

All Ears in Sacramento



Volume 10 Winter 2001

Inside this Issue:

Lessons Vi Taught Me	1
Rabbits Available for Adoption	3
Recent Adoptions.....	3
Bunnysitters.....	4
How Does Your Garden Grow?.....	4
Brenda's Homemade Bunny Biscuits.....	5
How Did Rabbits Learn to Lay Eggs?.....	6
Winter Status Report.....	6
Upcoming Events	7
Website Update.....	7
T-Shirts and Totes	7
Keep in Touch!	8
Volunteer Opportunities	8

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In this issue, Sacramento House Rabbit Society chapter manager Jill Raymond writes about her experiences with her first house rabbit, Vi. Now a stately "senior citizen bunny," Vi is a fixture in Jill's home, and was the inspiration for his owner's volunteer work with the HRS.

Lessons Vi Has Taught Me

When I first met Vi, he was eight days old, orphaned and roughed-up by a cat. Someone had found him and brought him to the San Diego Wildlife Center where I volunteered. I knew nothing about rabbits and assumed that he was a wild bunny. Bonnie, the center's cottontail expert, instantly knew otherwise.

"He's domestic," she sighed. "If I take him, I'll have to find a home for him."

I looked at the tiny fuzzball. His eyes hadn't even opened yet, but he thrust his front paws forward in Bonnie's hand, taking on a defiant stance.

"If you nurse him back to health, I'll take him," I said quickly, not really sure how my

roommates would feel about it.

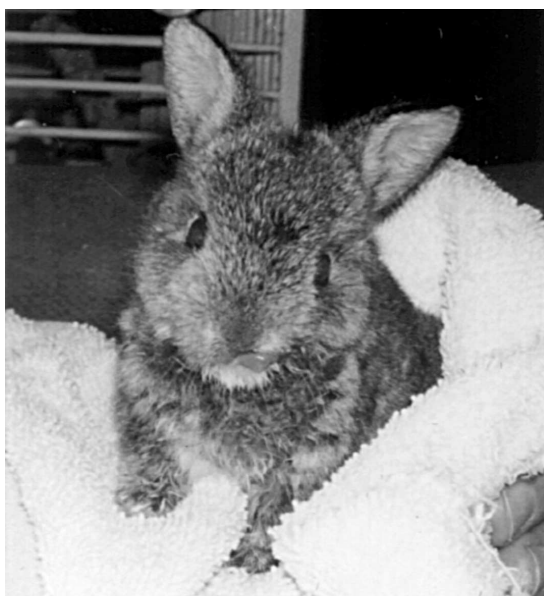
That was in 1993 – and Vi has been my companion and teacher ever since. I've learned how to "read" his body language and understand what he's trying to tell me. Luckily, he's been a very patient and steady tutor. Rabbits are not at all shy about teaching us how to live with them!

Lesson 1. Rabbits are curious

When Vi came to live with me at approximately four weeks of age, he was still quite tiny. His first home was a kitten airline carrier, and I was afraid to let him run around my room, lest I lose him! One day while I was cleaning out his carrier, I put him in my bathroom, figuring that he'd be safe in there. When I came to get him five minutes later, he was hopping around with a sopping wet rear-end. It wasn't pee – it was water. I realized that he must have jumped into the toilet, just to see what it was all about. Luckily, he had gotten himself back out! I quickly learned to re-evaluate my estimation of how far those tiny little back feet could jump (and to keep the toilet seat down!). It helps to always be one thought ahead of the bunny.

Lesson 2. Rabbits are hard to sex

Bonnie, who is a rabbit expert, examined the little munchkin closely at the center, and





Pasha and Vi enjoy a quiet moment

decided that we were looking at a tiny girl bunny. I pondered a name for my pretty little bunny for quite some time, and finally decided upon "Violet". At about three months of age, when the hormones kicked in, it became very apparent that "she" was a "he"! But by then, of course, the name had stuck, so "Violet" became just "Vi" (pronounced like the alphabet letter "v"). I've since talked to many other rabbit owners who know this only too well – pet store employees are often a little too quick to insist they're giving you "two boys" or "two girls." Sexing rabbits is a tricky task. If the bunny is very young, even the experts like Bonnie can be fooled.

Lesson 3. Rabbits like companionship

After Vi and I had been together for a few months, I began to worry what his life was like while I was off at work all day. He is a very affectionate bunny, who likes a lot of one-on-one attention. I decided it was time to find him a friend. Pasha, a small, white girl bunny, showed up at the Humane Society soon after. I brought her home to Vi, and boy was he happy! But Pasha, who was only half his size, was terrified of this big rabbit chasing her. I had no idea that bunny bonding was such a delicate operation. I contacted the San Diego HRS chapter for help, and, after a month's worth of car rides and enduring strange places together, Pasha decided that Vi wasn't such a bad guy after all. Soon after, I moved north, and a relatively peaceful eight-hour drive to Sacramento sealed the deal!

Lesson 4. Rabbits have personality plus

There are all sorts of bunny personalities – shy bunnies, bold bunnies, grumpy bunnies, bunnies who can't lie still for a minute. Vi is a rabbit of leisure. He seems to be distinctly aware that the world does, in fact, revolve around him. Unmade beds are his for sleeping in, carpeted corners are his for peeing in, and visitors are for fawning over him (or nipping as the mood strikes him). Since the first day I laid eyes on him, he has maintained his defiant demeanor, flicking out his back feet and hopping away, shaking his head, whenever I scold him for misbehavior. He's definitely irritated me from time to time ("Why does that rabbit insist on eating my clothes?!") but the overriding aspect of Vi's personality is his charm: His earnest face. The way he turns his ears. The little practice sways he makes before flopping over on his side. Vi has taught me that embracing the aggravating quirks along with the charming ones is the way to truly learn who your bunny is, and what he or she has to teach you.

Lesson 5. Rabbits are joyful

Being a rabbit of leisure, Vi leaves the rearranging, tunneling and digging to his little mate, Pasha. Vi's days are filled with sun baths, grooming sessions and hay munching. When I sing to him, he dances (there's usually food coming when the singing starts, which I suspect is the bigger motivating factor). What a joyful life! Rabbits live in the moment, and whenever I see the sun striking his shiny fur during a sunbath, it makes me realize how wonderful these relaxing moments can be, and how important it is to fully appreciate the happy ones. That's what Vi does all day long!

Lesson 6. Attention and affection are the keys to a bunny's heart and health

At three years of age, Vi developed an infection at the root of his molars. He stopped eating, lost a lot of weight, and ground his teeth in pain. I was terrified that I was going to lose him. I had to keep him alive by force feeding him twice a day for over a month. We both

Rabbits Available for Adoption

see page 7 for adoption event details



Sonora is a very calm, sweet girl who loves attention (from people and other rabbits) and morning treats!



Radar is a young Californian. She is big but gentle and would love to have her own family to dote on her.



Wiley is a Californian, who along with Radar, escaped from a rabbit meat farm. Wiley is very sweet and curious, and under one year old.



Percy is an English spot youngster. He is cute and a little shy, but learning to come out of his shell.



Beatrix is a fun-loving, easy-going bunny who loves to spend time with her human friends.



Ruby is a friendly girl who loves attention. She is a big, sweet, mellow bunny with a sunny personality.



Ro-cocoa is 3 month old boy who has the markings of a Siamese cat. He doesn't mind being picked up.



Sideways Sam is a tiny Polish dwarf who freely doles out kisses to his human companions. He is a special needs bunny and needs a home with no cats or very young children.



Star is an active, friendly young girl with a gentle demeanor. She likes being held in your lap.



Paloma is a beautiful large Dutch bunny, who is spunky and smart. A real delight for experienced bunny parents!

Recent Adoptions

Mr. Bop and **Miss Be** were adopted by Olivia Ambrose

Emily was adopted by the Miller family

Maurice was adopted by Terry Velarde

George (now Pipkin) was adopted by the Sharwards as a companion for their bunny, Nutmeg

Becker was adopted by Eileen Sasaki as a friend for her rabbit, Humphrie Bogart

Cocoa was adopted by the Borchardts

Sailor (now Hoagie) was adopted by John and Phyllis Moist

Zima was adopted by the Diebert family

Jack (now Anzu) was adopted by Ayako Imai as a friend for her bunny, Sakura

L'il Fella was adopted by the Walsh family

Benjamin was adopted by Ward Steiner and Autumn Allison

Trinket was adopted by Heather Goldie as a companion for her bunny, Smokey

Oprah was adopted by Kathy Sickles

hated it, so to make it more bearable, I tried to be as "positive" around him as possible. I brought him small dishes of water so he didn't have to get up to go to the water bowl. I told him what a wonderful bunny he was, in a low, soothing voice, and I petted him incessantly. I praised him every time he gulped down some pellet mash instead of spitting it out. After what seemed like an eternity, he started to eat on his own once more. Soon he was his old sun-bathing, dancing self again.

Because of what I learned from this episode, to this day I speak to all bunnies in a very uplifting, praising tone. Vi helped me to understand the healing power of the soothing voice and upbeat attitude – it works not only with sick rab-

bits, but also with nervous foster bunnies who are unsure about people. Even bunnies who are deemed aggressive can turn into sweethearts when they are treated with love and respect.

Over the years, Vi has grown older, transforming from the leisurely playboy to the distinguished gentleman he now is. I'm honored that he's been a part of my life, and I anxiously look forward to the next lessons he chooses to teach me. For as much as I'm proud to say that I've learned to "read" Vi, I must admit that he's trained me to his liking as well. (As I look at the clock, I realize that I am 30 minutes late with his dinner! Gotta go, my Master awaits!)

– Jill Raymond

Bunnysitters

The SHRS keeps a list of local people who are interested in bunnysitting for a fee or for a sitting exchange arrangement. Rates and experience vary, so please make sure you are personally comfortable with your bunnysitter, and ask for references. The SHRS provides this list as a service, and holds no liability for bunnysitters. If you would like to have your name added to this list, contact us at (916) 863-9690.

Bunnysitter Exchange

Karen Blaine.....726-4637
Danny Popp.....966-7805
SteviLynn
Saunders.....344-8917

Sacto Bunnysitters

Animeals.....646-4663
Dawn Dacy.....852-8233
Christine John.....722-5301
Bonni McMurray...451-6389

Folsom to Foothill Bunnysitters

Brian Barry...(530) 644-7387
Ravilla Irvin...(530) 676-2273
Cathy Shoeman.....933-0895
Charlene Welty.....933-0530

Elk Grove Area Bunnysitters

Wanda
Turner.....(209) 933-0895

Davis Bunnysitters

Rebecca
Buchen.....(530) 753-7869

How Does Your Garden Grow?

A Quick Guide to Planting Rabbit-Friendly Vegetables

If you find the January cold is wearing on your last nerve, why not cheer yourself up by planning a springtime surprise for your house rabbit? Gardening is a wonderful way to ward off the wintertime blues. We'd like to offer our thanks to the San Diego House Rabbit Society for offering this terrific list of gardening basics. All of the plants listed below are easy to grow this time of year, and are edible to humans and rabbits alike.

To ensure the best access to sunshine, place the shortest plants in southern-most part of garden, moving to taller varieties as you go north.



CARROTS

Biennial, grown as annual.

Full sun; maintain even soil moisture

The variety you should choose depends on your soil. Plant half-long varieties (Nantes Half Long, Chantenay or Burpee's Goldinhardt) if you can't give 12" of good, light soil. Soil should be fine and loose enough for root and sprout development. Sow thickly in rows at least 1' apart; sow for successive plantings when previous plants are up and growing. Too much nitrogen promotes excessive top growth and forked roots that taste fine but look funny. This could be a plus if your intent is to give Bunny lots of fresh carrot tops. When tops are 2" high, thin to 1.5" apart and again if roots begin to crowd. In mild-winter climates, carrots store well in the ground; dig as needed.



TURNIPS, RUTABAGAS

These are also winter crops, and need the same conditions as carrots. Turnips are fast-growing and should be harvested and used as soon as they are big enough. Flavor is milder if soil is kept moist. Rutabagas store well in the ground. Plant September through March.

KALE

Biennial vegetable

Full sun to part shade

Plant in fall or winter. Grow plants from seed about 6 weeks before transplanting to rich, moist soil, 24"-30" apart. To harvest throughout summer, keep lower leaves well-picked and remove all yellowing leaves. True Siberian kale has blue-green frilly leaves. Very cold-hardy; can be picked through winter in many areas.

BASIL

Summer annual herb

Full sun

Sweet basil grows to 2' tall with green, shiny 1"-2" leaves. Sow seed in early spring; requires warm soil. Make successive sowings 2 weeks apart. If starting from small plants, set 10"-12" apart. Fer-

Brenda's Homemade Bunny Biscuits

This recipe came to us from our friends "North of the Border." Brenda Plaxton, the kitchen whiz who invented it, lives on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia, Canada. Brenda originally created these treats for her own buns, Finnegan, Fiona, and Satchmo (her border collie, Brodie, rather likes the biscuits, too!). Brenda shared her recipe with another Salt Spring Island rabbit lover, Libby Hughes-Klokeid, who then sent it to us.

Remember, these are treats, so give them sparingly. If you try the recipe and your bunnies are happy with the results, let us know and we'll pass the word on to Brenda!

- 1 small carrot, pureed
- 1/2 a banana, mashed until really creamy
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1/4 cup rabbit pellets, ground finely in a coffee grinder
- 1/4 cup whole wheat flour

Mix pureed carrot, banana and honey in a medium bowl. Add pellet powder and whole wheat flour. Mix until blended. Knead in your hands for 1-2 minutes. Roll out the 'dough' in 1/8- to 1/4-inch thick layers between sheets of plastic wrap. Cut into small cookies (about 3/4-inch across). Place cut shapes onto a parchment paper covered cookie sheet. Bake at 325 degrees for about 30 minutes (check to make sure they are not browning too much). Turn off the heat and let the cookies sit in the warm oven for an hour or so.

Brenda adds: Next time, I am going to try finely ground rolled oats in place of the flour. I am sure that lots of other changes could be made, and these would still work. For example, you could replace the carrot with apple or pear.



tilize once with complete fertilizer. Pinch flower spikes to prevent seeding and death of plant.

CILANTRO

Annual herb

Full sun; tolerates part shade; regular water

Also called coriander or Chinese parsley.

Grows 12"-15" tall. Plant from seed (including coriander seeds sold in grocery stores) in good, well-drained soil. Grows quickly. Self sows.

DANDELION

Perennial; plant anytime

Full sun; regular/moderate water

A weed in lawns and flower beds, the dandelion is also cultivated as an edible-leaf crop. Sow from seed. Cultivated varieties (French dandelion) have larger, thicker leaves than the weed types. Leaves can be eaten raw or stir-fried. Said to have medicinal qualities and stimulate digestion.

PARSLEY

Biennial herb treated as annual

Sun to partial shade

Grows 6"-12" tall. Best grown anew each year from nursery plants or seed. Plant December to May. Soak seeds for 24 hours before planting. Even so, they may not sprout for several weeks. Thin seedlings to 6"-8" apart. Italian parsley (which resembles cilantro) is more prolific and easier to cultivate than regular parsley. Grows 2'-3' tall. Turnip-rooted or Hamburg parsley is grown for fleshy, turnip-shaped root vegetable and edible leaves.

For other bunny-friendly gardening tips, check out the upcoming issue of *Rabbits Annual* magazine, soon to be at a bookstore near you. SHRS friend Libby Hughes-Klokeid (who also hooked us up with the Bunny Biscuit recipe!) has authored a wonderful article on organic gardening.



How Did Rabbits Learn to Lay Eggs?

The short answer to why we have an Easter Bunny.



Around this time of year people start thinking about Easter and bunnies and how the two came together. The HRS has a standing policy of discouraging people from making impulse purchases of rabbits just for the occasion of Easter since it often leads to dumping of the animals a few months later when the cute little bunnies grow up or are no longer adored at the moment.

In her book *Rabbits Everywhere*, Alicia Ezpeleta (Harry Abrams, Inc., NY, 1996) explains that the easter bunny began as an old Bavarian folk tale in which mama didn't have money for holiday presents to give her children. She colored a few eggs and hid them in the forest. Later her children were playing and spotted a rabbit. They followed the bunny into the woods where he led them to the hidden

basket of colored eggs. The children jumped to the conclusion that the rabbit had left them the present of the eggs. Since then rabbits have been thought to bring presents of colored eggs.

Rabbits have always been associated with Easter because they are often the first animals to give birth after Winter. With their short gestation period of 30 days, they are a natural symbol of fertility, new life and rebirth.

Since A.D. 325, Easter has been celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon of Spring. The moon is also associated with rabbits because the 30-day gestation period naturally coincides for the lunar calendar. Japanese culture sees the "hare in the moon" instead of a man.

— Brandon Chee

Winter Status Report

As we near the Easter holidays ("crunch time", as those of you who are familiar to rabbit rescue know), we thought it would be a good idea to let you know about some of the internal "goings-on" and upcoming projects that our volunteers are working on.

Calling All Potential Fosterers:

1. According to data collected by our new Adoption Coordinator, Kimberley Wheatfill, our tireless volunteers rescued and placed 42 rabbits from the Sacramento area in the year 2000. The vast majority of these rabbits were surrendered to local shelters before entering our foster program. Others were found by volunteers or born to rescued rabbits.
2. We are now entering the busiest time of year for education and rescue. As of the end of January, there were 16 rabbits at the Sacramento SPCA, 1 at the City shelter and 1 at the County shelter. Our foster homes are currently full. If you have been considering fostering a rabbit, now is a wonderful time to begin. Call our hotline, (916) 863-9690, for more information.
3. If enough people show interest in becoming fosterers, we will put together a short, fun meeting to offer an overview of our foster program and to give everyone an opportunity to ask questions. Remember, HRS has "loaner cages" and pays for the majority of veterinary costs – your major commitments are simply time and love. Come see what it's all about – you won't regret it. There's no feeling quite like saving a life.

Other New Projects:

1. Our volunteers now keep a list of "other" rabbits (non-HRS fosters) who are available for adoption at local shelters and through private homes. If someone is looking to adopt a particular type of rabbit and they don't see a photo of what they want in the newsletter or on our web site, it's worth e-mailing or calling the hotline to see if we know of a bunny that fits the bill.
2. We don't have an update on the Emergency Fund yet, but we hope to have one by the next newsletter. Other HRS projects had to take precedence over the holidays, but this is Number One on our "to do" list this spring.
3. The website is getting a whole new look (see "Website Update" on page 7 of this newsletter).

Upcoming Events:

1. Please note that our April adoption day has been moved to the first Saturday of the month (April 7), in order to discourage impulse adoptions right before Easter. All other adoption days will be held on the usual second Saturday of the month.
2. We will be holding a Bake Sale at the April 7 event. If you would like to contribute a food item to the sale, please call our hotline at (916) 863-9690.

Do you have any local rabbit news to report? We welcome your submissions to *All Ears in Sacramento*! If you have story ideas, photos, illustrations, or article topics, send them to the address on page 7. We can't return items, so please do not send originals.

Upcoming Events

Bring your bunny to any Clinic for a \$5 nail trim - no appointment necessary!

Adoption and Information Clinics

Are you thinking about adding a bunny to your household? Or are you just looking to learn more about the one you've already got? Regardless of whether you've had a rabbit for years or if you're new to the joys of rabbit companionship, you'll have a great time at our monthly Adoption and Information Clinics. Come ask us questions about bunny behavior, care, grooming, nutrition, or anything else you can think of. We have free printed information on a variety of topics, and, of course, we also have our fabulous fosters on hand, waiting for just the right family to come along! The adoption donation is \$50 (\$75 for two), and includes a copy of *The House Rabbit Handbook*.

If you already have a bunny, you're welcome to bring him or her to the Clinic in a secure carrier. Our experienced "rabbit wranglers" can trim your rabbit's nails for a \$5 donation. We've recently added a new service as well - de-tangling matted bunny fur. If your rabbit has stubborn knots that you just can't get out, call our bunny line in advance (916-863-9690) and make arrangements to bring him to the Clinic for a makeover. We have clippers, combs, and lots of patience. Donations of \$10 are appreciated!

February 10

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Folsom PetCo
879 East Bidwell

March 10

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Fair Oaks PetCo
8840 Madison Avenue

April 7

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Arden PetCo
1878 Arden Way

May 12

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Folsom PetCo
879 East Bidwell

Website Update

The Sacramento HRS website (www.all ears sac.org) is getting a whole new look! In our quest to bring you rabbit care information in an easy-to-use format, we are revamping the site to make it more inviting, informative and easier to navigate. There are movies, an online store, links to local shelter sites and information about

local resources. In combination with the National HRS site (www.rabbit.org), the answers to your bunny questions are as close as your computer.

Thanks to Brandon Chee for putting together this site for us. Look for our new, improved site in late February.

— Jill Raymond

All Ears in Sacramento is published quarterly by the Sacramento House Rabbit Society, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization.

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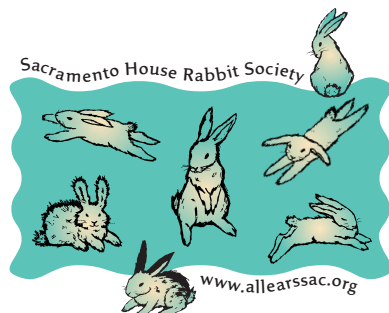
tel: (916) 863-9690
fax: (916) 923-0536

email:
KMacintyre@yahoo.com
hareline@pacbell.net

Website:
www.all ears sac.org

T-Shirts and Totes

SHRS t-shirts are back with a new front design featuring delightful illustrations by SHRS member Shannon Hawkins (see below), and accompanied by canvas totebags as well! The t-shirts are available in natural or navy, and the totes (measuring 19 x 14.5 x 5 inches) are natural with navy straps and bottom gusset. Come by to our monthly clinics or the Pet Expo to see them in person, or use the handy form (right) to order by mail. T-shirts: \$15 (natural available in sizes M, L, XL; navy in sizes L, XL, XXL) Totebags: \$25



Name: _____

Phone: () _____

Address: _____

ITEM	COLOR	SIZE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
shipping & handling*:				
total:				

Please mail completed form with check or money order (payable to Sacramento House Rabbit Society) to:
Sacramento House Rabbit Society, P.O. Box 13371,
Sacramento, CA 95813-0371

*SAVE on shipping & handling charges when buying in quantity!

1-3 items ordered is \$4.00 s&h 4-6 items ordered is \$8.00 s&h, etc.

allow 2-3 weeks for delivery



Sacramento House Rabbit Society
 P.O. Box 13371
 Sacramento, CA 95813-0371

Complimentary Copy
 Sacramento House Rabbit Society depends on donations to keep running. Please fill out the form below to keep receiving *All Ears in Sacramento*, and to support local rabbits in need!

Keep in Touch!

Time to renew your membership? New to the House Rabbit Society? The annual membership to the House Rabbit Society is \$18. This includes a subscription to the quarterly *House Rabbit Journal*. The annual membership fee for the Sacramento Chapter, which includes the quarterly *All Ears in Sacramento*, is \$15. The House Rabbit Society is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. All membership fees are tax-deductible and go towards care expenses for the rabbits and for providing educational materials, such as these newsletters.

- Please sign me up for the National Membership, \$18
- Please sign me up for the Sacramento Membership, \$15
- Please sign me up for both for \$30
- I have enclosed an additional donation of \$ _____
- I would like to volunteer with SHRS (see choices to the right)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

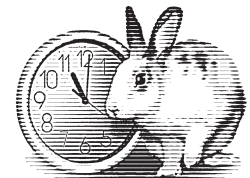
email address: _____

Return with check payable to House Rabbit Society to:
 Sacramento House Rabbit Society, P.O. Box 13371, Sacramento, CA 95813-0371

Volunteer!

Would you like to help local rabbits and bunny-lovers? We could use volunteers in the following areas:

- Public Events (staffing education tables)
- Fundraising Events
- Distributing Literature
- Working with Shelters
- Transporting rabbits to the National Headquarters in Richmond
- Fostering



HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY