



# THE *Rabbit Advocate*



PROVIDING INSIGHTS INTO THE LIVES OF HOUSE RABBITS

SPRING 2005

## ***Easter and Rabbits: “Make Mine Chocolate!”***

*Kudos to the Columbus (Ohio) House Rabbit Society for their inventive “Make Mine Chocolate!” campaign. The cause? Educating the American public that rabbits don’t make good Easter gifts for children. The goal? Preventing impulse purchases that often result in yet more surrendered or abandoned domestic rabbits.*

**R**abbit Advocates is pleased to be one of the animal welfare organizations that are partnering with Columbus HRS and helping them spread the word.

Rabbits as young as six weeks of age are sold at Eastertime and they are heart-meltingly cute when they’re small. But the ‘Easter Bunny’ grows up surprisingly fast. By summertime, many people feel they can’t cope. They are unprepared for life with a real rabbit. The key is to do some careful research before you bring a rabbit home.

Rabbit Advocate volunteers work hard to break the cycle of impulse purchases and abandonment by educating the public about rabbit care and dispelling some common myths. “Generally speaking, rabbits are not good pets for children,” says volunteer Mary Huey. “They are not ‘easy’ animals to care for. If the rabbit scratches, or nips, or chews the computer cables, the parent’s response tends to be the rabbit has got to go.”

Mary, who monitors the group’s Helpline and responds to over 600 calls a year, emphasizes that the mission of Rabbit Advocates is primarily educational. “We received over 450 requests in the past year to take unwanted rabbits. In that same time period, our volunteers placed 120 rabbits in loving permanent homes. There are simply not enough homes for all these animals.”

The Helpline is especially busy in the post-Easter period, when abandoned rabbits are sighted in parks, golf courses, and in country settings. Releasing a domestic rabbit outdoors is illegal and inhumane. These rabbits do not live happy bunny



lives. Predators, parasites, and injuries plague abandoned rabbits. And they can devastate a park’s ecosystem and create a nuisance in the community.

Please help us raise public awareness. You can make a difference by helping to get the word out. If someone you know is thinking about buying a rabbit as a child’s Easter gift, refer them to [www.adoptarabbit.org](http://www.adoptarabbit.org) for information about caring for a real rabbit. Or better yet, tell them to think about a chocolate bunny instead! To learn more about the “Make Mine Chocolate!” campaign, or to purchase ceramic chocolate bunny pins and other merchandise, hop on over to [www.makeminechocolate.org](http://www.makeminechocolate.org).



**Got a rabbit question?**

**Call our HELP-LINE**

**503-617-1625**



Photos: *Kem Sypher, Karen DiMilia, Mary Thompson*

# Special Rabbits, Special People: Caring for a Handicapped Rabbit

*Caring for a handicapped bunny can be difficult from time to time and requires patience and compassion, but what these stories show is that caring for handicapped animals has its own very special unique rewards that greatly outweigh the difficulties that may sometimes be involved.*

by Ewa Horan

Have you ever wondered how it is to live with a handicapped bunny? Here are three stories about some very special rabbits and the people who love them.

Clarence is a fourteen year old ginger/orange colored Lop. He looks like a cute pumpkin pie with airplane ears. Clarence came from the Oregon Humane Society after he was given up by a 12 year old girl. When Mary adopted Clarence, he was a healthy little bunny happily running around and playing. But as he got older, Clarence developed glaucoma and cataracts, which caused him to lose vision in both eyes. Mary's commitment to Clarence was unaffected by the difficulties involved with caring for a blind rabbit. This was something the family had to accept and they decided to help Clarence live a normal life.

Clarence is proof that animals can live a reasonably normal life in spite of a



Photo: Ingrid Doerksen

*Over the years, Clive has been given a lot of loving care*

disability. When I asked Mary if it was difficult to live with a blind rabbit, she said, "I don't find it difficult. He still explores, just a little differently. Instead of hopping boldly around, he walks on his four legs. I think between his whiskers and his ears, he doesn't have much trouble with bumping into things. In a strange room, he will start walking around in small circles, and then keeps expanding until he knows the perimeter of the room."

It is up to all of us to create an environment for our pets, handicapped or otherwise, that would help them lead a happy and fulfilling life. Seeing a handicapped bunny hopping around and enjoying his life is a reward in itself.

Honey is another rabbit whose life was dramatically changed by the kindness and patience of a special person. When Honey was rescued from a shelter in Washington, she was very skinny and

in poor physical and mental condition. Poor Honey was terrified of everyone and everything. When Shelley first adopted her, she wasn't able to touch Honey at all. Every time Shelley tried to get closer to her, Honey would desperately try to climb the walls in a frenzy of fear. The situation was really difficult, but luckily, one day Shelley heard about "T Touch therapy" and decided to take a class to help her win Honey's trust. After several months, Honey slowly began to let Shelley touch her and help her to overcome her fear of humans.

Over the years Honey has become a more trusting bunny, letting Shelley pet and cuddle her. It has been a blessing for them both, and Shelley would do it all over again without a doubt. For Shelley, seeing how her love and care changed Honey's life will always be a source of great joy. Had she not adopted Honey, this animal would most likely have simply been destroyed. Thanks to Shelley this bunny was given a second chance.

Clive, another "second chance" bunny, suffers from malocclusion of the front teeth, a very painful condition which was aggravated even more when a vet accidentally cut Clive's tongue and cheek during surgery. Thanks to Ingrid he was rescued from a shelter where he was about to be euthanized. Since Ingrid adopted him, Clive has been under constant care. She watches him very carefully every day and he may eat only certain foods. Clive is often on antibiotics and strong pain medicine.

Over the years, he has been given a lot of loving care and is an example of resilience and a will to live despite all the difficulty he experiences. Clive's condition has sometimes been an emotional and financial challenge for Ingrid and her family, but the happiness they receive from Clive makes it all worth it. Thanks to the loving care given by Ingrid and her husband Ron, Clive has a chance to enjoy his life and play with the other seven bunnies living in the house.

Caring for a handicapped bunny can be



Photo: Shelley Hanel

*Honey, relaxing with friends Jasper and Hopscotch.*

# Volunteer Spotlight: Shelley Cooper Hanel

difficult from time to time and requires patience and compassion, but what these stories show is that caring for handicapped animals has its own very special unique rewards that greatly outweigh the difficulties that may sometimes be involved. It is truly inspiring when kind people like Ingrid, Shelley and Mary open their homes to a bunny with a physical or emotional handicap. These cases are living proof of the joy that can be found when humans open their hearts and show compassion to an animal in need. Thanks



Photo: Mary Thompson

*Though 14 and blind Clarence (right) still loves life, exploring his environment and especially cuddling with his partner Fran.*

to the compassion of these three wonderful people and millions like them, handicapped rabbits, dogs, cats and many other animals are rescued and given a chance to experience a loving home.

*Ewa Horan is an animal lover and graduate student at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. We are grateful for her contribution. If you have room in your heart for a "special needs" rabbit, you'll find some among the foster rabbits listed on our website.-Ed.*

by Janeen Hammers

Shelley first heard about the Rabbit Advocates from an acquaintance and has been volunteering with the Oregon Humane Society and Rabbit Advocates for about five years. She is deeply committed to supporting both of these programs. She has volunteered her time helping in the OHS rabbit program in numerous areas of need, including training and mentoring new volunteers for the small animal room, fostering rabbits, and acting as a liaison between the Rabbit Advocates and OHS. She has also participated with the Rabbit Advocates in rescuing rabbits who have been abandoned, writing for the newsletter, serving on the Education Committee, leading meetings and working on Rabbit Awareness Day activities.

One of her most recently completed projects to assist volunteers in the small animal room at OHS is the development of a fact sheet covering information about ten different species of small animals. These adoptable animals include guinea pigs, rabbits, hamsters, rats, gerbils and birds. This information is on small, laminated cards so volunteers will be able to store them in their volunteer apron pockets, but have them handy when they need to assist visitors with questions. One of the most frustrating things for Shelley, who works full time, is not having enough time to develop other ideas that would be helpful for both the RA and OHS organizations.

Shelley was recently honored with a well-deserved OHS award for being an excellent ambassador for the small animals, and for her expertise in providing new volunteers with information and experience in handling small animals. Shelley says that one of the most rewarding aspects of volunteering is seeing the delight on the



Photo: Chris Arends

*Shelley with buns Honey, Jasper and Hopscotch.*

faces of people adopting a new animal and knowing the animal will be much happier in their new home.

In addition to the four foster rabbits (a mother and three babies) she is caring for at the present time, Shelley and her good-hearted husband Chris share their home with an 8 year old dog, a female Labrador/Catahoula mix named Rocksie, and four bunnies. Her rabbits Jasper, Hopscotch and Honey are a bonded trio, and the fourth bunny, Mr. B, is bonded to Shelley.

Shelley considers herself an Oregonian, but has also lived in Seattle, Austria, Washington, D.C. and New Zealand. Her most favorite things, in addition to caring for rabbits, are traveling, outdoor activities, photography, and spending time with family, friends and animals. Some of Shelley's travels provide the opportunity to enjoy all her passions, such as her trip to South Africa where she and Chris were able to observe and photograph native wildlife in their natural habitat.

## EVENTS

The Rabbit Advocates meet at the Oregon Humane Society, 1067 NE Columbia Boulevard, Portland, Oregon, on the third Sunday of every month (or as noted) from 4:00 - 6:00 PM. Meetings begin with a "Bunny Basics" Q & A session where we invite your questions about any aspect of rabbit care. The public is welcome!

### General Meetings March 6

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

### April 17

Spaying and Neutering.  
Why it is important;  
How it can help; and  
pre-op and post-op information

### May 15

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

### June 12

The differences between domestic rabbits, hares and cottontails.

### July 17

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

### Special Events March 12

Glendoveer Bunny Hop,  
10:00-12:00,  
Glendoveer Golf Course Fitness Trail, NE 148th & Halsey. Meet rescued rabbits, help stop abandonment in the park. See page 6 for more.

### June 18-19

Rabbit Advocates  
at Laurelhurst Garage Sale  
See article on back page.

# Don't Let Me Go! The Story of a Rescued Rabbit

by Sydney Thomson

*What made me cross the road that night? Blanketed by the wet, cold darkness, certain I would get across as I'd done so many times before, I hopped off the curb and started for the other side. And suddenly they were bearing down on me, two enormous black tires spinning on the slick pavement.*

*"Faster!" flashed through my brain, and I stretched my legs as far as I could to get beyond their reach. I was almost there, just one more leap...*

It was the next morning when the long, elegant cat Henry saw the injured rabbit in the front yard. Broken leg or not, somehow she had climbed the twenty steps up to the house.

Scratch! Scratch! Scratch! Henry pawed frantically at the window. The rabbit was hurt. He had to let his people know.

"Look Evelyn!" called Louis, coming to stand beside Henry at the window. "That little rabbit's outside again... but she's dragging one of her hind legs behind her. Something is definitely not right."

The couple had seen the small rabbit around the neighborhood for several weeks, sometimes on one side of the busy street, sometimes on the other. With a little detective work, they'd discovered her owner had lost interest in her and didn't see anything wrong with letting her loose. After all, she was a rabbit, she'd adapt...

But domestic rabbits don't adapt. Not designed to cope with being "in the wild," these rabbits are seriously at risk when released from our protection and care. For many generations, people have kept domestic rabbits, blunting the instincts that formerly helped them survive in the great outdoors.

Letting a domestic rabbit go is a potential death sentence. Cut off from his steady and nutritionally correct diet, the pet rabbit let loose outdoors often suffers from



Photo: Evelyn Roeloffs & Louis Eagle

*Arlene McMonagle with Zana. One very lucky bunny!*

malnourishment and dehydration. And as that discarded baby bunny from Easter becomes sexually mature (about 6 months of age) he will fight for mates, frequently inflicting serious wounds that easily become infected and abscessed, possibly leading to death if not treated.

Fleas and ticks are only a couple of the parasites rabbits deal with when released outdoors. More serious problems include raccoon roundworm, an internal parasite transmitted through the feces of raccoons, which attacks the brain of its host. Ringworm fungus causes skin lesions. And then there are the predators - dogs, cats, coyotes, owls, hawks - any of which can make a meal of a bunny, or injure him severely trying. It's not just crossing the street that's life threatening for these small creatures. Risks abound for domestic rabbits left to fend for themselves out of doors.

Armed with patience, persistence and compassion, Louis and Evelyn embarked on setting one little rabbit's life aright. A phone call to Rabbit Advocates gave them needed information and the assistance

## KUDOS

### **RABBIT BENEFACTOR**

Jason Iness  
Linda L. Johansen

### **RABBIT RESCUER**

Anonymous  
Monica Jo Mueller, in appreciation of Saffron  
Lillian M. Laskey  
Susan M. Lawrence  
Emily Stuparyk, in loving memory of Thumper Bumper, "my beloved Snowman"

### **RABBIT SPONSOR**

Anonymous  
Leann M. Bleakney  
Heather Brunelle, in appreciation of Dr. Chris Wilson  
Brian & Jennifer Carey, in appreciation of Sasha & Mercedes  
Karen DiMilia, in memory of Snowflake  
Constance A. Hawes  
Debra Hentz, in appreciation of Mary Huey  
Beccy Kirk & Ron DeLuca  
Kathy Kromm, in memory of T.J. Flopp  
Ken & Marjorie Miyasako  
Elaine Offield  
Erika Robinson, in appreciation of our special bunny friends  
Joanne & Garrett Schmidt, in memory of Bonnie & Clyde, in appreciation of Valerie Madison  
Mary Thompson

### **RABBIT FRIEND**

Anonymous  
Anonymous, in appreciation of Beta Bun  
Shelley Cooper Hanel, in appreciation of Kevin Gerdes  
Charlene DeLuca  
Ingrid Doerksen  
Julie Eddy  
Elizabeth Enslin, in memory of Daffodil & Leo  
Kathy A. Fitzgerald, in appreciation of Barbara Ray  
Kathi Lamm  
Robert A. Nisbet  
Teri Powers  
Evelyn Roeloffs  
Brenda Schneider  
Brian & Susan Watt

### **IN-KIND DONATIONS**

Nancy Doyon  
Natalie Palmer

Donations received after February 1 will be acknowledged in the next issue of the newsletter.

of knowledgeable volunteer Arlene MacMonagle, who spearheaded the capture of the little injured rabbit. It was a first-time rescue for all of them and Arlene beamed like the proud Mom when she held the little injured rabbit in her arms.

A trip to the vet and x-rays showed the left hind leg broken in two places, the hip severely dislocated and its joint damaged. The options were clear; amputate the leg or put the rabbit down. For Louis and Evelyn, people who had never before had a rabbit in their lives, the choice was instant-amputate the leg and save the animal.

Two weeks later Zana, as she was named (short for Zanahoria, Spanish for her favorite food, carrots), was well on her way to recovery. She'd cooperated through a week of hot compresses, been given a room of her own, and won the hearts

of Evelyn and Louis. Getting around on three legs was easy, especially with the remaining stump of thighbone she could use to prop herself up. And she was making new friends, the cats Henry and Casey who watched from a respectful distance. Yes, life was a lot better for one small rescued rabbit.

*That was how it began, how I moved into the house up the long flight of stairs. I know now why I crossed the road that night... it was to be with my family on the other side.*

*On March 3rd, Zana celebrates her first year as a member of Louis & Evelyn's family. Congratulations and much happiness to all! -Ed.*

## **Outreach**

***It's fun! It's informative!  
Whether you are thinking  
about adopting a rabbit or  
just want to learn more, our  
friendly and knowledgeable  
volunteers are happy to  
answer your questions.  
Meet adorable adoptable  
rescued rabbits and get the  
latest tips on living with a  
house rabbit. Rabbit care  
literature is available.***

## **East Side**

***Clackamas PetSmart,  
9450 SE 82nd Avenue***

***March 19, 12:00 – 3:00***

***April 16, 12:00 – 3:00***

***May 21, 12:00 – 3:00***

***June 18, 12:00 – 3:00***

## **West Side**

***Check our website,  
[www.adoptarabbit.org](http://www.adoptarabbit.org), for dates  
and locations.***

# **Rabbit Advocates and Metro Parks and Greenspaces present Glendoveer Bunny Hop!**

***Hop in for some family fun. Meet  
the volunteers who have rescued  
rabbits at Glendoveer and other  
parks, and hear their  
stories!***

***Fun for kids ages 4-12***

***Face painting and crafts***

***Prizes***

***Hop down the bunny trail.***

***See real rabbits and  
learn what it takes to  
care for them.***

***Saturday March 12, 2005***

***10:00 am- 12:00noon***

***Glendoveer Golf Course  
and Fitness Trail***

***Parking lot at  
NE 148th  
and Halsey***

***Rabbit  
Advocates.  
Helping kids  
learn to respect  
animals...  
educating the  
humane adults  
of tomorrow.***

***[www.adoptarabbit.org](http://www.adoptarabbit.org)***



# Adoptable House Rabbits

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



**Milly & Winky (above)** are a bonded pair of small rabbits. Milly loves to groom Winky. That's good, because Winky is dependent on Milly for some of his grooming, especially his ears. He has a genetic trait that caused his legs to grow at an unusual angle. You'd be surprised how well this sweet and feisty boy gets around. Milly is easygoing and loves to run around too.

**Contact:** [ovine22@yahoo.com](mailto:ovine22@yahoo.com)



**Winifred aka Fred (above)** is a lovely spayed, medium sized girl who loves to be fed by hand. She is a little slow to warm up but once she knows you she likes to explore you and give nose nudges. She would make a wonderful companion!

**Contact:** [zenrabbit1@hotmail.com](mailto:zenrabbit1@hotmail.com)



**Elise & Oliver (left)** are two very cute, sweet dwarf bunnies. Elise and Oliver live in a condo that they'll keep and do want to be adopted together, as they enjoy each other's company. Each bunny is about 5 years old. Oliver is a healthy neutered male, but Elise is being treated for E. cuniculi (a rabbit parasite) and needs special care. Elise takes medication every second day to stabilize her balance. She easily accepts the oral medication. If long-term adoption of Elise and Oliver is not possible, foster care for several months would be very helpful.

**Contact:** [ovine22@yahoo.com](mailto:ovine22@yahoo.com)



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

**Contact:** [ovine22@yahoo.com](mailto:ovine22@yahoo.com)

**Moira (left)** is a shy, young, gorgeous girl. She loves to explore and find every cozy corner. **Contact:** [ovine22@yahoo.com](mailto:ovine22@yahoo.com)



**Eddie (above)** is a young female with beautiful blue eyes. She is very gentle and doesn't mind a manicure at all. She loves to be held and is not afraid to be picked up. Her litter box habits are excellent and she is very inquisitive. Edie was found living in a wood pile and this sweet girl is in need of a safe, happy home.

**Contact:** [kokoewok@msn.com](mailto:kokoewok@msn.com)



**Chance (above):** Is a calm, quiet, easy going, and petite, 6 month old, grey and white dutch who was found near a busy street when still a baby.

**Contact:** [ovine22@yahoo.com](mailto:ovine22@yahoo.com)

**Rabbit Advocates  
Board of Directors**

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Thanks to our generous donors and our dedicated volunteers, we are well on the way to making our 2005 Garage Sale, scheduled for June 18-19, a successful event.

But we, and the rabbits, still need your help!

The Rabbit Advocates Garage Sale is our biggest fundraiser of the year. Your donations make it possible for us to have a **Medical Fund** to help with spays, neuters and health problems, **Educational Programs** to inform children and adults of the delights and challenges of a bunny in the family and continue our **Rescue and Adoption** efforts.

We need donations of all kinds – big items, small items, furniture, kitchen goodies, knick-knacks, jewelry, tools, you name it, we'll sell it to **Help the Rabbits**. So think of us when it comes to spring cleaning!

**June 18 & 19th**

**Want to help even more?**

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

**Call Arlene: 503.232.6460**

**email: ituri2@aol.com**

**or**

**Sydney: 503.695.3444**



Photo: Kern Sypher



**Rabbit Advocates**

**PO Box 14235**

**Portland**

**Oregon**

**97293-0235**

**Would you like to  
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newsletter, or update  
your mailing address?**

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suggestion?**

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