



THE Rabbit Advocate



PROVIDING INSIGHTS INTO THE LIVES OF HOUSE RABBITS

DECEMBER 2004

Volunteers to the Rescue at Glendoveer Golf Course

Ring...Ring... it was the phone again. A concerned voice met my ear. "I've been walking over at Glendoveer golf course and there are all kinds of domestic rabbits running loose. People must be dumping them there... and they're multiplying! Something needs to be done before this problem gets worse!"

by Valerie Madison

Domestic rabbits are ill-equipped to deal with life in the "wild" and many abandoned rabbits fall victim to predators, parasites, and disease. I had to act quickly. I took a deep breath and began to organize the Rabbit Advocate volunteers to capture, foster, make veterinary appointments and give love and attention to this next group of rescued bunnies.

Along with our efforts to educate the public in the joys of bringing a bunny into the home, we are constantly faced with the fates of unwanted rabbits that have been abandoned, let loose, or neglected. And we do help. The Rabbit Advocates have climbed through brambles, corralled rabbits, set up live traps and waited quietly for hours, and have done whatever was necessary to rescue many rabbits in need.

Although they came from sad situations, these rabbits are now safe, warm and properly fed. Those in need have received medical care (including the simple, but necessary treatment for fleas) and we are continuously in the process of having all rabbits spayed or neutered. Many have not known kind human companionship and still need time to trust people. The Rabbit Advocates are making every effort to help these rescued rabbits – and we need your help to continue.



Here's HOW you can help:

- Foster a bunny through our guardianship program
- Donate to the medical fund (see article pg 5)
- Give your time – bunnies need to be held, groomed, nails trimmed, etc.
- Got a bunny already? How about a companion for your rabbit?

Working in cooperation with Metro Parks, our volunteers rescued 18 rabbits from Glendoveer and did a community outreach event to educate park users and prevent future rabbit releases there. We plan to continue our outreach efforts at this location in the spring. Special thanks to Jim Desmond, Director of Metro Parks (see letter pg 5), Ron Klein of Public Affairs, Bill Glenn, Park Ranger, and Cathy Sherick, Special Events Coordinator and Dan Kromer, Park Manager.



Photos: Kern Sypher, Lorraine Bushek, Mary Thompson



Become a Rabbit Advocate volunteer and join a group of dedicated, fun-loving people who are committed to the welfare of companion rabbits. Contact us by calling 503-617-1625 or logging on to www.adoptarabbit.org for more information.

Keeping Bunny Healthy: Geriatric Buns

House rabbits really didn't evolve until the mid 1980's and as a result veterinary medicine is just now catching up to these wonderful creatures.

by Brian Zulauf

The concept of a house rabbit is still in its infancy, especially when compared to more traditional house pets. House rabbits really didn't evolve until the mid 1980's and as a result veterinary medicine is just now catching up to these wonderful creatures. As a result, rabbit lovers are facing a whole new set of challenges and rewards, and learning what to expect from an elderly bunny. A typical life span for a rabbit used to be 4-5 years, now it is not uncommon for them to reach 10 years and up. The reasons for this are many, including: spaying to decrease the risk of cancer, proper diet and nutrition and spotting health risks before they become life threatening.

The old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is as true with rabbits as it is with humans. A healthy diet throughout a rabbit's life is essential to a long and healthy life. A diet of mostly grass hay is a key to every rabbit but as they age it becomes increasingly important. It is not uncommon to notice some decreased mobility as a rabbit ages and a high fiber and low calorie diet helps prevent weight gain that can exacerbate other health issues, such as sore hocks, arthritis, and malnutrition due to the inability to reach and consume their cecals. Along the same lines it is important to ensure that your rabbit has plenty of opportunities for exercise and to "stretch" his legs and that they have a safe and stimulating environment in which to explore. Annual vet exams are an invaluable tool for catching health problems before they become serious. At one year of age a rabbit should be examined and a CBC and chem. panel should be drawn, in order to get an idea of what their blood levels are when they are healthy. This should be repeated once a year so it is easy to detect when something is wrong (over the age of 7 you might



Ever charming and outgoing, at almost 14 years of age, Clarence still loves to explore and be master of his domain, even after losing his sight earlier this year.

consider having certain values run more than once a year).

Even with all the prevention in the world, it is unavoidable that your rabbit will at some point get sick. Therefore, it is important to know your rabbit's behavior and keep an eye out for any deviations. Are they all of a sudden not interested in food? Are their litter box habits deteriorating? Are they suddenly more aggressive to you or their bunny companion? Do they appear to be in pain or are hunched over in a position you have never seen before? If any of these behaviors are noticed, a quick trip to the vet should be considered.

It is important to know common health issues for elderly rabbits before they appear. I have briefly listed a few of the more common problems below.



Mona (left) and Walter (right) owe their longevity to being indoor rabbits. Mona recently died at the age of 13. Walter, a natural caregiver, was devoted to her. His unceasing love and attention to Mona was the elixir that sustained her in her geriatric years. Walter is a spry 9 years old and has recently taken a new mate, Eloise, who is a lively 3 years old (photo pg. 4).

- Dental problems. These are usually evidenced by an inability to eat along with unexplained drooling.
- Kidney disease or chronic renal insufficiency. Clues can be an increased intake of water, urinating greater volumes and more frequently, dehydration and anorexia.
- Heart disease. Main indication is a sudden difficulty in breathing.
- Chronic abscesses/infection. An abscess often appears as a lump at the location of a previous injury or near the jaw. Infections are also common in the lungs causing respiratory difficulty or the eyes causing weeping and ocular discharge.
- Opportunistic parasites. E. Cuniculi is commonly noticed in rabbits that are weakened from an unrelated health crisis. Symptoms can be head tilt, hind limb paralysis and cataracts among others.

While caring for an elderly rabbit requires a lot of attention and responsibility, the rewards that come with sharing your life with such kind and caring creatures far exceeds anything you give in return. Older rabbits are often calmer, better behaved, and just love being loved.

Photo: Mary Thompson

Photo: Lorraine Bushek



HELP THE RABBITS!

Get Involved in the NEXT Garage Sale

Over the past year, hundreds of rabbits have been helped by the Rabbit Advocates. We've **EDUCATED** the public (did you know a rabbit's diet consists primarily of Timothy hay?), **RESCUED** rabbits (did you know that 18 rabbits were rescued from the Glendoveer Golf Course alone this past fall?), **REHABILITATED** them (did you know that aggressive bunnies can change their behavior and become wonderful family members?) and **ADOPTED** bunnies out (did you know all our rabbits are spayed or neutered prior to being adopted out to "forever homes"?) - all on behalf of these loveable lagomorphs. We love what we do, but it's time to think about replenishing our funds so all this work can continue.

The Rabbit Advocates Garage Sale is our biggest fundraiser of the year. It's what makes it possible for us to have a medical fund to help with spays, neuters, and health problems, educational programs to inform children and adults of the delights and challenges of a bunny in the family, and continue our rescue and adoption efforts. Last year we netted over \$5400, all of which went to help our rabbit friends. We'd like to raise even more this year. Here's how you can help.

Got a neighbor who's moving with too much to take along? Doing some house cleaning of your own? How about that treasure sitting curbside waiting for the trash man? We need donations of all kinds - big items, small items, furniture, kitchen goodies, knick-knacks, jewelry, tools - you name it, we'll sell it to Help the Rabbits.

Maybe it's something too special for a garage sale - we'll market it individually. Perhaps it's a vehicle you need to get out of the yard - we have the ability to accept these kinds of donations too. Remember, the Rabbit Advocates is a 501(c)(3) organization and your donation may be tax deductible. So think of us when it comes to clearing things out.

Want to help even more? In order to have everything ready for next year's garage sale
Scheduled for the **third weekend in June**, we need to price and sort ahead of time.

Please help with the following:

1. Provide a Temporary drop-off/storage location for donations (e.g., part of a garage, family room or storage shed)
2. Volunteer for parties to sort and price.
3. Volunteer for one of the many other tasks to make the sale a success.

Call **Arlene 503/232-6460**
(email ituri2@aol.com)
or
Sydney 503/695-3444.

**We're here to answer your questions,
inspire your altruistic spirit,
& encourage all to
Help the Rabbits!**

KUDOS

RABBIT BENEFACTOR

Mary I. Thompson

RABBIT RESCUER

Charlene Rhyne
Diane L. Shank
Jean E. Sted
Anita Winkler

RABBIT SPONSOR

Anonymous
Anonymous, in appreciation of Lulu & Jasper
Karen DiMilia, in memory of Parker, Prince William & Buddy
Frank D. Gaines, in memory of Captain Mad, in appreciation of Sunburst & Missy Moo
Shelley Hanel, in appreciation of Karen DiMilia
Shelley Hanel, in appreciation of Erin and Carmel
Erica Hartmann

RABBIT FRIEND

Anonymous
Anonymous, in appreciation of Gracie
Anonymous, in memory of Sampson, in appreciation of Theo
Cary L. Allen
Anne M. Blumer
Susan L. Boyl
Julie Eddy
John E. Keen
Lillian M. Laskey, in appreciation of Buddy & Little One
Michelle C. Lewis
Holly James Loew
Kendal L. McDonald
Joann Myers, in memory of Snow & Dugan
Veronica L. Nordeen
Katherine Perry
Byrnace Ristow
Karla J. Saindon-Hayes
Emily Stuparyk, in appreciation of Bumper Bunny
Doreen K. Walrod
June A. Yamrick, in memory of No Name

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Connie Hawes

Donations received after November 22 will be acknowledged in the next issue of the newsletter.

Volunteer Spotlight: Lorraine Bushek

Asked what has given her the greatest rewards in her work with RA, Lorraine is quick to respond that it has been giving so many abandoned rabbits, with so much to give, a second chance, allowing them to “prosper and bloom.”

by Adam Gottschalk

In chatting with Lorraine Bushek at her kitchen table on the day after Thanksgiving, I found not only another lifelong animal lover (or rather, devotee), and another one who stumbled on the wonders of rabbit companionship almost by accident, but also a woman who has given much of her time and energy over the last seven or eight years to the operations of Rabbit Advocates and to the welfare of many a rabbit.

Lorraine, who will be finishing a term on the RA Board of Directors at the end of 2004, found out about the group by way of Kimberly Osmundson, a vet tech formerly at Southwest Animal Hospital in Beaverton, who was one of the original RA founders. Lorraine had brought her rabbit Mona in for a check up after a raccoon got into Mona's outdoor pen; Kimberly invited Lorraine to join the group, which at that time consisted of Oregon Humane Society volunteers who specialized in the care of rabbits.

At that time, Oregon Humane Society was still in its old 1930s building, and the “rabbit room” was an old janitorial closet which shared space with janitorial supplies and other small animals. When the first Rabbit Awareness Day took place in that old building, Lorraine had already decided to volunteer at OHS, but Rabbit Awareness Day helped her focus her efforts. In fact, Lorraine was working for PGE at the time, and, though the company offered incentives for employees to volunteer at various organizations, OHS was not on their list of suitable organizations. Lorraine saw to it that OHS was added in due time. Lorraine is a trained OHS volunteer and is now trained to do health evaluations on rabbits incoming to OHS.

Lorraine has helped with a wide variety of endeavors, including the Beaverton Rabbit Roundup Project which took place in the winter of '98-'99. Her recent volunteer work with Rabbit Advocates includes helping Mary Huey respond to phone calls on the helpline, co-chairing the group's PR committee along with



Photo: Adam Gottschalk

Lorraine with 3 year old Eloise, a graduate of kitchen cupboard training, now has full run of the basement with new partner Walter.

Erica Hartmann and Dezi Gowdy, past Westside Outreach volunteer at Petsmart in Tigard, and rabbit sitting. During her time with Rabbit Advocates, Lorraine has gotten the reputation for being “the one” to rehabilitate aggressive rabbits. Her technique? She lets the rabbit live cage-free in one of the cupboards in her kitchen so the bun has no choice but to get used to people and commotion. Asked what has given her the greatest rewards in her work with RA, Lorraine is quick to respond that it has been giving so many abandoned rabbits, with so much to give, a second chance, allowing them to “prosper and bloom.”

She went on to say that, while some folks don't know exactly why they've been put on this planet, she knows for sure: she's an “animal slave.” With great friends like Lorraine, Rabbit Advocates is sure to live long and heartily!

Donations to the Medical Assistance Fund Helps Glendoveer Rabbits & More

In 2004, more than 90 rabbits were rescued by Rabbit Advocates. Of those, 50 rabbits directly benefitted from the Rabbit Advocates Medical Assistance Fund. Spays, neuters and other medical procedures were made possible by donations to the Fund by generous readers of our newsletter and other RA supporters.

The Fund, formed in 2002, helps rabbits, like the 18 recently rescued at Glendoveer Golf Course, get the medical attention they need to prepare them for adoption into permanent homes. Abscesses, parasites, and pregnancies are not uncommon among rescued rabbits.

The Fund helps foster parents pay for costly veterinary care and makes it possible for rescuers to care for, and ultimately rehome, more rabbits. Foster parents need not be Rabbit Advocate volunteers to qualify for assistance. (If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, or to inquire about guidelines for assistance, please call our Helpline. Assistance is subject to availability of funds.)

Please remember the rabbits at this holiday season! 100% of donations to this



Photo: Kam Szypher

These beautiful rescued baby buns will wait till they are 4 months of age to be spayed/neutered and then made available for adoption.

fund are used to restore the health of needy rabbits and your donation may be tax deductible as allowed by law. We, and the rabbits, thank you.

We would also like to acknowledge the generosity of veterinarians Dr. Chris Wilson, Dr. Mark Burgess, Dr. Debra Barnes, and Dr. Ken DeRemer who support Rabbit Advocates with generous donations of their services.

Dear Rabbit Advocates Board and Membership;

We recently received word that you have been able to safely and humanely capture a total of 18 rabbits from Glendoveer Golf Course and Fitness Trail. Your work over the past three months has provided an important and extremely valuable service to the animals and to our department and we want to convey our sincere gratitude for your efforts...

We would like to continue to work with your organization in the future, sharing your messages with citizens and insuring that the tremendous contribution of your organization can continue. We hope to work with you on a spring education program at Glendoveer in conjunction with the Easter holidays, when as you know, bunnies are a popular item and public awareness is most acutely needed.

*Warm Regards,
Jim Desmond
Director, Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces*

Products and Services for Rabbits and Their People

Create Your Own Habitat

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

Only \$8 per panel, \$11.00 for panel with a 12 x 12 inch door.

Pens created from these wire panels are not recommended for outdoor use, except for supervised sessions of exercise.

Valerie Madison, 503-788-7676

Bunny Checks

Show your support for shelter and foster rabbits every time you write a check! Checks can be customized with a photo of your rabbit. A portion of the proceeds for each order will benefit the Rabbit Advocates.

For details, go to our homepage at www.adoptarabbit.org and click on "Bunny Checks".



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

January 16

**Injections,
Subcutaneous Fluids
and Administering Oral
Medications**

February 20

Rabbit Anatomy and Physiology

March 6

**Special pre-Easter event.
Watch the website for details as
they become available.**

April 17

**Spaying and neutering.
Why it is important;
how it can help; and
pre-op and post-op information**

May 15

**How to deal with an unexpected
pregnancy and how to care for
baby rabbits.**

June 19

**The differences between
domestic rabbits, hares
and cottontails.**

July 17

**Proper diet.
What's good for some
might not be good for others.**

Adoptable House Rabbits



Albert (above) is a young male with a luxurious white coat and cute ears. He is very serene.

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



Gilly (above) is a cute and playful bunny girl with a wiggly white nose! Gilly loves to throw her ball, and chew on baskets and sea grass mats. Gilly is a very lucky bunny -- she and her sister were caught in a local neighborhood after a concerned person phoned the Rabbit Advocates about a third rabbit that was run-over by a car. Gilly is spayed, uses her litter box and seeks a forever home that is loving and safe. Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



Baxter (above) is a very calm young male. He's good about being held. Baxter is an adventuresome bun.

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



Bingo (above) What a sweet, sweet guy! Bingo, in spite of his wonderful personality, was left by someone along a walking path. The Rabbit Advocates rescued Bingo and he is now neutered and waiting for the perfect home where he will receive lots of love, have much space to play and lots of grass hay to eat (he would like a girlfriend bunny, too!).

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



Bop (above) is a wonderful, snuggly, friendly bunny who would be best in a single rabbit home. He really needs to find his forever indoor home with a big pen to live in. Come and meet him and he will work himself right into your heart.

Contact: ituri2@aol.com

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



Caddy (left) is a soft, slate gray neutered male rescued from a big local golf course. In spite of living many months without human contact, Caddy is now a very friendly bunny who enjoys being touched and cuddled. This young guy wants to move in with you and be your forever bunny-buddy.

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



Elsa and Leo (above) are two Lionhead rabbits who are bonded. The breed is known for their friendly personalities. It is likely that Leo is Elsa's son but we cannot be sure. They are altered and are very sweet together and with people. They were rescued in Washington state from a very bad situation but have now recovered and are looking for their forever home.

Contact: ituri2@aol.com



Saki (above): A little dwarf "shoe size 10 bunny", Saki will win your heart with his chubby cheeks and dark eyes. He loves to be stroked and can be held, but will soon wiggle, give a little nip and want to be put down to run and play in the room. Saki is a neutered male who eats lots of grass hay and has perfect litter box habits.

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



CindyLouWho (above) is a young and active female. She's a fun white rabbit with ruby red eyes. What a joy to see her coming all a-glow!

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



Sabrina (above) is a young, very pretty female. She's a little shy, and is learning the joys of human companionship. She'd love to have your attention.

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.com



Rufus (above) is an almost two year old male. He is dad to Lucy, Seven, and Bo, who can be seen on the website. Rufus is very protective of his family and a bit of a rebel, but not in a bad way. He's just very curious and independent; always wanting to stay out and play longer than any of the other buns in the family. Great soft fur.

Contact: shellf1060@hotmail.com

**Karen DiMilia,
President**
**Kem Sypher,
Secretary/ Treasurer**
**Sarah Yasutake,
Recording Secretary**
Sandy Alto
Chris Arends
Lorraine Bushek
Joan Gilbert
Erica Hartmann
Mary Huey
Mary Thompson

Donate to Our Garage Sale... OR Donate Your Car!

Another way to help is with a vehicle donation. The vehicle does not have 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 the Rabbit Advocates, and you'll be issued a donation receipt for your tax records.



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

Chris Arends (vehicles) 503-307-7407 carends44@comcast.net	Arlene MacMonagle (Garage Sale Items) 503-232-6460 ituri2@aol.com
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Photo: Kem Sypher



Rabbit Advocates

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Portland

Oregon

97293-0235

**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**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED