



THE Rabbit Advocate



PROVIDING INSIGHTS INTO THE LIVES OF HOUSE RABBITS

SPRING 2006

Daisy May: A Survivor's Story

A foster mom's persistence and dedication help a sweet rabbit survive cancer surgery and find her forever home.



Vivian Lane, age 7, holds the small black rabbit in her lap and gently kisses her nose. "Her nose feels like velvet," says Vivian. "She's nice to hold and really soft." Vivian's sister Lydia, age 4 1/2, strokes the rabbit's ears. "She's really soft under her ears and likes to be pet there," says Lydia. "She's a really nice bunny." It's clear that Daisy May (formerly known as Lucky Pink) has found a loving home with the Lane family.

Laurie Lane, Vivian and Lydia's mom, was at the Oregon Humane Society searching for a family pet. Her daughters had been asking for a dog, but none of the dogs seemed like

the right fit for her family. As she entered the Small Animal Room, she realized, "We need a bunny." Laurie had always loved rabbits, and was particularly drawn to a calm little black rabbit.

As fate would have it, RA volunteer Lorraine Bushek was at the Humane Society that day. She had been Daisy May's foster mom and had seen her through cancer surgery. Lorraine cradled the rabbit protectively as she explained to Laurie that Daisy May was a breast cancer survivor. Laurie was astonished. "So am I!" she exclaimed. It was a perfect match. "She's really calm and loves to be held. It's calming and healing for me as well as for her."

Not long ago, Daisy May's fate was uncertain. Sometimes a



loving and attentive volunteer makes a big difference in a rabbit's life. In this case, it was the difference between life and death.

Volunteer Lorraine Bushek, RA's liaison with the Oregon Humane Society, was called in to evaluate the older female rabbit who had arrived at the shelter with a lump on her chest. Lorraine felt that she should be given a chance at life. She recommended that the rabbit be spayed (all Oregon

Humane buns are spayed/neutered before adoption) and that she receive a vet evaluation at that time.

Dr. Chris Wilson of Beaverton Pet Clinic performed the surgery and discovered uterine cancer. He also removed two cancerous breast lumps. Uterine cancer is fairly common in unspayed, mature female rabbits -- it's a good reason to spay

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Saying “NO!” to the Easter Bunny

“Some friends of mine are talking about getting a rabbit as an Easter gift for their extremely active five year old daughter. I’ve seen the way this kid interacts with my house bun and I think it’s a really bad idea. Is there a tactful way that I can discourage them?”

Parents often have an unrealistic picture in their minds of their child calmly holding and petting a gentle, doll-like baby bunny. They need a good dose of reality so that they know what they’re getting into, and so that they can make an educated choice. A good place to start would be at the Rabbit Advocates’ education and adoption event on April 9th. (see below for details).

Let the adults hold your rabbit. Emphasize the fragility of the rabbit and the importance of holding him carefully. Tell them to be gentle, because the rabbit might scratch or nip if held improperly. Demonstrate the use of the nail clipper, because they’ll need to clip nails once a month or so. Oh yes, and the brush too, because he sheds. Show them the litter box, and



photo: Lorraine Buschek

This is an Easter bunny!

tell them it needs to be cleaned every day... for the next ten years. And you might mention that vet bill, too. It sure was expensive to have him neutered, but it’s worth it because your bun is a member of your family, and you don’t want him urine-marking around the house. If they’re not really committed to a rabbit as a companion for the whole family, they’ll probably run screaming at this point. You can reinforce the lesson by giving your friends some of our educational handouts. Go



photo: Kern Sypher

This is a 10 year commitment!

to our website, www.adoptarabbit.org, and click on Articles: Miscellaneous. Your friends would probably benefit most from the articles, “Children and Rabbits” and “Is a Rabbit the Right Companion For Me?”

Let’s hope they get the idea and decide that a chocolate bunny is a better gift for their daughter. If they follow through on their plans, take a deep breath and be prepared to educate, educate, educate!

April 9th

Rabbit Advocates with Oregon Humane Society present an adoption & education event, Sunday, April 9, 2006 from 1:00 – 5:00 PM Oregon Humane Society in the Education Hall.

Easter Bunnies: Look Before You Hop!

It’s that time of year when we are confronted with images of wide-eyed cuddly bunnies and when impulse purchases of rabbits are most likely to occur. Unlike their chocolate counterparts, real rabbits are a long-term commitment. They may live ten years or longer. Rabbits have unique personalities and can be wonderful companions. But don’t make an impulse purchase – make an educated decision. Hop into the Oregon Humane Society and learn the basics of rabbit care, behavior, health and housing. Best of all, you’ll

meet some very special shelter rabbits and foster rabbits who have been waiting for their forever homes. Volunteers will be available to answer questions.

Rabbit Advocates is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the welfare of domestic rabbits. Its volunteers work to educate the public about rabbit care and promote the adoption of rescued rabbits to loving homes. RA volunteers are pleased to support and assist the Oregon Humane Society’s small animal program.

Arts & Entertainment

Music Review

“Underwood Uncurling”

Bassist-songwriter-singer Belinda Underwood is an up-and-coming young Portland area talent whose jazz album, “Underwood Uncurling”, a mix of standards and original compositions, was released in 2005. Underwood’s wistful voice is well-suited to the dreamy melodies that intertwine with sophisticated bass lines. Belinda also performs with her sister Melissa in the folk duet Beliss.

What caught our attention is Belinda’s musical tribute to her house rabbit, a beautiful Dwarf Hotot named Elvira. She believes Elvira may be the reincarnation of a beloved rabbit (also named Elvira) from her childhood. She noted uncanny similarities in their behavior and appearance. “Then one day I asked her if she WAS Elvira. She lifted her head, stopped chewing, looked at me and winked. This is something I have never seen her do before, or since. I have called her Elvira ever since. My ‘Elvira’ song is about my love for her



Belinda Underwood and rabbit-friend Elvira.

and my gratitude to her for coming back (and if there is no such thing as reincarnation, I am thankful for the symbolic reincarnation, since she serves the role of rabbit-friend that

I have missed.)” Elvira loves cuddles and pets, riding on Belinda’s shoulder and playing in her hair, and grooming Belinda. Apples are her favorite treat.

Learn more about Belinda and her music at www.belindaunderwood.com and www.belissmusic.com (where you can hear the “Elvira” song) and look for her live performances around town.

Movie Review

Wallace and Gromit: Curse of the Were-Rabbit

Rabbit lovers and rabbit rescuers will appreciate this film from Aardman Animation Studios. The feat of animating clay figures, frame-by-frame, for a full length film is breathtaking in itself, and spectacularly well-done. Add to that a superbly funny script, lovable characters, a dilemma we can all relate to (rabbit overpopulation) and a happy ending that will warm the heart of any rabbit rescuer. Now on DVD.

Photography

Animal Photos by Kem Sypher

Kem Sypher seems to have camera in hand at those magic moments when animals are doing something extraordinary. See his latest work at the mezzanine gallery of Healthy Pets Northwest, 2224 NE Alberta. Opening March 30; through April 25. Meet adoptable buns at the Rabbit Advocates outreach during the opening reception, evening of March 30th.



How to Safely Lift and Hold a Rabbit

“Being picked up or restrained may remind a rabbit of being captured by a predator.”

by Brian Zulauf

To say that my rabbits are not lap bunnies would be an understatement. If anything, they view me as an obstacle between point A and point B. At best, I am a scenic rest stop where they might find something tasty to eat.

This is not an uncommon attitude for rabbits, who would much prefer the solid safety that comes with their own four feet planted solidly on the ground. Being picked up or restrained may remind a rabbit of being captured by a predator. A rabbit in this situation may panic (scratching, biting and kicking) causing injury to you and possibly even worse injury to himself (fractured spines are very common if the hind end is not supported properly). Now before you judge rabbits too harshly, imagine how you would react if you were picnicking in the park when suddenly a bear wandered by, picked you up and carried you off - you'd fight too. In order to avoid unpleasantness on both sides, it is important to understand the fundamentals of how to pick up and properly support a rabbit. The two most important points that can not be stressed enough are:

- **Do not pick your rabbit up by the ears.**
- **When you are holding him, make sure that the front and hind legs are supported as much as possible, making him feel almost as secure as when he is on the ground.**



When you approach your rabbit, it is important to have a plan in place before you begin. Do not “make it up as you go along.” Go over in your mind how you intend to hold the rabbit, where the head will be and how you will support the rear end. If you like, you can practice on a stuffed animal first, although you might get some strange looks from family members.

In addition, it is helpful if the rabbit is in a semi-confined location without a lot of escape routes. Do your best to calm him by petting him and talking softly, explain the necessity of picking him up and that he will be safe. Apply light pressure to the rabbit's head as you talk. When you feel the rabbit relax, you can make your move. It is important to not hesitate and to pick him up confidently.



photos: Lorraine Bushek

A common method is the scoop method. To do this, have one hand under the chest and the other supporting the rear as you lift. Sometimes it is easier to reach to the opposite side of the rabbit, partially blocking their sight with your arm as you reach under the chest. Lift with one motion and bring the rabbit close to your chest and adjust if necessary to make the rabbit more comfortable. If the rabbit is still nervous, try placing the head under your arm (sort of in your arm pit); this often will calm him down after a minute or so. If done correctly, scruffing is never necessary.

Once you have mastered this, you are well on your way to being able to trim nails, take temperature readings and other things your rabbit may poop on your pillow in retaliation for. If you have any questions about any of this, most vet offices are happy to demonstrate proper handling techniques. Or come to a Rabbit Advocates meeting and we'll be happy to help.

Brian Zulauf is a student of veterinary medicine at OSU. He serves on the board of Rabbit Advocates.

On Shelter Volunteer Work

“Until the shelters are empty, I will continue to volunteer.”

by Helen Swann

I have volunteered at shelters for more than ten years. Yes, it is hard. Yes, it hurts. Yes, you cry.

Every animal there has been saved. Saved from being hit by a car. Saved from starvation. Saved from some “human” torturing him. Saved from being left alone in an empty apartment. Saved from dying alone and in pain.

They do not all get homes, but they do have a humane death, painless and easy (for them, not for the humans).

Until the shelters are empty, I will continue to volunteer. I will not turn away because it is too hard. I will love the creatures I take care of, and let them know that their sometimes very short lives were not all abuse and terror. They will know love from me, even when it is the last contact they have before the bridge.

I encourage everyone to help at a shelter, it will change your life.

Helen Swann serves on the board of Rabbit Advocates

Daisy May *cont. from cover*

your rabbit while she’s young. Daisy May was returned to the Oregon Humane Society to recover from surgery.

In the days after her surgery, shelter staff reported that Daisy May was not eating. RA volunteer Kevin Gerdes, who was at the shelter that weekend, thought her condition was serious and required intensive care and pain medication. A rabbit in pain will often refuse food, leading to a decline in her condition and possibly death.

That’s how Lorraine became Daisy’s foster mom. She administered pain medication and encouraged her to eat. As the pain subsided, Daisy slowly nibbled a little parsley and romaine lettuce. After several days she started to feel better and ate more normally. Soon she was eating ravenously and exploring her surroundings. Her sweet personality blossomed.

Thanks to the intervention of RA volunteers Kevin Gerdes and Lorraine Bushek, Daisy May pulled through and has found her forever home with the Lane family.

Want to make a difference in some bunny’s life? Contact us at foster@adoptarabbit.org to learn more about being a foster parent.



Web Links and Binks

www.rabbit.org

The House Rabbit Society’s website contains a wealth of information on rabbit care, behavior and health. HRS has chapters in almost every state, and many chapters have excellent websites of their own.

www.giantrabbitrescue.co.uk/

Just for fun, visit this English site to see great photos of amazing giant rabbit breeds. Some of these European breeds weigh in at more than twenty pounds. That’s a lot of love!

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Rabbit Manure: Spectacular Natural Fertilizer

Don't empty that litter box in the trash! Rabbit manure is one of nature's best fertilizers and is highly prized by gardeners. It is high in nitrogen and phosphorus, nutrients that are required for plant growth, flower and fruit formation. And it's safe to use directly around plants. You need not compost it first. If you use a biodegradable, paper-based litter like CareFresh, you can dump the entire contents of the litter box in the compost pile and use it in the garden when it breaks down.

Bunny Universe

A Discount Store for Animal Rescuers, A Virtual Store for Bunny Lovers

Rabbit Advocate volunteer Janeen Hammers announces the startup of Bunny Universe, a unique new venture which combines a home-based business in Vancouver and an online store.

Bunny Universe can provide discount petfood and supplies - for all types of animals - to people in the Portland/Vancouver area who foster animals, or who are supporting members of an animal rescue group. For more information or a personal price quote on food or supplies call Janeen at 360-609-2924 or email at bunnyspirit@iinet.com.

Janeen's online business focuses on bunnies and bunny-related gifts and merchandise, including Café Press and eBay stores. The web address is www.bunnyuniverse.com.



Rabbit Manure Nutrient Analysis*
NPK: 2.4 1.4 .6

Bunny parents who put hay in the litter box should be aware that hay seeds may sprout in the garden. Try offering hay in a rack instead. Or, look for hay that contains few seed heads.

**Source: "Manure Matters" by Marion Owen, co-author of Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul.
www.plantea.com/manure.html*

Wish List

Rabbit Care Supplies

Working water bottles

Exercise pens

Flat-bottomed heavy ceramic crocks

Litterboxes

Clean, dry hay

Rabbit pellets – timothy or alfalfa

Paper-based litter

Sheet vinyl flooring

Coroplast (corrugated plastic)

Delivery preferred but pickup also possible on east and west side of PDX and suburbs.

Please write to foster@adoptarabbit.org.

Please Donate to Our Garage Sale

Please think of Rabbit Advocates when you're doing your spring cleaning. We are seeking donations for our annual garage sale, scheduled for June 17-18. The sale is the largest single source of funding for our education programs, medical fund, and adoption/fostering services. Thanks to the generous outpouring of donations from the community, it has been a big success for us in the past.

This year, storage space is extremely limited, so please be understanding if we're not able to accept all items. We may not have room for bulky things, like large pieces of furniture or bags of clothing. Contact Tara at 971-998-5440 or wtrdragyn@gmail.com to discuss what you've got and arrange for transport.

Let us turn your castaways into cash for the rabbits. Thank you, donors, for making our work possible!

Another way you can help is to foster a rabbit (we provide training & supplies) or donate your time and expertise to Rabbit Advocates.

We need professional help in these areas:

Database Development

Marketing & PR

Fundraising

Website

Writing & Graphic Design

We also need centrally located storage space.

If you can help send an email to us at:

volunteer@adoptarabbit.org

Adoptable House Rabbits

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

Chance and Happy (right) are bonded and happy and were rescued in SE Portland. They're petite and shy. Adopt them and bring a little cheer into your home.
Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



Gizmo (above) is a large neutered male between 9-10 months old. This guy is quite the clown. He is super easygoing and wants to be loved and talked to. He is an active guy who will turn your family room into a rabbit playground where you can watch his antics as he jumps and twirls for you. Then, when he gets tired he will flop down next to you so you can pet him as he rests. Gizmo would fit well into most family situations. He is a rabbit for all seasons... perhaps this is his season to find a home?
Contact: zenrabbit1@hotmail.com



Margot and Etheline (above) are a pair of sisters who are a year old. These girls are very bonded to one another. Margot is the outgoing sister and Etheline hangs back a bit. Both are active and want to get out and play once they see they are in a safe place. Margot blazes the trail and Etheline follows. These girls were born in a shelter and came to foster care when they were a few weeks old. They had six siblings, all of which are super friendly. These girls would love to come and play at your house.
Contact: zenrabbit1@hotmail.com



Kate (aka Katie-Bear) (above) is a spayed female between 2-4 years old (approximately). She was found wandering a neighborhood in Gresham. Kate is a gal who knows what she wants. And what she wants is attention -- yes, your attention! She wants you to pet her and wait on her and bring her treats and tell her how pretty she is. In return she will dance across your living room or give you nose nudges. She will demand more of your attention which you will happily give her because she is an irresistible beauty. Please come meet her today so she can begin her new life with you.

Contact: zenrabbit1@hotmail.com



Fleck (above) is a very sweet and gentle guy. He has great litter box habits and is easy to handle. We believe he would enjoy the company of a female. Fleck is a German word for spot.

Contact: kokoewok@msn.com

Thank You to Our Vets!

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the following veterinarians and staffs for their services to our rescued rabbits:

Dr. Chris Wilson,
Beaverton Pet Clinic

Dr. Mark Burgess,
Southwest Animal Hospital
Beaverton

Dr. Katrina Ramsell,
Southwest Animal Hospital

Dr. Ken DeReamer,
Paws & Claws Pet Medical Center
Troutdale

We'd love to add more names to this list! Please call us at 503- 617-1625 if you are a rabbit-savvy vet who is able to donate services to help rescued rabbits.

Donate Your Car to Help the Rabbits!

The vehicle does not need to be running, but should be able to sell for at least \$75 at public auction. 100% of the proceeds from car donations will go to Rabbit Advocates, and you will be issued a donation receipt for your tax records.

If you have questions about how to donate, please contact **Chris Arends**, 503-307-7407 or carends44@comcast.net.

Upcoming Meetings & 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 include a "Bunny Basics" Q & A session where we invite your questions about any aspect of rabbit care. The public is welcome!

April 9, 1-5pm Event

Easter Bunnies: Look Before You Hop!
More information on pg. 2

May 14, 4-6pm General Meeting

Rabbit First Aid Kit: What to Have and When to Use It

June 17 & 18, Garage Sale

No General Meeting in June. Please direct your energy to the garage sale!

No general meeting in July. Look for these future programs: The Truth About Lab Results, Rabbit Ophthalmology, Acupuncture, Rabbit Safe Meds, and Understanding Your Bunny's Immune Response

March 30, 6-9pm Outreach

Healthy Pets Northwest, 2224 NE Alberta, mezzanine gallery. Meet adoptable buns and view rabbit photos by RA volunteer and skilled animal photographer Kem Sypher (see pg3). This is part of the "Last Thursday" arts event in the Alberta Arts District.

May 20-21

Alberta Art Hop. Check our website for details

*Would you like to continue receiving our newsletter, or update your mailing address? Or maybe make a comment or suggestion?
WRITE TO US AT newsletter@adoptarabbit.org*



Rabbit Advocates

PO Box 14235

Portland

Oregon

97293-0235

Helpline 503.617.1625

www.adoptarabbit.org

**"Promoting
the Welfare of
Domestic Rabbits"**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED