Celebrate Easter with stuffed bunnies and candy

It’s the holiday rabbit lovers both celebrate and dread. Easter, when bunnies take center stage and finally get their due, is also the time when well-meaning but ill-informed people buy baby rabbits for children.

Initially, children delight in their new pets but soon the novelty fades and surprised purchasers are left with a growing rabbit that is no longer a baby fluffball but a long-legged, active teenager with raging hormones.

Rabbits have been a symbol of spring for centuries and because of their fecundity, have long been associated with birth and abundance. Spring festivals in ancient pagan cultures exalted hares as a symbol of the season when plants return to life after laying dormant all winter and the season when animals procreate. These cultures even had a maiden goddess of fertility named “Eastre” or “Eostre” (“Oestre” in Latin) who was represented by hares because they were such fertile animals.

It took centuries, but celebrations of the pagan goddess, the vernal equinox marking spring and the Christian celebration of Jesus’ rise after crucifixion eventually combined to become Easter. The appearance of a bunny with brightly colored eggs was documented in Germany as early as the 1500s. Settlers in America 200 years later firmly established the holiday and more carefully defined the Easter bunny and his delivery of candy and dyed eggs.

Today, many celebrate the holiday with candy and an egg hunt for children. Some parents believe children would enjoy a “live” Easter bunny and without adequate information, buy a bunny for their family. This practice led to disillusioned parents, homeless rabbits and frustrated animal rescue and advocacy groups, which learned to fear the months after the Easter holiday as bunnies were abandoned.

In 2002, the Columbus, Ohio, House Rabbit Society began a campaign to warn people that living creatures are not appropriate as an Easter gift. The message “Make Mine Chocolate” became a national campaign. The goal is to spread the message that rabbits should not be casually acquired and to educate the public about these special pets.

The Rabbit Advocates began their own Easter-focused educational campaign several years ago with a clever side-by-side comparison of a stuffed Easter bunny and a live rabbit (above). The message: live rabbits are not seasonal acquisitions but are long-lived companion pets that should be treated like a family member. Cut out this version or go to our website for an 8-1/2 X 11 version that can be printed and posted on bulletin boards or in car windows. The Rabbit Advocates hope to spread the message that bunnies are not for Easter, but they are wonderful year-round companion pets.
Diary of a rabbit rescue

In December 2008, during record-breaking snow storms in the Portland area, Rabbit Advocate volunteers spent more than three weeks on an all-consuming quest: rescuing a family of Dutch bunnies spotted in the northeastern part of the city.

Led by Advocates Janeen Hammers and her sister Shari Clevenger, these intrepid volunteers began a journey to rescue two bunnies. In the end, five lucky bunnies were rescued.

This rescue could not have successfully happened without the willingness of Mike and Lana Hoffman, who live in Bellevue. Originally, two bunnies were spotted, and the Hoffmans agreed to take them. Volunteers gradually realized it was not two bunnies but an entire family in need of a home. The Hoffmans agreed to accept each additional bunny caught, even though two soon turned to five. The human and rabbit families now live together happily in Bellevue.

During the three weeks the volunteers worked to rescue these bunnies, Janeen kept a diary. Her diary entries have been edited for brevity but illustrate the determination it takes to capture little creatures that face constant danger in living without shelter and safety.

December 3, 2008: Mike Hoffman called the RA Helpline to report the appearance of two small, friendly Dutch bunnies in Northeast Portland. Mike said he loves this breed of rabbit and has worked with Rabbit Haven in Gig Harbor, Washington. He said he would be happy to take them if we can catch them. (Mike works for a business with offices in Seattle and Portland and travels between the two cities.) This is a perfect arrangement. Most helpline callers are looking for someone to take bunnies and not offering to keep them.

Dec. 6: I set up a live trap that can capture and hold small animals without harm and watched for an hour and a half with no sightings. Rabbit Advocate volunteer Lori Lacell checked the trap in the late morning and early afternoon. By 4 p.m. that day we caught the first bunny and spotted another. The rescued bunny came home with me until he could be reunited with his siblings. Mike arranged for any bunnies rescued to live in his conference room at work. Even his staff was recruited and Tina, his employee, helped us daily over the course of the rescue operation.

Dec. 7: Several volunteers working together were able to corral three bunnies: one baby Dutch, one adult Dutch and one wild cottontail that Advocate Mary Huey singlehandedly caught in a pen. Because it was dark outside we did not realize we had a wild bunny until we took him into the office light...and immediately took him back outside. There was still one baby Dutch that we could not catch.

Dec. 9: Mary, Shari and I met around 3:30 p.m. and set up the trap in the same spot where I had trapped the first bunny and within 30 minutes what we thought to be the last bunny was caught. We were so excited and elated. We finally caught them all! And we caught them before the giant hawk that hangs around the area could do his grocery shopping. We were able to reunite this bunny with his family. It was amazing to watch them all greet each other.

Dec. 12: I got a call from Mike’s office saying that yet another baby Dutch rabbit had been spotted in the same trap location. Mike said he will take him home to reunite him with his family.

Dec. 13: I went out twice today, once in the morning with no sighting and again in late afternoon. I saw what I believe to be the mother rabbit several times ducking in and out of the blackberry bushes. The last time I saw her she binkied her way...
behind the parking lot and did a three-foot high, straight-up flying jump.

Dec. 14: I went out in the morning for a couple hours. I experienced nasty wind and some snow with temperatures in the 20's. I'm very concerned about this bunny.

Dec. 19: Mike called to report he caught a squirrel in the trap. After releasing the squirrel, the trap finally captured a bunny at 2:45 pm. Mike had just flown in from L.A. and was taking a train back to Seattle so could not take the bunny with him. So I kept her for a couple of days until Mike would be able to come back. This was not the bunny I had last seen. It's definitely not the mother, but another baby.

Dec. 20: Ten inches of snow falls in the Portland/Vancouver area. Mike can't travel to Portland to pick up this bunny, so I took care of her for 12 days, getting more and more attached to her each day even though I tried not to and kept contact to a minimum.

Dec. 30: The roads are finally clear enough for travel. Lana drove all the way down from Seattle and back just to pick up this last baby, which turned out to be a boy. I cried when they left. Sadly, the mother bunny was never caught or seen again after the snow.

In all there were five Rabbit Advocates and three additional people involved in this rescue. I spent nearly 30 hours on the rescue over the course of almost three weeks. With all the other people involved many more hours were spent trying to save this bunny family. We trapped four baby Dutch and one adult male Dutch, along with one raccoon, one wild bunny, and one squirrel.

This was my first multi-rabbit rescue and although it was cold, sometimes very frustrating and often boring waiting and watching, it was also one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had. I could not stop until the last bunny was caught. The overwhelming feelings of elation, gratification and achievement with each rescue were worth every minute.

What’s one more?

Five bunnies now living happily in Bellevue

By Lana Hoffman

Editor's note: Mike Hoffman works for a company with offices in Portland and Seattle. When he spotted two bunnies near his workplace in Northeast Portland, he and his wife Lana, who live in Bellevue, Washington agreed to take the rabbits if Rabbit Advocate volunteers were able to catch them. Volunteer Janeen Hammers documents the rescue in the accompanying story. From Bellevue, Lana describes waiting for phone calls reporting the rescue of what will become not two but five bunnies. Four are in foster care in the Hoffman home and available for adoption through Gig Harbor’s Rabbit Haven. The fifth has been adopted by the Hoffmans. Learn more through Rabbit Haven's website: www.rabbithaven.org.

Mike called me one evening from Portland to tell me he saw two bunnies in the wooded area behind his office. He said that they looked like Dutch bunnies and immediately realized that they were not wild rabbits, and should not be out there. He called Rabbit Advocates for some help. They explained to Mike that they would help rescue the buns but that he would need to find a home for them. Despite the fact that we already had two Dutch bunnies of our own (in a tiny house) we were very happy to take in two rescued bunnies and foster them as long as needed.

First rescued were the two baby brown Dutch bunnies that turned out to be a boy and girl. Their names are now Piper and Franklin. Oh wait, another one was spotted...and another! Poppa bunny was the next to be rescued, now known as Sherman. Halle was the fourth caught. When the fourth baby bunny was presented to the rest of the rescued family, dad immediately perked up and went over and started licking her head. A few days later, yet another bunny was spotted, bringing the count to five bunnies. This little guy was the most elusive and tricky to catch and the cold, windy weather didn't help. Finally, Mike and his employee Tina Turpen were able to reset the trap and

continued on pg.7
Bunnies... not just for girls anymore

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.

Some male Rabbit Advocate volunteers agreed to describe why they’re drawn to rabbits and why rabbits make great companion pets for men.

Macho rabbits can teach a lesson

By Mark Larsen

I’m a normal guy. I drive a pick-up truck, played baseball in high school, fished a time or two and even drink a beer on the weekends. But I don’t have a dog, a pet snake or a horse. I have bunny rabbits. Bunnies have been with me since 1992. They are the perfect animal companion for me and are plenty macho. Four rabbits having free reign in the living room (as I had in 1995) was “ultra macho.” The amazing thing is that over the years I’ve come to learn many things from my bunny friends, lessons I think my wife is pleased that I have learned. Being around bunnies I’ve witnessed amazing acts of them caring for each other in our small warren, the sharing of food, the concern for others’ well being, the serenity and an all-around sense of virtue that the rabbits possess. It makes me proud to be among the rabbits as they just possibly connect with my “oh so macho” heart.

As I write this I’m sitting with Violet Moonbeams, who was cared for and honored by her late companion Flash. May bunnies and people alike demonstrate such love and respect.

Princess Penny captures hearts

By Bob Sherman

My bride Marie and I agreed to “bunny sit” for our neighbors while they were away for a week. They brought Penny (a gray Holland Lop), and her hutch, over to our backyard. After day one, we needed to clean her hutch, so brought her into the house. She enjoyed this freedom and we all played a bit. Penny did not want to go back to her outside hutch. Not long after their return, our neighbors said they would have to find a new home for Penny. We did not hesitate to say: “We’ll take her!” Penny immediately became a house rabbit. We bought a two-story “townhouse” hutch that occupies a spare bedroom. Penny began enjoying her new freedom. We saw signs of a happy bunny as she started to “binky” (doing gyrations as she jumped up in the air at a run), and found her favorite places in the house to rest. We laughed with joy one day when Penny figured out that she could climb the carpeted stairs to the second floor. Penny has trained us by sitting near the refrigerator when she thinks it is time for her fresh greens.

Last year, I retired from 31 years in law enforcement. My experiences included not only patrol as an officer but also as a sergeant supervising street officers and also supervising the crime scene unit. I’ve seen a lot of things that most of you don’t even want to think about. I’ve enjoyed some of the best accomplishments as well. However, I credit Penny for spurring my retirement decision. After all, I thought, if I wasn’t working, I could spend a couple hours each morning with her! Although I was ready to retire, it did make the decision easier.

So Penny, as our family bunny, rounds out my life. She gives me companionship, satisfaction and love. She is dependent yet has an independent spirit. She encouraged me to volunteer at the Oregon Humane Society, to help homeless bunnies become more adoptable. Penny has made a difference in my life. Perhaps a pet rabbit would make a difference in your life as well.

“Carrot crunchers” in a red Corvette

By Kevin Gerdes

Why Rabbits? A few years ago I found myself at that point in life that spurs some men to go out and buy a red Corvette. I figured that if I must make a fool of myself, perhaps there was a better choice. With the blessing of my long-suffering wife, I rescue
rabbits. I love the little carrot crunchers. They get a good home and a safe warm place to live; I get to be Spiderman every once in a while. You want to feel like you matter? Try saving an innocent sometime. Of course, I guess that there is no rule that says that you can’t rescue rabbits in a red Corvette. Have to talk to Mrs. Spiderman about that one. Hmmmm.....

**Clover made the home a lucky place**

*By Kevin Yasutake*

To be honest, it was all my wife’s idea. Let’s go to the humane society, she says. We’ll just look. Next thing I know we’re buying supplies and adopting a rabbit, and as you might have guessed, I wasn’t too keen on the idea at the time.

The funny thing is, growing up, I had rabbits as my first pets. I remember how my father made a nice hutch for them on our back patio, from which we would let them out into the yard on weekends. They would run around, eat our strawberries, and dig up the yard, all the while hopping and looking as happy as can be.

But they were pets that I watched. No jumping into my arms and licking my face, or curling up with me in bed. They rarely ever let me get near them, and when it came to getting them back in their hutch, I always had to chase them until I could corral them back inside. Little did I know what a difference a short hop—from outside to inside—would make. My wife and I adopted a big white rabbit like the Cadbury bunny, except without the chocolate. He had grayish-colored ears. Couple that with the rest of his white fur, and it gave him the appearance of a wise old man.

Once we brought him in the house, he immediately made himself at home. Our dog and cat weren’t sure what to make of him. Before we knew it though, they were the best of pals. As for me, it didn’t take long before we were snuggled up together in a ball. I would pet him, and he would push his nose against my hand, purring loudly. I was amazed at what I had been missing. This magical little creature was a loving friend every bit as special as my dog or cat. From that moment on, I was forever changed.

This amazing rabbit’s name was Clover. And much like the four-leaf version of his namesake, Clover was special. So much so that I feel lucky to have shared my life with him, knowing that I’m the one who became better for it.

**Chosen by a rabbit**

*By Eric Strata*

I did not choose to have a rabbit as a pet. The rabbit chose me. When I started dating Kori, we did not really talk about her pet, but when I visited, Monkey was fun to have around, and I could see how much Kori adored him. I was not sure about my ability to be a good pet owner, but I’ve learned and hopefully I’m more responsible. I enjoy taking care of the rabbits: they are so obviously grateful for any food or hay and since they have each other they are reasonably self-sufficient.

Rabbits are fun when you don’t expect them to be anything else but what they are. They are willing to be social, but only on their own terms, and they are bad at some of the traditional pet things I expect from small fuzzy things, like cuddling, and being picked up and carried around, and not chewing on the furniture. Sometimes it’s like having a little baby, only one who does not talk, who is covered in fur, who fights to the death with other babies, and who eats its poop. So, not like a baby at all. I enjoy our little fuzzballs, Monkey, Heidi, and the even tinier (seriously, small, how do they get that small?) foster bunny Twylo.

My name is Eric, and I have rabbits as pets.
BunSpace: boldly going where no bunny has gone before – the internet

First there was MySpace; then there was Facebook. Now, there is BunSpace, the social networking website for our favorite furry friends.

by Guinevere Boostrom

Type [www.bunspace.com](http://www.bunspace.com) into your web browser, and you will be transported to an immense online community of bunnies and their devoted human companions.

BunSpace went live in December 2007. Founders Andrea and Uwe of Sonoma County, California created the website to be an inclusive community for fellow rabbit lovers to find and share information about rabbits as house pets. They noticed that there were online communities devoted to dogs and cats, but nothing similar for rabbits, and so an idea was born. Now, just over a year later, BunSpace is a thriving online warren with nearly 8500 members from all over the world, including the U.S., Canada, Europe, Asia, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

First and foremost, BunSpace is a lot of fun. Anyone can go to the BunSpace website without registering just to look at the profiles of all of the amazing bunnies that are members. (And really, who can't waste an hour or so of the day just looking at pictures of cute bunnies!) However, if you spend a few moments to complete the free registration process, a whole world of features will open up to you. First of all, you will get to add profiles for each of your bunnies. Much like human social networking sites, you can upload pictures, share amusing anecdotes, and even maintain a blog of your bunnies’ daily lives. (For an example, see [http://www.bunspace.com/view_bunny?bunid=660](http://www.bunspace.com/view_bunny?bunid=660).)

Yes, I am shamelessly plugging my own bunny! You can invite other bunnies to be your bunnies’ buddies and leave comments for other bunnies. You can also give worthy bunnies a virtual “carrot” to show your support or just to say, “You’re adorable!” You can submit photos of your bunny into the monthly photo contests and vote on the other contestants. Recently, BunSpace created its own form of currency “Nomies,” which you can use on the site to purchase cute graphics that you can give as gifts to your online bunny pals. Finally, you can follow the adventures of Pacer and Pantouf, a pair of stuffed bunnies who are traveling the globe visiting BunSpace members far and wide. For those who want a few extra features, such as the ability to upload unlimited photos and ad-free profile pages for their bunnies, BunSpace does have a VIB (Very Important Bunny) membership that costs from $2.99 to $3.99 a month.

BunSpace isn’t all just fun and games, however. It is also a useful resource for finding and sharing rabbit care information with other rabbit owners. BunSpace maintains a searchable list of veterinarians with reviews and recommendations by other BunSpace members. This can be a great resource when you move and need to find a vet in your new area, as we all know how difficult it can be to find rabbit-savvy vets. BunSpace also houses a myriad of rabbit forums where bunny parents can post their health and behavior questions and get responses from the international community of bunny owners. (As with any health information you find on the Internet, you should always scrutinize the source and check with your trusted veterinarian before acting on any advice you receive on BunSpace.) For those who have recently lost a beloved bunny, there is a Rainbow Bridge forum where you can share your grief and give comfort to others in mourning.

More recently, BunSpace has also expanded its world to include rabbit advocacy. Rabbit rescue groups have been invited to create pages on BunSpace to describe their organizations and list their adoptable rabbits. You can find Rabbit Advocates on BunSpace at: [www.bunspace.com/view_bunny?bunid=777](http://www.bunspace.com/view_bunny?bunid=777). BunSpace users can use the site to search for adoptable rabbits in their area, which makes BunSpace a great tool for Rabbit Advocates fosterers to get the word out about their buns seeking forever homes.

BunSpace is a great place to spend an hour or two (or more) reading up on rabbit information, making friends with other rabbit people around the globe, and just generally reveling in the wonderfulness of all things rabbit. Just be careful that you don’t get too addicted and lose track of (supper) time. Your real rabbits will most surely disapprove!
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, Dr. Katrina Ramsell, Beaverton Pet Clinic
- 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, St. Johns Veterinary Clinic, Portland
- 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.

RA Board of Directors

- President Kem Sypher
- Vice President Mary Huey
- Secretary/Treasurer Kevin Gerdes
- Recording Secretary Leann Bleakney
- Volunteer Coordinator Joan Gilbert
- Webmaster Mary Thompson
  Allison Brennan
  Janeen Hammers

Join the Rabbit Advocates for fun

Rabbit Advocates will be out in force this spring, attending special events to talk about companion house rabbits. Events are open to the public and we welcome everyone interested in seeing adoptable rabbits and talking about their care. All events are in Portland unless otherwise indicated. Outreaches are subject to change—see the RA website to confirm. For a list of our regularly scheduled events, see the back page of this newsletter. Come join us!

Saturday, April 11

Adoption outreach at Orchards Feed Mill, located at 6017 NE 109th Ave. in Vancouver, Washington. Hours are 10am–1pm. The staff at Orchards Feed Mill promises a visit from the Easter Bunny.

Saturday and Sunday, April 11-12

Celebrate Easter at the Oregon Humane Society with shelter bunnies and Rabbit Advocates. Hours are 10am–4 pm. both days. The Easter Bunny will be busy but promises to stop by the shelter both days.

What’s one more?

rescue number five. I was informed of all this via text message and email. It was an exciting day!

Janeen kept baby number five at her house until the snowy weather cleared. On Tuesday, December 30, I was able to drive to Vancouver to go pick up number five, who we named Buddy. I also got to meet Shari Clevenger and Janeen, two of the wonderful people who helped rescue this adorable little family. We now have two boys, two girls and dad.

The whole family is doing fantastic and awaiting their forever homes. Today, Sherman and Halle are a pair. Halle was such a daddy’s little girl right from the beginning so it just seemed natural to leave them together as a bonded pair. Piper and Franklin are a natural pair as well. They are the perfect partners in crime and are quite a handful at times. We have decided to keep Buddy. Someday we hope to bond him with our two bunnies. It has been a lot of fun watching their personalities develop.

Multnomah County Library Sponsored Events

Monday, April 6

An education event geared toward children at the Gregory Heights Branch, 7921 NE Sandy Blvd. This is a one-hour event beginning at 11am.

Tuesday, April 7

Children’s story hour at the Hillsdale Branch, 1525 SW Sunset Blvd. Geared to preschool children. Hours are 10:15am–12:30pm.

Wednesday, April 22

An education event geared toward children at the Hollywood Branch, 4040 NE Tillamook Street. Hours are 10:30am–12:30pm.

Saturday and Sunday, June 20-21

“Wine and Wags” adoption event at Garden World, located at 10506 Broadacres Rd NE in Hubbard. Hours are 11am–4pm.

Franklin & Piper

Franklin are a natural pair as well. They are the perfect partners in crime and are quite a handful at times. We have decided to keep Buddy. Someday we hope to bond him with our two bunnies. It has been a lot of fun watching their personalities develop.

The Rabbit Advocate

The Rabbit Advocate is published three times a year.

- Editor Leann Bleakney
- Graphic Designer Sandy Alto
- Photographer Kem Sypher
- Writers: Sarah Yasutake, Amy Leith-Young, Amy Roddey, Sara DeLuca, Jan Hutto, Elizabeth Olson
- Proofreader Joan Gilbert

What’s one more? continued from pg 3
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. Meetings include a “bunny basics” question and answer session on bunny behavior and care. The public is welcome. Please park in the gravel parking lot just west of the shelter building.

**Upcoming Meetings & Events**

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<th>General Meetings</th>
<th>Bunny’s Best Bites</th>
<th>Adoption Outreaches</th>
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<td>April 19, May 17, June 14,</td>
<td>Volunteers blend and bag different types of hay to create Bunny’s Best Bites, our own custom blend of hay. For more information about the hay parties, go to the RA website or contact volunteer Jan at <a href="mailto:jhhutto2@msn.com">jhhutto2@msn.com</a></td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>July 19, August 16,</td>
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**2009 Hay Packing**

(10am & noon unless otherwise specified)

April 25, May 30, June 27

**Bunny’s Best Bites**

April 11, May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 10, November 14, December 12.

w w w . r a b b i t a d v o c a t e s . o r g

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