



# THE *Rabbit Advocate*



PROVIDING INSIGHTS INTO THE LIVES OF HOUSE RABBITS

FALL 2010

## **More Men with Buns**

*They're soft, they're cuddly, and their cuteness cannot be denied. Bunnies possess all these traits so they're often considered "feminine" pets that only girls and women love. Rabbits are gaining in popularity and are considered the number three companion pet in the United States (cats and dogs retain the ranks of numbers one and two). As more and more Americans care for rabbits, they will be increasingly cared for by men. Even tough-guy actor Clint Eastwood snuggles a pet rabbit when he gives interviews in his California home. Clearly, bunnies aren't just for girls any more.*

*The spring, 2009, issue of **The Rabbit Advocate** featured photos of male **Rabbit Advocate** volunteers and descriptions, written by the men in their own words, why they have rabbits as pets. The article received tremendous response and so the "Men with Buns" feature has been reprised here, only with more men, more rabbits and more stories of why it's manly to love bunnies.*

### **Evan Gossett**

My name is Evan Gossett and I am a proud rabbit owner. My girlfriend Crystal and I have had our rabbit Radar for just about two years now. We have had some ups and downs with him, but overall it has been an incredibly positive experience for all of us, especially for Crystal.

Looking back on the day that we adopted Radar, it was an

*continued on page 4*



**Evan Gossett and Radar**

Photo: Leann Bleakney

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memory of dear little Suzy-  
Bear Rabbit  
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*Donations made after June  
20, 2010, will be gratefully  
acknowledged in the next issue  
of The Rabbit Advocate.*

# **Toys bring out bunny's playful side** *Any toy rabbits destroy or throw around are the ones they like the most!"*

*Three Bunnies Rabbit Rescue*

*by Jan Hutto*

Rabbits are playful animals that need time to exercise every day. Given the opportunity to play, they will invent games and use toys. This provides time to socialize, stretch muscles and demonstrate creativity. Bored bunnies can be destructive bunnies. But owners can channel destructive tendencies and save the furniture by offering adequate play time and a variety of toys.

Below are some things to try to encourage your rabbit to play.

The number one rule: Safety and health first. Stores sometimes sell brightly colored wood and plastic chewing objects that look cute to us humans, but do little to attract rabbits. Worse, they can be expensive and in some cases can be dangerous. Just because there is a cute bunny on the package doesn't mean the toy is safe or healthy. Stick with all natural materials. Rabbits, like toddlers, get everything into their mouths. Be sure that your rabbit can't get her head or paw stuck in the toy and can't choke on any small pieces. Hard plastic is safe to chew, but soft plastic isn't. Don't allow anything that contains lead-based pigments, glazes, stains or paints.

Rotate toys for stimulation and variety. Not all rabbits like the same toys. Some prefer things for burrowing and digging, while others prefer to chew or redecorate, and some adore things that make noise. After a bit of trial and error, you will quickly discover what things your rabbit loves the best.

Think like a rabbit. Get down on the floor and on their level. Make time to engage your rabbit in a game of toss, play 'you stack/bun knocks down,' or even a friendly spirited chase, exercising you and your rabbit at the same time. Stop the chase and let your rabbit come to you for more. Talk to your rabbit! Encourage him or her to seek and find toys by hiding them in new places. Spending special time with your rabbit not only shows your love; it also brings out their silliness even more, and in this crazy world laughter is a great tonic. Get the family involved, both with making the toys and then watching the antics begin when it is playtime. Make it a regular part of your family's routine. Men and boys tend to love a good engineering project so have them make a cardboard maze for them.

Be creative. Thankfully, there are scads of online and good local sources for safe house rabbit toys. For those on a budget or feeling crafty and

creative, there are many simple toys you can make or simply find around the house. You don't have to spend a lot of time or money. Thrift stores are a great resource for willow and wicker baskets, metal measuring spoons on a ring, wooden spoons, or other wood utensils and much more. Some rabbit-safe materials include:

### **Cardboard**

Pre-fabricated mazes can be great fun and include the Cottontail Cottage, Maze Haven and Hopper Hideaway. For the small investment, your rabbit will get great pleasure from exploring the endless possibilities.

Cardboard tubes from paper towels or toilet paper can be stuffed with fresh hay or apple branches for chewing fun. Surprise rattle tubes can be fashioned by clipping and notching ends about an inch down and about six times around; fold in bottom end to close. Fill with a little hay and a few pellets for the rattle effect. Fold the top ends of the tube inward to close.

Cardboard concrete forms are used for setting cement for posts or columns and are available at home improvement centers. They make great tunnels for bunnies to zip through, gnaw on, nudge, hop over and hide in.

Use non-waxed boxes for hidey-boxes by cutting two or three doors and some holes for hopping in and out and chewing. These are usually free from your grocer or warehouse store. If you have space, you can make these into quite elaborate mazes by punching holes with a screwdriver into the sides and connecting the corners together with zip ties.

Other things to try: Oatmeal-type cylinder containers removing any plastic or metal first, paper egg cartons, macaroni and cheese sized boxes. An empty sandwich bag box or tissue box can be stuffed with hay, putting the flap back down for something clever your rabbit will enjoy figuring out how to open.

### **Paper**

Old telephone books are a little messy for the human caretaker but rabbits who like to dig love them.

Newspaper (no color inserts) can be bunched tightly into balls to play toss and roll, or rolled tightly into logs and tied with natural twine (cotton, jute, hemp) in the middle. An entertaining variation is "The Car Wash." Cut two-inch wide strips of paper and, punching a hole toward

# ***You love your bunny. Show the world how much by wearing a Rabbit Advocate logo.***

the top, string them on a clothesline like a grass skirt. Hang above the pen, tying at each end to the pen, so the ends dangle about an inch above the floor. This is for running through and ultimately destroying.

## ***Safe woods***

Chewing is instinctive and an important activity for your rabbit's dental health. Here are some better alternatives instead of your furniture, cords, carpet and base molding. Safe woods come from the trees of willow, spruce, ash, aspen, birch, maple, juniper, poplar, apple, pear, hazelnut and hawthorn. Branches and twigs must be pesticide free and aged at least three months. Apple and pear twigs can be given when still green and fresh.

## ***Woven mats and baskets***

Unvarnished and unpainted straw, wicker or willow baskets, including natural wicker paper plate holders and baskets are good for bunny chewing. Untreated straw like brooms, coasters and plain straw hats make good chew toys as do sea grass mats commonly sold at Pier 1 and Cost Plus stores.

## ***Toys borrowed from others and from around the house***

Rabbits like to ring kitty toys with bells or to toss plastic infant keys. Well-washed hard plastic caps from liquid laundry detergent and softener bottles are easy for bunnies to pick up with their teeth, are nice for "stack-and-knock-down" games and for rolling and tossing. Never use caps from toxic or caustic chemical bottles like drain or bathroom cleaners.

Golf balls can be pushed around, empty yogurt containers can be thrown and towels or blankets can be used as both bedding and for bunching and spreading.

Bunny toys can be found online at such places as Leith Petwerks at [www.leithpetwerks.com](http://www.leithpetwerks.com), Bunny Universe [www.bunnyuniverse.com](http://www.bunnyuniverse.com), Bunny Luv [www.bunnyluv.com](http://www.bunnyluv.com) and Bunny Bytes [www.bunnybytes.com](http://www.bunnybytes.com).



Photo: Leann Bleakney

***The Rabbit Advocates is proud to offer t-shirts, sweatshirts and even static-cling stickers featuring our logo.***

***Crew neck t-shirts are available in unisex sizes S-4XL in colors: white, purple, light grey heather, black and teal. Price: \$14***

***Crew neck sweatshirts are available in unisex sizes S-4XL in colors: white, light grey, purple and black. Price \$20***

***Full-zip sweatshirts are available in unisex sizes S-4XL in colors: black, white and light grey. Price: \$30***

***Five-inch square static cling stickers (to put in your car window): \$3 each***

***For more information, contact Rabbit Advocate volunteer Tonie Young at (503) 318-8792 or e mail her at [cs@colonialbusinessforms.net](mailto:cs@colonialbusinessforms.net).***



Photo: Kern Sypher

# More Men with Buns *cont.*



Photo: Cari Beltane

**David Agranoff and Goldie**

uncharacteristically impulsive decision for me. We saw him at our local Petco, where he was on loan from the humane society. We both fell in love with him instantly. I went from having just recently “put my foot down” about not getting any more pets, to telling Crystal “please, convince me to buy him for you!” And clearly, she did! I have often criticized myself for not having given it more consideration beforehand. I think it goes without saying that anybody looking to adopt any animal needs to consider heavily all of the costs and obligations that are part of the package. Looking back on it now in hindsight, I am enormously happy about our decision to adopt a rabbit. He has provided a great means for Crystal and me to bond with one another and has actually added a much needed little extra bit of structure to our lives. He has also given what I can only describe as therapy to Crystal at some much needed times. In my opinion, rabbits are very easy to clean up after and maintain. I would rather change a haybox or dump a litterbox full of harmless (and mostly scentless!) cocopuffs than scoop an even slightly dirty cat box! I have found our rabbit to be incredibly clean and in fact I actually like smelling his fur. Find someone who can say the same about their dog! Rabbit mannerisms, generally speaking, are very uniquely adorable. It is not often that I want to cuddle and kiss on anything quite as much as I do our little bun!

## **David Agranoff**

I’m a novelist and pretty much all my writing happens in the office. Right now that is a bunny space. Our bunnies Tucker and



Photo: Theresa Brennan

**Frank Hoetker and Chevette**

Iris tend to feel most comfortable under my desk. They often flop at my feet. They are great bunny muses and only distract me when they are dreaming. When they are deep asleep and dreaming I have to stop and watch them. Rabbits are my partner Cari’s passion. I have to admit they came into my life because of her, but we are now starting a third generation of rabbits together. It has been a real joy to get these rabbits because each one has such a unique personality.

*Editor’s note: David Agranoff is the author of Hunting the Moon Tribe, a dark fantasy novel due out this summer from Afterbirth Books. His partner Cari Beltane is a member of the Rabbit Advocates board of directors.*

## **Frank Hoetker**

In my lifetime, I’ve never been someone to have pets because I was always involved in sports or other activities and selfishly never seemed to have the time to devote to their care.

And then, about eight years ago, my life changed dramatically when my wife brought home an abandoned bunny, dropped off by an uncaring owner on

some hot pavement in the blistering sun of Bakersfield, California.

At first I was in a quandary about taking in this little furry creature that we named Caprice. Did I really want to commit myself to co-caring for this animal? We soon came to love her assorted antics, and before long we adopted another abused friend as an adorable companion that we named Chevette. She gave the sweetest kisses, and was most responsible for inspiring us to chart this new and rewarding path.

Well, that joyous commitment expanded rapidly, and before long we were fully engaged in bunny rescue; at one point we had as many as 26, never dipping below 12. All with us are spayed and neutered, of course, and enjoy daily the best that life has to offer...good food (and treats), exercise, critical care, and plenty of love!

My wife Theresa and I are as much fine beneficiaries of this life-changing experience as is our fuzzy little family!

Sadly, over the last few years we have lost 19 of our friends to their crossing over Rainbow Bridge, yet the fond memories are forever vivid.

Our remaining family of 15 right now takes a lot of time, but gives us back so

# Male Rabbit Advocate volunteers agree rabbits aren't just for girls

much by showing us their happiness with binkies and bonks day after day! And yes, I can recite the names and eccentricities of each one!

Our lives have been transformed by these little ones, and we are better people as a result. Each and every day is a blessing!

## Bob Sherman

My wife Marie and I had talked about adopting a bunny but little did we know how quickly this would happen. Following 10 days of bunny sitting for our first bunny, Penny, we adopted her and she adopted us.

Our neighbors told us she was easy to care for, and needed her outdoor hutch cleaned only weekly. We brought the hutch over to our back garden the day before they left. We soon saw this little lop had trouble keeping herself clean, and had picked an area inside her closed section for her urinary needs. This didn't help matters. The other side of the hutch had a coated wire floor, which would be much

better. We did an on-line crash course in bunny care!

We set about a thorough daily cleaning, disinfecting and replacing litter. Very quickly, little Penny did keep herself clean and used the outside wire coated area for her eliminations. We had learned that bunnies don't like their homes cleaned while inside them, so we brought Penny into the house each evening for a couple hours. She delighted in the freedom, exploring and binkying. We learned that bunnies need at least a couple hours of free play time each day. I could hardly wait to return from work each day to interact with this little girl. We fell in love with this wonderful rabbit and adopted her shortly after our neighbors returned.

We came to know that rabbits are a great pet, for both men and women, provided one has done one's homework and realizes what they are about. Past the baby stage, they are certainly not passive cuddly lap animals. They are independent, intelligent, and curious. The bunny parent really must work at earning the trust of the



Photo: Leann Bleakney

## Peter Levy and Sheeba

rabbit, since they are instinctively wary as prey animals. Bunny parents are rewarded as they see their pet happy, running and binkying in their home during "free time." More rewards come when bunny jumps up on the couch to be petted, or allows petting when you are on the floor with him or her. The joy of providing a safe home and looking after one totally dependent on you for care are, in my opinion, good reasons for being a bunny parent. There is no gift you can give as meaningful and vital as love, especially to your house rabbit.

## Peter Levy

What do I love about rabbits?

They are responsive, empathic, task oriented, stubborn, loving, protective, and highly intelligent.

My rabbit Sheeba was adopted in 2003 (though I'm not sure who adopted whom), she was already sweet and loved attention. We had just lost our first adopted bunny, Van Gogh, at the age of 11 1/2 years. No matter how long they live, it's never long enough. Sheeba ended up saving my life, no exaggeration there.

In March, 2006, my wife Grayce died suddenly and I went into a tailspin. There was no purpose in going on: days, weeks, months consisted of pointless days and



Photo: Marie Sherman

## Bob Sherman and Sunshine Bunny

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## More Men with Buns *cont.*

endless nights. One day as I sat contemplating my options, Sheeba hopped over and placed her head on my thigh, began to lick my leg and arm. It was as if she was saying “I love you daddy, please don’t go away.”

I felt needed and loved and perhaps that’s selfish, but as I lay on the floor crying, Sheeba lay right beside me and continued her grooming.

We’ve flown across the U.S at least five times, and have driven from Georgia to South Carolina, from Washington State to British Columbia (and a flight to New Jersey) all to visit other bunny homes and people.

When rabbits entered my life back in 1992, my (late) wife had been wanting a “floppy eared rabbit” for several years. The apartment in which we lived had a “no pets” policy, so a bunny was her dream. I wasn’t particularly enthusiastic as I believed they were dumb. But I also thought they should never be caged. I was right only about the cage.

The apartment finally relented and allowed some pets, rabbits included. So in 1992, we went to a pet store and bought a mini-lop. After Meshugge died, we became members of the House Rabbit Society’s Georgia chapter, where we lived. Soon we adopted Van Gogh and in 2003 we adopted Sheeba. I’ve bonded with all three of my rabbits. Grayce called me “Dances with Rabbits.”

### **Matthew Young**

My girlfriend Tonie introduced me to the incredible world of bunnies when I first met her last year. Since then, I’ve been impressed with her knowledge of the care that they need, overwhelmed with the factors which shorten their beautiful lives and marvel at the beauty and happiness that they provide for all.

Before we left town on a weekend trip, Tonie told me that one of her bunnies, Polani, wasn’t doing too well. Before Polani could even ask, I told her “it would be fine if you would like to take Polani with us.” I drove to our destination that evening



**Matthew Young and Polani.**

Photo: Leann Bleakney

and I remember that it was raining and there was a lot of traffic as we left Portland for the coast. I believe that Polani was a little freaked out by my driving (as is Tonie sometimes) but they were both great sports about it. Polani started to settle down on Highway 26 and she made the trip quite well.

However, Tonie was greatly concerned because Polani wasn’t eating. This is an important thing for bunnies because “if they don’t eat, they die,” Tonie said.

I could tell that Friday night that Tonie was thinking that she was going to lose Polani because she often told me that when a bunny feels like it’s time to go, then “their life is over.” I wasn’t aware of that fact but it made me equally concerned for Polani that night. I’ve always been the optimist in situations like that so I told Tonie that I would pray for Polani.

Later that evening Polani started to eat which made Tonie feel a little bit better.

Polani felt even better the next day as she toured the place where we stayed and gave her stamp of approval as she did many binkys along with her famous trademark run, the figure eight. Her



Photo: Jan Hutto

**Mark Hutto and Baltimore**

enthusiasm carried over on the ride home as she played hard to get when Tonie tried to put her back in her basket.

Since that weekend, I’ve felt a closer connection to Polani so I look forward to giving her treats at night as she waits patiently for me to reach into her area. She is such a beautiful bunny. As Tonie often says, “look at that beautiful butt!”

Tonie and I are going to be married soon and we’re looking for a house that will be adequate for her bunnies and her cats and other things so it’s safe to say that she’s got me hooked. I’m glad that my RabbitGirl is going to become my wife soon, as we celebrate our love for these amazing furry animals which provide us so much love and support in their unique way.

### **Mark Hutto**

Spending time with rabbits has a calming effect on me. They help take my mind off anything that is bothering me at the time. I especially enjoy the ones that have what I call a “little big man” personality!

Baltimore (aka King Balthazar) is a mini rex who really cracks me up, especially when we play catch with the willow ball. For such a little rabbit, he shows me (a rather large human) a major attitude in a funny way when I toss the ball to him. He snatches it and tosses it right back with vengeance! He used to lunge more when we first got him, but spending time playing with him helped me understand that he just wants you to know he thinks he’s in charge.

## Tellington TTouch finds global appeal

*Editor's Note: Lauren McCall is a Tellington TTouch (TTouch) instructor and animal communicator who, with her business partner Debby Potts, owns The Integrated Animal. Her web site is [www.integratedanimal.com](http://www.integratedanimal.com). The mission statement of the Integrated Animal is to "support the health and well-being of animals and people through better understanding, communication and proven effective techniques." During the past 10 years, Lauren and Debby have taught thousands of people the art of TTouch and animal communication through workshops held all over the world. Lauren has taught numerous workshops at the Oregon Humane Society and teaches a special class for using TTouch with rabbits. She is currently working in Japan, where she wrote this article for The Rabbit Advocate.*

*by Lauren McCall, TTouch Instructor*

Toyko, Japan—Even people who have heard of TTouch don't realize that it is wonderful for rabbits. TTouch bodywork is a gentle hands-on technique that can greatly improve the health, behavior and the well-being of any animal (even humans).

Developed in the 1970's by Linda Tellington Jones, the TTouch (pronounced "tee-touch") bodywork involves using your hand or fingers to lightly push the skin in a pattern that accomplishes a clockwise circle and a quarter. Although TTouch might look like a massage technique, the effect is much different and the results are much longer lasting. These hand and finger movements work on a cellular level to release fear and tension, and activate the regenerative potential and cellular intelligence of the body. This neural and cellular activity promotes optimal behavior and health and takes animals beyond instinct so that they can learn, think and behave in a new way. TTouch is fun and easy to learn and it will certainly enhance your relationship with your bunnies.

Have you ever noticed that your rabbit can't tolerate much petting or stroking? Or perhaps your rabbit is sensitive to being groomed around the hindquarters. Areas of the body that are sensitive to touch often indicate that the animal is holding tension there, just as humans often do in their neck or shoulders. These tensions in the body can result in reactive behavior such as biting, urinating outside the litter box or resistance to being groomed. TTouch works



Photo: courtesy Lauren McCall

**Lauren McCall practices TTouch on a bunny .**

to release the source of the tension being held in the body and changes how animals react to things in their environment.

I have been doing TTouch for 13 years now and travel around the world teaching people how to use this technique on their own animals, in vet hospitals, rehab facilities and shelters. I love having the opportunity to teach "TTouch for Rabbits" workshops.

As a 'world first' I recently started a TTouch Rabbit Associate Program in Japan. This four-day program gives rabbit caretakers, vets, vet techs, shelter workers and pet shop workers a chance to learn a technique that will help with common health and behavior issues. Rabbits are very popular pets in Japan and there are many national magazines geared toward the rabbit owner. As in the U.S., rabbits are the third most popular pet. It's common for people to get their rabbits from pet shops; Japanese shelters rarely have rabbits up for adoption. The Japanese fascination with all things small and cute means that most of the rabbits available are lop-eared dwarfs.

The program covered applying TTouch techniques to improve behavior issues, health issues, digestive issues and pain relief. TTouch is not a substitute for medical care but can complement medical attention. The curriculum in Japan included a lecture on rabbit welfare issues and a comprehensive presentation by a rabbit veterinarian on health issues and bunny anatomy.

To learn more about TTouch, please visit my web site: [www.integratedanimal.com](http://www.integratedanimal.com), or the TTouch web site: [www.TTouch.com](http://www.TTouch.com). If you want to have a look at the Japanese TTouch Rabbit Associate page, please visit: <http://ttouch.jp>.

## 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. Katrina Ramsell,  
Northwest Exotic Pet Vet**

**Dr. Mark Burgess, Dr. Melinda Surrency  
Southwest Animal Hospital, Beaverton**

**Dr. Ken DeReamer  
Paws and Claws Pet Medical Center  
Troutdale**

**Dr. Ross Weinstein  
North Portland Veterinary Hospital  
Portland**

**Dr. Mary Blankenvoort, Dr. Peter Davis  
St. Johns Veterinary Clinic, Portland**

**Dr. Rebecca Prull  
Dogwood Pet Hospital, Gresham**

**Dr. Sheri Schlorman  
Creswell Veterinary Hospital, Creswell**

**Dr. Matt Fricke  
McKenzie Animal Hospital, Springfield**

**Dr. Doug Ferro  
Barclay Hills Animal Clinic, Oregon City**

**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.**

### The Rabbit Advocate

**The Rabbit Advocate is published  
three times a year.**

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### RA Board of Directors

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## **Upcoming Meetings & Events**

*Rabbit Advocates general meetings are held at the Oregon Humane Society, 1067 NE Columbia Blvd., the third Sunday of each month from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in the Education Hall. The public is welcome. Please park in the gravel parking lot just west of the shelter building.*

### **2010 Meetings**

**September 19**

**October TBA**

**November 21**

### **Bunny's Best Bites**

#### **2010 Volunteer Hay Packing Schedule**

**Saturday, August 28 (9am & 11am)**

**Sunday, September 26 (9am & 11am)**

**Saturday, October 23 (10am & noon)**

**Sunday, November 28 (10am & noon)**

### **Adoption Outreaches**

*Each month, Rabbit Advocates showcase foster rabbits available for adoption. Adoption outreaches are held at Western Pet Supply, 6908 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway. Volunteers are also on hand to provide grooming and nail trimming services. A donation is appreciated for this service. Adoption outreaches are held the second Saturday of each month from noon-3 p.m.*

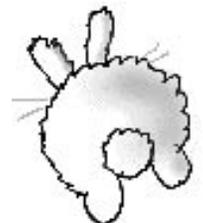
#### **2010**

**September 11,**

**October 9,**

**November 13,**

**December 11.**



**Schedules are subject to change due to extreme weather. Check the RA website for driving directions to the location, schedule changes or to sign-up for a work party.**

**[www.rabbitadvocates.org](http://www.rabbitadvocates.org)**