

THE *Rabbit Advocate*

SPRING 2003



Enjoy the Summer Sun & Keep Your Rabbit Safe

A word from our President, Mary Huey

Spring has always been my favorite season. It invites us to step outside and enjoy the new warmth of fresh air with family, friends, and our little furry companions. Then Summer comes and along with it, increased heat and special dangers for our rabbits.

Letting my rabbits have some outside time in the yard seemed like a nice idea... until the shadow over my suburban Beaverton driveway, and later

on my fence, turned out to be a hawk in pursuit of food. We were fortunate that time. No one was lost, and now I never forget that even the suburbs can be fraught with danger.

Excessive heat can be one of the worst hazards for our rabbits. I keep a close eye on my thermometers and as the temperature approaches 82-85 degrees I go into action to protect my rabbits.

We can't be too careful when it comes to keeping our little ones safe. Inside this issue of *The Rabbit Advocate* you'll find tips on protecting your rabbit in the Summer season.

Have a safe and enjoyable Summer!

Rabbit Advocates, Board of Directors

Mary Huey, President

Karen DiMilia, Vice President

Anita Winkler, Secretary

Kem Sypher, Treasurer

Chris Arends

Joan Gilbert

Marjorie Surridge

Mary Thompson

Rabbit Advocates Bring Educational Message to Pet Fair

"Do they really use a litter box?"

"Would a rabbit get along with my cat?"

"What's it like having a rabbit in your house?"

The questions were flying as many of the visitors to the Northwest Pet and Companion Fair stopped by to meet our rabbits and learn about rabbits as companion animals. The fair, which was held on the weekend of April 12-13, attracted about 8,000 animal lovers.

Our booth was designed and fabricated by Rabbit Advocate volunteers (with the help of a few spouses!). It was designed to look like the living room of a small home, emphasizing the message that rabbits can successfully be brought into the home and made part of the family. Fabulous photos showed rabbits in home settings, and educational displays introduced the public to the personalities of our favorite companion animals.

Our volunteers also put in an amazing effort to secure donations, create educational materials and displays, transport rabbits, and set up and staff the booth.

Our sincere thanks to all our volunteers and donors (see our Kudos column for donor names). Special thanks to Len Alto, Richard Hoyen, Terry Niedermeyer of Niedo Wholesale Dis-



Len Alto sizes up the Big Rabbit.

plays, Jon Gramstad of Lux Lighting, and show manager Patrick Dinan. Show manager Mike Boyd, who passed away shortly before the event, is gratefully remembered for his encouragement and support.

Got a rabbit question?

Call our HELP-LINE

503-617-1625

Photo: Karen DiMilia

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. The public is welcome!

Sunday June 15

Ready for the Summer
Outdoor exercise setups, fly strike, heat exhaustion, other seasonal issues.

June 21-22

Garage Sale Fundraiser
(see article on pg.3)

Sunday July 13

Caring for Orphaned Rabbit Babies.
Rabbit Advocate volunteers
Lorraine Bushek and Anita Winkler.

Sunday August 24

Photographing Rabbits -
Tips and Tricks
Rabbit Advocate volunteer
Kem Sypher

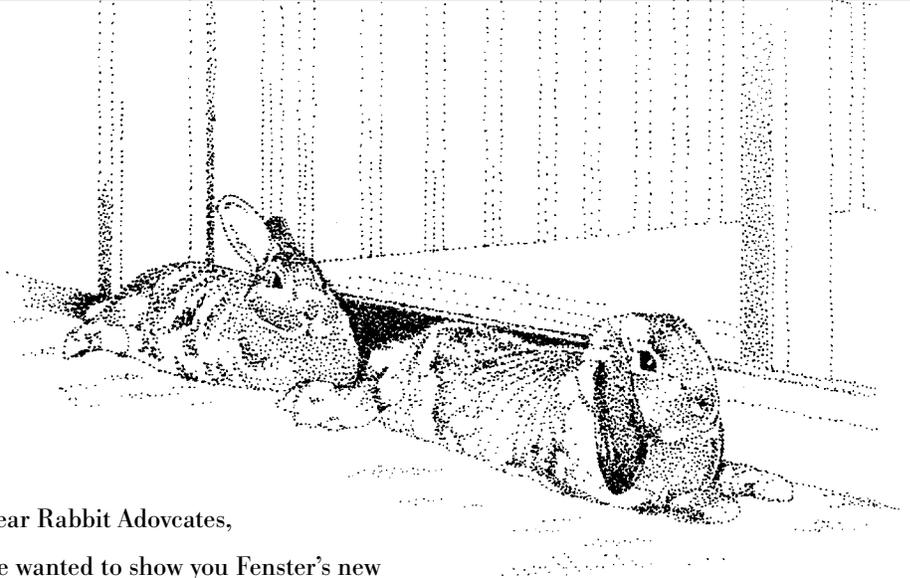
Sunday September 21

Understanding and Dealing
with Pet Loss
Enid Traisman from Dove Lewis Pet
Loss Support Group

Log on to www.adoptarabbit.org
for further information, outreach
schedule, and special events, or
phone: 503-617-1625.

“Would you like to continue
receiving our newsletter? Got a
comment or suggestion?
WRITE TO US AT
newsletter@adoptarabbit.org”

A Happy Bunny Mom Writes



Drawing: Richard Hoyer from photo by Linda Johansen

Dear Rabbit Advocates,

We wanted to show you Fenster's new life with his four year old sister, Ivy. As you can see, they've bonded very well, and live in the same "Urban Condo" when we're not home. Otherwise they roam the house and stare at the fireplace or out the window. They eat a giant organic salad every day, and lots of timothy hay, hay cubes, papaya and Petromalt.

Since they are our kids, they go to our vacation home with us once a month, travelling together in one Sherpa bag on Mommy's lap for four hours. They sit quietly in the restaurant when we have pizza on the way there!

"Fenny", as we call him, is spunky and cautious. He is more hand-shy and only cuddly under certain conditions than our Ivy, but over time, we hope he'll like being picked up more. He gets treats for dashing around fast, and for flipping in the air, which he does daily at "tea time". Every day at 3:00 pm, he comes to get his "tea" (a few pellets in a mini tea cup) while I have real tea. He shows

off most after that. Ivy and Fenster cuddle and kick back together and groom each other. We were apprehensive about getting a second bunny, but now promise to always have at least two.

We admire all of your volunteers and support all of your noble work. Thank you for caring for Fenster until we found him.

Sincerely,
Linda Johansen



A volunteer helps a family considering adoption.

Volunteer Spotlight: Kem Sypher

by C. Nolan Huizenga

Kem Sypher has shared his home with at least 12 rabbits over the past 20 years. Bunny companions included The Bun, who lived in the kitchen and grew to 20 pounds ("perhaps it was the Fruit Loops -- we didn't know any better," Kem admits), Little Squirt, who had perfect household manners and asked to go out to the shop every night to sleep, and Fritz, a dwarf who arrived as a potential boyfriend for Daphne but instead fell hard for Elvira.

Co-workers at US Bank gave Kem his first rabbits, who in turn taught him "everything in the House Rabbit Handbook" before he ever read it. Kem and his parents, with whom he has shared a museum-like Portland home since 1952, all grew very attached to the rabbits, delighting in their antics and enjoying their affection. When The Bun died, Kem says "It felt like losing a family member."

Based on these early experiences, Kem assumed that all rabbits loved people and would litter train themselves. Then Max arrived, from a breeding facility whose conditions Kem abhorred. Max had been so terrorized that he remained very wary of people and marked his territory everywhere. Nothing seemed to help.

Kem finally received some kind and helpful advice from Rabbit Advocate Mary Huey. They figured out how to make the best of Max's life (he lived in the shop and never became very social), and Mary invited Kem to join the newly-formed Rabbit Advocates group. Mary also introduced Kem to Bailey, a beautiful little dwarf rabbit who was looking for a loving home.

A Rabbit Advocate since 1998, Kem is now on the Board of Directors and serves as Treasurer.

Kem is also a master animal photographer, capturing beautiful and perfectly timed images of rabbits lounging, playing, and being social. His photos grace numerous RA publications, posters, and our website. Kem's large prints of house rabbits were a huge hit at our NW Pet Fair booth. Recently Kem cracked up everyone on the RA email list with a photo of Desdemona the bunny brazenly stealing a whole cookie from her human's coffee table!

At the Oregon Humane Society Kem does in-depth rabbit room training for new volunteers, teaching about rabbit health, grooming, behavior, and also helping volunteers educate the public and evaluate what kind of home a rabbit might go to.

Despite his long experience with



Kem and Cutie meet the public at the NW Pet and Companion Fair.

companion rabbits, Kem says they still surprise him. When Kem's mother died of a stroke, the family held a reception at their home, and forty people attended. Kem figured little Bailey would hide somewhere quiet for the day. Instead Bailey chose to work the crowd, breaking the tension by hopping around people's feet and asking for affection. Everybody loved him. "Bailey became very endeared to me after that day," says Kem warmly.

Garage Sale Fundraiser in June

The Rabbit Advocates will be holding our major fundraising event on June 21-22nd, 2003. We will be selling garage sale items at the Laurelhurst and Eastmoreland neighborhood sales, and are currently asking for donations in the Portland metro area.

If you have a box or two of items that you've been waiting to get rid of, now could be a great time! 100% of the proceeds will benefit the Rabbit Advocates,

and we'll send you a donation receipt for your tax records.

If you have any questions about how to donate, please contact one of the two people listed below.

Thank you so much for your help. We'd love to have you stop by the sales as well:

Saturday, June 21st from 8am - 5pm
485 NE Hazelfern Place
in Laurelhurst (cross street Glisan)

Sunday June 22nd from 8am - 3pm
7828 SE 35th Ave. in Eastmoreland.

For more information, or to donate, please contact:

Chris Arends
503-612-9270
carends44@cs.com

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

Continuing Education: Summer Safety Q & A

by Mary Thompson
Education Committee

Q *What would be a good way for my rabbit to experience the outdoors this summer?*

A Set up an exercise pen for your rabbit. This can be a set of pen panels joined together or a puppy exercise pen. If your rabbit lives in a pen indoors, you might even use the same one for outdoor exercise. Set the pen in a shady place on flat ground. For something more permanent, you can install a fence and either bury the bottom several inches in the ground or lay wire over the soil. This way your rabbit will not be able to dig out. Cover the top of the pen with wire to protect from predators.

If you are planning to let your rabbit run in a fenced in yard, inspect your fence first to be sure there are no gaps between the fence and the ground. Even a small gap may allow a rabbit to escape!

Some rabbits will do okay on a harness and leash, but it must fit securely and you must accustom your rabbit to the harness gradually to prevent injury.

Always think safety. Supervise your rabbit when he is outside. It only takes one moment for a situation to become dangerous. Evaluate your exercise area for safety from predators. Don't allow your rabbit to play on chemically treated grass or have access to poisonous plants and shrubs such as azaleas or rhodies. Sit with your rabbit and play with him while he is outside and enjoy the nice weather with your bun.

**Heat can kill!
Help your rabbit
keep cool
on hot days.**



Photo: Mary Thompson

Clarence enjoys a stroll in the garden ... under Mom's supervision!

Q *What can I do to keep my rabbit from becoming sick from the heat?*

A When the temperature approaches 80 degrees, we should be concerned for our rabbits. If you have a long haired rabbit, you might consider a haircut for her, or at least keep her well brushed out. Be sure your rabbit has a shady, well-ventilated living area and plenty of fresh drinking water. Freeze some plastic bottles filled with water for your rabbit to lie against. Give your rabbit a ceramic or marble tile (these can be frozen for extra oomph) to lie on. Try placing a cool wet towel over a fan blowing on low speed towards your rabbit's area. Lightly mist your bunny's ears, which serve as his temperature regulators.

If your rabbit is listless and overheated, do NOT submerge your rabbit in water. Take him to a vet or emergency clinic. On the way there, lightly mist his ears with cool water or hold a cool rag against his ears. You can pull back the fur and lightly spritz his skin, but do not saturate his fur as that will hold in the heat.

Q *What is fly strike?*

A Flies seek out warm and damp areas to lay eggs, and maggots will intrude into flesh if given time, producing shock from toxins they release. This is called "fly strike." Especially vulnerable is a rabbit who has a moist rear end from incontinence or diarrhea or has a wound.

Keep your rabbit, and his living space, clean and dry. Try to keep your rabbit's area free from flies and inspect your rabbit regularly, especially after a romp outside. If you suspect that your rabbit has fly strike, call your vet immediately so that they can remove the maggots.

Playing outdoors can be a fun and healthy experience for your rabbit, and one many rabbits enjoy. Be safe, and have a wonderful summer!

Please Donate to Our Medical Assistance Fund

The Rabbit Advocates Medical Assistance Fund helps foster parents pay for costly veterinary care and procedures like spay/neuter surgery for their rescued rabbits.

100% of designated donations are used to restore the health of needy rabbits while they await placement in permanent loving homes.

Your donation may be tax deductible as allowed by law.

Adopt a Fabulous Foster Bun



Satine (left) is lots of bun to love. She is a big beautiful girl, 3 years old, spayed, with great litter box habits. She gets along with cats but not dogs. She sometimes “speaks” in little squeaky sounds. She’s calm and mellow, but curious about her surroundings. She’s a very intelligent rabbit; you can see her “thinking” and figuring out how to get what she wants! She would like an indoor cage-free home.

Contact: ztgst@aol.com



Basil and Skitter (right) are a gregarious pair of siblings. They are friendly, easy going, and like to bounce around. They like people and will stand on their hind legs to get their noses scratched.

Contact: rabbitzen@aol.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 loving till now. He needs an inside home that is quiet and that will shower him with attention so he can get used to gentle handling. A very special boy.

Contact: rabbit8@hevanet.com



Winifred (right) medium size part dutch, black and white. Fred is a sweet gal who knows what she wants and usually what she wants is food! She is very curious, friendly and intelligent.

Contact: Rabbitzen@aol.com

Products and Services for Rabbits and Their People

Create Your Own Rabbit Habitat

Surprise bunny with a big space he can call his own! Create a lightweight freestanding pen of any size with wire pen panels. Each panel is 30 x 30 inches (1 x 2 inch gauge wire). Panels can easily be attached together.

Only \$8 per panel, \$11.00 for panel with a 12 x 12 inch door. Pens created from these wire panels are not recommended for outdoor use, except for supervised sessions of exercise.

Valerie Madison,
503-788-7676

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of Karen DiMilia
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& Audrey
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continued next page

Keeping Bunny Healthy:

The Litter Box Detective

By Valerie Madison

Why are bunny parents so interested in the contents of their rabbit's litter box?

The contents of the litter box can provide much information about your rabbit's health. If you have a rabbit, you are familiar with her output of fecal pellets (typically a 5 pound rabbit passes 150 fecal pellets each day!) and hope to find them only in the litter box.

Fecal pellets scattered outside the litter box are territorial markers. You may see these if the rabbit is moved to a new area or if a new rabbit comes into the home. If the pellets are in piles outside the box, more litter box training is needed.

Familiarize yourself with the appearance of your rabbit's fecal pellets. A healthy digestive tract will produce large, round pellets. If the pellets suddenly get smaller, hard, misshapen or strung together with strands of fur (or carpet), you need to determine the cause. Be certain your rabbit is eating plenty of grass hay, has access to clean water and is getting lots of exercise. Brush her daily when she is shedding so that fur is not ingested.

Rabbits also produce cecal pellets (cecotropes), which you may never see, because your rabbit eats them as they exit the anus. Cecotropes are soft, shiny, small pellets resembling tightly bunched grapes. They have a strong odor, due



Glamorous Marilyn and Jean lounge in the best seat in the house. These riendly girls are available for adoption. Contact: bleakney@teleport.com

to the high content of beneficial cecal bacteria. These bacteria contain essential amino acids, vitamins and minerals that the rabbit cannot produce on his own. By eating the cecotropes, the rabbit redigests the material and extracts the vital nutrients.

If your rabbit is not eating the cecotropes, he may be too overweight to take them directly from the anus. Soft, unformed and uneaten cecotropes (and the resultant "poopy butt") may be due to an unhealthy diet, internal parasites, the use of inappropriate antibiotics, or sudden diet change.

True diarrhea (watery feces) is not common in rabbits. But because diarrhea causes rapid dehydration, it must be treated immediately by

Become a Rabbit Advocate Volunteer

Join a group of dedicated, fun-loving people who are committed to the welfare of companion rabbits. Call 503-617-1625 for more info or simply come to one of the monthly meetings.



Volunteer Leanne Blinky makes a television appearance from an outreach location.

Rabbit Friend

Sandy Alto
 Anonymous
 Tricia Azzone
 Allyn K. Bowers
 Lynne C. Heidsick-Ditullio
 Darlene Exendine
 Anonymous
 Helen Holmes Gold
 Gilbert Hartl
 Karla Saindon-Hayes
 Paul D. Iwasaki: In memory of KC Yoshida
 Holly James
 Connie B. Kenney: In memory of Thor
 Vicki L. Locklair
 Valerie Madison
 Karen Markle
 Scott A. McCorkle
 Marjorie Miyasako
 Keith Van Doren Moe: In appreciation of Mary Huey and Mary Thompson
 Veronica L. Mordeen: In appreciation of Mary Huey and Leann Bleakney
 Helen Mae Olson: In memory of Maurice Olson
 Anonymous
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photo: Kem Sypher

**“Your rabbit’s
 litter box contains
 heaps of information
 about your bunny’s
 health”**

tate in the urine. An occasional occurrence of creamy colored urine is normal. If this occurs frequently, or if the urine is sludgy, your veterinarian may suggest a diet low in calcium. Red urine caused by a bloody discharge (and confirmed by a test at the veterinary clinic) may be due to urinary tract infection, bladder and kidney stones, or uterine cancer. Be aware of other signs that may indicate a need to visit your rabbit veterinarian: straining to urinate, loss of appetite, drinking more water than usual, thick and sludgy urine, decreased or increased urine output, a temperature over 102F, or “urine burn” (urine-soaked fur keeps the skin damp and irritated).

Your rabbit’s litter box contains heaps of information about your bunny’s health. Observe the contents daily for what is coming through, and you’ll learn what is normal for your rabbit.

a veterinarian. Diarrhea or mushy cecotropes left on your rabbit’s fur may result in fly strike (growth of fly maggots). This can be fatal to your rabbit.

The color of rabbit urine varies from yellow to red and from clear to creamy. Don’t be alarmed – the color and clarity is generally due to plant pigments in the food, pigments produced by the bladder, or the presence of calcium precipi-

Gifts of Love Come in Many Different Forms

Edie Emerald was a lifelong animal lover. When she passed away in the autumn of 2002, her executor, Marty Emerald, sought to make a donation to an organization that benefits companion animals. A substantial portion of Edie’s possessions were donated to the Rabbit Advocates. Edie is truly a Rabbit Angel whose gift continues to provide for the animals.

Jim Harris was clearing out a barn full of curiosities and treasures. The Rabbit Advocates held a barn sale fundraiser, and Jim Harris generously donated a portion of the proceeds to the group.

Becky Kirk and Ron DeLuca donated a set of fine antique china. Richard Hoyen donated postage stamps for our newsletter mailing. Linda McKinnon packed up a carload of items and donated them to our upcoming yard sale fundraiser, and many others have made in-kind donations, large and small.

There are many ways to show your support for the rabbits and for the work of the Rabbit Advocates. We are deeply grateful for every gift. On behalf of the rabbits, thank you to every one of our donors!

Fabulous Foster Buns Available for Adoption

Brad Sypher with *Mitsie (right)*, a one year old lop who is looking for a loving

home. She's a small, energetic girl, white with dark markings and big dark eyes. Mitsie wants to be the only rabbit in your heart! This shy bun would like a quiet, cage-free indoor home where she can get lots of exercise.

Contact: ztgst@aol.com



photo: Ken Sypher

Harry & Heidi (below). Harry is a large neutered gray chinchilla male. Heidi, a spayed black & white Dutch is his partner. They are probably between 1 and 2 years old. Together they make an active pair who are curious and love the freedom of their exercise pen. Both were released to the wild and concerned neighbors were able to catch them. They love romping together and actively seek their main love, carrots, whenever possible. They will need a quiet home with an inside exercise pen, patience and extra attention to help them learn to trust humans.

Contact: rabbit8@hevanet.com

Adam & Autumn (left) are mother and son Rex rabbits. They are a great pair who will run up to you for carrots and special treats/veggies. They are somewhat shy and so need someone who will spend time with them and help them to learn how wonderful it is to have human touch. **Contact: carends44@cs.com**



Rabbit Advocates
PO Box 14235
Portland OR 97293-0235

**Garage Sale Fundraiser
June 21 & 22
Laurelhurst and
Eastmoreland**

See article inside

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED