

SAN DIEGO RABBIT NEWS

WINTER 2004

What's Inside

Rabbit Rescues

Teen likes to win over "difficult" rabbits...2

Valued Volunteer

Diane Calkins...3

Calendar

Upcoming events...6-7

Donor Recognition

Their contributions sustain the chapter...7

Adoptable Rabbits

Foster bunnies who need homes...8

New Office Hours

How volunteers can and do make a difference...10-11

Holiday Party

Photos tell the story...12

Hay Sources

Updated list of where to buy hay, CareFresh...14

Order Form

Membership and HRS products by mail...15

Getting to Know Thumper

Rabbits don't meow, bark or speak. Well actually, they do speak. They speak their own language. A language we humans must learn in order to communicate with them proficiently — or at the very least, understand their behavior.

As HRS educators, we get calls and e-mails nearly every day asking about a certain behavior someone's rabbit is displaying. The human is usually confused, frustrated or simply puzzled by what her rabbit is doing. In an attempt to interpret the puzzling activity, we ask questions and listen to how the person describes the activity. This is a very important step as the human may only be describing this "annoying activity," but not describing the situation the rabbit was in when it occurred — what was going on in that rabbit's world at that moment. We ask the age of the rabbit, whether he has been fixed (there are plenty of interesting behaviors if the rabbit is not fixed!), how big his cage is, amount of run time each day, health of the rabbit, activity level or changes in the home, etc. All of this plays a part in the rabbit's life and his reaction to it.

Some rabbits appear very shy, others bold and curious, but it is the nature of the rabbit to be cautious and careful. In the wild, they are an animal that is easily preyed upon, so they must be wary to survive.

Misconceptions abound when it comes to rabbits. Few rabbits like to be held, they may not come when called and they don't necessarily make good pets for children. In order to understand your rabbit for who he or she is, forget

all your expectations and focus on him as an individual. Be open to learning about him and let him teach you what he is all about.

Especially with a shy rabbit, the first rule in communicating is to get down on the floor. The second rule is also to get down on the floor. Rabbits must be approached at their level — the floor. Spend time getting to know him where he is comfortable. If he seems to avoid you at first, spend time just sitting quietly on the floor, not approaching him, not trying to pick him up. Rabbits are naturally wary, but also naturally curious. Eventually curiosity will win out and your rabbit will come over to investigate you.

As Amy Espie writes in her article, Honorary Rabbit, "It's easy to miss gestures of trust from a shy or aloof rabbit. Even friendly, confident bunnies are usually more subtle than cats. A timid rabbit may make a first step toward friendship simply by going about the business of being a rabbit in your presence — in effect, by ignoring you. This may not sound like much, from a human point of view, but it's a great effort for her to switch from ready-to-run to a more relaxed, peaceful state. Although our house rabbits have been domesticated for more than 500 years, they are still basically designed to respond quickly to all the information coming through their ears, nose, eyes and whiskers."

As with any animal, or humans for

(continued on page 4)

Local Animal Shelters

(call for hours of operation)

•San Diego County Department of Animal Services:

••Central, 5500 Gaines St., San Diego

619-236-4250

••North County, 2481 Palomar Airport Rd., Carlsbad

760-438-2312

••South County, 5821

Sweetwater Rd., Bonita

619-263-7741

• San Diego Humane Society,

5500 Gaines St., San Diego

619-299-7012

• Chula Vista Animal Shelter,

130 Beyer Way, Chula Vista

619-691-5123

• Rancho Coastal Humane

Society, 389 Requeza, Encinitas

760-753-6413

• North County Humane Society

& SPCA, 2905 San Luis Rey,

Oceanside

760-757-HELP

• Escondido Humane Society,

3450 East Valley Parkway,

Escondido

760-888-BARK

My Rabbit Rescues

For as long as I can remember, I have loved animals. I have had many pets, including chinchillas, birds, rats, guinea pigs, dogs and even a donkey. But, I have a special connection with my rabbits that is different from any of my other pets. Rabbits are great because they are so patient and easy going. All they want in life is love and acceptance. And, maybe a carrot or two!

Six months ago I was visiting a local shelter when I came across a beautiful Dutch rabbit. She was gray with a white chest and a white stripe on her nose. Attached to her cage was a piece of paper describing her. As I read her profile I realized she was not an ordinary rabbit. She had been at the shelter for over a year and she was described as being “difficult and cage protective.” But, there was something about this rabbit that intrigued me. I looked in her eyes and I saw she had spirit.

My 9-year-old rabbit had passed away several weeks before, so I asked my mom if we could adopt this rabbit. She said yes. I had never worked with a “difficult” rabbit before, but I knew from training my donkey that love and patience are all you need to work with an animal. We proceeded to the office where we completed all the paperwork necessary for the adoption.

We brought the rabbit home and I named her Wendy. After she had rested and eaten a bit I opened the cage door. Immediately, she growled and lunged toward the door. I did not try and pick her up—I did not even try to pet her. I just let her smell my hand. She lunged

once more at my hand but I did not flinch. She seemed confused. Unlike every other person she had ever met I was being patient with her. We repeated this exercise over and over again until finally she accepted my hand. Eventually she would let me pet her and even pick her up.

In one month Wendy had gone from a “difficult” rabbit to a delightful one. I held her often and she ran in my backyard every day. I later found out Wendy had belonged to a little girl who had neglected her. When she bit the little girl, the girl’s mother took Wendy to the county shelter. When a volunteer asked the mother, “What is one thing you like about this rabbit?” the mother replied, “Nothing.” No one had ever given Wendy a chance.

Unfortunately, four months after I adopted Wendy, she passed away suddenly from gastrointestinal stasis. I was devastated, but then I realized her last four months had been her best.

Two months later I was visiting a local humane society when I met a lovely HRS volunteer and we began discussing my experience with Wendy. I explained that I liked working with “difficult” rabbits and I asked her if she knew of any. She told me there was a rabbit very similar to Wendy at another shelter.

The next day my mom and sister and I went to see this rabbit. She was a large beautiful rabbit with white, brown and black fur. I fell in love with her. We adopted her and I named her Rita. Rita and I have become great friends and all it took was patience and time.

Unfortunately, there are many rabbits like Wendy and Rita.

Fortunately, all it takes to fix them is love and patience. In our hectic society today people forget how useful love and patience are. It took a rabbit to remind me of this.

by Kelley Schiffman (age 15)



Kelley and Wendy the rabbit.

Valued Volunteer: Diane Calkins

This time our intrepid Valued Volunteer correspondent, Debra Doerfler, interviews fellow North County volunteer Diane Calkins.

DD: How did you get involved with the House Rabbit Society?

DC: In the late '80s I started volunteering at the Central animal control shelter. At that time, very few rabbits were brought in, probably because people just let them go rather than bothering to take them to a shelter. But I'll never forget going into the "sleeper" room, a place I dreaded, to get a leash, and there on the table was a beautiful white bunny. It brought home the fact that every kind of animal is at risk.

After almost three years, I decided that getting a few animals out the door to, one hoped, permanent homes wasn't really the answer. Instead we needed to deal with the larger problem: too many animals born, not enough homes. Several former shelter volunteers and other people joined to form SNAP (Spay Neuter Action Project) to develop ways to solve that problem. At about the same time, I started editing an adoption newspaper called "Muttmatchers Messenger" and met Libby Donovan (former HRS chapter manager) who was doing rabbit rescue on her own.

As I look back, people coming together at that time and forming groups like SNAP, HRS, Feral Cat Coalition and others really changed the fortunes of companion animals in our county for the better.

As an HRS volunteer I've worked as a shelter volunteer, fostered bunnies and now provide hay and other supplies from our little brown shed with the bunny on the door. That's the best volunteer job I've ever had, despite the fact that the hay shed sometimes seems like a demanding, starving infant always having to be filled. The vast majority of the people who buy supplies are wonderful and care deeply about

their rabbits and guinea pigs.

DD: What do you enjoy most about being part of the HRS group?

DC: Of all the groups I've been involved in, SNAP and HRS have been the most positive forces for change. Both groups have also avoided, for the most part, the in-fighting that is not uncommon among animal welfare organizations. Best of all, these are nice, smart, funny people who are always there for each other.

DD: Tell me about your favorite rescue story.

DC: That has to be Izzy, who came to me shortly after I lost a tiny, 8-ounce foster. She'd been found in the street and had an abscess, probably from a cat bite. Even though I'd only had her for two or three days, I was devastated. Fortunately another needy baby, this time a little white one with ears going every which way, turned up.

Despite the fact that he was also tiny and had the worst case of fur mites I've ever seen, he thrived. He ate everything in sight and gained an ounce a day. And what a character, full of mischief but friendly with everyone, people, dogs, cats and other rabbits. When I think of Izzy, I think of the photo I took of him on his hind legs in the vegetable garden, one ear up, one ear down, trying to wash his face with his dirty paws.

Best of all, he was adopted by a couple, Kathy and David Carlson, who absolutely adore him. We had a reunion last spring when we found ourselves at the specialty hospital waiting for appointments with Dr. Tony Basher. Izzy developed cataracts and has had



Izzy

Holiday Wrap-Up

Many thanks to our HRS volunteers who worked at Barnes & Noble wrapping holiday gifts. They raised more than \$200 with their efforts.

Spay-Neuter Update

The San Diego HRS has spayed or neutered more than 270 rabbits both from our local animal shelters and those in HRS foster care. These 270 rabbits will be more likely to stay in their adoptive homes and will not be adding to the pet overpopulation problem. Your donations help the HRS continue this important work. Thank you!

(continued on page 4)

Getting to Know Thumper

(continued from page 1)

that matter, each has his or her own personality. Some are active and crave attention. Some are shy or aloof. If a rabbit is shy, you need to make an

Monroe

Monroe is a neutered New Zealand male who is currently available for adoption. Monroe is typical of a shy rabbit who is just waiting to feel secure enough to show us his true personality. He has already made great progress simply by being in foster care and is getting more brave each day. He now greets his foster Mom at the side of the pen for veggies! Monroe is sweet and gentle and may make a good companion choice for a gentle female rabbit. If you are interested in adopting Monroe, call 619-718-7777 or e-mail MEWHRS@aol.com.



effort to interact with him. Although shy rabbits may become more sociable with time, do not expect a totally different personality. This seemingly reserved behavior is actually more common and “rabbit-like” than the interactive rabbit of folklore who plays with children.

Tips to win over a shy rabbit:

- Sit quietly on the floor with him in a small room. Do not reach out to pet

Valued Volunteer

(continued from page 3)

successful surgery in both eyes. Nothing makes a foster mom happier than to see one of their little charges in the hands of people like the Carlsons.

DD: Tell us a little non-rabbit related bit about yourself.

DC: It's probably not a huge secret, but I'm a baseball fanatic and plan my schedule around games. The worst time of the year is after the World Series ends — no baseball, dark early, cold. But there's hope, as Padres pitchers and catchers report to Peoria, Ariz., for spring training on Feb. 15.

him or pick him up, just sit with him. A slice of apple or banana may help entice him to visit you. See if he will eat it from your hand without running away.

- Allow him to investigate you. He may smell you, hop over your leg or nibble your pant leg, but don't disturb his investigation. Let him get comfortable just being around you.

- After several days of quiet bonding, see if he will allow you to pet him on the top of his head or better yet, lie down and go face to face with him — that's how rabbits approach each other. See if he will allow you to approach him face to face. Note: If your rabbit is protective of his space, this could result in a serious bite to the face, so decide which approach would be better for the both of you.

- You can also try bringing the newspaper into the room to read. You might be amazed that this once-shy rabbit has an interest in the financial section! Let him play by tearing up the paper. Let him be a rabbit in your presence.

- Toys and more toys. Toys can build confidence and help displace anxiety. Observe what he likes to do. Is he a buncher? A digger? A chewer? See this page for great toy ideas:

www.rabbit.org/chapters/san-diego/behavior/toys.html

- Increase freedom and space as he becomes more secure. With time, you will start to see a braver bunny.

The first time your rabbit nudges you or grooms you, the process of trust has begun and a special honor has been bestowed upon you. He is communicating with you as he would communicate with a fellow rabbit.

What is a “difficult rabbit”?

Aggressive? Cranky? Nippy? Destructive? These are all traits we humans find difficult to understand and deal with. In most cases, rabbits have a genuine reason for acting the way they do. Perhaps their history dealt them neglect and they are now

South County Update

Because of changes on State Route 54 east, there is no longer a Sweetwater exit to the South County Shelter. The nearest exit is Briarwood.

Directions:

From 805 or 5 either direction...
54 East

Right or South on to the
Briarwood exit

Down the hill to a T in the Road
(stop sign)

Left on Sweetwater Road to 5821
Sweetwater Rd.

From East County, Jamacha, Hwy
94 or 125...

125 South

Left or South on to Briarwood
Down the hill to a T in the Road
(stop sign)

Left on Sweetwater Road to 5821
Sweetwater Rd.

Sweetwater Road dead ends at
the shelter.

mistrustful, maybe they have not been fixed yet and their hormones are playing a part, or maybe their human is untrained or unwilling to understand their needs.

First, have your rabbit examined by a rabbit experienced vet. Once in a while, aggression can be related to a health concern such as an imbedded foxtail, ear mites or other health concerns.

Next, its important to realize that what we view as aggression is simply “communication” from the rabbits point of view. Since rabbits cannot bark or meow, they may nip to communicate. This communication may be telling you to put them down or even to pet them more — it’s a way to get your attention and it usually works! They may nudge or dig at you first and if that does not get the desired effect, the nip is next.

Some rabbits act aggressively out of fear and some rabbits are territorial of their space. Sometimes these behaviors can be overcome, but most likely you will need to learn how to approach the rabbit in a way that will not provoke this behavior. This is for your benefit as well as hers.

If she is cage protective, try opening the cage door and letting her come out on her own, not removing her from the cage. If your cage does not have a side door, purchase an appropriate cage for her needs. Be sure to let her out of the cage when you fill the food bowls or clean the litter box. Don’t provoke her by doing these things while she is in her cage. Spaying or neutering your rabbit will also help diminish cage-protective tendencies.

Another tip is to try setting her up in a large exercise pen instead of a cage and make sure she has plenty of run time each day to burn off excess energy. If the aggressive response is fear based, try limiting her freedom at first to a small space such as one room or even a

cage with a pen around it. Add several hidey-boxes or chairs that she can go under to feel secure, but not hide from you completely as might be the case if she can get under a bed. Let her approach you on her terms. Do not chase her to pet her.

Another common provocation is to present your hand for a rabbit to smell as you might do with a dog. To a rabbit, this is very confusing and may instigate a slap with her front paws or a growl. The reason behind this is that rabbits do not see well close up so your hand is startling to them. Ever

Getting bitten can be frightening but understanding and anticipating your rabbits needs is the best defense.

notice that a chunk of carrot set down close to their face gets bumped and passed over until they realize exactly where it is? In short, do not present your hand to a rabbit. If you want to pet her, place your hand firmly on top of her head and pet her. Hesitant motions are confusing to a rabbit.

Even strange smells or smells of another rabbit can make your rabbit act

Double Your Donation

Does your employer have a charitable matching plan in which they will match your gift to a recognized charity? Many large and some small companies have them. Check with your human resources department. The House Rabbit Society, San Diego Chapter is a registered 501 (c) 3 nonprofit animal rescue organization, which should qualify your gift for matching under these plans.

Rabbit Care Resources

- www.rabbit.org — House Rabbit Society
- www.sandiegorabbits.org — San Diego House Rabbit Society
- www.morfz.com/rabrefs.html — Rabbit Resources
- www.catsandrabbitsandmore.com — Cats & Rabbits & More

Georgia

This gorgeous New Zealand black is an example of a “difficult” rabbit who is waiting patiently for an understanding and rabbit-savvy home. Georgia loves to be pet but we have learned not to approach her in her cage as she is very cage protective. She may also nip you if your hand rests too long near the side of her face — perhaps she doesn’t see well from the side.

Georgia loves to explore the house, dance around and then lay down for pets — lots of pets. She’s a confident and smart rabbit who is looking for a home where she will be admired for the beautiful rabbit that she is. If you’re interested in adopting Georgia, call 619-718-7777 or e-mail MEWHRS@aol.com.



in ways he would not otherwise act. Hand lotion, perfume and another bunny’s scent are all possible annoyances.

(continued on page 6)

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

Saturday, Feb. 21

HRS office open 12 - 3pm, 4750 Cass St. in Pacific Beach. Drop by to purchase hay, CareFresh, toys and other supplies for your rabbit. Proceeds benefit HRS.

Sunday, Feb. 22

North County Adoption Day. Call 619-718-7777 for more info

MARCH

Monday, March 1

Volunteer Meeting to discuss Open House, 7 p.m., 4750 Cass St., Pacific Beach.

Saturday, March 6

HRS office open 12 - 3pm, 4750 Cass St., Pacific Beach. Drop by to purchase hay, CareFresh, toys and other supplies for your rabbit. Proceeds benefit HRS.

Sunday, March 7

Pacific Beach Adoption Day, call 619-718-7777 for more info.

Saturday, March 20

HRS office open 12 - 3pm, 4750 Cass St., Pacific Beach. Drop by to purchase hay, CareFresh, toys and other supplies for your rabbit. Proceeds benefit HRS.

Saturday, March 27

OPEN HOUSE - 12 noon - 4pm. 4750 Cass Street in Pacific Beach. See page 16 for more information.

Wednesdays,

March 17, 24, 31

"Bunny Basics & Rabbit Habits" class, a three-session class taught by HRS Educator Debra Doerfler. Class will include housing, diet, behavior, litter box training, bunny-proofing & more. 6:30-8 pm, \$27 for adults, \$13 for children with registered adults. \$5 material fee due in first class. Located in Escondido. For more information or to register for class, go to www.ci.escondido.ca.us/recreation/enrich/adults/personal/1534.html or call 760-839-4691.

Getting to Know Thumper

(continued from page 5)

Is she aggressive or just playing? As Amy Espie writes, "Play behaviors in animals (humans included) have several functions. One is for youngsters to practice skills they will need as adults. Kittens' primary games are Chase it, Catch it and Kill it. Bunnies, being low on the food chain, play Elude the Captor, as well as Court the Potential Mate, and a variety of King (or Queen) of the Warren games. Thumper may invite you to chase him by zooming up to you, nipping or nudging your ankle, then racing off with a sassy switching of his tail. He may further entice you by shaking his head." Remember, nipping is communication. This tiny little being is not necessarily coming after you aggressively.

If you are bitten by your furry friend, try letting out a shrill EEEKK !! See what her response is. Sometimes no response works well, too, depending on the rabbit. If you let her growl and paw at you, she may eventually realize that you are not intimidated and that she is not getting the desired effect. This may take time and more bravery on your part, but it's worth a try. Try to determine though if either of these responses is more stressful to her. Observe what works the best for you and your rabbit.

Never hit a rabbit! This will only make her more aggressive or do bodily harm. Swatting her on the nose is also a no-no. You need to provide a safe and reassuring environment, not an environment where she is fearful. Getting bitten can be frightening, but understanding and anticipating your rabbit's needs is the best defense.

Particularly destructive rabbits

need a job. If your rabbit seems to chew everything in sight, your first step is to bunny-proof your home and then offer different toys to keep her entertained. It will also help to limit her freedom at first and give her a structured, regular routine. Sadly, we get calls from people who have given their rabbit total freedom in the house and, of course, the rabbit has destroyed the walls, carpet — you name it. End result? They want us to take their rabbit. The better solution is to spend time training your rabbit. Let her know what is acceptable

to chew, and provide many chewing options. And, set the rules early on so you don't have to spend time undoing bad habits. Age plays a

role here too, and rabbits usually mellow a bit after the first couple of years, so hang in there!

The first time your rabbit seeks you out without the enticement of banana, allows you to pet her without a grumpy growl or hops onto the couch to see what you are doing, you'll know you are on the right track and that she now feels more comfortable in your presence.

Gaining the trust of a shy rabbit will take time, but it will be very rewarding to see his personality blossom. Gaining the respect of a "difficult rabbit" will not be easy, but if you take the time to understand rabbit behavior, your rabbit's history and her current situation with you, you should find yourself at a point of mutual respect while having a greater understanding of this precious and complex animal.

By Michelle Wilhelms, San Diego HRS chapter manager

Additional web sites to browse should you need more insight, tips and ideas on the topics discussed in this article..

www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/shy.html

www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/aggression.html

www.rabbit.org/chapters/san-diego/behavior/toys.html

www.rabbit.org/chapters/san-diego/behavior/bunnyproofing.html

www.wisconsinhrs.org/Articles/

The%20Biting%20Rabbit.htm

www.rabbit.org/journal/2-8/honorary-rabbit.html

So Many of You Help Year 'Round

The closing of 2003 brought out the generosity of many caring people. San Diego HRS is very grateful to have such supportive members. We'd like to especially thank these generous donors who gave to San Diego HRS throughout the year. We could not accomplish everything we do without your support. Thank you so much!

- John & Kristi Koivula
- Walter Arnstein, Inc.
- Mary Wrighton
- Alan and Luarn Sorkin
- John Weir
- Jason and Lisa Reich
- The Jones family
- Donna Choy and Ryan Nakawatase
- Kristin Tow
- The Zamans
- The Casterline family
- Francesca Bestetti
- Doug and Michelle Beale
- Charles and Wendy Alvarez
- LeRoy and Jacqueline Dietz
- Mary Wrighton
- Paul and Rachel Tanton
- Thomas Roach
- Lisa Foland
- Lynette Feely
- Larry Dudus
- Thomas Fledderjohn
- Jill and Robert Gibbs
- Mary Ann Galliher
- The Paulsons
- Elizabeth Hartshorn
- Karin Ingvarsdotter
- Dell Ann Maurino
- Dorothy McCorkle
- Debbie Magidson and Harry Copeland
- Marie Milliner in honor of Tina Otis
- Elizabeth Mariscal in honor of Gerry Streff
- Shelly and Steve Threan in honor of Judith Pierce
- Melissa and Geoff Downes and Stella in honor of Michelle Wilhelms

- Dennis Dudus and Suzanne Bagozi in memory of Shelly Dudus
- George and Victoria Cramer in memory of Victoria's Dad, Max Wells.
- Ark Antiques donated to help with our "spay/neuter efforts and to help you continue all the good work you do." Stop by and see the beautiful items in their store, 7643 Girard Ave., La Jolla. Proceeds benefit animal rescue organizations.
- Scott Badong, along with his employer Cox Communications and its corporate matching program.
- Tim and Kathy Dowdle for donating an answering machine/telephone.
- Larry Nixon for building a table-top display for the toys we have for sale in our office. Thanks so much, it's beautiful!
- Sara and Digby (adopted by Fred and Jennifer Beyer) saved their allowance and donated to HRS along with a new printer and ink cartridges.
- Kathy and Pete Rivas, who recently moved to Tennessee, for volunteering for the San Diego HRS. They helped out at many educational functions and volunteered at the North County Humane Society and S.P.C.A. Kathy also spent many hours updating the shelter rabbits for us on catsandrabbitsandmore.com. Many rabbits are in new homes today because of their efforts. We wish them well and thank them for their time spent volunteering for SD HRS.
- Welcome to Alison Leinbach who has taken over the catsandrabbitsandmore.com updates and is doing a fabulous job. Alison is also the new official photographer for HRS adoption days and other events. See her pictures of the holiday party on page 12. And, she and George just adopted their third rabbit! Thanks so much!

CALENDAR

APRIL

Saturday, April 3

HRS office open 12 - 3pm, 4750 Cass St., Pacific Beach. Drop by to purchase hay, CareFresh, toys and other supplies for your rabbit. Proceeds benefit HRS.

Sunday, April 4

Pacific Beach Adoption Day, call 619-718-7777 for more info.

Saturday, April 17

HRS office open 12 - 3pm, 4750 Cass St., Pacific Beach. Drop by to purchase hay, CareFresh, toys and other supplies for your rabbit. Proceeds benefit HRS.

Sunday, April 18

North County Adoption Day - Call 619-718-7777 for more info.

Sunday, April 25

Earth Day - All day event in Balboa Park. Visit our booth along with hundreds more. Volunteers needed! 619-718-7777.

Plan ahead...

JUNE

Saturday, June 12

New Volunteer Meeting on Saturday, June 12. This meeting is for those who have been thinking about volunteering and want to know more about the opportunities we have available. Stay tuned for more info or call 619-718-7777.

Volunteer Meeting Change

Please note that our Volunteer Meetings are now scheduled more specifically around upcoming events, instead of every first Monday. Meetings are still open to anyone who would like to participate.

Adopting from the HRS

Did you know that rabbits crave companionship and are typically most happy when part of a pair? If you have only one rabbit, go to www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/multiple.html and learn about the advantages of getting a companion. HRS volunteers will be happy to help you find an appropriate companion for your bunny and guide you through the bonding process.

Unless noted otherwise, call 619-718-7777 to learn more about any of these, or other, rabbits.

The HRS adoption fee is \$50 (\$80 for a pair), which includes a spayed or neutered rabbit, free vet exam, box of hay, coupon for another box of hay and a one-year membership in the San Diego House Rabbit Society. Supplies are also available at HRS adoption days.

Double the Fun

Experienced bunny families will tell you that bunnies usually prefer to have a friend, and caring for a bonded pair is just as easy as for one! Visit the HRS website to learn more: www.sandiegorabbits.org.



Rabbits Who Need Homes

Last fall, the HRS got a call from a local shelter saying that a mother rabbit and her newborns had been “dropped off” in the night. Because they were full to capacity, the shelter asked if we could take them in and care for them. So, Boots and her newborn kits were taken into HRS foster care.

Boots came to HRS in bad shape; she was malnourished, and her fur was thin and spotty, with scabs all over and a bad case of fleas and ear mites.

In the five months that we’ve had her, Boots has grown to be a lovely young adult and her babies — all girls — have grown into frisky young ladies. All are now spayed and ready for adoption.

Boots is now ready to find a family who will continue to love and care for her. She is good with her litterbox, enjoys being pet, and is getting used to being held a bit. She would likely be best in a home with adults or older children (10+), and most especially with a neutered bunny boy as her constant companion. Boots is about 4-5 pounds, and a little over 1 year old.

Ronan is the largest of the girls, but since her spay has become quite timid. She needs to learn to trust humans again, and we are working diligently on that by giving her a lot of one-on-one time. She may do just fine as a companion bun, but is probably too timid at this point to go to a new home alone, unless it is an adult home willing to work with her to earn her love and trust. She is a beautiful girl, solid black, with lovely shiny fur and a keen intelligence.



She’s a bit difficult to handle, but she loves to run, jump, and dance in wild gyrations around the room.

Here’s **Toe**, so named because her two white toes allowed her foster family to tell her apart from her sisters. Miss Toe is a bit of an anomaly; she has the funniest fur. Part of it is short and silky black, and part of it is long (angora-like) and gray.



Who knows? Her daddy must be responsible, but we never met him so we don’t know what he looks like. Toe is very sweet, a bit shy, but does love to be cuddled. We would like to see Toe go to a home as a companion to a sweet bunny boy who will treat her nicely. And only families with older (10+) children, please.

Pepe is a 3 year-old Standard/Lop mix male. Pepe is an active boy who loves to have his nose rubbed,



but he’s not yet comfortable with being held. He’d rather you hang out on the floor with him and watch TV. Pepe has lived with older children (10 yrs+) and had a cat friend with whom he liked to play. He does love his chew toys, so his new family will need to be sure to bunnyproof well and give Pepe all the great chew toys he loves.

This handsome Dutch boy is **Oreo**.

This young bunny boy was left at the shelter with an abscess in his eye. In



the end, the eye had to be removed, but Oreo is doing much better now and gets along well with one eye. He is active, loves attention and pets, and enjoys playing with toys. We are looking for an adult home with people who have had some bunny experience.

Miss **Lilly** has a spunky attitude and a friendly personality. Lilly would like a home

where she can have lots of run time, and someone special to play with. At this time in her life we don't feel that she's a good companion choice, as she's just a bit too bossy and



has a tendency to nip (rabbits, not humans), making the boys really mad! She would do well in an adult home or one with older children (10 or older) who have plenty of time to spend with her.

Marlow and **Poppy** are a gorgeous bonded pair of Jersey Woolies. Marlow,

right, is a male, about 4-6 months old and just under 3 pounds. Poppy, his lady friend, is



also about 3 lbs. Because of their long fur and delicate size, these bunnies will need an adult home with someone who is comfortable handling and brushing small bunnies. The good news is that because they are so petite, brushing should only take 20 minutes 2-3 times a week.

Lizetta is a beautiful young girl, about 2 years old. This sweet girl is easy to handle, friendly, funny, and has wonderful young bunny energy. Lizetta is very active and would like a lot of run time and interaction to keep her happy. She also is friendly with cats and well-behaved dogs.



Honey Bunny is a sweet rabbit who is about 3 years old and spayed.

She was recently diagnosed with a cataract and glaucoma which necessitated removal of her left eye. She has been treated for e.

cuniculi also and is doing very well. Honey Bunny is playful, although a bit shy, and loves to be held. The perfect



home for Honey is with adults who have the time to spend doting on her.

Inca is a female black standard rabbit, about 4 years old. She has become more relaxed in foster care, alert and interested in what is going on around her. She has been one

great rabbit with her litter box and takes her time eating her veggies, hay and pellets.

Inca is an elegant little lady and wants to be part of a family that will treat her gently and show her a lot of tender love.



Volunteers Keep the HRS Going

The San Diego Chapter of the House Rabbit Society gained “chapter status” from National HRS in 1990. Since then, many volunteers have helped our chapter grow to where it is today with membership just over 650 strong and volunteers helping out in nearly every local animal shelter or humane society. As support grows for our work, we are able to offer more and more services to our community.

The San Diego HRS web site, www.sandiegorabbits.org, as well as www.catsandrabbitsandmore.com have become much-relied-upon sites for rabbit adoption. This is because of the dedicated HRS volunteers who keep the sites updated. Many rabbits have these wonderful volunteers to thank for their new homes.

In 2003, San Diego HRS was able to spay or neuter more than 265 shelter and foster rabbits! This is one of the most important accomplishments for our chapter this year. These 265 rabbits are 265 rabbits who will now have a better chance of staying in their adoptive homes while not adding to our pet over-population problem. We could not have done this without your donations and volunteer time.

Everything we do requires volunteers: returning hundreds of phone calls and e-mails, running ads and press releases, paying bills and keeping track of the accounting, coordinating printing of handouts as well as premiums, packing hay for distribution, scheduling events and volunteers, screening potential adopters, working educational events, volunteering in shelters, maintaining the membership database and website, delivering supplies and transporting rabbits to the vets, fostering rabbits and even putting together this newsletter. So as you can imagine, we always need more volunteers!

Additionally, our office in Pacific

Beach is now open to the public for supplies the first and third Saturday of each month. Soon, we would like to be open every Saturday, so additional volunteers are needed for this as well. Our office is fast becoming a popular place for people to pick up proper

Volunteer Meeting Change

Please note the changes to our Volunteer Meeting schedule. Our meetings are now scheduled more specifically around upcoming events. Be sure to check the calendar on pages 6-7.

Foster, Sanctuary Update

In 2003, San Diego HRS was able to take in 80 foster rabbits, while bringing our total number of rabbits in sanctuary care to nine. Sadly, we witnessed the passing of four sanctuary rabbits in 2003.

Top 10 Reasons to Shop at the HRS Office

- 1. Purchases support the full range of HRS activities.**
- 2. Great prices. Hay is \$8/box (tax included).**
- 3. More great prices. CareFresh is just \$14 for a large bag, instead of \$19+ at retail stores. \$12 each if you buy 3 or more.**
- 4. Nail trimming for a donation. Get your rabbit's nails trimmed by HRS volunteers and, if you want, learn how to do it yourself.**
- 5. A chance to ask questions of experienced rabbit people.**
- 6. Lots of ooohs, ahhhhs and kisses for your bunny.**
- 7. Products specifically for rabbits. You don't have to hunt through shelves full of stuff for cats and dogs, and guess what would be right for your rabbit.**
- 8. Rabbit-themed decorator items.**
- 9. HRS premiums without the shipping charge.**
- 10. You're in PB on a Saturday. Good excuse to go shopping, out to eat or to the beach!**

rabbits supplies while helping support the work we do.

We are very grateful to all the HRS volunteers and supporters who give their time and financial assistance to help further our chapters goals of rescue, adoption and education. We could not do it without you. Thank you for helping us spread the word and for helping us find homes for the many rabbits who come through the system yearly.

If you are reading this and think you'd like to get more involved with

HRS, please attend our New Volunteer Meeting on June 12, 12 noon-2 p.m. at our office. Call 619-718-7777 for more details.

Additional volunteer and donation information can be found at www.rabbit.org/chapters/san-diego/aboutus/index.html.

With your support, San Diego HRS will continue to grow and help the rabbits in our community.

By Michelle Wilhelms, San Diego HRS chapter manager

Carpet Elves

Thank you to two fine companies — Coles Carpet and Floorsource in San Marcos — for donating carpet samples for foster and shelter rabbits to sit on.

Expanded Hours, More Products at HRS Office

***Open 1st & 3rd Saturdays
12 noon - 3 p.m.***

***4750 Cass St., Pacific Beach
4 blocks north of Garnet Ave.***

***Boxed fresh hay • CareFRESH • water bowls • cages •
litter pans • nail clippers • San Diego HRS T-shirts, caps,
and other fund-raising items • House Rabbit Handbook •
toys • framed prints • and much more***



Wish List

We can use the following items:

- paper towels
- gallons of white vinegar
- new carpet samples
- returned hay boxes in good condition

Donate items to HRS by bringing them by our Office. See the calendar on pages 6-7 or ad on page 11 for the address and the dates our office is open.

Happy Holiday Party

This year's holiday party was a great success, raising more than \$1,000 for our local chapter. We estimate at least 75 people attended this year. There was great food and adorable rabbits. It was wonderful to see so many supporting members having a

good time! Many thanks to all the HRS volunteers who helped out this evening, and also to Dorothy Mattos and Sherry Larson who donated several very nice items for our auction!

If you missed this event, here are some photos by Alison Leinbach.



We Want To Hear From You

Have you adopted from SD HRS? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Send us a note or photo of your happy house bun to be included in the SD Rabbit News. It makes our day to hear our adopted foster buns are doing well!



Happy Adoption: Bernie

Bernie (formerly Mr. Bunny) was adopted by Alison, an HRS member and volunteer. Alison adopted her other bunnies, Bebe and Buddy, through HRS and has been so delighted with them, she decided to adopt another. She chose Bernie because he's such a friendly guy who likes to be around people. She reports that on his first day in his new home, he seemed at ease almost right away. He showed an immediate interest in becoming friends with Alison's sweet dog, Boo. Bernie also decided that he really likes the futon in his room. Initially he chose to lie underneath it, but soon realized it's much softer if he lies on top of it instead. During playtime, he likes to run across it doing bunny dances.



Bernie and Alison

HRS Office Open 1st, 3rd Saturdays

The HRS office in Pacific Beach is now open the first and third Saturdays of each month from 12 noon - 3 p.m. for your convenience. Drop by to purchase fresh hay, pellets and other supplies and goodies for your rabbit. Proceeds benefit SD HRS. The office is located at 4750 Cass St., 4 blocks north of Garnet Avenue, in Pacific Beach.

Happy Adoption: Patty and Paco

I am grateful for Paco and Patty because they bring a lot of joy into my life. They are fun to watch when they do their cute little bunny dance at feeding time, and they are willing to cuddle with you. What's really funny is when you get the pellets out at night, Patty (if she's in her cottage) starts running around the box. Back in, and back out, back in, and back out. Back out through a different hole that is!

Thank you for letting us adopt Paco and Patty, and thank you for training us. I am really glad you let me help take care of the foster babies. Well, they are not babies anymore!

From Sarah Wentworth

Editor's note: Sarah Wentworth and her mother, Ann, have become great foster bunny socializers and even helped out recently at the Barnes & Noble gift wrapping that HRS did during the holidays. Sarah also made an informational display about HRS for all to see! A big thank you to Sarah and Ann for their time and commitment to the rabbits.

Web Resources Available 24 Hours

Ever wonder where you can go to get accurate information about your rabbit's diet? Good bunny-proofing tips? A list of great toys to keep your rabbit busy?

Check out the San Diego House Rabbit Society web site! We work hard to keep our web site updated regularly and to include new items of interest. Go to www.sandiegorabbits.org to find out about all these great topics and more:

- Diet information from the Carrot Cafe
- Great tips on bunny proofing your home
- A large list and photos of bunny-safe toys
- Bonding tips for you and your rabbit's new companion
- Hay and CareFresh distribution locations that support HRS
- A list of rabbit-savvy vets
- The HRS event calendar
- Darling rabbits looking for homes
- New HRS T-shirts and other premiums

HRS Volunteers Get Thankful Paw Award!

HRS shelter volunteers Tina Otis and Marisa Castro each received a "Thankful Paw" award from the County Department of Animal Services recently for their work in helping the rabbits at both the Central and South County Shelters.

Thank you, ladies, for your time spent caring for these rabbits. You have made a difference!

Silver Rabbit

Be sure to see our beautiful new sterling silver rabbit and heart prayer box. Description and photos on www.sandiegorabbits.org. Order online or purchase at our office.

Who We Are

The San Diego Rabbit News is published by the nonprofit House Rabbit Society, San Diego Chapter. Every reasonable effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information in the News, however the editors and House Rabbit Society assume no responsibility for unintentional errors and omissions.

The content of this newsletter has not been reviewed by the national House Rabbit Society, which is in no way responsible for its content.

There is no expressed or implied recommendation for any vendor/sponsor named in this newsletter.

Contact Us

Mail comments and suggestions to the San Diego Rabbit News, P.O. Box 2628, Spring Valley, CA 91979 or e-mail to the addresses below.

Chapter Manager
Michelle Wilhelms
MEWHRS@aol.com

Newsletter Editor
Kristin Tow
funnybunny@dslextreme.com

Website Editor
Judith Pierce
pierceja@cox.net

San Diego Rabbits Online
Amy Spintman
SDiegoHRS@aol.com

Website

www.sandiegorabbits.org

Correction

Bunnyfest photos on our website were taken by Brian Vestyck.

Updated Hay, CareFRESH Sources

The House Rabbit Hay Exchange offers fresh hay and grasses at an affordable price. For just \$8 (\$8.62 with tax) you get a good-sized box filled with hay. Plan ahead. Don't let your hay supply run out before trying to buy more.

Hay sales by the sources below provide valuable income for the HRS. The money supports our spay/neuter efforts and the veterinary care for our foster and shelter bunnies.

Hay is boxed and distributed by volunteers. ***Our hay outlets do change occasionally, so please check this revised list for current hay sources.***

Central San Diego	Cabrillo Veterinary Hospital	619-224-9516
	HRS Office -- for open hours, see page 11	
East County	Rancho San Diego Animal Hospital	619-660-6767
North County	Diane Calkins	760-633-1564
	Acacia Animal Health Center	760-745-8115

The HRS office, some other sources here and many pet supply stores carry CareFRESH litter.

Rabbit Saves Diabetic From Coma

A diabetic man credits his giant pet rabbit with saving his life when he slipped into a coma.

Simon Steggall, 42, of Warboys in Cambridgeshire, said Dory, a one-and-a-half stone rabbit [21 lbs., probably a Flemish Giant], jumped on his chest and thumped furiously when he passed out while watching television.

Dory's odd behaviour caught the attention of Mr. Steggall's wife, Victoria, 32, an ambulance driver.

When her attempts to bring him round failed, she rang 999 for paramedics for help.

"I work for the ambulance service and I'm embarrassed that the rabbit spotted it before I did," Mrs. Steggall said.

Mr. Steggall said his wife thought he had simply nodded off.

"When I have one of these turns I can't speak or move, but I can still hear and I heard Victoria tell Dory to get down.

"Although she is a house rabbit,

she's not allowed on the furniture. The rabbit came up on my lap and started tapping and digging at my chest and looking at my face. That caught Victoria's attention and she realised something was wrong."

Mr. Steggall, a diabetic since childhood who has to inject insulin four times each day, said he did not get any warning when he was about to be unwell.

"One moment I am vertical and next minute I am waking up with a paramedic. It's like a flick

of a switch."

The couple have had Dory, a three-foot rabbit, for three months, but she is not the first pet to respond when he has a diabetic reaction.

Mr. Steggall said he once had a black Labrador who would cower in a corner when his blood sugar levels began to fall dangerously low, reminding him to do a blood test.

From BBC News, UK Division



Dory

ORDER FORM

Name _____ I'm interested in volunteering. Please call me.

Address _____ Apt. _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____ E-mail _____

ITEM	COLOR: 1st choice	2nd choice	SIZE	QTY	PRICE EACH	TOTAL
Stories Rabbits Tell, A Natural and Cultural History of a Misunderstood Creature , by Susan E. Davis, Margo DeMello, 320 pages, paperback					\$22	
SAN DIEGO RABBIT NEWS with 1-year San Diego chapter membership 1 YR <i>(San Diego membership does NOT include national membership; join national below)</i>				1 YR	\$10	no tax
National House Rabbit Society Membership <i>(Does not include local membership or San Diego's newsletter)</i>				1 YR	\$18	no tax
House Rabbit Handbook, 3rd edition					\$10	

Your purchases support HRS in San Diego

Caps — cotton baseball-style caps, one size with adjustable strap. Herman head design (upper right this page) or caffeine bunny. Apricot, aqua, blue, natural **\$12**

Clock motif T-shirt — Long-sleeve, imprinted in front in black. Gray or natural in S,M,L,XL,XXL; Sky blue or bright yellow in M,L,XL **\$18**

Clock motif T-shirt — Short-sleeve tee, imprinted center front in black. White or gray in S,M,L,XL,XXL **\$15**

Scoop-neck ladies T-shirt — Clock motif on short-sleeve T. Violet, light blue, light yellow S,M,L **\$15**

3-Rabbit T-shirt - Crew-neck short-sleeve tee with color illustrations on white backgrounds. Blue or natural in S,M,L,XL,XXL **\$15**

Scoop-neck ladies short-sleeve T. White, yellow or violet in S,M,L,XL **\$15**

3-Rabbit sweatshirt - Color illustrations on white backgrounds. Blue, purple or natural in S,M,L,XL **\$22**



"Clock" motif



HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY
"Caffeine bunny"



3-rabbit design

For delivery in Calif., add 7.75% sales tax ...

Postage & handling (see below)

Additional donation for San Diego rabbit rescue

TOTAL ENCLOSED

Postage & handling:
 Clothing / hats, totes, posters: Southern Cal delivery \$4 first item, \$1 each additional; all other areas, \$5 first item, \$1.50 each additional item.
 Grocery pads: 75¢ for one, 50¢ each additional.
 Books: \$2.40 each

Make checks payable to House Rabbit Society and mail with this order form to P. O. Box 2628, Spring Valley, CA 91979

NOTE: Quantities may be limited in some sizes and colors, so please indicate a second choice.

Save postage & handling — shop at the HRS office. See page 11.

San Diego Rabbit News
P. O. Box 2628
Spring Valley, CA 91979

*Check your expiration date
and renew early.*



Printed on recycled paper

Shelter Volunteers Needed

Do you have a few hours a month to volunteer at your local animal shelter? We need shelter volunteers in all areas of the county. Duties include cleaning cages, grooming and socializing rabbits, handing out veggies and hay; and updating HRS. Shelter volunteers must have some experience handling rabbits, be reliable and able to communicate with shelter staff and HRS volunteers.

If you are interested in helping at your local shelter, contact Michelle at 619-718-7777 for further information. The bunnies say thanks and hurry up with the carrots!

Online Update

Want to keep updated on the San Diego chapter activities by e-mail? Join our online update and get monthly updates sent right to your desktop. We post to this list only once or twice a month as important events come up, so don't worry, this is not a busy list. Join by sending a blank e-mail to: sandiegorabbitsonline-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or go to our website for a link, www.sandiegorabbits.org.

Standard Presort
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 51
San Diego, CA

Mark your calendar and join us for our

Open House Saturday, March 27 12 noon - 4 p.m.

**at the HRS office,
4750 Cass St., four blocks north of
Garnet Avenue in Pacific Beach.**

Purchase your rabbit supplies while you visit, and pick up new toys for your bunny. Enter to win prizes in our raffle, snack on some yummy food and visit with foster rabbits and HRS volunteers while you help support the rescue work of the House Rabbit Society.

See you there!

OPEN HOUSE