

THE Rabbit Advocate

PROVIDING INSIGHTS INTO THE LIVES OF HOUSE RABBITS

APRIL 2004



A Salute to Our Volunteers

A word from our President, Anita Winkler

As I assume the position of President of the Rabbit Advocates, I realize that I have large shoes to fill. Mary Huey did Herculean duty as the first President of this organization. Mary guided and inspired the Board through those essential first steps in the start-up of our new non-profit organization.

The dedication of all those who have served on the Board over the last two years is extraordinary. Each director has put in hundreds of hours on administrative tasks, in addition to working with rabbits. I'm sure each of them will tell you that they prefer the rabbits, but without the administrative work the Rabbit Advocates would not exist. So a huge thank you to each of you who have served on the Board for your time, your energy, your caring, and your commitment to the rabbits. We wouldn't be here without you.

As I write this, a group of our volunteers are attempting a nighttime rescue of an injured rabbit which has been running loose in a Northeast Portland neighborhood. It's just one example of the extraordinary dedication of our volunteers. I wanted to share with all of you a sampling of activities the Rabbit Advocates have been involved in recently. This provides a flavor of how our resources are used and of the opportunities available to volunteers.

- Work is underway for our booth at the 2004 Northwest Pet and Companion Fair. (More about the Pet Fair in this newsletter.)
- Our educational message is spreading via various media with newspaper articles, letters to the editor, and cable television.
- We have created educational materials on many facets of rabbit care with more on the way.
- Our newsletter continues to draw compliments about the quality of the information and the quality of the publication itself.
- We staff the Oregon Humane Society's Small Animal Room on weekends and sometimes during the week, and assist with OHS volunteer training.

- Our volunteers are caring for over 250 rabbits in our homes and we have a program to help those fostering rabbits find permanent homes for them.
- I was afraid to ask for the number of calls received by our Helpline – it's an overwhelming number. (In this issue of the newsletter, Mary Huey discusses one of the most common – and distressing – calls that come in.)
- We've started scheduled outreaches (see Events schedule).
- We're creating a program to assist our foster parents with the costs of spays, neuters and veterinary care for their rabbits.

Rabbit Advocate volunteers make all this possible. Thanks to each of you for the time and caring you give. I hope you will continue to volunteer. If you haven't found the right match for your interests, call any Board member to talk about other opportunities or to give us suggestions for something you might like to pursue. We are a group that continues to evolve and grow, and your input is invaluable. There's something for everyone to do!



It takes talent, hard work and lots of love to create and staff our booth at the Northwest Pet & Companion Fair.

From our Helpline

“There is a rabbit running around my neighborhood. I don’t think he is a wild rabbit but I’m not sure. I can get within 10 feet of the rabbit but he runs off if I try to get closer. Am I worrying too much about the rabbit’s well-being or should I try to do something?”

Does this Rabbit Need Help?

By Mary Huey

Of all the phone calls we receive on our Helpline, this is one that demands urgent action. Abandoned rabbits are in a great deal of danger. One of the most important messages we would like to convey to the community is;

Do not release your domestic rabbit into the “wild”!!

If you can get close to a rabbit, as described above, he is most likely domestic and not a wild cottontail. Wild rabbits are quite skittish, have a brownish coat, a long narrow body and elongated face.

It saddens us that abandonment is used by many anonymous people who no longer want the responsibility of their rabbit’s care. It is extremely cruel, and it is also against the law, to abandon a domestic animal. The domestic rabbit, having lived in a cage or hutch his entire life, has no clue about keeping safe from predators and automobiles. He might look like he is happy to be free, but in fact he rarely lives more than a few months. He may be maimed and suffer a painful, tragic death out of sight of any people. He is vulnerable to the cold and wet Oregon weather. Summer brings the torment of biting insects and parasites.

Thus he needs your help and every attempt should be made to capture him as soon as possible.

Here are some helpful pointers:

- Act quickly! If there is more than one rabbit running loose, there may soon be a population explosion. Then, you won’t be concerned for just one rabbit, but dozens.
- Have a plan. Gather equipment and helpers. Decide where you will put the rabbit after he is captured.
- Limit the rabbit’s range. If the rabbit is in someone’s yard, block any escape routes and keep him there.
- A hungry rabbit is easier to catch than one that is not. Set up a feeding station near where you usually see the rabbit so he will become comfortable and rely on this place for some of his food.
- Buy, rent or borrow a live trap. Place it in the shade near the feeding station and monitor it several times a day when it is open. As bait, use smelly food such as the ripe fruit of pear, banana, cantaloupe, etc. Cover it on top and sides with branches and leaves. The end should be open.
- Set up a semi-permanent U-shaped wire enclosure with one end open. Feed the rabbit at the opening of this enclosure and gradually move food to the far end of the U. When the rabbit is eating at the end of the U, quietly and quickly close the opening. One person enters the pen and throws a blanket over the rabbit which should cause him to freeze in place.
- Create a “walking fence” and surround the rabbit, or set up a temporary wire fence around the rabbit, carried with the help of several other people. This must be done quietly and patiently so as not to alarm the rabbit.
- Don’t try to herd the rabbit, but instead, stand quietly blocking spaces in



Photo: this page, Karen D’Milia, opposite Kern Sypher

Safe from harm, Satine, abandoned in a Portland park, was attacked by a dog. She has recovered from her injuries and lives with a loving family.

which you don’t want him to move. To move a rabbit where you want him to go, try slowly moving up on him. Watch his body language. If he becomes alarmed he will bolt and be gone.

- Netting is not recommended. On rare occasions, one may use a net but this is difficult. One must be able to get close enough and then hold net sides down so the rabbit can’t escape around the edges.

Rabbit Advocate volunteers are available to give advice and may be able to help with the rescue, but you must provide a place to rehome the rabbit. Our volunteers care for approximately 280 rabbits in their individual homes and are not able to take more at this time. We are happy to provide educational materials and supplies, if available, to people willing to house the rabbit.

Many animal lovers acquire their first rabbit by rescuing an abandoned one and then learn what wonderful companions house rabbits can be. Every domestic rabbit deserves a home of his own, no less!

Getting in TTouch with your Rabbit

Shadow lunges at me. Tail erect, ears flat to his head, he grunts aggressively at my outstretched hand. It is our first meeting and things are actually going as expected.

*By Sydney Thomson,
Certified TTouch
Practitioner*

Recently returned to a shelter for being “cage aggressive and biting”, Shadow has been slated for euthanasia unless someone is willing to rescue him.

Encouraged by my friend Valerie, I decided to take Shadow on. I was in the second of my two year training as a TTouch practitioner and I was just beginning my case studies. He would be a challenge, but I was up for it. And besides, I’d always wanted a black rabbit.

The Shadow that came into my life had a lot of issues, mostly with people. He lunged, he bit, he grunted, he reared up and knocked food out of my hands when I tried to put it in his cage. Early on I gave him the run of our “mud room”, hoping the space would help extinguish his “cage aggression” issues. And right off the bat I began doing TTouch on him.

TTouch is a gentle, hands-on method of working with animals to enhance their behavioral, emotional and physical well-being. Developed by animal expert Linda Tellington Jones, the touches grew from her belief that most problematic behaviors are the result of muscular tension created by fear or stress. Bring awareness to the body, allow it to release the tension and the behavior will change.

Using gentle, connected, circular touches, and lifting and stroking movements on the skin, I started to get to know Shadow and build a bond of trust between us. His aggression was clearly fear-based: body taut, ready to react, on the offensive. But as he began to accept the touches I could see his body relaxing. His head lowered, his body softened and there was



a new calmness about him. Slowly, over the months, Shadow moved from a tense reactive rabbit to a relaxed one who would approach me and settle down for a TTouch session.

TTouch looks deceptively like massage, but it goes beyond, stimulating cellular function to awaken the innate “intelligence” within the cells themselves. It builds confidence and teaches animals to think

rather than react. And in addition to the positive effect on personality and behavior, the touches can dramatically affect the healing process and the body’s ability to heal itself. A language without words, TTouch increases general well-being while strengthening the bond of trust between human and animal.

It’s been more than a year and a half since Shadow came into our home and hearts. He’s become a model bunny, a sweet guy who likes to hang out with his people. Working on the computer, cooking in the kitchen, Shadow is often with me, sitting in his hay/litter box, munching a straw of timothy and watching me.

“Does he bite? Can I pet him?” my friend Ann asked on a recent visit.

“He doesn’t bite,” I assured her. “And of course you can pet him. He loves to be touched!”

I couldn’t have said that when Shadow first arrived. It’s a wonderful transformation that we owe to TTouch and a lot of love.

Sydney Thomson, a Certified TTouch Practitioner, lives in Troutdale, Oregon with her partner Akana, 8 rabbits, 2 dogs, and 2 cats, all of whom get lots of TTouch. Email: sydtkin@comcast.net or Phone: (503) 351-9340.

Products and Services for Rabbits and Their People

**Would you like
your rabbit
to be friendly,
calm and confident?**

Of Course You Would!

**Learn more about TTouch,
a gentle, hands-on method
to improve your
animal’s well-being.**

Sydney Thomson

**Certified TTouch
Practitioner**

503.351.9340

Dr. Chris Wilson

**11876 SW Beaverton-
Hillsdale Hwy., Beaverton
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details, go to our homepage at
www.adoptarabbit.org and click
on “Bunny Checks”.**

KUDOS

Rabbit Champion

Lorraine Gilbert, in memory of Ferne Spoto

Rabbit Benefactor

Mary Thompson, in memory of Lillian

Rabbit Rescuer

Jane Biequette
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Rabbit Sponsor

Sarah Bauman & Alex Philbrook, in appreciation of Peanut & Sable
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Emily Stuparyk, in memory of Christorino Bunny
Chris & Connie Hawes
Sharon Jenda
Anonymous
Lorraine M. Bushek
Diana Kottmeier, in memory of Bunners
Catherine Roberts

Thank you to all those who have donated cars and items for the garage sale.

Donations received after February 29, 2004 will be acknowledged in our next newsletter.

Meet the Vet: Donna Craig, DVM

Left untreated, abscesses can spread throughout a rabbit's body with such severity that they may lead to death.

Donna Craig, DVM explains the use of antibiotic bead therapy

By Sarah Yasutake

Dr. Donna Craig always knew she wanted to be a veterinarian, but she had no idea that she would wind up interested in rabbit veterinary medicine. In fact, prior to attending vet school at Kansas State University, Dr. Craig had an associates degree in zookeeping, and her greatest interest was in reptiles.

Now, two years out of vet school, Dr. Craig finds that her favorite animal clients are rabbits, and, somewhat ironically for someone whose initial interest was in reptiles, she has taken a keen interest in learning all she can about rabbits and their special medical issues.

Dr. Craig has a special interest in rabbit dentistry because her husband is an equine dentist, and she finds that rabbits are like little horses in that much equine dentistry applies to rabbits. Dr. Craig recently attended a national veterinary conference where she attended every rabbit-related session that she could. There she learned about a relatively new type of bead therapy for jaw abscesses in rabbits. Rabbits are prone to dental abscesses from abnormal tooth wear.

When teeth do not wear properly, they may grow in the direction of the root and eventually cause erosion of the surrounding bone. Eventually this leaves a cyst filled with infection. Rabbit abscesses are difficult to treat because they tend to fill with pus that is so thick that it cannot be drained the way the fluid from a dog or cat abscess can be. Rabbit abscesses also wall themselves off, which means that orally-administered antibiotics cannot reach the actual infection. Left untreated, abscesses can spread throughout a rabbit's body with such severity that they may lead to his death.

Because of these problems, somebody came up with the idea of adding antibiotics to beads that can be implanted directly into the abscess. The beads are made from polymethylmethacrylate (PMMA), a substance that is commonly used in orthopedic medicine, combined with a liquid



Photo: Sarah Yasutake

Donna Craig with Katrina, a favorite animal client. Dr. Craig's recommendation for preventing jaw abscesses: feed plenty of hay!

antibiotic. The doctor first removes the abscess surgically, then scrapes and flushes out the cavity left behind and packs it with the antibiotic beads. The beads slowly release antibiotics that seep into the local tissue to attack the abscess directly from the inside out. The beads usually do not need to be removed. Dr. Craig recently performed this surgery and implanted the beads in one of the bunnies of a Rabbit Advocate volunteer, and he is reported to be doing well.

According to Dr. Craig, the single most important thing that we can do to help prevent jaw abscesses in our rabbits is to make sure that they eat plenty of hay and/or grasses. Hay and grasses are the most important part of a rabbit's diet because they wear down the teeth. Commercial rabbit pellets and wood do not do the same job of grinding down rabbits' teeth. A rabbit with a diet that does not include enough hay therefore faces a great risk of developing dental problems and possibly jaw abscesses. Despite the fact that this new bead therapy is available, jaw abscesses are so nasty and dangerous that we should do all we can to help our rabbits avoid them.

Dr. Donna Craig practices at the Companion Pet Clinic at 19343 Willamette Drive in West Linn; 503-635-3115.

Rabbit Advocates **at the Northwest Pet & Companion Fair** **April 17 & 18 at the Portland Expo Center**

It's a small, lonely world for a rabbit in a hutch. But bring her into your home, and watch her personality blossom! Our volunteers will be on hand to share their stories and show you how to successfully adopt a rabbit into your family.

Meet adoptable foster rabbits in a home-like setting and see how we house, litterbox train, and interact with these charming, joyful companion animals.

If you already have a rabbit, pick up supplies. We'll have hay, feed, toys, apple sticks, pen panels and more.

Attend a workshop and learn the basics of rabbit care and handling. Information for kids, too!

SATURDAY APRIL 17TH

10:45AM STAGE B

House Rabbit 101

Rabbit Advocate, Harmony VanEaton

1:45PM STAGE B

*How to Converse with Your Rabbit
Moderator & Rabbit Advocate,
Arlene MacMonagle*

4:30PM STAGE A

*Getting in TTouch with your Rabbit
Rabbit Advocate & Certified TTouch
Practitioner, Sydney Thomson*

SUNDAY APRIL 18TH

10:45AM STAGE B

*Rabbits for Kids
Rabbit Advocate:
Harmony VanEaton*

1:45PM STAGE B

*How to Converse with Your Rabbit
Moderator & Rabbit Advocate:
Arlene MacMonagle*

*For more complete workshop
descriptions check our website at
www.adoptarabbit.org*

*All workshops are subject to
change, please check with the shows
website www.petfairs.com
for most current information.*

Out of the Hutch



... Into the Home



EVENTS

The Rabbit Advocates meet at the Oregon Humane Society, 1067 NE Columbia Boulevard, Portland, Oregon, on the third Sunday of every month (or as noted) from 4:00 - 6:00 PM. Meetings begin with a "Bunny Basics" Q & A session where we invite your questions about any aspect of rabbit care. The public is welcome!

APRIL

No General Meeting

APRIL 17-18
Rabbit Advocates at
Northwest Pet
& Companion Fair

See page (5) of this newsletter for details.

MAY 16

General Meeting

Check our website for educational topic.

JUNE 13

General Meeting

Keeping your rabbit safe in the summer and all year round.

JUNE 19 & 20

Rabbit Advocates at
Laurelhurst Garage Sale

See article on opposite page of this newsletter for details.

JULY 18

General Meeting

Rabbit Habitat,
Rabbit Housing Ideas

AUGUST 15

General Meeting

Medical topic (to be determined).
Check website for more details.

Adoptable House Rabbits

All rabbits shown here and on the Rabbit Advocate website have been spayed/neutered.



Dazzle (left) is a curious and cuddly female. A dazzling girl with lovely markings, Dazzle likes to get out into the house and play.

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



Napoleon and Josephine (right) are a bonded pair of Hotots. Josephine is incredibly gentle and cuddly and Napoleon has loads of wonderful personality. They will make good companions who will want a lot of attention.

Contact: sydkin@comcast.net



Wilson (left) is an adorable Silver Martin dwarf, 3 pounds. Totally litter trained.

Loves to run in circles around the furniture. Loves fresh veggies. Great with cats. Good with calm children. Would make another bunny a good companion. Loves to sit on your lap or on the back of the couch. Would make a great apartment bunny. Must go to an inside home.

Contact: hanel@ohsu.edu

Lucy (right) is a very friendly 3 year old black rabbit who is calm, sweet and loves to explore her surroundings yet is relaxed enough to receive gentle attention from her family. She is used to dogs and cats and has good litterbox habits. She would welcome being part of a committed family and being housed in a stand up exercise pen where she can move about freely.

Contact: rabbit8@hevanet.com



Pogo (left) is a sweet yet shy medium size fellow who would love to get pats and loves from his new family. Found alone outside, he appears not to have had much people lovin' until now. He needs an inside home that is quiet and one that will shower him with attention so he can get used to gentle handling. A very special boy!

Contact: kingcat01@yahoo.com

Spring Into Summer at Our Huge Yard Sale June 19th And 20th

100% of the Proceeds from the Sale of Your Donations Go to the Rabbit Advocates. Please Consider Helping Us This Year!

On the weekend before summer officially starts, the Rabbit Advocates will be hosting our third annual yard sale, in conjunction with the Laurelhurst Neighborhood Garage Sale in Northeast Portland.

Our generous friends and neighbors have donated an amazing assortment of items: kitchenware to clothes and linens, knick knacks, hardware, sporting goods and toys, electronics, books, lighting, furniture, and one-of-a-kind treasures.

Are you doing any spring cleaning? Donate unneeded items to our yard sale. We'll be accepting donations through the first week of June. You'll receive a charitable donation receipt for your tax records.

These funds support ongoing public education, spay/neuter and other medical

programs, our website, helpline, newsletter, and special events.

This is our group's major fundraising event for the year. Our volunteers put in countless hours to solicit, collect, sort and price the items, set up and staff the sale, and provide excellent customer service. We're also happy to answer questions about house rabbits!

Mark your calendars and note this location: 485 NE Hazelfern Place at the corner of Glisan.

For information about how to donate, contact one of the volunteers below. We and the rabbits thank you!

Chris Arends 503-612-9270
carends44@comcast.net

Arlene MacMonagle 503-232-6460
ituri2@aol.com



We Also Accept Donated Automobiles

The Rabbit Advocates now accept donated automobiles. The vehicle does not have to be running, but it should be able to sell for at least \$75 at public auction.

100% of the proceeds will go to the Rabbit Advocates, and you'll be issued a donation receipt for your tax records.

Contact Chris Arends at 503-612-9270 or carends44@comcast.net and he'll explain

the simple process. We, and the rabbits, appreciate your generosity.



EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 12
General Meeting

Oregon Laws That Affect Rabbits

OCTOBER 17
General Meeting

*The Rabbit in Literature,
Myth and Legend*

OUTREACH SCHEDULE

The following Westside Outreaches are tentatively scheduled for Beaverton Petsmart, on Walker Rd.

Check our website to confirm dates and times

APRIL 3

Petsmart Outreach
12:00 – 3:00

MAY 8

Petsmart Outreach
12:00 – 3:00

JUNE 5

Petsmart Outreach
12:00 – 3:00

Check our website, www.adoptarabbit.org, for Eastside Outreach dates and locations. All outreach schedules are subject to change; please check the website for current information before you head out.

**Rabbit Advocates,
Board of Directors**

**Anita Winkler,
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**Karen DiMilia,
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Erica Hartmann

Mary Huey

Mary Thompson

Sarah Yasutake

**Got a rabbit
question?**

**Call our
HELP-LINE**

503-617-1625

More Adoptable House Rabbits



Tanzey (left) is a lovely, brown, spayed female lop. She is very calm and is fine with being picked up. She is a laid back and

pretty lady who is litter box trained.

Contact: ehartmann33@yahoo.com



Nicky (left) a quiet, sweet boy is missing his mate and would like a new one. He's nervous about being picked up but once he is in your arms he loves the attention. Good litter-box habits. **Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com**

Ritz (right) is a very friendly 7 month old orange neutered male.

Because he loves to exercise, he wants a home with plenty of indoor space to run. **Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com**



Johnny (left) a small neutered male Dutch was seen being thrown out of a car near Mollala and then

rescued by two Rabbit Advocates. He is a real cuddle bun. Loves to be petted. Would do very well with the right female who wants an attentive boy.

Contact: ituri2@aol.com



Rabbit Advocates

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continue receiving our
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your mailing address?**

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a comment or
suggestion?**

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