The organization that began with a handful of dedicated rabbit lovers has, in the past eight years, grown to an organization that boasts more than 1,000 people on its newsletter mailing list, a robust email list, and even an internet presence through its web site and Bunspace and Facebook pages. But Rabbit Advocate volunteers refuse to rest until homeless rabbits have found loving indoor homes and the public understands how charming pet bunnies can be.

And for this larger mission, volunteers are desperately needed.

“We are so thankful to each of our generous volunteers,” said Mary Huey, Rabbit Advocates president. “But our task is large and we need more dedicated volunteers to support our message that rabbits are wonderful companion pets.”

This issue of The Rabbit Advocate focuses on the tremendous work of the organization’s volunteers. It also spotlights the opportunities for new volunteers to become involved. In an all-volunteer organization, the need for additional help is constant and growing.

Here’s how you can help:

**Donate money:** Rabbit Advocates is a non-profit organization. Your donation is tax deductible. Donations pay for things like the printing and distribution of this newsletter, among many other projects and expenses.

**Donate time:** This issue of The Rabbit Advocate highlights some of the many opportunities to get involved in the organization. One project is Bunny’s Best Bites, a gourmet hay blend. Mixing and bagging Bunny’s Best Bites requires volunteer time and labor. The job is a work-out but it’s also rewarding. Proceeds from the sale of Bunny’s Best Bites go to the Rabbit Advocate Medical Fund, which offsets expenses for spaying, neutering and providing medical care for rabbits.

**Western Pet outreaches:** Another project is the education outreaches held monthly at Western Pet Supply. These events allow the public an opportunity to learn about companion pet rabbits. Volunteers talk with the public and groom pet rabbits when requested.

**Rabbit Advocate telephone help line:**
A third ongoing project is the Rabbit Advocate telephone help line. Volunteers check voicemail messages every day and return phone calls to people who have called the help line to ask rabbit-related questions. The helpline project consistently needs volunteers to check messages and return phone calls.

**Donate a chunk of your heart:** Sadly, there are more homeless bunnies than available loving homes. If you can open a space in your home to adopt, please consider adopting a wonderful companion rabbit. Many are featured on the Rabbit Advocate website at www.rabbitadvocates.org. If you are unable to provide a permanent home, please consider opening your home on a foster basis to provide shelter and love to a rabbit that otherwise would not have either. Adoptive and foster homes for otherwise homeless rabbits are a constant need.

**Rabbit Advocate Volunteers Win Awards**

The Oregon Humane Society has awarded Rabbit Advocate volunteers during its annual volunteer banquet. Earning Oregon Humane Society appreciation are:

**Tyler Norby,** named small animal volunteer of the year.

**Lori Lacell, Holly Hayashi and Bob Sherman,** who logged top volunteer hours.

**Jan Hutto,** who spent more than 2000 hours fostering Oregon Humane Society animals.

Congratulations to these outstanding Rabbit Advocate/Oregon Humane Society volunteers and thank you to all Rabbit Advocates who dedicate their time to the Oregon Humane Society.
By Sarah Yasutake

On the second Saturday of each month, Rabbit Advocates volunteers descend upon southwest Portland’s Western Pet Supply store for public education outreach events. At these outreaches, volunteers spotlight adoptable rabbits, educate the public about house rabbits and rabbit care, and even provide rabbit nail trimming and grooming.

From the Rabbit Advocates’ perspective, the Western Pet Supply outreaches are an unqualified success. Many rabbit caretakers aren’t aware that rabbits can be litter-box trained or that much commercial rabbit food is little more than “junk.” The outreaches allow Rabbit Advocate volunteers to get the word out on these and other topics and also expose the pet-loving public to the idea that rabbits make wonderful pets. In addition, rabbits benefit from the grooming and toenail trimming sessions (called “pawdicures” by the dedicated volunteers who perform them) and donations raise money for the Rabbit Advocates’ medical fund.

Incredible volunteers have made the Western Pet Supply outreaches a huge success, but the unwavering support of Western Pet, including manager Damon Sheeley, has been crucial. Before the Western Pet Supply outreaches started in 2006, Rabbit Advocates held outreaches at various Petco and PetSmart locations, but never had a consistent schedule or venue. With Western Pet Supply, the Rabbit Advocates enjoy a warm and welcoming location and a consistent monthly presence. Every month we have both new and repeat visitors.

According to Sheeley, the Rabbit Advocates’ outreaches have been a positive experience for the store as well. He says that Western Pet is pretty choosy about which groups it allows to hold outreaches on site. In fact, Rabbit Advocates is one of only three organizations that has earned appreciations of small animal products, but more important to

### KUDOS

**Rabbit Angel**
- Mary Thompson

**Rabbit Champion**
- Berta Langston

**Rabbit Benefactor**
- Akana Ma and Sydney Thomson
- Marianne and Lauren Walsh in memory of Maggie and Clover
- and in appreciation of Rosy
- Evelyn Roesloff
- Gary Boostrom and Nancy Pond
- Boostrom in honor of Guin and Jim Chockey
- Vicki Holechek

**Rabbit Rescuer**
- Emily Stuparyk in loving memory of dear little Stuy Bear rabbit
- Leann Bleauhney
- Sandy Japel
- Mike and Lana Hoffman in appreciation of Sherman and the kids
- Anita Winkler
- Bob and Marie Sherman
- Kendall Broschat who donated $100 from her allowance
- Mike Yamrick to celebrate Jane’s Christmas gift
- Pam and Monte Wagner

**Rabbit Sponsor**
- Sue Nelson-Mullett
- Charlene DeLuca
- Heather Goldsmith
- Frank Hoecker and Theresa Brennan
- Jannen Hammers
- Karen Stelter in appreciation of all foster parents
- Andrew John Yamrick
- Emmalyn Yamrick in honor of June Yamrick
- Valerie Madison in honor of all who have adopted rabbits
- Peggy and Mike Pohl in memory of Farty and Squirt
- Jeff Wiseman
- Christine and Karen Stamper
- Heidi Anderson

**Rabbit Friend**
- Kelly Schaafrianetz
- Therese Mitchell
- Anne Mitchell, in memory of Clare
- Veronica Nordeen in memory of Moonstruck, Gouda, Edam and Milady
- Susan Boyd
- Cheryl Petersen
- Carolyn Brown
- Sadie Karon-Flores in appreciation of Perry
- Doreen Ernst
- Kathy Perry
- Kate Wallis in appreciation of her two sweet bunnies
- Kathie Malone
- Heather Brunelle in appreciation of Mr. Rex
- Dr. Vanessa Estes
- John Thorbeck and Joanne Swenson
- Linda Lenoine
- Ryan Greco
- Lillian Luskey in memory of Little B
- John and Maria McLaughlin
- Ingrid Duerksen
- Elizabeth Olson
- Juliet Syers
- Duane Kennedy

Donations made after Feb. 19, 2010, will be gratefully acknowledged in the next issue of The Rabbit Advocate.
Lee Ratcliffe had an unusual request. Would a Rabbit Advocate loan Lee a rabbit to take to visit a sick friend? Lee didn’t know most of the Rabbit Advocate volunteers but she decided to ask on behalf of her close friend, Linda Vlahos, who was terminally ill. Lee and her friend Kate Brownlie understood that they were asking a Rabbit Advocate volunteer to place a lot of trust in them to handle the rabbit properly and not cause the rabbit undue stress.

But volunteer Bobbi Waggoner said Lee and Kate could take Paley to visit Linda. Paley is a mellow rabbit who enjoys being held and Bobbi knew her bunny would help make this special visit pleasant. Lee and Kate agreed the visit was truly special because Linda passed away soon afterwards.

Lee said her friend Linda has loved and cared for animals her whole life. Lee and Kate gave The Rabbit Advocate permission to talk about their friend Linda and this special bunny visit because Paley brought Linda so much joy and comfort. “I thought maybe you could put something about this in your newsletter to show what a bright spot a visit from an animal can be in someone’s life,” Lee said, “especially when they are used to being surrounded by animals and for some reason are now without any companions. I personally can’t think of anything worse than to be without them in my life. Thank you from me and all of Linda’s friends who loved her. She is one of those people who will stay around the Rainbow Bridge to take care of the animals.”

Audra Busey brushes a rabbit at an education outreach at Western Pet.

Rabbit Advocates logo merchandise

Let the world know how much you love your rabbit by proudly wearing a Rabbit Advocates t-shirt, polo, or sweatshirt. Available in a variety of colors and unisex sizes S-4XL. $14-$30, email cs@colonialbusinessforms.net
By Guinevere Boostrom

The recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile serve as urgent reminders that we here in the Pacific Northwest also live in earthquake country and need to be prepared for natural disasters. For those of us with rabbits, we need to be sure to include our furry friends in our emergency plans.

The most important part of emergency preparedness is to have a plan. Having a plan will help you fight panic and stay calm under pressure. This is important for everyone in a disaster situation, but especially important for our pets, as they may not understand what is going on and may become agitated or nervous as they sense stress and chaos around them. This is particularly true of prey animals like rabbits that are more easily stressed and can become ill from stress.

Rabbit Emergency Kit: Supplies to have on Hand

After a natural disaster, electricity and gas may be out for days and tap water may not be potable. Stores may be closed, and even after they reopen, it may take time for them to be fully restocked. For this reason, part of being prepared means having at least three days’ worth of food, bottled water and other supplies for both yourself and your animal companions. For rabbits, it is recommended that you have:

A Good Supply of Hay
Because hay is the mainstay of the rabbit’s diet, you’ll want to have plenty at the ready. If you have one or two rabbits, a 10-pound bag would not be a bad idea to have on hand. If you have several foster rabbits to provide for, having a bale of hay or plastic garbage can filled with hay may be in order.

Pellets
Plan to have three days’ worth in an air-tight container as part of your emergency supplies.

Bottled Water
You’ll want to plan for a liter a day per rabbit. Or to make it easier, since you’ll want enough for at least three days, plan a gallon bottle per rabbit.

Food and Water Dishes
You’ll want to keep a set of whatever type of food and water dishes your rabbit is used to eating and drinking out of with your emergency supplies. You don’t want to be wrestling a water bottle off of a cage or exercise pen in an emergency.

Litter Box
Most rabbits like their litter box as a place to munch hay, defecate and just generally feel safe and secure. Therefore, you’ll want to have one litter box per rabbit or bonded pair of rabbits.

Clean Towels
Towels can be used to scoop up a frightened bunny, warm a cold bunny, serve as bedding or used to clean up messes.

A Few Toys
A nervous bunny may not feel like playing, but may take comfort in a familiar toy being in her carrier.

Emergency Housing
In case you need to evacuate your home in a disaster, or move to a different part of your home (such as an attic during a flood or a basement during a tornado), you should have some temporary housing for your bunny as part of your emergency gear. If your rabbit’s carrier is large enough for him to sit upright, turn all the way around, and house at least a small litter box, your carrier could serve this function. If not, you will want to have an exercise pen or small cage, preferably one that will fit easily into your vehicle, to serve as temporary housing for your rabbit until you are able to return home.

Medications and Medical Records
If your rabbit is on any type of medication, be sure to keep at least a three-day supply of the medication near the other emergency supplies so that it can be located and grabbed quickly should you need to evacuate. Likewise, if your rabbit has any special medical concerns, have a copy of his medical records along with your emergency supplies in case the circumstances of the natural disaster force you to see someone other than your regular veterinarian.

First Aid Kit
Many organizations sell pet first aid kits, but most of these kits are aimed at dogs or cats and aren’t too useful for rabbits. The Minnesota Companion Rabbit Society has an excellent list of first-aid items to have on hand especially geared toward rabbits: styptic powder to stop bleeding such as from a broken nail; infant simethicone drops to relieve minor gas symptoms; instant heat pack or hot water bottle to keep your bunny warm if he goes into shock from stress or injury; eyedropper or oral feeding syringe; Oxbow Critical Care for herbivores, unsweetened canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling with spices), or unsweetened carrot baby food to feed a rabbit by syringe who isn’t eating (don’t forget a can opener if packing canned pumpkin); Q-tips and cotton balls, liquid antiseptic such as betadine or hydrogen peroxide; gauze or other bandages to stop bleeding, and Neosporin® or similar triple antibiotic ointment, making sure to avoid the “Plus” formulations that include pain-killing ingredients that can be toxic.
Strikes Your Home!

to rabbits. For more information, see: www.mnhouserabbit.org/rabbit/care/health/firstaidkit.html.

Recent Pictures of Your Bunnies and any Microchip Information

Hopefully, by following the advice in this article, you and your bunny will stay together and stay safe throughout the duration of an emergency. However, in case the worst happens and you and your bunny are separated, you will want to have recently pictured your bunny to show animal control officials or Humane Society volunteers who are helping to search for your pet after the disaster. If your bunny is microchipped, you’ll also want to make sure that local shelters have your bunny’s microchip information and know the best way to contact you should your bunny be found.

One of the key elements of being prepared for an emergency is not only having all of the items listed above on hand, but having them together in a convenient place that you can grab if you need to leave the house quickly. If the sheriff has given you 30 minutes to evacuate your home due to an impending natural disaster headed your way, or worse yet, if you awaken to your smoke alarm going off, you won’t have the time to be searching several different rooms of your house to gather all of these supplies. Instead, it is recommended that you keep everything together in a self-contained kit. A sturdy plastic storage box, such as the type sold at Target or Home Depot is a great place to keep all of your food and first aid items. Evacuation Plan

If you need to evacuate your home during an emergency, you should plan on having to evacuate your pets as well. If your home is not safe for you, it’s not safe for your rabbit either.

Within your household, you should designate a person who is responsible for getting each rabbit in your home into a carrier and out of the house safely in an emergency. If you foster or otherwise have more rabbits in your home than you have people, you may need to be creative with your plans for getting all of your rabbits out. One Rabbit Advocate has suggested that pillowcases might be a good temporary solution for getting rabbits out of the house quickly in an emergency. The rabbits can breathe through the pillow cases, but they won’t be able to see through them, which may help reduce panic, and it should help keep them contained at least long enough to get them into the car or over to a neighbor’s house.

Once you get everyone and every bunny safely out of the house, you should have a plan for where you will go with your rabbits after evacuating, keeping in mind that rescue agencies, such as the Red Cross may not be able to make accommodations for pets. For a local evacuation, you should make pre-arrangements with a friend or neighbor who can make room for you and your bunnies if you have an emergency, an offer you would reciprocate for them if the situation were reversed. In case there is a more widespread natural disaster that requires evacuation not just from your home, but from your town, make pre-arrangements with relatives or friends who live out-of-town who will be willing to take you and your rabbits in temporarily, or identify pet-friendly hotels within a few hours’ drive away that you could go to in an emergency.

Finally, make arrangements for someone to look after your pets should a disaster occur while you are away from home. If you are at work or away on a trip, it may be hours or even days before you can get home to check on your bunnies.

Practice and Keep Everything Up to Date

Once you have your emergency kit assembled and your evacuation plan arranged your work is only half done. The other half of emergency preparedness is to practice your plan and make sure your plan and emergency supplies stay up to date. This means that twice a year, you should go through your emergency kit and swap out the hay and food so that the items in the emergency kit aren’t stale. You should replace any medicines that have expired and update medical records and photos of your pet. Planning to do this in the fall and spring when we change the clocks is an easy way to remember.

Once or twice a year, you should review your emergency plan with family members to make sure everyone remembers and is comfortable with their roles.

Every year or so, you should also go through your emergency contact list and make sure that it is up to date and that the people on the list are still willing to help with your rabbits. Maybe your friend, Sue, who had volunteered to fetch your rabbits if you were stuck at work during an emergency, has moved into a condo building that doesn’t allow pets. Or maybe your cousin Fred in Seattle was willing to take in your bunnies when you first talked to him about five years ago, but now he has a big Rottweiler and you might not think it’s the best situation anymore. Updating your contact list every so often will help ensure that the assistance you need is ready and willing to help when disaster strikes.

Emergencies, by their nature, are unexpected and create chaos. Some may force us to get creative and improvise. But by having some basic supplies on hand and having a plan prepared, we will be better equipped to do the best we can to help ourselves and our rabbits.
**The medical fund needs you, stat!**

By Lori Lacell

In the world of rabbit advocacy there seems to be a never-ending supply of rabbits needing help. Many rabbits are helped when people who have questions call the Rabbit Advocate’s Help Line to talk with a volunteer or attend a monthly Rabbit Advocate meeting. For some rabbits, help may mean being a pampered guest in RA foster care homes. For a few of these rabbits, health issues mean their help comes with a price tag attached. The most common health needs are spaying or neutering procedures. Other ailments, such as misaligned teeth, may require regular and sometimes costly medical care.

Rabbit Advocates is a no-kill nonprofit organization. Among the rabbits in foster care available for adoption are those who were discarded by their families because of chronic health issues. The Rabbit Advocates recognize that providing on-going foster care for these rabbits may be costly. As a result, the Rabbit Advocate Medical Fund was created. Primarily used to reimburse for spay and neuter surgeries, it has grown to cover reimbursement to foster care families and other applicants for some medical costs.

The Medical Fund has several fund-raising contributions. The biggest is proceeds from the sale of Bunny’s Best Bites custom-blend rabbit hay. BBB sales have provided a reliable income to the Medical Fund since it began production nearly four years ago.

The project’s contribution to the Medical Fund is impressive and a testament to the power of volunteerism. Volunteer Jan Hutto oversees all facets of Bunny’s Best Bites production and sales. She recently reported to RA volunteers that 2009 brought a net contribution to the medical fund of $7,091 in Bunny’s Best Bites sales.

The relationship between volunteer work and a healthy Medical Fund is simple. The cold facts are this: the more hay bags produced, the more money can be given to the Medical Fund and the more rabbits whose medical expenses can be offset.

“Our goal is to produce at least 100 bags per month,” Hutto explains. “To do this we need anywhere from 18-20 volunteers each month to cover the various phases of the BBB project.”

Hutto admits that demand for BBB often exceeds its supply.

The BBB project is moving to a new location in Northeast Portland. Organizer Hutto hopes this move will encourage more volunteer participation. Mixing and bagging all the hay is a workout, but it is rewarding, particularly when volunteers understand that the money generated goes directly to help rabbits receive necessary medical care.

Please visit the RA website at www.adoptarabbit.org for more complete information on Bunny’s Best Bites and how you can help.

**BBB is moving**

Production of Bunny’s Best Bites, Rabbit Advocates’ gourmet hay blend, will move from Sherwood to Northeast Portland. Rabbit Advocates and Bunny’s Best Bites customers thank Shellie Fletcher and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Barcal, for generously hosting monthly hay packing parties and for allowing hay to be stored on their property. The Barcal family has generously offered this important project space, time and untold hours of hard work during the last three years. All profits from sales of the gourmet hay blend benefit the Rabbit Advocate medical fund, which helps offset the costs of spaying and neutering pet rabbits and goes toward other medical expenses.

Special teams of volunteers are needed to help return the Barcal shed space to proper order and to help move equipment from their home to the new location in Northeast Portland. Special thank you to Evelyn Roeloffs, who has offered space for hay packing.

For more information about these special work parties, please contact Jan Hutto at jhutto2@msn.com or Dawn Iweane-Curell at dawnic@msn.com.
Rabbit Advocates in cyberspace

"Link up with other rabbit friends on Facebook. Fans can interact with each other and many have expressed gratitude to have this forum where questions are answered, valuable advice is given and even a seasoned rabbit rescuer can learn something new."

By Ingrid Doerksen

Rabbit Advocates now has a presence on Facebook, the widely popular social networking site on the Internet. Started late October 2009, the page has already attracted over 800 fans from around the globe. Fans are from countries as diverse as Italy, Australia, Taiwan, Croatia, and Japan, as well as the U.S. and Canada.

Ingrid Doerksen and Joan Gilbert are the Rabbit Advocate’s Facebook administrators. “Our regular web site provides readers with great information. Facebook, in addition, allows real-time interactions with visitors,” Doerksen said. Administrator duties include frequent postings of rabbit-related information, photos and videos.

Because Facebook is a social networking site, links to interesting websites and books are shared. Fans engage in ‘cross-posting,’ in which fans offer links to their favorite sites and bits of information on the Rabbit Advocate Facebook page and Rabbit Advocate Facebook administrators are allowed the same access. Gilbert and Doerksen say this helps spread the word about pet rabbits among the more than 300 million members of Facebook.

A calendar showing the dates for all meetings, outreaches and other RA related events has recently been added. Fans can interact with each other and many have expressed gratitude to have this forum where questions are answered, valuable advice is given and even a seasoned rabbit rescuer can learn something new.

Gilbert and Doerksen said Facebook allows the administrators to track the conversational “traffic” among fans and that they are pleased that the Rabbit Advocate Facebook page includes an exceptionally loyal base.

They encourage all Rabbit Advocate volunteers and newsletter readers to sign up with Facebook at www.facebook.com. Establishing individual Facebook pages is free. To then find the Rabbit Advocate page, type “Rabbit Advocates” into the search field on the top of the page.

The Rabbit Advocate

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 Blankervoort, 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.

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Upcoming Meetings & Events

2010 Meeting

April 18
May 16
June 13
July 18
August 15
September 19
October TBA
November 21

Bunny’s Best Bites is Moving

2010 Volunteer Hay Packing Schedule

Production of BBB is in the process of moving from its current Sherwood location to a new location in Northeast Portland. See article on page 6.

On Sunday, March 28 we will cleanup the Sherwood location and then setup the NE Portland location. All future packing will be in NE Portland. Volunteers are needed.

Sunday, March 28 no hay packing
  Sherwood shed clean up
  NE Portland setup

Saturday hay packing:
  April 3, May 1, June 5, 10am-noon
  Sunday hay packing: July 11, 9am and 11am

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

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

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

www.rabbitadvocates.org