Our Sanctuary Rabbits Need Your Support

by Kathleen Wilsbach

W hen people think of an animal sanctuary, they picture an idyllic outdoor environment with animals frolicking in the sunshine. But there are many different kinds of sanctuaries. Webster’s dictionary defines a sanctuary as a place of refuge and safety. We offer refugee and safety to every HRS foster rabbit and we make that commitment for life.

People often ask fosterers, “What happens if a foster rabbit never gets adopted?” This is a tough question. While we have slots for the foster rabbits who come into our care and are adopted out, we don’t have an established place for rabbits who will be in foster care the rest of their lives. But we want to provide those rabbits with the same standard of living they would have received if they had been adopted into permanent homes.

“Why don’t some rabbits get adopted?” we are asked. There are several reasons, the most obvious being medical, but many rabbits are passed over because of temperament, physical appearance, age, or a combination of these factors. The majority of our sanctuary rabbits have been adopted and then returned later, older and sometimes with health problems.

As the chapter ages (we placed our first rabbit in 1995) we are getting back more older rabbits returned by adopters. Our fosterers don’t always have space and time to offer a permanent home to these older returned rabbits needing extra care. We are now hoping to find special members who would consider opening their homes to some of these rabbits. We have several very special rabbits in need of a permanent refuge and financial sponsorship. Each of our sanctuary rabbits has his or her own touching story. And it’s your help these wonderful, yet needy, rabbits depend on now.

Jasmine

How do we find homes for “unadoptable” rabbits? Sometimes our experienced foster volunteers adopt them. Pasha was an intelligent and beautiful Siamese girl but she was also aggressive. She had been adopted and returned when her adopter couldn’t handle her lunging. When my rabbit Lila died, I decided to give Pasha a try, wanting to give an “unadoptable” rabbit a chance at a home. Luckily my rabbit Rowan liked her right away, and she and my other rabbit, Clover, ignored each other. I renamed her Jasmine and she was part of my family for over five years until she died in 2002 of congestive heart failure. Her behavior dramatically improved, although she never completely lost her desire to assert herself. (She’d still occasionally try to intimidate a guest if she thought she could get away with it.)

Harmony

Harmony came from the Montgomery County Humane Society. A young, friendly Holland lop, she initially showed promise of being adopted quickly. She seemed healthy, happy, and active but had slightly misshapen and soft stools, so we took her to the vet. Although Dr. Keith Gold said not to worry about the unusual fecals, he discovered a lump on her jaw that had not been there a few weeks earlier, when she was spayed.

He suspected a jaw abscess and we scheduled surgery. Harmony came through the operation with flying colors and was soon eating normally again. Unfortunately, jaw abscesses have a tendency to reoccur. We knew that most adopters would not be eager to take on a rabbit, even one as cute and sweet as this one, who might have a reoccurring medical problem requiring additional surgery. We wanted her to have a home where she could enjoy the companionship of other rabbits and where she’d receive the same personal attention our adopted rabbits receive. But this home would have to be close to one of the three veterinary hospitals that give us a substantial discount, and her caregiver would have to be capable and willing to
provide her with nursing care if she developed another abscess.

Jamie Johnston, at the time our chapter's new treasurer and a fosterer, agreed to adopt Harmony as a friend for her other two rabbits, Sugar & Pepper, and provide her with a permanent home. Technically, Harmony would remain a foster rabbit and HRS would continue to pay for her medical care, although she would belong to Jamie in every other way. Harmony's abscess reoccurred only once in her three years with Jamie. Sadly, in 2002 Harmony died suddenly. A postmortem showed enterotoxemia. We are glad to have been able to find her a permanent sanctuary and provide for her when she couldn't be adopted in the conventional sense.

Blizzard

Blizzard is a beautiful white angora who came to us from DC Animal Control. She was originally very dirty and matted. After a radical hair cut to remove the filthy mats, she was almost bald. Now, however, she's a vision of fluffy loveliness. But when she was spayed, Dr. Keith Gold found several masses in her uterus and a cyst on one ovary. Lab results revealed that what was removed was cancer (adenocarcinoma). A subsequent x-ray revealed that although most of the cancer was removed at her spay, it had spread to her lungs. Blizzard could be the poster bunny for why spaying female rabbits is so important.

It was a dream come true when Christine Klingebiel and her rabbit Cassidy made Blizzard a part of their family. Christine had previously opened her home and heart to several older dogs. She uses Dr. Gold as her regular veterinarian, so he can continue to provide Blizzard's medical care; and she's a professional dog groomer, so Blizzard's extra hair care is not a problem. Subsequent x-rays have shown no change in the spots on her lungs. Christine was so happy with her prognosis that she decided to adopt Blizzard.

Holly

Holly was turned in to the shelter as a stray, but we later found out from a shelter volunteer that she was really an outdoor hutch rabbit whom someone no longer wanted. When she first came into the shelter, she was terrified and wanted nothing to do with humans. With lots of TLC she really turned into a nice rabbit. Since being taken into foster care, Holly has had some bad luck and developed some health problems that made her a sanctuary rabbit. On her way home from being spayed, her foster father had a car accident. Everyone was OK, but Holly broke a front tooth that has not grown back. Also, she developed abscesses in both ears. She underwent surgery for the abscesses and is just fine with some occasional ear cleaning. And because of the trauma to her tooth and her ears, her eyes weep. Holly has found a sanctuary home, and bonded with a rabbit named Hops, at Laurie Kuhn's house. (Hops himself had been dumped in pitiful condition after living in a rusted cage outdoors, no longer of interest after the 4-H project for which he was needed.) Holly is now doing well but still requires vet visits.

Aristotle and Easter

An increasingly common situation is that rabbits are dumped when the adopter decides to make a life-changing decision (having a baby, moving) without giving priority to the rabbit. We now have several pairs who have been returned two and even three times. They are usually four to five years old.

Aristotle and Easter were sweet and friendly. Aristotle was returned very overweight; the poor guy weighed 6 lb. when he left foster care and 9.5 lb. when he returned. We have worked hard on slimming him down and he is now 6.5 lb., a lot healthier, happier and more active. Easter's teeth have needed to be filed every few weeks, and her molars on one side are starting to grow into her sinuses, a very serious problem that we may not be able to correct. She was also diagnosed with an abscess in one lung...
and it has responded really well to antibiotic treatment. We are hopeful this problem is resolved.

**Guinevere and Fergus**

Guinevere and Fergus are two beautiful mini-rexes. Their fur is so soft, like a cloud! Fergus only has one eye because of an abscess. Guinevere is a serious chewer and needs a very bunny-proofed environment with plenty of projects to occupy her. She also has been diagnosed with glaucoma and needs eye drops in one eye twice daily and close veterinary monitoring of her eye pressure.

**Kira and Luke**

Kira, a wonderful fuzzy lop, was adopted to be a friend for Luke back in 2000. She was recently returned with Luke to HRS because her adopter’s grandchildren are allergic. Kira is six years old and has had a few bouts with Pasteurella upper respiratory infection but is currently healthy. Luke is nine years old. Several years ago he had surgery for a jaw abscess. Tragically, shortly after being returned to HRS, the infection returned, maybe from the stress of losing his home. He had surgery in which he lost a large part of his lower left jaw to the infection. Because of the extent of the infection he has had to have several surgeries and a long course of antibiotic treatment. Recently he had to have all his upper molars extracted on his left side. Luke is a real trooper and is usually eating mush on his own a few hours after surgery. Luckily, in addition to his resilience he also has Kira to keep his spirits up and give him lots of head licks. We seem to have finally gotten rid of the infection, but Luke will continue to need molar and incisor trims as well as softened food.

**Contessa and Roscoe**

Adorable medium-size lops, both around eight years old, these are our newest sanctuary rabbits. Roscoe was adopted in 1998 to be the buddy of Contessa, a pet store bunny. Citing health problems, their family later returned the rabbits to HRS. They get along fine but both have leg problems. Roscoe sustained a severe hip injury from the family’s dog that was helped by surgery, but a subsequent fracture that didn’t heal correctly limits his mobility. Contessa this year had to have a front leg amputated because of a rare form of cancer in the joint. She also has had several seizures this summer but so far they are not affecting her overall health or quality of life. With good veterinary care, these sweet rabbits are now doing well. We hope to find a permanent sanctuary home for them very soon.

**Will You Help?**

If you have toyed with the idea of becoming a fosterer but are concerned that you’d become attached and have a hard time giving up your foster rabbits when someone wanted to adopt them, this could be the perfect opportunity. When you adopt a sanctuary rabbit or a pair of them, they become yours, but if they have a medical condition, HRS will continue to provide for their medical care throughout their lives as long as you are willing to use one of the veterinarians who generously provide our rabbits with discount medical care (see the clinics mentioned on page 16). As our chapter continues to age, we expect that our need for sanctuary homes will continue to increase. By the time you read this article, we might have even more sanctuary rabbits; we try to keep our website’s sanctuary section updated.

If you are unable to take in a sanctuary rabbit, please consider making a donation toward the considerable expenses of these special rabbits. Our chapter is proud to honor its lifelong commitment to “our” rabbits, and your donation will be of tremendous assistance.

Thank you!

**Upcoming Events**

Please check our website for additional events and details as they become known: www.rabbitsinthehouse.org

Our chapter will have a booth at the 4th annual World of Pets Expo
January 29-30, 2005
Maryland State Fairgrounds
Timonium, MD
www.worldofpets.org

We will also have a booth at the Super Pet Expo
April 1-3, 2005
Dulles Expo Center
Chantilly, VA
www.superpetexpo.com
The Fabulous Fivesome

by Kathleen Wilsbach

Sona, a dwarf girl missing her tail and the tips of her ears, was adopted out from HRS in 1996 to be the companion for a rabbit named Silver. The enthusiastic adopters then added a third rabbit (Noel) from another rescue group, and when Silver died, they adopted a lop named Klaus in December of 1997. In 2000, when they added a human baby to their household, they decided they did not have time for their rabbits anymore. Klaus and Sona were returned and we also took Noel even though she was not originally from HRS. At this point these rabbits were five or six years old. Because of their age we knew they would not be easy to place.

All three rabbits seemed healthy, but we noticed that Klaus was unusually clumsy. Then at one of our adoption days, he collapsed. Understandably alarmed, we rushed him to the vet. There was nothing obviously wrong. We decided to have all three rabbits tested for E. cuniculi, a parasite that can infect the kidneys and nervous system. Many rabbits silently carry this infection, and it is estimated that only 12 percent develop symptoms. Klaus and Sona both tested positive but Noel was negative.

We had another bonded couple, Jackson and Belle. Jackson is a handsome harlequin (orange and black). He was a stray in Frederick, MD, whom we acquired and adopted out to be Belle’s buddy. When the adopter, two years later, decided to get a dog instead of keeping two rabbits, Jackson and Belle were given to a pet store. We had a somewhat harrowing time getting them turned over to HRS. Belle had previously been diagnosed with E. cuniculi. She had some impairment in the use of her back legs and some incontinence. When we got them back, we also had Jackson tested. He tested positive for E. cuniculi, and they both started treatment with albendazole.

In May of 2002 I lost my 13-year-old Rowan and then suddenly in October ’02, I lost Jasmine. This left my rabbit Palmer as a single rabbit. Since Klaus and Sona had been in my care for over a year, the sensible thing seemed to be to see if they got along. I didn’t want to compromise Palmer’s health so I had him tested for E. cuniculi. He was positive but has never shown any symptoms. It was about this time that Belle and Jackson came back into foster care. That gave me another option for companions for Palmer. I took Palmer to an adoption day to try him out with both couples. Each combination looked equally possible. On a whim, we decided to see what would happen when all five were together. That also looked like it might work. Hmmm. I took them all home and began to work on the bonding. Unfortunately we then discovered that Belle and Sona both wanted to be queen. Their passionate mutual dislike was quite intense.

Luckily Palmer proved very accepting. For almost a year, I had five rabbits separated into two trios. Jackson and Belle were caged at night and free during the day with Palmer. Klaus and Sona had the opposite shift, also with Palmer. Both girls bossed and chased him quite a bit but he was too fast for them. Both Jackson and Klaus provided him with lots of licks and cuddling.
Rabbit Supplies Sold by Our Chapter

These items are available only by pickup. Prices include sales tax. Not all items are sold at all locations; please ask ahead of time about availability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hay</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Timothy bale</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Timothy 2.5 lb</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Timothy 9 lb</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Timothy 25 lb</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Timothy 50 lb</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Orchard Grass 9 lb</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Oat Hay 9 lb</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pellets</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Bunny Basics/T 10 lb</td>
<td>$8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlan Hi-Fiber 33 lb</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Oxbow Products</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papaya Tablets 200</td>
<td>$8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papaya Tablets 500</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critter Carrots (sugarfree snack)</td>
<td>$4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Care (for syringe-feeding)</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Litter</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CareFresh 50 quarts</td>
<td>$14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-Straw (wheat-based pellets) 20 lb</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tek-Chip (pelleted paper) 40 lb</td>
<td>$19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Litter Pans</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise Pens</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 inches tall</td>
<td>$55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 inches tall</td>
<td>$65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toys</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grass Mat</td>
<td>$4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chew Ring</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Bowl</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basket of Sticks</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basket with Handles</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Basket</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deluxe Basket</td>
<td>$9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass Ball</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Ball</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Tunnel</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Tent</td>
<td>$16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottontail Cottage</td>
<td>$16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critter Castle</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunnel of Luv</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeding Supplies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crock-Loc Bowl</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceramic Crock</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Bottle</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini bottle</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grooming Supplies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slicker Brush</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Loop Brush</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detangler Comb</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nail Clippers</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hay</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Timothy bale</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Timothy 2.5 lb</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Timothy 9 lb</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Timothy 25 lb</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Timothy 50 lb</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Orchard Grass 9 lb</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Oat Hay 9 lb</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pellets</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oxbow Bunny Basics/T 10 lb</td>
<td>$8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlan Hi-Fiber 33 lb</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Oxbow Products</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papaya Tablets 200</td>
<td>$8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papaya Tablets 500</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critter Carrots (sugarfree snack)</td>
<td>$4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Care (for syringe-feeding)</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeding Supplies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crock-Loc Bowl</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceramic Crock</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Bottle</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini bottle</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grooming Supplies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slicker Brush</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Loop Brush</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detangler Comb</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nail Clippers</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our Chapter’s Supply Volunteers

Thank you for supporting HRS by buying rabbit supplies from us. You will find our prices quite reasonable, and the profits go to help rabbits. Supplies are available to chapter members from the following supply volunteers:

**Maryland**
- Bel Air: Jodi Robertson
  lapinblanc@comcast.net
- Hunt Valley: Susan Meier
  susan@firaxis.com
- Baltimore: Kathleen Wilsbach
  kathleen@rabbit.org
- Ellicott City: Connie Tjoumas
  connie.tjoumas@comcast.net
- Rockville: Marcus Silvestro & Betty Lee
  rockvilleshed@hotmail.com

**Virginia**
- Alexandria: Karen Jones & Kevin Smy
  ksmyjones@yahoo.com

We are expanding our sale locations. If you might be interested in being a supply volunteer, especially if you are in an area not already served—such as Frederick, Reisterstown, Annapolis, Arlington, or DC—please contact Kathleen Wilsbach at kathleen@rabbit.org to discuss details.

_hrs maryland/washington dc/northern virginia chapter_
Chapter Update

We start this update by apologizing for how long it has been since the last Clover Leaf was published. Please know that meanwhile our work to help rabbits has not stopped; we have just been unable to publish in a timely manner. We appreciate your patience and hope to be back on track with this issue. Although we have a wonderful reliable graphic design volunteer for layout, Deborah Miles-Hoyt, we could use additional help with other areas of production. So if you have the desire to lend us your talents in the areas of writing articles or editing the newsletter, please contact Kathleen Wilsbach at kathleen@rabbit.org.

FOSTERING AND ADOPTION
Adoptions are down this year. In 2003 we had 63 adoptions; so far in 2004 we have adopted out 35 rabbits. We believe one reason for the decline is that we have fewer fosterers than we used to have, so we have fewer rabbits to offer for adoption. Also, there are now several other rabbit rescue groups in the area. Although we would like to have more adoptions, we can’t complain when people adopt from other rescue groups or from shelters. The important thing is that rabbits’ lives are being saved!

HRS would like to give a GIGANTIC THANK YOU to our fosterers for all their hard work. Our fosterers are the backbone of HRS and we couldn’t save rabbits without them. Fosterers take time out of their busy lives to pick up rabbits from area shelters, have them spayed/neutered, and then provide a loving home for them until they are adopted. In addition many of our fosterers screen and educate prospective adopters, bond rabbits, deliver rabbits to their new homes, and do many, many other things for HRS. Our appreciation goes to our current fosterers Chris Brannon, Kay Bannon, Carla Pickett, Jodi Robertson, Kathy Brooks, Jim Edwards-Hewitt, Jenifer Hicks, Matt Hill, Ralph Hold and Rita Shaw-Hold, Connie Tjoumas, Judi Lainer, Mary Ganikos, Kathleen Wilsbach, and Laurie Kuhn.

Thanks to Barbara Storck for stashing baby bunnies until they are old enough to be spayed/neutered and go into a regular foster care space; and to Brenda and Paul Coran, who, while stashing a baby bunny for us this past summer, fell in love with little Moxie and decided to adopt her, writing “She is such a sweet delight and is very happy here.”

Also, thanks to Debbie Guidry for temporarily fostering when we were in a bind; and to Betty Lee, Marcus Silvestro, and Debbie Guidry for helping out at adoption days.

Our supply volunteers provide a very useful service to the chapter’s membership, and we appreciate their dealing with the varied and detailed facets of their work. These volunteers, as well as the items that chapter members may purchase from them, are listed on page 5.

We also thank the people who volunteered to temporarily house our sanctuary rabbits, many of whom require medication and other extra care, so that Kathleen Wilsbach could go on vacation with her husband. A big thank you to Liz and Kevin Bertha, Connie Tjoumas, the Bastaky family, Rachel Rotenberg, and Kathleen Dunleavy for this help.

A special THANK YOU! goes out to Diane Reich and her family for allowing HRS to use the conference room of their business—Biocoustics Instruments, Inc.—and to Susan Wong for letting us use her home to hold adoption days.

And with great gratitude, we acknowledge Anne Imboden for repeatedly, and sometimes on very short notice, driving sanctuary rabbits between Kathleen Wilsbach’s home in Baltimore and their appointments at Chadwell Animal Hospital.

So far in 2004 we have been able to take in 54 rabbits. As hard as it is to believe, 11 of those are returned rabbits who were adopted out by HRS earlier, and their mates (not adopted from HRS). As you can see, we are in need of new foster homes for adoptable rabbits as well as sanctuary homes for some of the older, unadoptable pairs who have been returned. If you think you might be interested in fostering an adoptable rabbit or taking in a sanctuary rabbit, please e-mail Laurie Kuhn at Laurie.Kuhn@yahoo.com. HRS is currently able to provide financial support for the care of both adoptable rabbits and sanctuary rabbits, but we need financial donations in order to ensure that this support to fosterers and sanctuary homes continues to be possible.

SHELTERS
As usual, the animal shelters are bursting at the seams with unwanted rabbits. July and August are usually the worst months of the year for rabbits being surrendered. Some are Easter throwaways, others are from people going on vacation, and some are brought in with the usual myriad of reasons people give for not wanting their rabbits anymore (moving, had a baby, kids lost interest, and you name it). So if you have been thinking about adopting a rabbit from HRS or your local shelter, now is a great time to do it.

We often refer adopters to animal shelters if they want to adopt more quickly than we are able to accommodate them. The list of shelters that we are currently working with to foster rabbits includes the Washington Humane Society, DC Animal Control, the Humane Society of Baltimore County, Frederick Animal Control, the Humane Society of Harford County, Humane Society of Harford County, Frederick Animal Control, and Humane Society of Harford County.

PLEASE JOIN OUR CHAPTER’S VOLUNTEER NETWORK AND/OR MAKE A DONATION TO SUPPORT OUR FOSTER RABBITS. SEE THE FORM ON PAGE 19.
the Fairfax County Shelter, Howard County Animal Control, the Humane Society of Washington County, and the Humane Society of Carroll County, and we are VERY pleased to announce our newest alliance, with the Animal Welfare League of Arlington. We have not taken any rabbits from the Montgomery County Humane Society or the SPCA of Anne Arundel County in quite a while because we currently don’t have any fosterers in those areas or volunteers to keep us updated on current residents and transport rabbits to foster homes. If you would be interested in doing that at one of those two shelters, please let us know.

Special thanks go to:
• Chris Brannon for working very closely with Frederick Animal Control
• Jodi Robertson, Michelle Thomas, Teresa Shaffner, Robin Patalon, Kit Hug- gins, and Laurie Kuhn for working very closely with the Humane Society of Harford County
• Kathleen Wilsbach, Pam Hagen, and Diana Rekos for working very closely with the Humane Society of Baltimore County
• Rebecca Kingery and Nicole Roberts for working very closely with the Animal Welfare League of Arlington
• Jodi Lainer for being our contact with DC Animal Control and the Fairfax County Shelter
• Kathy Brooks for being our contact with the Washington Humane Society

HRS volunteers who are willing to work closely with their local shelter enable a more active relationship between the shelter and HRS. If you are interested in working with or being a contact for your local shelter, please contact laurie.kuhn@yahoo.com.

EDUCATION

We are happy that Judi Lainer, Jodi Robertson, and Chris Brannon, after years of hard work on behalf of rabbits, are now officially national HRS educators. Congratulations to them!

HRS had an educational and fundraising booth at the World of Pets Expo in Timonium, MD, in February, organized by Kathleen Wilsbach. The event was a great way to get the word out about house rabbits and raise some funds too. The booth itself is free but we do pay $5 for each volunteer badge over an initial five. We grossed $440, which netted $343.54. Thanks to the following volunteers who help educate the public and raise money: Anne Imboden, Judi Lainer, Rita Shaw-Hold, Mike Salisbury, Kelly Miller, Diane Reich, Laurie Kuhn, Jodi Robertson, Bill and Robin Patalon, Nicole Koller, Nicole and Ginger Roberts, Kay Bannon, Debbie Kenny, Brian McNeill, and Kathy McKenzie. Special thanks go to Faye Levine, Patti Henningsen, and Jackie Hill for helping with setup in spite of the freezing rain; and to Volunteer Coordinator Nicole Koller for organizing the volunteers.

We were pleased to welcome Susan M. Smith, Ph.D, of the Wisconsin HRS and the Department of Nutritional Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison, to present a special talk about rabbit nutrition in February in Great Falls, VA, and in October in Reisterstown, MD. Susan is the author of the rabbit.org Treat FAQ and has contributed to several House Rabbit Journal articles about rabbit diet. We had good turnouts for the events and everyone left with a better grasp of the ever-mystifying rabbit diet.

We had an education booth at the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Pet Fest America at the MCI Center in Washington, DC in March. This event was a wonderful opportunity to get the word out about house rabbits. Thanks to the following volunteers: Megan Hemmer, Liz Howard, Regina Spallone, Dan Berlin, Melissa Kucinski, and Winifred Roberts. Special thanks go to Susan Wong and Kathleen Wilsbach for being in charge of running the booth; and to Volunteer Coordinator Nicole Koller for organizing the volunteers.

We also had an educational and fundraising booth at the Super Pet Expo at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly, Virginia in April. This event was organized by Liz DiNorma; next year we are going to need a new point volunteer for this event. Liz’s husband, Scott, went above and beyond by helping with setup. The booth fee was $250 and we are happy to have broken even by selling supplies. Thanks to the following volunteers: Natalie Medina, Johanna Neuhaus, Don Kruzeer, Nancy Boyd, Judi Lainer, Rita Shaw-Hold, Krysty Kolesar, Cinzia and Gaia Mattiace, Susan Wong, Ragni Rawat and Brian, Emily Lam, Kathleen Wilsbach, Jenifer Dodson, and Mara Hurwitt. Special thanks go to Volunteer Coordinator Nicole Koller for organizing the volunteers.

Jodi Robertson and Laurie Kuhn joined with the Humane Society of Harford County to staff adoption day booths at the Harford Mall in Bel Air, MD, on several occasions.

continued on next page

We are grateful to the people who have joined iGive.com and donated to the chapter through their online purchases. Our chapter has already earned more than $300 through iGive! For more information on iGive, see page 20.
al occasions. They took adoptable bunnies from the Humane Society of Harford County and handed out educational material. What a good way to educate the public about rabbits and maybe even get some rabbits adopted!

Michelle Thomas joined with the Humane Society of Harford County to staff an adoption day booth in Abingdon, MD. She took adoptable bunnies from the Humane Society of Harford County and handed out educational material. This event was taped and televised by the Harford County cable channel so Michelle was able to really get the word out when the TV host interviewed her about adopting rabbits.

Jodi Robertson, Michelle Thomas, and Laurie Kuhn staffed a booth at an open house to celebrate the opening of Chadwell Animal Hospital in Abingdon, MD in the fall of 2003. They were accompanied by adoptable rabbits from HRS and handed out educational material. Chadwell is a practice opened by very experienced rabbit veterinarians Dr. Keith Gold and Dr. Ruby Schaupp. Congratulations, Dr. Gold and Dr. Schaupp! We wish you well!

Liz DiNorma ran the HRS booth at the Animal Welfare League of Arlington's annual Walk for the Animals in Bluemont Park in Arlington in May. The weather was great, so lots of people turned out to raise money for the shelter and many stopped by to learn about adopting and caring for rabbits.

Kay Bannon conducted a bunny talk for children in June at Silver Spring Elementary School. The school had an organized pet day; classrooms were set up with different pet groups. The kids visited each pet group and learned about caring for the different types of pets. Chris Brannon and Kay Bannon staffed a rabbit education table at the Frederick Humane Society Walk & Wag in June. There are always bunny owners looking for information on veterinarians and bunny care at this event. And Kay conducted a bunny talk for two groups of children at Lewistown Elementary School in July.

Debbie Guidry held a bunny education talk at Grace Christian School in Bowie and another at Indian Creek School in Crownsville.

Judi Lainer did a rabbit education hour for kids and parents at a Prince William County library in June. She took Harrison (a former foster rabbit), and the kids got to pet and feed him and learn about gentle handling as well as basic feeding and housing of bunnies.

Susan Wong participated in the Howard County Walk for Paws in October by running an education booth for our chapter.

WEBSITE
Jodi Robertson has been the HRS webmaster for four years now. Thanks, Jodi, for maintaining our site! We hope soon to be able to accept online financial donations.

Patti Henningsen does a wonderful job of keeping the HRS foster rabbits up to date on Petfinder.org. Thanks, Patti, for all your hard work!

EASTER CAMPAIGN
Many thanks to Karen Tran, who ran our Easter Media Campaign this year. Karen did such a super job with our local press release that it was used as the basis for the national HRS Easter press release “Easter Gifts Result in Summertime Orphans.” Karen was also instrumental in getting Margo DeMello, development director and former executive director of national HRS, on Animal Planet Radio for an interview about rabbit behavior.

We got very good TV coverage in the Baltimore area. Kathleen Wilsbach appeared on the WJZ Channel 13 CBS Sunday morning news for the Humane Society of Baltimore County, on the Fox 45 Baltimore morning news, and on the ABC Channel 2 evening news. Susan Wong appeared on the Montgomery County Public Access cable
News from the Board of Directors

Congratulations to Laurie Kuhn on her appointment as our chapter’s fostering director! Congratulations to Jodi Robertson on her appointment as a member of the board!

With deep appreciation for their long-time dedication and tremendous contributions, we salute Liz DiNorma and Susan Wong, both of whom have resigned from the board. Liz and her husband, Scott, have had a baby; James Joseph DiNorma was born July 26, 2004. Our chapter, many of its individual members, and whole legions of rabbits have benefited from the talents, skills, and dedication that Liz and Susan brought to their positions. We thank you, Liz! We thank you, Susan!

show Living with Animals.

Thanks go to Laurie Kuhn for bringing the “rabbits and Easter don’t mix” message to commuters during their morning drive to work. Laurie persuaded Steve Rouse of WQSR and Kenny Campbell of Mix 106.5 to read our HRS Easter press release on their respective morning radio shows.

Laurie Kuhn also wrote a letter to the editor of the Montgomery County newspaper The Aegis; it was published the week before Easter.

The Humane Society of Harford County published a very informative article about rabbits featuring an interview with Fostering Director Laurie Kuhn in their spring newsletter.

Chris Brannon and Kay Bannon staffed a booth at the Easterfest held in March at the FSK Mall in Frederick, MD. They took adoptable bunnies from Frederick Animal Control and handed out educational material. This was a great way to educate the public about bunnies before people go out and buy them for Easter.

Way to go, Chris and Kay!

Erinn Kravitz designed a wonderful ad for the local Howard County newspaper that was paid for by the Animal Advocates of Howard County.

FUNDRAISING

We have held Uncle Ralph’s fall cookie sales since 1998; every year we sell Uncle Ralph’s cookies and brownies to raise money to help the rabbits. Last year the cookie sale raised $1,030 for the chapter; and this year, $945. We couldn’t have done it without you! Thanks go to Nicky Roberts for organizing these sales and to Liz DiNorma, Libby Noyes-Palmer, Jenifer Hicks, Kristina Soderquist, Marlene Appleton, Holly Arnold, Robin Patalon, Regina Spal lone, Anne Imboden, Deanna Williston, Connie Tjoumas, Debbie Guidry, Bob Wersto, Tracy and Matt Hill, Kathleen Wilsbach, Martha Morrison, Diana Rekos, Jen Prrone, Barbara Storck, Debra Zusman, and Janelle Macogay and Bryan Jones for selling cookies. Thanks also to Nicky Roberts and Connie Tjoumas for maintaining dropoff/pickup sites for the cookies.

We held our seventh annual HRS Easter candy sale! Every year we sell high-quality Log Cabin chocolates to raise money for the rabbits. Our chapter receives 40 percent of the total amount of money collected for the candy sold. This year the sale raised $830 for the chapter. Thanks go to Amber Elburn (formerly Amber Winningham; congrats on your recent marriage, Amber!) for organizing the candy sale again this year and to Nicole Roberts, Connie Tjoumas, and Jodi Robertson for allowing their homes to be dropoff/pickup sites and to Jodi Robertson, Nicole Roberts, Liz DiNorma, Judi Lainer, Kristina Soderquist, Moira Howard-Jewler, Connie Tjoumas, Janelle Macogay, David Golden, Barbara Popofsky, Kathleen Wilsbach, Amber Elburn, Diane Reich, and Martha Morrison for selling candy. We had fewer candy sellers this year and as a result raised less money. If you have participated in previous years and didn’t participate this past year, be sure we missed you! Please consider selling candy for us again in 2005.

Many thanks to Baltimore artist Katie Rickman for creating beautiful original painted Christmas ornaments of our pets or favorite animals and donating 15 percent of her ornament sales to our chapter. You can view Katie’s ornaments and find out more about ordering them by going to her website at www.kgrickman.com/ornaments/.
FAMILIES

We have recently had the privilege of raising adorable litters of rabbits. They are all grown up now and looking for their forever homes. Since these rabbits are used to living with other rabbits, we would like to see them adopted in pairs or trios, or adopted individually to be friends for your rabbits.

JADA is a gorgeous dark brown and white spotted mini-rex. Jada was left at a shelter with Derby (right, under MALES). A few weeks later she gave birth to GRAY WILLOW and RAVEN. Gray Willow is a gray silver marten mini-rex. Raven is a black mini-rex. We would like to see them adopted together or as friends for other rabbits.

From this beautiful young family of small spotted rabbits, you can pick 1 or 2 to be friends for your rabbit, pick 2 as a pair, pick 3 as a trio, pick 4, or pick all 5. They were found by the side of the road and brought to a shelter by Animal Control. They all are in good health and are friendly.

SHIRLEY, DANA, CINDIE, and ROBERT are agouti and white, and DENNIS is lilac and white; they all have their own individual personalities.

MARTINA (black silver marten) and GRAYSON (gray silver marten) are energetic and sprightly siblings. They get along very well together and can be adopted as a pair, or separately to be friends for other rabbits. Their small size makes them unsuitable for families with very young children.

MALES

DERBY is a handsome mini-rex whose favorite pastime is adjusting the interior decorating of his pen. He comes running to see what is happening whenever a member of his foster family, including the dog, is nearby.

FIETJE is a young, energetic Dutch boy who loves to run around demanding food and treats, pulling hay out of his litterbox and decorating with it, and dumping toys into his water dish.

GUTHRIE is a little guy, less than 4 lb, very active, friendly, and affectionate. He has agouti coloring; he looks like a wild cottontail, right down to his white tail. He loves to cuddle and is very happy to sit in bed with you.

HUXLEY is a little round fuzzy ball of cuteness, white with beautiful chinchilla-colored spots. He is shy when he first meets you, but it doesn’t take him long to get comfortable.

JOEY is a handsome, playful white bunny, about 7 months

Ode to Bronwyn

I love her at night, I love her at day.
I love her with hay - stuck in her teeth or caught in her fur.
I love hearing her growl - and thump, and purr.
I love kissing her morning, noon and night - Nothing else is my heart’s delight.
I love watching at dinner to see her eat.
I love watching her dance on her dainty, painted feet.

Bronwyn, Bronwyn, I love you so,
Yet I am afraid that you never will know.
So I dance around and show you how much I could make you happy with my golden touch.

Sweet, sweet Bronwyn, consider my plea.
Mother is getting tired of cleaning up my pee.
And, if you should decide to be my mate, I’ll let you eat first off the dinner plate.

—Rodney (adopted by George MacDoogal)

Dear HRS,

I still can’t believe that somebody couldn’t love Bubbles like all of us do. He is not just another pet. Sometimes Jim and I talk about how much our lives have changed since he is with us and how much flavor he has added to our relationship...hopefully he thinks the same about us.—Marcela Olivera
old, who came to HRS when he was about 6 weeks old. He loves to be picked up and cuddled and is curious about everything.

KENYON is an albino New Zealand or NZ mix. He is a friendly, very curious boy who is afraid of being picked up but loves full body massages on the floor.

McTAVISH, approximately a year old, is a medium/large bunny about 7 lb. He is a little shy, but he loves to sit and be petted, and he loves to throw his toys around.

TINY TOT (aka Tot) is a very small dwarf boy who has a cute personality to go with his cute looks. Because of his delicate size, Tot is only suitable for families with children over 10 years of age.

FEMALES

ANDREA is a black silver marten dwarf who likes to run and play and climb her Critter Castle. She is very sensitive and would do best in a quiet, gentle household.

ECHO is a big, bold, beautiful girl. She loves nothing more than snuggling up for long sessions of petting and cheek rubs. She can be a bit opinionated about handling her things and would do better with older children, not toddlers.

JUDY is a mini-lop who keeps busy moving boxes around her room. Judy has molar spurs. This means her cheek teeth are not perfectly aligned and spurs will develop and eventually cut her cheeks if not removed. She will require vet visits every couple of months to have the spurs filed off.

LINDSEY LOU is a sweet and outgoing mini-lop of 6 lb. She is energetic and likes to have things to dig and chew. She is fine around friendly dogs and would be a good choice for a family.

NEFRA is 5 pounds of lovable bunny, white with dark ears and the most beautiful big brown eyes you ever saw. Nefra is about a year and a half old. She is a little shy and you need to be quiet and gentle with her at first.

NATASHA is shy, but she wants to make sure she does not miss out on any of the fun. She is perfecting her dance moves; her best move is the jump and spin.

PIXIE is a Siamese-looking bunny who came into the shelter pregnant, but she lost her babies. She is still a bit wary of people but really loves to be petted, and she has the loudest bunny purr! Pixie enjoys shredding cardboard. She is on the quiet side and has excellent litterbox habits. Because of her small size she would not be a good choice for families with small children.
The Biting Rabbit

by George Flintke

So your “friend” decides they no longer want the rabbit and has given “it” to you, because you know so much about bunnies and you will give her a good home. At the time you didn’t know that “Bunnicula” was an appropriate name. The vicious beast seems to be trying to live on your blood. Fortunately all is not lost, because most rabbits can have their behavior modified in a non-aggressive healthy manner. This is a common problem for the HRS fosterer and will be seen by the local bunny expert. In this article I hope to give you some of the tools to help you deal with this kind of problem. I can’t guarantee these techniques will work for all rabbits, but they have been successful in helping us to address some of my most incorrigible cases.

First and foremost is the general health of the rabbit. You need to make sure that a physical problem is not the prime cause making the bunny aggressive. Rabbits in pain will be aggressive to avoid any more pain. Checking the rabbit for mites, wounds, burrs, or other problems can be done by you and a rabbit-savvy vet. Many times mites or a hidden burr can be driving the rabbit frantic. The second most important thing is to spay/neuter the rabbit. Female rabbits in particular can be very territorial. Many non-spayed female bunnies are fierce defenders of their cages. Spaying will dramatically decrease this tendency. In many but not all cases, it will stop much of the aggressive behavior. In those that it does not decrease the biting and aggressive lunging, a little behavior modification is called for.

Behavior modification involves convincing the rabbit that aggressive behavior is either nonproductive or not necessary. Behavior modification does not mean brainwashing. The rabbit is actually making the decisions with a little help from you. Behavior modification is teaching them that they do not need to bite. You may have a grouchy rabbit, and our goal is a non-biting grouchy rabbit.

If you eliminated physical problems and neutered your bunny and still see aggression then your bunny may have a behavioral problem that you might need to modify. There are several general rules that will speed the taming of Bunnicula. You need to be flexible in how you approach the problem. Flexibility is needed because many aggressive rabbits are on the high end of the IQ range for rabbits. A smart rabbit is both a help and a problem. Remember, many bunnies developed their behavior as a method of coping with a problem, and it worked. Many of these bunnies were picked up incorrectly or were constantly being prodded by little children. They were smart enough to develop a coping strategy. It will take time and some effort on your part to convince them otherwise.

A second contributing factor is that these aggressive rabbits tend to be female, and their behavior may be an extension of their territorial nature. You should always remember that the majority of such rabbits are not innately vicious rabbits; most of them use this coping strategy because they have become frightened of people. Remember that when you are bitten good and hard; it always helps me keep my temper to realize that I must help this bunny get over the fear someone else has caused. For me, the most successful method is to develop a coping strategy. It will take them time to realize that they are safe now.

In many cases, not reacting to the pinch, just leave your hand there and try not to jerk it away. Talk calmly, don’t raise your voice, and pretend that nothing important happened. This can break the mild biter in a few days to a few weeks. Remember though, a smart bunny may try it on the next new human, but generally they do not try it for long. As the pinching fails, it will stop the biting completely.

Now what about “Bunnicula,” the rabbit who bites with a vengeance? This kind of rabbit may not let you put your hand into their space without a growl, lunge, and bite. My current technique is to develop more than one area for the bunny. Once she is used to her cage, I then open up an attached but limited play area. This attached area means you do not have to pick them up until further along in the process. I use a dog playpen that I have attached to the cage. This gives them a 4-by-8-foot play area. I let them go into the play area to feed them and water them. I change the litter by having another litterbox all set to go. I pull one and put in the new one with me in front of the door while they are in the play area. I don’t get bit if they can’t get to me. Otherwise, the cage is theirs; I try to interfere with that piece of personal space as little as possible. The playpen is the public area. This is where they get to run around and this is where you will start the process of breaking bad habits.

I have had several of these ultra-smart rabbits put themselves to bed at night. I make the motions to put them to bed and they jump into their cage by themselves. I won’t say you will always get this lucky, but it is another example of the adaptability in these kinds of rabbits.

The next level is to get them used to people; this can take up to a month. Most of the time (all the time for really scared rabbits) this is essentially spending time in the play area, staying out of the cage and doing whatever you want. I suggest reading books (but not the newspaper!), using a cordless telephone, or even watching TV if you can. My favorite trick is to take advantage of their innate curiosity by turning your back to the cage and most of the play area. Pay no attention to the
rabit. For a lot of us this is hard to do, but I find this vital. This gives these ultra-smart rabbits a chance to meet a human who is not reaching for them with hands. Many of these bunnies are, deep down, scared or angry. I feel that it is important at this stage to (1) let the bunny come to you, and (2) do not ever reach for the bunny with your hands. Strangely enough, phone conversations seem to be really soothing to the bunny. My aggressive rabbit area is in my office at home. I think it helps to have me doing a lot of quiet non-rabbit things in the area around their playpen. It will not take them very long to raise their curiosity. I have a low level of violence from these kinds of get-togethers in the playpen. Being outside the cage seems to decrease the need to bite. This is where you start allowing the bunny to interact with you rather than around you on his terms. I start by putting my hand down in a rabbit path, a route he takes regularly, but is not using at that moment. Eventually they will find the hand already there and not moving. Do I get bitten? Occasionally yes, but I usually put my hand back and talk to the bunny. Again, the area outside the cage has a greater level of tolerance. A major factor is that this is not the usual behavior of humans getting bit. The ears go up and the rabbit starts thinking. I get bitten very rarely after the first week of this, and the bites are never like the bites of going into the cage. I call this my first plateau.

However, petting a bunny like this requires dirty tricks; my favorite is to give them a treat and then start petting. The smart bunny is gravely annoyed at first, because they realize they cannot eat the treat and bite the person at the same time. With time, though, petting is something they figure out is okay. Some of my smarter bunnies hesitate at treats or grab and run. This is one of the ways I rate the IQ. One bunny would sit next to her food dish waiting for me to leave before she would eat. This standoff lasted for a week! It took her only two feedings to learn the game. We still got around it with a few carrots. This was before I worked out the playpen setup. If I had done treats with the playpen, I suspect it would have gone faster with this obstinate little lady. I would not have been in her space with my hands.

Once you can pet in the play area it’s time for the next level, the cage itself. This is the real test and can take some serious time. Usually, I include the bunny in filling the food dish, but not in changing the litter pan. Again, for the smart bunny, you already showed that you are OK, but you are on their turf. A bunny with their mouth full has a hard time biting. Remember to continue the playpen routine while adding the feeding.

One of the things I have noticed is that I am not getting these bunnies to quit the aggressive behavior; instead, the bunnies are modifying it. Thus one bunny would still lunge at me, but would duck her head at the last moment for a petting session. Another hates hands, but if we approach face-to-face, she will accept my hand for petting after presenting her face. (Author’s note: This is a dangerous maneuver especially on an unknown bunny and should not be used if there is any worry at all of being bitten in the face. The author also wears glasses as a precaution). If I just reach out, she will grunt and box. This beats her “grab on and lock jaw behavior”; she has a little further to go. If I worked at it, I might be able to remove the lunge, but first things first.

To give you an example of the personalities you may be dealing with I’ll give you my favorite “vicious bunny” story. The bunny is a very smart small female rabbit that bounces all over the playpen when I come in. I went out of town for a week; when I came back, I went into the playpen to pet her. She let me pet her once or twice then she bit down hard, immediately let go, ran into her cage, and sat in her litterbox. When I went back 15 minutes later, she was bouncing all around the playpen, excited to see me. We had a long petting session. My interpretation is that she first punished and then forgave me, pretty magnanimous of her! Smart rabbits are a treat, but they do require effort when they have been abused and learned improper behaviors for dealing with us humans. If you take the extra time you will not be disappointed with the gem under the rough exterior.

Dear HRS,

We just got done with a great exercise time. They ran around like crazy for a long time and even danced a bit. They both checked out Tux, our older cat. Blackberry was a bit nervous at first, but Honey went right up to his face and checked him out. Jake, our cat who loves to watch the bunnies but is afraid of them, ran out of the room when they came out of the pen. He came back later, though, and perched on the top of the couch to watch their antics... Both are worn out now. They are snuggling. Shawn and I just love having these two. They are a lot of fun. We have given Blackberry a nickname already: Sir Poops-a-lot!... Thanks for all your help with them.—Shawn and Mary Lovley

Dear HRS,

I think you’ll enjoy seeing how happy and in love Blossom and Bogart are. They are always cuddling, grooming and licking each other. They are both very sweet. Blossom didn’t show any sign of jealousy or territorial behavior. She has always been incredibly sweet and calm. We are very lucky. Gaia wrote a poem for Bogart when he was still at Susan’s for the bonding and she’d like to share it with you.—Cinzia Mattiaci

**BOGART**

Bogart is cute, Bogart is nice.
I love his twitching nose, I like his eyes.
He’s soft and cuddly and very snuggly.
He’s in my heart, he’s very smart.
We’ll always be together like birds of feather,
And always means FOREVER.
—Gaia Mattiaci

Ruby Dey adopted Jordan first and then Billy as a friend for him. She came to pick them up after I had been bonding them for three weeks, and I have never seen another rabbit so happy to see his mother as Jordan was!—Laurie Kuhn
Jodi Robertson:
Rabbit Whisperer

by Laurie Kuhn, Fostering Director

We refer to Jodi Robertson as the rabbit whisperer because of her calm, quiet manner and her ability to understand “rabbit-speak.” If Jodi can’t get a pair or trio of rabbits to bond, no one can.

I first met Jodi six years ago at the Humane Society of Harford County’s annual Walk for the Animals fundraiser. She was volunteering at the shelter but didn’t have any pets yet. She’s a dog person and her husband is a cat person, so they hadn’t found an animal to suit them both. I was at the fundraiser with an albino dwarf rabbit named Snow White. While I was trying to trim Snow White’s long nails, Jodi helped me by holding the squirming rabbit. Once Jodi held Snow White, she never put her down again. Snow White became Jodi’s first rabbit, renamed Manon.

Two months later Jodi decided she wanted a friend for Manon and called for my help in matching Manon up with a shelter rabbit. After trying Manon with many rabbits, Jodi chose a pair: Randy, a huge New Zealand white, and Ralphie, a timid brown and white Dutch rabbit. (Can you guess where those names came from? I’ll give you a hint: a movie about Christmas.*) Jodi insisted on doing her own trio bonding. Having never done a bonding before and not really knowing much about rabbits at the time, she did an amazing job and hardly asked any questions about the bonding process. Was it beginner’s luck or is she a natural?

Since then Jodi has grown into a tireless volunteer and rabbit advocate and expert who does an enormous amount of work for the MD/DC/NoVA chapter of the House Rabbit Society as well as the Harford County shelter. Here are some of the things she does:

- Fosters three rabbits for HRS;
- Sells rabbit supplies to benefit HRS out of her home in Bel Air, MD;
- Volunteers at least once a week (often more) at the shelter, cleaning cages for rabbits and other small animals, working with adopters, building cages or whatever is needed;
- Manages and updates our HRS website, www.rabbitsinthehouse.org, and the small-animal portion of the shelter’s website, www.harfordshelter.org;
- Works at adoption days and public education events for both HRS and the Humane Society;
- Does many rabbit bondings both for HRS and the Humane Society; and
- Often pitches in money out of her own pocket when shelter rabbits need vet care.

Are you dizzy yet? When asked why she does all this, Jodi simply answers, “I do it for the rabbits.” Believe it or not, in addition to all this, Jodi works full-time as an operations research analyst with the Army, plays the banjo, does crafts, and also volunteers for Habitat for Humanity. We want to recognize Jodi, a superhuman volunteer, and let her know we appreciate all the GREAT work she does! Thanks, Jodi!

* A Christmas Story, released in 1983

Faye Levine:
Faithful Helper

by Kathleen Wilsbach, Chapter Manager

Faye Levine became a member of the House Rabbit Society back in 2000 and adopted a friend for her rabbit Slate. In May of 2002 she began coming to my home to help clean up after the nine or more foster and sanctuary rabbits. At first she agreed to one day a month, always showing up on time to scrub litterboxes and sweep up copious amounts of hay. However, when I’m short-staffed, she has pitched in and done even more. Faye is also a computer graphic designer, attending graduate school at the University of Baltimore, and she teaches several classes at two different com-

continued on page 16
A re you living with an elderbun (a rabbit eight years or older)? Even if he or she is basically healthy, age will take its toll. You may find him napping a lot more than usual, or a bit stiff to rise from his nap. Here are tips for keeping our senior companions comfortable.

Mobility
Do you find your rabbit is not hopping up to his favorite haunts—sofa, chair, and stair? He might have a bit of arthritis that makes such maneuvers painful. Talk to a rabbit-savvy veterinarian about this. If arthritis is suspected, ask about medication to ease the inflammation and pain. Glucosamine and chondroitin have been used in animal medicine long before arriving on the scene for humans, so ask if these might help. If your rabbit doesn't tolerate handling or being given medicine very well, you'll have to weigh this against the benefits of the medicine. However, there are many tricks for disguising medicine in treats and food for these difficult rabbits. Acupuncture is also a pain management option that should be considered.

Your rabbit may just be weaker on his legs and find it takes more effort to rise from a seated or reclining position. To make it easier for him to get up, be sure there is plenty of traction. A piece of artificial sheepskin with a rubberized backing or a carpet runner will give him a soft place to sleep as well as a non-slip surface to dig his claws into.

Are you using plenty of hay in the litterbox? Provide a thick pad of hay and tamp it down to give increased traction. This also offers a nice soft place to nap, since bunnies do like to nod off in the litterbox!

If he can't get in and out of the box with ease, consider cutting down one side to just an inch or so in height, smoothing the edges with sandpaper—or buy a Purina Second Nature Dog Litter Pan or a gardener's Tidy Tray.

Area rugs with no-slip backing in the kitchen and other slippery locations will help him navigate from place to place. (This is good, too, for rabbits that won't walk on slick surfaces.)

Buns past middle age are prone to develop calluses on their hocks (you may need to move the fur away to see them). Gently rub Vaseline into these calluses every few days to keep the skin soft. This will help prevent pain and irritation, and will help to keep the calluses from cracking open.

Diet
Is your elderbun losing a little weight? Just like people, some older rabbits may not eat as much or their aging digestive systems may not take full advantage of the calories they consume. Try adding more plain rabbit pellets to the daily diet. If the rabbit lives in a cool part of the house, she'll need to use more calories to maintain her body temperature. Consider a higher-calorie treat: a piece of dried fruit, for example. Significant weight loss can indicate illness. That would merit a trip to the veterinarian for an elderbunny check-up.

You may need to adjust the balance of fresh veggies and fruits to hay. As your rabbit ages, her ability to digest certain foods—or food in the usual quantities—may change. Tooth problems may also make her avoid consuming as much hay as needed to balance the water content of fresh veggies, resulting in a bit of poopy butt.

Provide a choice of water bowl or bottle. There may be times when one or the other is more comfortable for her to use, and this will keep her hydration up to par.

Not all older rabbits are too thin. Like some people, older rabbits can also have trouble with obesity. Carrying extra weight is very hard on arthritic joints and can cause or intensify other health problems such as heart and digestive problems. Discuss your rabbit's ideal weight with your veterinarian and work to achieve and maintain it.

Eyes
An occasional weepy eye is probably just a clogged tear duct. The more the ducts are flushed, the more likely they are to develop scar tissue, making the already narrow channel even tighter. Besides trying to flush the duct, the veterinarian will also give you some antibiotic ointment. Clogged tear ducts are a breeding ground for infection.
The weepy eye may also be the result of an upper molar problem impinging on the duct. Checking molars thoroughly can require sedation, which is more risky in an older rabbit. Discuss this with your veterinarian.

Vet Check

When your rabbit reaches about age six, consider taking her to a good rabbit veterinarian for a full examination, including blood panels. This exam should then be repeated annually. Variances in blood levels can indicate illness; normal test results can allay your concerns and provide a baseline for future tests. An annual exam for a rabbit at this age is like a 50-year-old person going to the doctor once every five years. Is that often enough? Consider your rabbit’s vitality and health history along with your budget in deciding how often your elderbun should see the doctor.

Additional Resources

For more information, see the Rabbit Reference section Elderly Rabbits at http://homepage.mac.com/mat-tocks/morfz/rabrefs.html. Also, consider investing in a copy of the new Drolerry Press video CD “Planning Your Bunny’s Assisted Living,” available in the Rabbit Catalog on page 18.


Thanks to the following Special Friends who donated $24 or more to help the rabbits:

The weepy eye may also be

The weepy eye may also be the result of an upper molar problem impinging on the duct. Checking molars thoroughly can require sedation, which is more risky in an older rabbit. Discuss this with your veterinarian.

Vet Check

When your rabbit reaches about age six, consider taking her to a good rabbit veterinarian for a full examination, including blood panels. This exam should then be repeated annually. Variances in blood levels can indicate illness; normal test results can allay your concerns and provide a baseline for future tests. An annual exam for a rabbit at this age is like a 50-year-old person going to the doctor once every five years. Is that often enough? Consider your rabbit’s vitality and health history along with your budget in deciding how often your elderbun should see the doctor.

Additional Resources

For more information, see the Rabbit Reference section Elderly Rabbits at http://homepage.mac.com/mat-tocks/morfz/rabrefs.html. Also, consider investing in a copy of the new Drolerry Press video CD “Planning Your Bunny’s Assisted Living,” available in the Rabbit Catalog on page 18.


Thanks to the following Special Friends who donated $24 or more to help the rabbits:

Blue Ridge Veterinary Associates
Brookeville Animal Hospital
Chadwell Animal Hospital
Kentlands Veterinary Hospital
Old Farm Veterinary Hospital
Ridge Lake Animal Hospital
Wheaton Animal Hospital

We also thank the chapter members who bunnysat for other members and, instead of payment, requested that they donate to the chapter.
Rabbit Catalog

Hoppy Holidays!

It’s time to start thinking of holiday shopping, and we hope the Rabbit Catalog will help. The items on these pages include some that are familiar and others that are new. Drollery Press, the publisher of the House Rabbit Handbook, is offering new video CDs, and we have license plate holders from the Wisconsin chapter. National HRS is not producing a calendar with Browntrout this year (the publisher doesn’t like to use the same photographer more than two years in a row), but we offer a calendar assembled by the Missouri chapter and sold exclusively by HRS. All purchases from the Rabbit Catalog will help our chapter to continue rescuing and rehabilitating shelter rabbits and placing them into carefully screened homes. All proceeds will directly impact the lives of rabbits in need.

Won’t you show your pride in your companion rabbit by ordering today? Simply fill out the order form and mail it in with your check or money order. You can expect shipment within three weeks. Then you’ll have the satisfaction of knowing that you’re helping rabbits. And, oh yes: it’s also a good time to renew your membership and to join our Volunteer Network.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Kathleen Wilsbach, Chapter Manager
**Order Form**

If you are not currently a member of HRS, we invite you to join!  
See Membership Area below.

---

**Would You Like to Become a Member of HRS?**

Is your membership current? Has your address changed?

I'd like to become a member of HRS! Please change my mailing address to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>ZIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Shipping**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your subtotal is up to $9.99</th>
<th>Add</th>
<th>If your subtotal is $10.00 – $19.99</th>
<th>Add</th>
<th>If your subtotal is $20.00 or more</th>
<th>Add</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$2</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4</td>
<td></td>
<td>$6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prices include sales tax.

**Subtotal**

**Shipping**

**Rabbit Catalog**

**Total**

---

**Total Remittance for Rabbit Catalog and Membership**

Make check or money order payable to *House Rabbit Society*.
Sona accepted Palmer and started being nice to him after about three months. For Belle it took over seven months.

I had hoped to spend some of my summer working on getting my five-some together. But the only large neutral territory available was the back yard. Rain and working on bondings for chapter adoptions threw a wrench into that plan. By mid-August no progress had been made. I’m a bit ashamed to admit what finally led to a breakthrough. There were a couple of times when I didn’t latch Sona and Klaus’s cage properly when Jackson and Belle were out. I’d come into the study to find J+B sort of cowering on the top level of their open cage but no injuries and no tufts of fur. It looked like Belle decided to back down and let Sona be the undisputed queen. Sona was still chasing Belle. But it wasn’t a frantic high-speed chase, more a slow-motion thing. Sona hopped up to Belle, poked her in the butt or gave her a nasty threatening look, and Belle ran off. And Belle was intimidated enough by Sona that she didn’t go after Klaus at all.

So I started letting them all out when I was in the study. I know, I know, it wasn’t neutral territory. But the method seemed to be working. Bonding really is an art, not a science, so I just went with the flow. It then reached a point where I felt comfortable going downstairs to eat or watch TV, but I was still within earshot.

I thought it would take a long time for the relationship to move from tolerance to affection. After all, it took 8 months for that to happen between Belle and Palmer. If I didn’t have Faye Levine as my witness, I’m not sure anyone would believe me: It was less than a week before we caught Belle and Sona lounging together and saw Sona lick Belle’s face! Wow! I can’t put into words how happy that moment made me feel. A happy fivesome! I quickly used up the batteries in my digital camera snapping photos of the big pile of snuggling rabbits.

Sadly, just a couple of months later, beautiful Belle was struck down by intestinal torsion and we lost her within 24 hours. Watching her four rabbit friends view her body and say good-bye with a few last ear-licks was quite poignant. We all miss her and treasure the time we had with her. Jackson has been diagnosed with early-stage kidney problems and is being treated with Vitamin D hormone. He is responding well. Sona is amazingly healthy for her nine years and spends her days keeping her two boys in line. Although Palmer has some dental issues he is otherwise happy and healthy.

Unfortunately, I’m not in the financial position to officially adopt three special-needs rabbits, but they will have a permanent place with me. With the help of our chapter, we will be able to provide for all their medical needs.
How can your holiday and everyday shopping benefit the House Rabbit Society?

Who hasn’t uttered the words “I wish there was something I could do to help”? Now you can help. Start shopping! At www.iGive.com/HRS-MDDCVA, you can buy your holiday gifts or everyday items and help rabbits at the same time.

Joining iGive is FREE—no invisible costs or tricky obligations. Shop at the more than 550 stores at the Mall at iGive—such as Barnes & Noble, Eddie Bauer, Lands’ End, Brookstone, Adidas, and Expedia.com—and a percentage of each purchase is donated to our HRS chapter.

With so many choices at iGive, there is something for everyone!

Join now at www.iGive.com/HRS-MDDCVA

Information is subject to change. Visit www.iGive.com for current details.

igive.com Holdings, LLC