Most animal shelters will admit that white rabbits with pink eyes are the last bunnies to be adopted. Some people look at those pink eyes with suspicion. They don’t realize that this simply means the eyes are without pigmentation at all, just like the human albino genetic variation. Those who have cared for white, pink-eyed rabbits, particularly the large New Zealand buns, consider these rabbits to be wonderful pets, with mellow and patient personalities.

This winter issue of the Rabbit Advocate will cast a special focus on these rabbits. With the season nearly upon us, why not include a big white bunny in your home for holidays?

**A Salute to White, Pink Eyed Buns**

by Amy Young-Leith

In 1992 I fell in love with the gentle heart of the rabbit when we adopted our first companion, Dinkum. Since then I have met an untold number of amazing creatures. They have been of every size and color. From Dinkum’s mixed Harlequin/Dutch heritage to Billy’s prime Mini Rex genes, each unique personality shines through whatever generalizations were made about rabbits based on breed, size, gender, or age.

Through hanging around shelters and fostering, however, it’s clear that some buns are getting a short end of the stick. Perhaps most overlooked is the iconic white rabbit. Their image is everywhere, from children’s stories to stuffed animals. Potential adopters, oddly enough, often ignore this icon when they are found in foster homes or shelters. Some people simply prefer smaller rabbits. For others, the pink or red eyes of the New Zealand breed are unsettling. I’ve even heard the eyes described as “evil!”

The origin of the New Zealand (a pure American breed, by the way) was not for pet or companionship. The strong, muscular bodies and thick fur coats were well suited for commercial purposes. New Zealands are also commonly used in labs, where they are valued for their sensitivity and the similarity of human and rabbit reactions to disease and medication.

The number of rabbits used for such purposes is staggering, a number I will spare you. But those numbers have led to large white rabbits finding their way into the pet/companion animal arena.

The pink eyes, which can range in shade from light pink to almost a red, are simply a genetic deviation causing albinism, which is a lack of melanin that gives skin, fur, eyes and hair their color. As the natural occurrence of this deviation is rare, the breeding for the standardized white coat came with this trait.

Those looking for a companion pet for the family often overlook them without a thought. From otherwise well-meaning people I’ve heard all kinds of responses: “White bunnies just seem so boring,” or “Big buns aren’t as cute” or “The pink eyes just look evil.”

Squirt admires all the bunny toys under the Sypher Christmas tree.
I can tell you from experience that none of those statements are true. While on the surface I admired the big white buns in part for what they’d suffered, I admit that even I wasn’t always enthralled with them, often gravitating toward the silky soft mini lops, or unique all around mutts. That was until I met Charmin.

Charmin was a large New Zealand girl being cared for by Amanda, a fellow fosterer with Indiana House Rabbit Society. As life required the changes and adaptations that it sometimes does, Charmin found her way into our home.

She was perhaps the most athletic bun I’d ever met. She was muscled like a track star and had large, solid back feet that made a great base for periscoping or leaping into spaces. She used all her abilities to carry out the devious plans her sharp mind would hatch. She was intensely curious, and forever in motion. Her independence had a soft side, though, and while she was her own rabbit, she loved a treat, a stroking of the ears, and a chance to snuggle up beside you when she eventually wanted to rest.

Our deep bonding, however, came about through the worst of experiences. One day, our athletic beauty was shaking her head. Less than 24 hours later, her head was tilted almost 180 degrees, and she began rolling. Through uncountable vet visits and tests, we stayed with her to position her comfortably, hand feed her, and tried treatments both routine and experimental. Through our perseverance together she recovered, although a good deal of tilt remained. She adapted and returned to being her outgoing self, with some small modifications in how she approached the world. It was through knowing her that I came to really adore the big hearts, minds and spirits of the New Zealand.

The New Zealands I have known have been on the larger side, and this often translates into a confident, calm personality and lots of curiosity and love for people and other rabbits.

Give a cheer for the “plain white rabbit,” for they are anything but plain, if they are just given a chance to shine.

**Rabbits on Chairs paintings**

**Art show includes bunnies as subjects, visitors**

Boris the rabbit spent an afternoon at a Portland art gallery in October. On a bright and beautiful fall day, he was the subject of much conversation as Rabbit Advocate volunteers talked to art fans who strolled from gallery to studio during the annual Portland Open Studios art walk.

Boris came along to the show with Portland artist and Rabbit Advocate volunteer Lorraine Bushek. Lorraine was invited to participate in the two-weekend event by Beet Gallery owner Sandy Japel. Sandy owns the Northwest Portland gallery and has aided Rabbit Advocates in the past, including providing care to rabbits in protective police custody in Hillsboro. She asked Lorraine to the gallery so Lorraine could feature paintings of rabbits.

Lorraine’s oil paintings of rabbits impressed Sandy and art fans as well. Lorraine has focused on rabbits on chairs as a subject of her oil paintings, which she believes whimsically portray bunnies as companion animals.

“One of our themes has been ‘out of the hutch and into the home,’” Lorraine said. “This is a way of making the point that rabbits should live in the home just like any other companion pet.”

While Lorraine talked to art fans about her paintings, Rabbit Advocate volunteers handed out literature and talked about rabbits as pets. “Thank you to Sandy for thinking of us and allowing the Rabbit Advocates space and the opportunity to participate in this event,” Lorraine said.

Beet Gallery is located at 1720 NW Lovejoy Street, Portland. The web site is www.beetgallery.com. Lorraine’s “Rabbits on Chairs” paintings are for sale and her web site is http://lorrainebushekstudio.blogspot.com.

Boris the rabbit is a foster rabbit and available for adoption. He is very well cultured, now that he has attended an art show, and his photo is featured on the Rabbit Advocate web site.

**White Bunny Christmas**

*continued from page 1*

I can tell you from experience that none of those statements are true.

While on the surface I admired the big white buns in part for what they’d suffered, I admit that even I wasn’t always enthralled with them, often gravitating toward the silky soft mini lops, or unique all around mutts.

That was until I met Charmin.

Charmin was a large New Zealand girl being cared for by Amanda, a fellow fosterer with Indiana House Rabbit Society. As life required the changes and adaptations that it sometimes does, Charmin found her way into our home.

She was perhaps the most athletic bun I’d ever met. She was muscled like a track star and had large, solid back feet that made a great base for periscoping or leaping into spaces. She used all her abilities to carry out the devious plans her sharp mind would hatch. She was intensely curious, and forever in motion. Her independence had a soft side, though, and while she was her own rabbit, she loved a treat, a stroking of the ears, and a chance to snuggle up beside you when she eventually wanted to rest.

Our deep bonding, however, came about through the worst of experiences. One day, our athletic beauty was shaking her head. Less than 24 hours later, her head was tilted almost 180 degrees, and she began rolling. Through uncountable vet visits and tests, we stayed with her to position her comfortably, hand feed her, and tried treatments both routine and experimental. Through our perseverance together she recovered, although a good deal of tilt remained. She adapted and returned to being her outgoing self, with some small modifications in how she approached the world. It was through knowing her that I came to really adore the big hearts, minds and spirits of the New Zealand.

The New Zealands I have known have been on the larger side, and this often translates into a confident, calm personality and lots of curiosity and love for people and other rabbits.

Give a cheer for the “plain white rabbit,” for they are anything but plain, if they are just given a chance to shine.
Tamara Fuller’s son was devastated. His grandmother was going to get a puppy and allow him to name it. He chose the name “Cooper.” But when a puppy arrived, it already had a name, so the name “Cooper” wasn’t used. The family began the search for a pet to fit the name.

After much research, the Fullers decided that a male lop-eared rabbit seemed a good fit for the family. Tamara’s research led her to the Rabbit Advocate website where providence seemed to intervene. There, staring back at Tamara was the photo of an available male rabbit perfect for her family.

And his name was Cooper.

Cooper was the foster bunny of Cyndy and Kirk Johnson. Cooper came to the Johnson household after a couple found him in their back yard. The couple already had a pet rabbit and couldn’t keep the one who found its way to their home. The couple found the Rabbit Advocates and Cyndy and Kirk stepped in to foster the little foundling.

Veteran volunteer Lorraine Bushek helped facilitate the adoption. Cooper went to his permanent home on July 30, 2008.

Cooper’s care is a full-family responsibility. Tamara’s twins and her mother all help, so that Cooper is attended to most of the day. He has earned the privilege of much freedom in the house, and enjoys watching evening movies with the children.

The adoption has created a true connection between foster and adoptive families. Cyndy continues to stay in close contact with Tamara, notifying her of adoption outreaches and Rabbit Advocate meetings. Cooper attended the August meeting, observing the event from his fully covered animal stroller.

“Our thanks and gratitude to the Rabbit Advocates, particularly those who assisted with Cooper’s adoption,” Tamara says. “Cooper is a wonderful addition to our family and we cannot imagine our lives without him. He brings us so much joy.”
Gifts for Bunny Lovers

For bunny lovers in training: Bramley’s Little Sister.
This children’s book, written by Dawn Allen with the help of her rabbit, Bramley, tells the story of a sibling relationship between a Flemish Giant and his human baby sister. $9.98 ($1 is donated to rabbit rescue).

For the philosopher: Bunnies in Boats.
A short, entertaining tale with a big message. Great for children and adults. The bunnies in the story are named after real bunnies that live with the authors. $10.00. If you purchase this book from Bunny Universe, $5 will be donated to the Rabbit Advocates’ Medical Fund.

For the wine enthusiast: Metrokane Rabbit Professional Wine Tool Kit.
This wine tool collection features the Rabbit Corkscrew, “the ultimate corks-pulling machine.” $69.95.

For the art lover: Rabbitt in Paradise Bunny Jewelry and Art.
This site overflows with gorgeous and unique bunny jewelry, art, ceramics, and more, all inspired by the artists’ own house rabbits.

For the clotheshorse: Sage Rabbit Dress.
A cotton/linen dress with handprinted drawings of animals including a lovely rabbit. $85.

Gifts for Bunnies

For the playful bunny: Busy Bunny Filled Playhouse Basket.
A natural willow basket with an arched doorway gives your bunny his own private spot for resting or playing. Filled with an assortment of edible toys for your bundle of fun. $49.95.

For the chewing machine: Petwerks Chew Monster MEGA Chew-n-Fling Toy.
This 7-inch long dumbbell toy with 4 attached poplar blocks is described as the perfect toy for the rabbit that could eat through your dining room set. $9.99.

For the rabbit who has everything: Omlet Rabbit Eglu.
A modern house for your rabbit! This colorful, insulated house is available in five colors. Although it appears to be designed for outdoor use (and an optional secure run is available), the eglu would make a handsome indoor home as well. $395 ($495 with secure run) plus $170 shipping.

For the single bun: A companion rabbit.
The perfect gift for many single rabbits is a companion to snuggle with and groom. Many single buns are waiting in foster homes for new bunny companions.

For the yogi: Luv Your Buns Yoga Pants.
These soft pants feature a drawing of a rabbit leaping over a heart and the message “Luv Your Buns” printed across your buns. $22.

For the explorer: Hopper Hideaway.
The basic configuration of this bunny funhouse has two cardboard houses joined by a tunnel. Additional houses and tunnels can be purchased separately to create more elaborate forts and mazes for your little adventurer. $15.99 for the basic model.

For the sentimentalist: Shawn’s Gallery Glass Creations.
Personalized suncatchers made from your electronic bunny photos. $15 for a peelable suncatcher ($5 goes to rabbit rescue); $50 for a larger framed suncatcher ($10 goes to rabbit rescue).

For the craft lover: Lavender Bunny Sachets.
Set of three hand-sewn bunny-shaped sachets with sweet embroidered faces. Stuffed with dried Provencal lavender. $20.

For the lover of cute things: Glass Bunny Badge.
These shiny little handmade glass badges feature a drawing of a resting bunny, $9. Also available as a pendant on a sterling silver chain for $28.

For the planner: 2009 Rabbit Rescue Wall Calendar.
The bunnies featured in this calendar’s photos not only are cute, they also are rescued bunnies. Each bunny’s rescue story is included, as are rabbit care tips. Proceeds support rabbit rescue organizations.

For the explorer: Hopper Hideaway.
**For the beauty queen: Zoom Groom Brush.**  
Originally designed for cats, the Zoom Groom is also a great grooming tool for rabbits. The soft rubber bristles gently remove loose hair while providing a calming massage. $7.29.  
[www.forotherlivingthings.com](http://www.forotherlivingthings.com)

**For the gourmet: Bunny’s Best Bites.**  
How about a custom blend of hand-mixed hay for “a nutritional and tasty culinary experience” for your rabbit? All proceeds benefit the Rabbit Advocates’ Medical Fund. $10.00 per ten-pound bag.  
[www.adoptarabbit.org](http://www.adoptarabbit.org)

---

**Gifts for Rabbit Advocates**

You can help the Rabbit Advocates by volunteering or making a donation. Some of our specific needs are listed below.

**Donate.**  
Send your check to Rabbit Advocates, P.O. Box 14235, Portland, OR 97293-0235. If you would like your donation to go to the Medical Fund, which provides for rabbit medical attention, spays, and neuters, please write “Medical Fund” on your check. All donations are 100 percent tax deductible.

**Adopt a rabbit.**  
Give a forever home to one (or more!) of the many rabbits currently being fostered by Rabbit Advocate volunteers. Each adopted rabbit opens up space for another rabbit in need. Adoptable rabbits are featured on our website, [www.adoptarabbit.org](http://www.adoptarabbit.org).

**Foster a rabbit.**  
Provide a temporary home for a rabbit in an emergency situation or for a rabbit that needs special care. For more information on how to foster a rabbit, contact volunteer coordinator Joan at lobunny88@aol.com.

**Donate your car.**  
The vehicle does not need to be running, but it should be able to sell for at least $75 at public auction. All of the proceeds will go to Rabbit Advocates, and you will receive a donation receipt for your tax records. Contact volunteer Chris at 503-307-7407 or carends44@comcast.net.

**Search or shop online.**  
We are registered with GoodSearch.com and GoodShop.com. Simply select Rabbit Advocates as your designated charity, and each time you conduct an internet search using GoodSearch.com or shop online using GoodShop.com, a donation will be made to our organization. It costs you nothing!

**Donate warehouse space.**  
The Rabbit Advocates have a number of large items that need to be stored. If you have warehouse space available, please contact us at info@adoptarabbit.org.

**Public relations.**  
Help get the word out to the general public about our ongoing programs and special events. Much, if not all, of this could be handled via e-mail. Contact volunteer coordinator Joan at lobunny88@aol.com.

**Help with Bunny’s Best Bites.**  
Help raise money for the Rabbit Advocates’ medical fund by joining other volunteers who mix and bag hay for Bunny’s Best Bites, the Rabbit Advocates’ own custom blend of hays. Hay packing parties take place at least once a month. Contact volunteer Jan at jhhutto2@msn.com.

---

**KUDOS**

**Rabbit Benefactor**  
Mariann and Lauren Walsh in memory of Clover and Maggie  
Western Pet Supply  
Jeffrey Wiseman

**Rabbit Rescuer**  
Valda Wold  
Hazel Knox  
Helen Swann  
Lorraine Bushek  
Bob and Marie Sherman in appreciation of Penny  
Andre and Diane Sauvageau  
April Surman-Oliger in memory of Anni  
Sheila David  
Becey Kirk and Ron DeLuca  
Leann Bleakney

**Rabbit Sponsor**  
Heather Brunelle in memory of rabbit Audrey  
Erin Woodley in memory of Milo  
Roberta Gold  
Patricia Toecalino in memory of Alex  
Christine Arth  
Cindy Matter  
Shannon McLean  
Carole Peters  
Lynne Kuchenreuther  
Julia Heydon  
Emily Stuparyk in loving memory of dear little Suzy Bear  
Rabbit  
Kendal McDonald in memory of Winnie and Bandit  
Karla Saindon-Hayes  
Karen Stelter in appreciation of A.B. and Daria  
Keith and Elizabeth Olson  
Sarah and Kevin Yasutake

**Rabbit Friend**  
Claire Smith  
John Nerikaat  
Kathi Lamm  
Rosie Fiallo  
Gina Crowder  
Joann Myers in memory of Joe  
Imperial  
Kirk and Lyndy Johnson in appreciation of Lorraine for Cooper  
Kristi Johnson-James  
Teresa Cornelius  
Kent Wiles  
Kenneth and Penny Dillon  
Julie Eddy  
Susan and Mark Rive  
Poh Hock Leng and Yen P. Ho  
Heidi Harvey  
Helen Mac Olson in memory of Petunia  
Iris Welch

Donations received after November 9, 2008 will be gratefully acknowledged in the next newsletter.
Bunny Visitors Delight Seniors

“It turns out that the buns can sense that they need to be nice or that the residents are relaxed and won’t hurt them.

Residents of Terwilliger Plaza, a retirement community in downtown Portland, have welcomed Rabbit Advocate volunteers, and their rabbits, for fun and socializing. Staff at Terwilliger Plaza suggested the visits and volunteer Audra Busey and her son Devin have regularly packed up rabbits and taken them to the Plaza. Seniors delight in the rabbits’ antics and love holding them. For some it recalls memories of childhood pets.

“It is very rewarding to see the expressions on the people’s faces,” Audra says. “They really love to hold the bunnies and many talk of having them as children. The hardest part is telling someone they need to let another person have a turn to hold ‘their’ bunny.”

Audra and Devin typically bring five bunnies to the sessions and have been visiting the seniors at least twice a month since June, 2008. As word of the therapy sessions spread, other Rabbit Advocates and their rabbits, have gathered at the Plaza.

“I had a wonderful and eye-opening experience,” says Kem Sypher, Rabbit Advocate president, who joined Audra and her bunnies for August visits. “I arrived right on time but found the room already occupied by several residents, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the bunnies. Soon Audra arrived, wheeling a cart piled with carriers and a bag of greens. As soon as she arrived we started placing rabbits in residents’ laps. It was amazing to see how everyone’s faces would light up.

“One of the rabbits was placed in the lap of a very elderly, frail man. The rabbit immediately started to lick his hand and arm. The man started to smile and looked up at me with his face beamng. He said one of the things they missed there (at the facility) was children and animals.”

Kem has since taken his rabbits Fuzzy and Wuzzy, a pair of dwarf Jersey woolies, to the Plaza.

While Audra admits her rabbits are very gentle, she said that even the more rambunctious bunnies have a sense that these visits are special.

“It turns out that the buns can sense that they need to be nice or that the residents are relaxed and won’t hurt them. I put the busier buns into a basket and they seem to know they shouldn’t climb or jump out.” She said the only “incident” occurred when a bunny, hopping around the room, bit through a phone cord. Bunnies are bunnies, after all.

Rabbit caretakers should minimize stress of the transportation to visiting locations and keep visits short. Any time away from home and the rabbit’s accustomed environment can be stressful for bunnies, which can cause health concerns. Audra tries to limit visits to Terwilliger Plaza to one hour and cautions against long car rides, particularly in the summer time.

The therapeutic value of the visits cannot be underestimated. Volunteer Val Tuck’s mother lived in a similar facility toward the end of her life. The facility supported animal visits. “We took her kitten often,” Val says, “and it was during those times that she was alive and open and often relaxed. I think animals do such a wondrous thing for the elderly and the ill.”
Top 10 Reasons Big White Bunnies are Awesome Companions!

10. You can hear them coming when they run down the hall.
9. There's more bunny to warm up your lap.
8. Their serene white faces always look innocent, even while making mischief.
7. Their ability to reach higher makes them able to help with more home decorating projects, yours or theirs!
6. They are a real presence when they enter a room (everyone will turn and stare!).
5. They can steal an entire apple off your plate and take off! (And they can't hide well in the shadows, so retrieving stolen items is easy.)
4. You can always tell when they've been playing in the fireplace.
3. They look especially cute with orange carrot stains on their chin.
2. Their beautiful light-colored eyes reflect love and gratitude whenever they look at you.
1. They always complement your décor.

Adopt a White Bunny!

**Toupe**

He would love some toss toys to call his own. Toupe is an 8-pound adult, altered, male angora who, like his brother, Tipton, will need frequent grooming. He is used to being groomed and will gladly veg out on his back while you attend to all that fluff. He is currently in foster care in SE Portland. Indoor home, Portland area only.

Contact: jhutto2@msn.com

**Charity**

She is one of three bunnies who were found in Glendoveer Golf Course. She is very sociable, enjoys being petted and cuddled. Her litter habits are very good and she is just a sweet, young bunny. Charity and her sisters are just over 1 year old and weigh about 6 pounds.

Contact: kokoeveok@msn.com

**Blizzard**

He is a white New Zealand, who are known for their amazingly sweet personalities. He is currently in foster care in SE Portland, waiting for his forever home!

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.co

**Mighty Whitey**

This easy going guy looks great in his Valentine's suit of white, with red and pink accents. He is very calm, enjoys petting and fresh herbs. He is a white New Zealand, who are known for their amazingly sweet personalities. He is currently in foster care in SE Portland, waiting for his forever home!

Contact: ovine22@yahoo.co

**Boris**

He is a small but mighty three-pound Netherland dwarf. He was found on an empty lot in North Portland. He is quite shy and likes having a little step stool in his pen so that he can hide under it when he wants to. He is not shy, however, about appreciating his food and any treats that come his way. He is adorable and is regularly picked up and kissed, as all bunnies should be. His foster family believes Boris is actually searching for his Natasha so that together they can plot against Moose and Squirrel, but you'd have to remember the “Rocky and Bullwinkle” show to understand his long-term plan.

Contact: gbbleakney@gmail.com

Thank You to Our Vets!

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

Dr. Chris Wilson  
Dr. Katrina Ramsew, Beaverton Pet Clinic  
Dr. Mark Burgess, Southwest Animal Hospital Beaverton  
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
### Upcoming Meetings & Events

#### General Meetings

- January 21, February 15
- March 15, April 19
- May 17, June 14
- July 19, August 16
- September 20
- October 18
- November 22

#### Bunny’s Best Bites

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 jhhutto2@msn.com

- **2008**
  - December 13, 2008

- **2009 Hay Packing**
  - (10am & noon unless otherwise specified)
  - January 3 AND January 31,
  - February 28, March 28,
  - April 25, May 30, June 27

#### 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.

- **2008**
  - December 13, 2008

- **2009**
  - January 10, February 14
  - March 14, April 11, May 9,
  - June 13, July 11, August 8,
  - September 12, October 10,
  - November 14, December 12