

SAN DIEGO RABBIT NEWS

SUMMER 2003

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Volunteers Make It Happen

Ever wonder how it all gets done — everything from fostering rabbits to writing this newsletter? And, have you ever wondered if there was some way that you, personally, could make a difference in your world?

Over the last 12 years or so, the San Diego HRS chapter has grown to be a very successful chapter because of our dedicated volunteers and terrific community support.

Amazingly though, we only have a core group of about 15 people who do it all, and another 20 or so who help out on occasion.

Of course, everyone's help is greatly appreciated but we really need more dedicated volunteers who can help out with our regular, ongoing activities which are necessary to make the work of this chapter successful.

With more than 500 members in the San Diego Chapter, we know there are people out there just waiting to make a difference in the lives of our rabbits. Can you commit to a few hours a week to help the rabbits? Perhaps you could help staff an education event at Petsmart? Hand out veggies to eager rabbits at a local shelter? Pack a few boxes of hay?

Come on! Give us a call or send us an e-mail. Help us help them! You'll be amazed how making a difference in the lives of these abandoned rabbits makes a real difference in yours.

Here are some of the many ways in which we need you:

Shelter Volunteer

Do you have a few hours a week to volunteer at your local animal shelter? We need shelter volunteers to help us care for the rabbits in all areas from Oceanside to Chula Vista and all shel-

ters in between. Duties include cleaning cages, grooming and socializing rabbits, transporting rabbits to vets, handing out veggies and hay, and keeping HRS updated as to the rabbits available.

Shelter volunteers must have some experience handling rabbits, be reliable and able to

communicate well with shelter staff and other HRS volunteers.

The presence of HRS volunteers in our shelters not only helps find homes for these rabbits, but also allows us to buy the rabbits a little time. This is what we are all about.

Education Events

This important activity helps keep HRS in the public eye and also helps the public learn more about rabbits. Typically, these events are held on a Saturday afternoon at Petsmart or other locations. You'll hand out HRS literature, talk with the public, perhaps sell a T-shirt along the way.

These events really help us spread the word about proper rabbit care. You'll share rabbit info with someone, they pass it on, and so on and so on... We can make a huge difference when we educate.



Buy a bunny
a little time

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CALENDAR

JULY

Saturday, July 26

Shelter Rabbit Adoption Day,
Encinitas Petsmart, 1034 No. El
Camino Real, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Sunday, July 27

North County HRS Adoption Day,
1-3 p.m., call 619-718-7777

AUGUST

Sunday, Aug. 3

Pacific Beach HRS Adoption Day,
11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Call 619-718-
7777

Monday, Aug. 4

Volunteers' Meeting, 4750 Cass
Street, Pacific Beach, 7 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 17

North County HRS Adoption Day,
1-3 p.m., call 619-718-7777

SEPTEMBER

Monday, Sept. 1

Volunteers' Meeting, 4750 Cass
Street, Pacific Beach, 7 p.m. Be
sure to attend for last minute
Bunnyfest information

Sunday, Sept. 7

Pacific Beach HRS Adoption Day,
11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Call 619-718-
7777

Sunday, Sept. 7

SD Pet Memorial Community
Fest, 8995 Crestmar Point, off
Carroll Road in Mira Mesa area;
858-909-0009. Join many rescue
organizations for this event to
celebrate our companion
animals.

Sunday, Sept. 28

BUNNYFEST! 10 a.m.-4 p.m.,
Heritage Park, Old Town, San
Diego. Vendors, activities, huge
fundraising auction, raffle,
information, refreshments, and
much more. Rabbits are welcome
if they are in a carrier or on a
leash.

Bunnyfest News: Check this page
for the day's schedule, vendor
list, volunteer opportunities, and
info about the shelter rabbit toy
drive: [www.rabbit.org/chapters/
san-diego/aboutus/bunnyfest/
bunnyfest_2003.html](http://www.rabbit.org/chapters/san-diego/aboutus/bunnyfest/bunnyfest_2003.html) or go to
www.sandiegorabbits.org and
click on About Us, then
Bunnyfest 2003.

Will You Help With Bunnyfest?

Bunnyfest is right around the corner — on Sunday, Sept. 28 — and we need your help. Our largest fundraiser each year is the popular Bunnyfest. There will be food at the Cottontail Cafe, an auction, a kids area, the HRS info booth and premium table, and lots more to do and see. Let us know how you want to be involved.

Set up/tear down

We need people early in the morning (7 a.m.) to drive items to the park and help set up. We also need people to be there at closing (4 p.m.) to help load up trucks and take items back to our office. Let us know if you are available to help (truck, van or SUV useful).

Also, we will be renting canopies, awnings and tables for the booths. Let us know if you know of a canopy company who can give us a deal!

Cottontail Cafe

This is our food and drink area. We need people to work the booth and also people to gather food and drinks. Like to bake cookies? Know someone who can donate soda and water? We need it all. Let us know how you can help.

Kids area

Good with kids? Like to keep them busy? Let us know and we will have you playing games and doing crafts with the kids for a few hours.

Lagomorph Lounge

This is the bunny-sitting area. We will have exercise pens set up and we need volunteers to keep a watchful eye on the visiting rabbits. Adults (over 18) only, please.

Premium table

Have sales experience? We can put you to work for a few hours at the HRS premium table selling T-shirts, caps, handbooks and other HRS premiums.

Raffle

This year we will have a small raffle to keep people hoppin' throughout the day! We need a couple of people to sell raffle tickets and keep an eye on the raffle items.

The Auction

This is the big fundraising part of the day. We usually have approximately 100 items in our auction, so we need plenty of people to help at the auction tables as well as people to help ready the items before the event.

Help us gather auction items. We need volunteers to get out in the community and ask for donations to help support the work of the San Diego HRS.

We request mostly rabbit-related items for the auction, but can use other items as well. Have a favorite pet supply store? Favorite restaurant? Ask them for a donation to help the rabbits. Gotta have that rabbit serving bowl? Buy an extra one and donate it to the auction! In past years, auction items have ranged from rabbit earrings, pet carriers and rabbit T-shirts to theatre tickets, dinners for two and beautiful artwork.

A donation letter is available for you to give the company you are contacting. Remember, donations are tax deductible! There will be a meeting with auction volunteers prior to the big day, so let us know how you can help.

For more information about the auction or to get a copy of the donation letter, please contact Judith Pierce at pierceja@cox.net

For information about all other areas, contact Michelle at mewhrs@aol.com or call 619-718-7777.

Be sure to attend the HRS Volunteer Meetings in August and September to learn more about Bunnyfest and other events. Bunnyfest details at www.sandiegorabbits.org, click About Us, then Bunnyfest 2003.

Fly Strike: A Summer Hazard

As disgusting as the subject is, we cannot ignore this eminent warm-weather danger. Flies can strike a healthy animal who has temporary loose stools, but at particular risk are your aging, disabled or overweight rabbits who are not able to clean themselves. Within a 24-hour period an otherwise stable rabbit can enter a terminal state of shock because of maggot infestation.

Moisture, warmth and odor attract flies. If open sores are present, or if thick fur is dampened with urine or feces, flies will head toward these warm incubation areas to lay their eggs. The chances are greater if the rabbit is outside, but it only takes one fly indoors to do the damage.

What kind of damage? Maggots do not stop at the surface. Once they have consumed external debris, they go right on to sound flesh (sometimes up the back where you don't see it), and once in the flesh, they produce toxins that create a state of shock.

Warning signs

Seizures: Rabbits are sensitive to surface irritations and some rabbits will react with "itchy skin" seizures — but instead of being toxin related, these are caused by local nerve sensors on the surface of the body triggering a general or overall nerve reaction, resulting in a seizure. If you suspect a seizure, turn your rabbit over and check for insect or plant (e.g., foxtails) irritants in the anal and scent gland area.

Listlessness: This is never a good sign in a rabbit. It usually means something is seriously wrong. In the case of fly strike, the rabbit may already be in shock.

Treatment

Your course of action will depend on how advanced the infestation is and how far you are from your vet. If the larvae are small and still few in num-

ber, you can hurry to the veterinary hospital. If the larvae are large and numerous, you have little time. Rinsing them off is very difficult, but I have removed them by completely submerging the rabbit's trunk in a tub of water. It takes two people to do this effectively; one to hold the upper half of bunny above water, the other to wash out all infested areas. It requires about three tub refills, followed by careful drying. Wet fur provides an environment for more eggs to hatch. Avoid dampening any more area than necessary.

Some veterinarians prefer a completely dry technique for maggot removal and pluck them by hand or tweezers, but many clients are too squeamish to do this themselves.

Chemicals strong enough to destroy the maggots are often too toxic to apply to a bunny in shock. If you are successful at removing the maggots yourself, you will still need to get your bunny checked by a veterinarian, as treatment may be necessary for shock or toxins.

Prevention

At best we can only reduce, but we can't eliminate flies from the environment. So we turn a watchful eye to the potential victim. To make the environment on the rabbit as hostile as possible to egg-laying flies, here are two rules:

Keep it dry! Don't dip the rabbit's rear end into water. (You resort to that only after an infestation but not for prevention.) Instead, use a "spot cleanser" for softening, loosening and removing feces stuck to the hindquarters.

Keep the fur short, even shaved. Clear any area that tends to stay damp. This will also enable you to get to these areas with your cleaning solutions.

Nolvasan Otic solution, available

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

Sunday, Oct. 5

Pacific Beach HRS Adoption Day, 11 a.m.- 2 p.m. Call 619-718-7777

Monday, Oct. 6

Volunteers' Meeting, 4750 Cass Street, Pacific Beach, 7 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 19

North County HRS Adoption Day, 1-3 p.m. Call 619-718-7777

Photo Contest

Start snappin' those photos now! There will be a photo contest with the following categories:

- * Bunny's Best Friend
- * Most Mischievous Moment
- * Snuggle Bunnies
- * My Favorite Photo

Winners will be decided by public vote at BUNNYFEST.

* Deadline to submit photos is August 31, 2002.

* Mail photos to: P.O. Box 2628, Spring Valley, CA 91979

* If submitting digital photos, email to SDiegoHRS@aol.com. Be sure to mention in the email that your photo is for the Bunnyfest Photo Contest, and tell us which category you want to enter.

Sorry, photos cannot be returned. By submitting photos, you grant San Diego HRS the rights to use the photo(s) for any chapter purposes. No larger than 4" x 6" please.

(continued on page 4)

San Diego County Fair

In June, HRS volunteers came out to cover even for two long days. We succeeded in educating hundreds of people who stopping by our booth. We know many rabbits will now lead better lives due to our participation.

Thanks goes to the following hard-working HRS volunteers:

*Judith Pierce
Larry Nixon
Sara
Kathy Burke
Sandi Stewart
Tina Otis
Marie Milliner
Lisa Ronco
Elizabeth Olson
Rita Bowen & her Mom
Gerry Streff
Karen Gurneck
Lisa Robinson*

Volunteering

(continued from page 1)

Hay Elf

Be a Hay Elf for a few hours every other Saturday morning and pack hay for sale. Pull on some old clothes, pack boxes of hay, have some refreshments and talk with other rabbit lovers. We are currently restructuring our North County hay packing and need people who can deliver 10-12 bales of hay, people who can help pack hay into boxes and people who can distribute boxes of hay to other areas of the County each week (SUV, van or truck preferred).

We may also need another storage location for the hay boxes once they are all packed (more than 100 boxes). We also need people to help deliver and pack hay in the East County area.

Our hay distribution is a very important part of our fundraising, so please, contact us if you can help out even for just a few hours a month.

BONUS: Hay Elves get a free box of hay when they pack!

Fly Strike

(continued from page 3)

through your veterinarian or veterinarian supply catalog, is used for loosening ear wax but also works well on the hindquarters. Its antibacterial/antifungal agents soften caked-on feces and/or yeast.

A good cleaner from your pet supply store is Nolvadent, which you might already be using to brush your dog's teeth.

If your bunny's problem is urine-soaked fur rather than fecal material, then ChlorhexiDerm Flush (also non-prescription) may be your best choice, since it has a drying agent.

Adapted from an article by Marinell Harriman on the House Rabbit Society website at www.rabbit.org

Sanctuary Home

Permanent homes are needed for "sanctuary" status rabbits. Rabbits in sanctuary care need caretakers with rabbit experience. These rabbits typically have been in HRS foster care for a while and may have challenging attitudes or ongoing medical concerns making them difficult to adopt out. HRS covers medical costs and supplies (cage, hay, etc.) to approved sanctuary homes and you provide the love and care throughout the bunnies' lives. Contact us to apply for sanctuary status, and to give one of these special needs rabbits a loving place to live out the remainder of their life.

For more ideas on how to volunteer with HRS, call 619-718-7777 or go to www.sandiegorabbits.org and click About Us, then Volunteer Opportunities.

Help Distribute Adoption Flyers

The shelters and HRS are all beyond capacity right now and many rabbits are at risk, so it is critical that we generate more adoptions.

Please, take a moment and print out a few flyers and post them at vet offices, coffee shops or any public community bulletin board. Carry a few with you so you always have them.

For people without time for other events, this is the perfect chance to do something that really matters. We have wonderful rabbits in foster care and at the shelters — all it takes to save them is getting the word out.

The current flyer can be found at www.rabbit.org/chapters/san-diego/aboutus/volunteer_materials.html

If you have trouble downloading it, contact Judith at pierceja@cox.net

Valued Volunteer: Amy Spintman

In the fall of 1996 HRS had established a telephone help line and was in need of volunteers to help return calls. A notice went in the newsletter, and that plea was answered by our next Valued Volunteer, Amy Spintman. Amy's background knowledge of rabbits and her enthusiasm soon had her committed to the position of Help Line Volunteer.

Debra Doerfler: Amy, how long have you had house rabbits?

Amy Spintman: I got my first house rabbit, Lacey, in June 1995. I had been looking for a new companion for my kitty Skimble, since her elderly guinea pig companion, Tilly, had passed away. I knew Skimble wouldn't tolerate another kitty, so I was looking specifically for a different type of companion. I was considering all different kinds of animals. At the time, my veterinarian suggested that a rabbit would make a nice indoor companion and she knew of someone who had rabbits. At the time I didn't know there were rabbits available at the shelters, let alone that there was a House Rabbit Society, so I ended up getting a beautiful Florida White from a breeder. Of course, now I know better!

DD: Almost everyone I know has made mistakes like with their first rabbit. How did you finally find out about HRS?

AS: I saw one of the flyers for Bunnyfest and, of course, I went. I remember feeling like I had found my place. I realized HRS was an organization I was interested in being a part of, I just never imagined how much a part of my life my involvement would become.

DD: And now, almost eight years later you're still very involved. Tell me about the CatsandRabbitsandMore (CRM) website you administer. Why did you start it?

AS: I was speaking with a lot of

people from the help line and over time, I began to sense that there just weren't enough resources available to rabbit owners. I envisioned a website where people could purchase supplies and also learn about the many shelter rabbits that were available for adoption. The focus has always been on rabbits with a sprinkling of cats and other critters. These days I have a small group of volunteers who help maintain the site with all the adoptable animals. I try to help the smaller rescuers who don't have the resources for their own website.

DD: What do you want to share with our readers that most of us don't know about you?

AS: I almost didn't start the CRM website! I had the idea and went to a friend in hopes that she would talk me out of it. Instead she said, "Go for it!" I know it's helped countless animals find homes. The success of CRM has encouraged me to tackle my latest project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping rescuers with supplies and medical expenses. The website is Skimble.org, in memory of my kitty who passed away earlier this year.

Amy helps the House Rabbit Society in many volunteer activities, but admits to being unsuccessful as a foster home. After a trial venture into fostering she adopted most of her foster rabbits and now shares her home with eight rabbits: Lacey and Beau; Cookie and Domino; Casey, Burnie and Bijou; and Dolce, plus her new kitty, Salem. Thank you, Amy, for all you do for the creatures in Southern California. You are a Valued Volunteer!



Amy uses a stuffed toy rabbit to demonstrate rabbit care at an education event.

Heather's Story

Bring a Bunny Toy to Bunnyfest

Again this year we are collecting toys to give to shelter and foster rabbits so they have something to play with while they are waiting to be adopted.

Suggested bunny toys include:

- * Cardboard concrete forms for burrowing
- * Untreated wicker baskets or boxes
- * Cat toys: Batta balls, jingle bells and other hard plastic cat toys that can be rolled or tossed
- * Parrot toys that can be tossed, or hung from the top of the cage and chewed or hit
- * Baby toys: hard plastic toys like rattles and keys, things that can be tossed
- * "Busy Bunny" toys
- * Plastic Rainbow slinkies
- * Toys with ramps and lookouts for climbing and viewing the world
- * Untreated sea grass or maize mats from Pier One or Cost Plus
- * Canning jar rings and shower curtain rings looped together.
- * Stuffed bunnies (that look similar to real bunnies) to act as temporary companions to lonely or ill bunnies while they await adoption

I am writing this to share with you the story of a very special bunny girl and to confirm the importance of getting your female rabbit spayed. If only one rabbit is saved by this, the story of Heather is worthwhile.

It is not every day that I'm dismayed by some insensitivity of mankind but this particular incident is not one I will soon forget. While at the shelter one Saturday afternoon, I saw a man and his two children came in with their lop rabbit.

They wanted to relinquish her because, as the man put it, "She's going to die and I don't want the kids to have to go through that."

Now I can empathize with him in wanting to protect his children from something, but really, what is he teaching them in the long run? What will they do when faced with death in the future? Dealing with death is part of life. Clearly, you don't just cast away someone who is dying. Do you?

As you can imagine, my emotions shot through the roof and it was all I could do to keep my mouth shut to what I perceived to be a most uncaring man. As he walked away with his crying children, I kept thinking these children will never step foot in an animal shelter again. They'll think it's a bad place, where animals are taken to die. Two unfortunate lessons for his children.

The rabbit they dropped off was a beautiful older female, a tri-colored French Lop mix. Maybe you saw her on our web site or in a previous issue of

this newsletter. Heather was one of the sweetest girls to cross my path in many years and her situation that day was worrisome. On her belly were three large lumps and she had never been spayed (she was four years old). I got approval from Michelle (Chapter Manager) to take Heather to the vet for

an evaluation that coming week. So I bundled her up, checked her out of the shelter and took her home with me. What a sweet, gentle girl I had. She ate well and seemed unaware of her previous fate.

The vet exam confirmed the lumps were probably cancerous, but they were confident they could remove the masses and give Heather



Heather

more time, assuming the cancer had not spread. We would spay her at the same time. How long the family had ignored the situation we'll never know, but each day the cancer had grown in Heather.

Amazingly, Heather did not have uterine cancer and the lumps were successfully removed. The tumors were malignant, but we all felt Heather was a fighter and would be with us for a good long while. She healed well and her spirits were always good.

In no time she was ready for adoption. For as beautiful a girl as she was, we think many people bypassed her because of her history of cancer. What they missed in adopting her, I gained as she stayed with me in foster care.

Each day brought new joy as she explored and played, doing little dances and in general enjoying her second chance at life. At the adoption events people would pet her and commented how pretty and sweet she was, but no one adopted her. Were people unwilling to take the chance? I think that was it.

Then, on May 13, Heather was very quiet and was suddenly having difficulty getting around. Her breathing was labored. The next day she went to the vet for an exam. X-rays showed our greatest fear: the cancer had metastasized and was now in her lungs. There was nothing that could be done.

We made the decision to have her humanely euthanized while she was still in little pain. Only the mobility issue and a difference in her breathing indicated anything was wrong. But the X-rays showed the growths — it was only a matter of time. Maybe a few days, perhaps a couple of weeks. We did not want Heather to suffer. When it gets down to the wire on situations like this, our Chapter Manager, Michelle, always asks for our input and lets each foster parent take the lead in decision making. It was my decision and I'll be the first to admit it's one of the hardest things in the world to do, letting go.

I asked the vet hospital to wait for me; I wanted to say goodbye and wanted to be with her in the end. I drove to the hospital after work and sat with Heather in a room, just the two of us. It was hard saying goodbye. I stroked her fur and talked to her, struggling not to cry uncontrollably, but to be strong for her in the end. When it was all over, then I would cry.

Within moments, Heather's life vanished. How sad she only had the opportunity to spend a third of her life span on this planet, she had so much love to offer and so much happiness to share. If only she had been spayed and had been given quality veterinary care in time. Our special girl is now gone but her story lives on.

By Debra Doerfler

North County Needs Hay Elves

Please consider volunteering to pack hay with the North County Hay Elves. Demand for the hay keeps increasing, however the same intrepid few give of themselves every other weekend to keep Avian and Acacia hospitals, and several other distribution locations supplied. We currently have openings for all of the dates this quarter, as well as other long-term opportunities. Our dates this quarter are: Aug. 2, Aug. 16, Aug. 30, Sept. 13 and Sept. 27.

The elves pack at Larry Dudus' house in Oceanside, beginning at 9 a.m. and usually finishing up about noon. Drinks and snacks are provided. You also get one box of hay **FREE**, packed just the way your rabbit likes it. And if that isn't enough incentive, your mileage is tax deductible (because you are doing volunteer work for a nonprofit organization).

Don't want to pack? We need people to tape the boxes and stack the boxes.

Want to help but can't spend three hours on a Saturday? We also need people to help transport the boxes on Saturday and throughout the week.

This is an easy way to help HRS. North County really needs more volunteers! Just one day would be a big help! For more information, call Larry at 760-439-9262.

BUNNYFEST 2003
Sunday, Sept. 28
Heritage Park in Old Town
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

All the details at
www.sandiegorabbits.org
click About Us, then Bunnyfest 2003
Mark your calendar.
Be there!

Thank You, Thank You

We very much appreciate the following generous donations:

- Harriet Nixon for the table top copier, paper and office desk donation.
- Brandy Smith from Lowe's for carpet samples in time for our Open House.
- Special thank you to Elizabeth and Keith Olson for their donation to SD HRS in memory of Michelle's rabbit Thomas.

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@yahoo.com

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

Suzie, the Survivor, Thrives in Her Own Home

When I went to the shelter that fateful day so many years ago, the rabbit I saw sitting in her cage startled me – she had an enormous belly. I learned that the staff suspected she was pregnant. Because she was four years old, I suspected she was carrying a cancerous uterus, not babies. She was taken to the vet immediately to be spayed and my fears were confirmed: her uterus was riddled with cancer! Thankfully it appeared to be contained and was removed with the spay procedure.



Suzie relaxes at home

Local Animal Shelters

(call for hours of operation)

• San Diego County Department of Animal Services:

•• Central, 5480 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, 887 Sherman 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

The incidence of cancer in older female rabbits is quite high, so it wasn't a shock that this girl bunny had it. Having sat undiagnosed and untreated for so long, this rabbit's story could easily have had a different ending.

After her spay, she was transferred into HRS foster care where, under a watchful eye, she recovered and was ready for adoption.

Debra Doerfler

A new foster family

Keith and I met our little Suzie one evening in June 2000 at foster mom Debra Doerfler's house. After much research and discussion, we felt ready to become bunny caretakers. Being cautious types, we opted to start as HRS foster parents and requested a "first-timers" bunny. Debra introduced us to her foster bunnies and told us what she knew of their histories,

including four-year-old Suzie's successful treatment for uterine cancer months earlier. Suzie won that night's foster bunny audition, thanks to her beautiful coloring and her immense pleasure at being petted.

We took Suzie home, as nervous as any parents of a first-born. Over the next six months, we dutifully took her to HRS adoption days where she terrorized any bunny that got too close, and then sulked for days afterward. After growing to love Suzie and secretly hoping no one would adopt her, we adopted her in January 2001!

Saucy Suzie, as she came to be known, intimidated us at first. But eventually we learned to speak lagomorph and, on Debra's good advice, became the alpha bunnies. Soon Suzie's occasional hard nips turned to nibbles and then to earnest grooming. Her litterbox habits became impeccable, and she earned the unlimited run of our bunny-proofed kitchen, dining room, hallway and living room.

Some big scares

Caring for a cancer survivor is much like caring for any other bunny, except that we are extra vigilant and nervous when anything is different. Early on, Suzie had some messy urine accidents with sludge, blood and mucus. Our first thought was the cancer is back – we were terrified! On veterinary advice, we treated with antibiotics, limited her calcium intake, and kept her hydrated. The veterinarian said it probably was a urinary tract infection, and the treatment cleared it up quickly. Then shortly after increasing her hydration and adding more succulent veggies, she stopped pooping! An expensive trip to the weekend vet ER, watchful waiting, and firm tummy massages cleared up that problem by evening. Whew – very

scary!

To keep her in the pink, we buy veterinary pet insurance, give her annual vet checkups, never let her outdoors, and watch her weight, hydration and diet. Each day I brush her and gently massage her tummy to keep her insides moving and to feel for any unusual lumps. I trim her nails regularly and clean her litter box religiously. We both shower her generously with pets, cuddles and kisses. She's now a happy, healthy seven-year-old!

Fun stuff

Over the years, Suzie has brought us inexpressible pleasure. She grooms me, especially when I'm sick, sad or sleepless. She grooms Keith shamelessly anytime! Meal times are hilarious as she anticipates fresh hay and veggie morsels. She jumps on and off her condo's top shelf, does the cutest half-twist top-speed mid-air binkies, and races back and forth through the kitchen. She also "carpet surfs," which involves scampering over the kitchen's

carpet samples and stopping suddenly enough to make the last sample slide a foot or more.

Suzie grows on us every day. She snuggles with me in bed and watches TV as I pet her, and she loves to shred cardboard tubes and boxes. Suzie knows several phrases, including "Suzie, come get me," the names of her favorite foods, "in" (get in your litter box), "good girl," and "Want a kissy?" She also has become livelier and more confident. Truly, our house bunny is a treasured family member who has brightened our lives beyond measure.

Some people never would consider adopting a "cancer survivor," but we focus on the positive – the word "survivor" – and treat each day with her as a precious gift.

I could go on and on about Suzie's antics and loving nature, but, I'll just end by saying: "A million thanks to the House Rabbit Society for saving Suzie's life and for bringing this miracle bunny into ours."

By Elizabeth and Keith Olson

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!

Pet PALS Presentation

Volunteers Amy Spintman and Nicola Schulz-Jander recently made a presentation to 30 children from the San Diego Humane Society Pet PALS (Protecting Animals with Love and Shelter) program. With the help of bunny Corey, the kids learned all about rabbits.

The highlight of the presentation was the "bunny circle." Corey was placed in the middle of a large circle formed by the kids. They got to watch Corey explore the area and become comfortable with his surrounding, while, as instructed, they kept quiet and didn't reach out to him. Corey rewarded their good behavior by performing several high binkies! But kids being kids, after awhile they couldn't resist reaching out and trying to pet him. As they learned during the presentation, rabbits are often fearful

of being approached and having hands come toward them, and Corey responded by running to the middle of the circle, as far away from them



as possible. Once they became quiet again, Corey quickly felt more comfortable and continued to explore and play. After observing his behavior, they could see firsthand how important it is to be quiet and gentle around rabbits.

One of our chapter's goals is to educate the public about rabbit care and behavior. We thank the San Diego Humane Society for inviting us to come out and make this presentation.

Baseboard Repair

For all of you who have had your bunnies chew on the baseboards, here is a way to repair the damage.

Supplies:

Wood filler (not wood putty)

Putty knife, plastic or metal; these have a straight edge and flat surface for smoothing the filler flush with original wood.

Fine sandpaper (200 grit or finer)

Touch-up paint to match original, or stain and varnish for natural wood finish

Directions:

Follow the directions on the wood filler label. If the damage is deep, you may need two or more applications. Spread the filler into the holes and leave to dry per instructions on the container. It dries to a very hard surface, like wood. Sand the area lightly to a nice smooth surface and paint.

You can also try this with doors, balusters or other chewed wood. It's very easy.

If the damage is too extensive, it may be more efficient to replace some sections of baseboard, which is a bit more work, but certainly not complicated carpentry. You'll need unfinished matching baseboard strips (they come in long lengths at any lumber source), a hammer, miter box to cut corners, a small hand saw, finishing nails (small, headless nails), a counter-sink implement to push nails slightly below the surface, wood filler (to fill nail holes), fine sandpaper, and paint or stain and varnish to finish. Some kind of pry tool will be needed to remove old baseboards.

Remove damaged baseboard sections. Measure length needed and cut from new material, using the miter box for corner cuts. Nail in place, counter-sink nails, and fill holes with wood filler. When dry, sand baseboard and paint or stain and varnish to match original.

You can protect the new or revitalized baseboards by tacking furring strips along the baseboards. These are strips of wood available wherever you got your baseboard repair supplies. Bunnies will be attracted to the newly refurbished baseboards that they see as their private chew toys. With the furring strips in place, they can chew and tug to their hearts content without damaging your handiwork underneath.

In Loving Memory of Bianca

Feb. 14, 1992 - July 12, 2003



This article is dedicated to Bianca, who never met a baseboard — or wall or wallpaper or baluster or cardboard box — she didn't want to chew.

Bianca was rescued by the HRS from a South Bay shelter in November 1992, spayed and adopted into her lifelong home the next month.

She was a spunky girl who would gleefully explore any new territory opened to her, and not hesitate to try new foods. The stronger the taste, the more she liked it — which is why Tabasco, Bitter Apple and other chewing deterrents were, to her, condiments.

Not a lap bunny, she would soak up kisses and sweet talk on her own terms, and nudge you to keep going.

Bianca never had a sick day and she accepted the afflictions of advancing years — cataracts, then blindness; one bad hip, then another; and finally her once-cast-iron digestion failed her — with grace and courage. Now that she is freed from the physical limitations old age imposed, she surely is running and dancing in Bunny Heaven, devouring her favorite herbs and veggies, and grooming her beloved mates Benjamin, Spencer and, briefly, Romeo, who went before her.

She wooed you with her big brown eyes, and laid claim to all in her realm. She was truly the queen of her household, and I was lucky to live with her.

Bianca, may Bunny Heaven be one big digging box surrounded by all sorts of things to chew. I'll remember you every time I patch or replace a baseboard, or spackle the wall corners, or replace wallpaper. You are missed!

by Kristin Tow

Memorial Donation for Samantha and Alexander

House Rabbit Society, please accept this donation of \$150 in memory of our two beloved rabbits, Alexander and Samantha. We had the privilege of sharing our home with them for nearly 10 years.

We rescued Samantha from the San Diego Humane Society. She was grossly overweight, had dead brown fur instead of beautiful black. She had been with a family that kept her in with a male and she had litter after litter of babies. The family tired of the rabbits and sent them all to the shelter. She was extremely skittish when she first arrived and it took much time and patience to reassure her that she was completely safe. We always laugh and say that she must have thought she had died and gone to heaven when she came to us.

Alexander was fortunate enough to be with the House Rabbit Society from a young age and we adopted him when he was six months old.

These two were a beloved pair and when Samantha became ill, Alexander knew long before we did. He would lie with her and I thought they were inactive because they were old. Later, we discovered that Samantha had a calcified kidney and other problems, and had not felt well for quite a while.

When we lost Samantha, Alexander began doing bunny dances again and ran around as if he was young. That is when I realized what good care he had taken of his friend.

Alexander followed Samantha a few months later. We miss them both, but we know that no two rabbits were ever more loved and more cared for than these two. We are making this donation in the hopes that many other bunnies will find great loving homes where they can thrive and live very long lives.

by Anne Di Napoli and Ed Poffenberger

No-Waste Hay Rack

The hay rack is made of untreated fir and one-inch wire with hard plastic bumper guards around the head holes.

Bunnies eat comfortably without spreading hay everywhere.

This is ideal for places where hay mess is a problem. It comes in four sizes. They all measure 9.5" tall and 6.25" deep. The only difference is the width — with one opening, two, three or four. See the hay rack at <http://ca.geocities.com/sweetrabbits2000/nowaste.htm>. To order a hay rack or for more information, e-mail Michele Gagnon at michelerabbits@hotmail.com.



HRS Volunteers Win Shelter Awards

Two House Rabbit Society shelter volunteers, Marie Milliner and Tina Otis, are among the first recipients of the Thankful Paw Awards from the Department of Animal Services (DAS). Award nominations for "a job well done" were submitted by DAS staff and peer volunteers. Both ladies volunteer at the Central Animal Shelter.

Marie Milliner was nominated for her awesome commitment towards the shelter bunnies. She makes sure they are groomed, works on getting the rabbits to veterinarians to get altered, and will talk to interested adopters to ensure the right rabbit goes to the right home.

Tina Otis was nominated for her dedication to the rabbits at the shelter. She spends her time cleaning the rabbit cages, combing and grooming the rabbits and enhancing their stay at the shelter, making them more adoptable.

Congratulations, Marie and Tina!

Escondido Shelter Reopens Soon

The new Escondido Humane Society, rebuilt after the old shelter was destroyed by fire, is open. If you are interested in volunteering there, please contact Mary Lee Poremba, director of Volunteer Services, at 760-839-0050. Please also contact HRS chapter manager Michelle at MEWHRS@aol.com or 619-718-7777 to let her know of your interest.

Bunnyfest OnlineNews

Check this page for the day's schedule, vendor list, volunteer opportunities, and info about the shelter rabbit toy drive: www.rabbit.org/chapters/sandiego/aboutus/bunnyfest/bunnyfest_2003.html or go to www.sandiegorabbits.org and click on About Us, then Bunnyfest 2003.

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 Awaiting Adoption

Popcorn is a neutered male Mini Lop, about 3 years old. He's an active boy who loves his run time, and will need a lot of interaction to keep him mentally stimulated and prevent boredom. Popcorn can be a



bit shy with newcomers, but he's a really nice bunny who just needs time to get comfortable with you. He's also very good with his litterbox. He needs a quiet, rabbit-experienced home with adults who will be patient and loving and take the time to earn his trust. We do not feel he would be appropriate for children.

Pepe is a 3-year-old Standard/Lop mix male. He was just recently relin-



quished, due to a family break-up. He's wondering what happened and is hoping to find a new family soon. 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, such as seagrass mats, willow baskets, cardboard boxes, and more! Call us soon, because Pepe wants a new, permanent home right away!

Mini-Cooper is a tiny Netherland Dwarf male, between 1 and 2 years old, and under 2 lbs. He had malocclusion of his front teeth, so



HRS had them removed. Consequently, Cooper needs his food chopped for him so that he can eat it. Otherwise, he's healthy and active, and loves to be held. Because he is so tiny, he will not be adopted to a home with children. He also can be a bit skittish at times, but he may also make a good companion to your tiny bunny girl.

Becky is an active spayed female rabbit who is just beautiful. She is about 3 years old and has been in foster care for more than a year! Becky is a friendly girl, but can be a bit assertive about her needs, so requires an experi-

enced rabbit caretaker. But, she also loves to be pet and will come



running up to see you, in hopes of getting your attention. Becky has a great appetite and enjoys prancing around her pen with her carrot chunk in her mouth! A lively, beautiful girl who is looking for a patient, experienced home.

Paxton, on the left, is a sweet, shy boy. **Maxx**, on the right, is the more assertive of the two spotted boys. These two boys are neutered, litter box



trained, and about 10 months old. They are a bonded pair and must be adopted together.



Georgia is a big beautiful black New Zealand/Standard mix girl. She has one white sock and a white dot on her chin. She loves attention, but can be a little

grumpy when you reach into her cage uninvited. She does love her playtime, however, and will run, jump, and dance with glee! We think she would do best in an adult home where she can receive plenty of attention.

Josephine is an affectionate little Himalayan girl, about 1 year old and 3 pounds. She is spayed, litterbox trained and good with cats. Josephine is a little skittery after enduring so many changes in her life. She responds well to gentle treatment, however, and will lean into your hand when you give her a gentle scratch on the ears or cheek. Josephine just needs an experienced bunny person to help her overcome her fears. She might also make a good companion choice for an adult home with a sweet bunny boy.



Alex and **Emily** are two young Californian kids, who have just turned a year old. They have grown to their full size (big!) and are really wishing for a home of their own. They are two very active kids, full of energy, curiosity, and funny bunny dances! Alex is probably at least 10 lbs., with Emily trailing behind a pound or two. They are a sweet pair who need an experienced bunny home where they will be appreciated for their size and silly bunny antics.



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.

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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. Please call ahead to see if there is hay available so you won't waste a trip.

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Central San Diego | Cabrillo Veterinary Hospital | 619-224-9516 |
| | Avian & Exotic Animal Hospital | 619-260-1412 |
| East County | Rancho San Diego Animal Hospital | 619-660-6767 |
| North County | Diane Calkins | 760-633-1564 |
| | Acacia Animal Hospital | 760-745-8115 |

Many pet supply stores, as well as some of the hay sources listed here, carry CareFRESH litter.

More Travel Tips

One rabbit family recommends takeyourpet.com. "We have used takeyourpet.com for over a year now and just love it. We always find a pet hotel when we need it. You do need to call ahead as occasionally there will be a mistake in the listing. However, usually each listing is very thorough with both pet fees and rules listed for that particular hotel. Offers a large variety of listings, too, both chain and privately owned hotels."

Plastic tarp

Instead of linoleum, which can't be packed away easily, take a piece of very heavy-duty plastic to go under the cage and/or pen. Select the heaviest weight of plastic you can find. However, this may not work for rabbits who are excessive diggers. Make sure you have the plastic perfectly flat and tight under the cage walls. If there is a wrinkle, they'll chew it.

Pelleted litter

Be a thoughtful guest: Opt for pelleted litter on the road. Little feet don't track it around, leaving debris you need to clean up. Keep the lint brushes handy to pick up fur and even pieces of hay.

Open House Raised \$1,000 for Local Chapter

Thank you to everyone who helped us get ready for the Open House in May. The effort was well worth it, bringing in more than \$1,000 that day. Thanks to volunteers Larry Dudus and Michelle Wilhelms who cleaned the office, hauled items to storage and shampooed the office carpet; Judith Pierce and Larry Nixon who delivered a new desk to the office and planted flowers out front; Claudia La Rue who beautifully painted "HRS" surrounded by ivy above our front door; and the several people who donated food and carpet samples as well as items for our auction. A special thanks to Judith who also cut enough bunny nails at the Open House to last a life time!

Many people joined us at our Open House and we thank you for your support!

See the photos at www.sandiegorabbits.org. Click About Us, then Open House Photos.

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 |
|--|-------------------|------------|------|------|------------|--------|
| SAN DIEGO RABBIT NEWS with 1-year San Diego chapter membership <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

Totes — Buy a Bunny a Little Time "clock" motif in black on natural canvas tote bags. **\$12**

Caps — cotton baseball-style caps, one size with adjustable strap. Herman head design (upper right this page). Apricot or aqua blue **\$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; Sky blue or bright yellow in 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 in S,M; or natural in S,M,L,XXL (no XL) **\$15**
Scoop-neck ladies short-sleeve T. White in S,M,L,XXL (no XL) or violet in S only **\$15**

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



"Clock" motif



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.
Handbook: \$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.

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Sunday, Sept. 28
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10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Mark your calendar.
Be there!

Bunnyfest Online News

**Check this page for the
day's schedule, vendor
list, volunteer
opportunities, and info
about the shelter rabbit
toy drive:**

**[www.rabbit.org/
chapters/san-diego/
aboutus/bunnyfest/
bunnyfest_2003.html](http://www.rabbit.org/chapters/san-diego/aboutus/bunnyfest/bunnyfest_2003.html) or
go to
www.sandiegorabbits.org
and click on **About Us,**
then **Bunnyfest 2003.****

Happy Adoption: Molly and Miles

This love match between Molly and Miles happened because of the HRS volunteers at the South County shelter who knew sweet Miles was available. Volunteers suggested Shelley and Steve Thraen might like Miles. Sure enough, when they met Miles at the shelter they really liked him, and adopted him. Sometime later they came to the HRS to adopt a companion and Molly was the lucky girl bunny. Molly and Miles (the kissing duo) now share a happy home together



Molly, left, and Miles

because of the connection HRS volunteers were able to make. Definitely time well spent – just ask Molly and Miles.

Happy Adoption: Rhapsody and Rosebud

After more than two years in foster care, Rhapsody and Rosebud finally have their own home. Adoptive mom Pamela Randall reports that they are going great.

“I really can’t get over how beautiful they are, and they are super smart too. They’re our babies and they know it!” she says.

“They have free run of two rooms and spend their days dozing in our bedroom in the sun. Then in the evenings they bee-bop around and entertain us. They are getting bolder by the day and are enjoying life, and I just wanted to say thanks again for everything.”



Rhapsody and Rosebud