

Quarterly News from the
Sacramento House Rabbit Society

All Ears in Sacramento



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A Hop, a Waddle and a Quack: *The Story of Dash and Little Duck*

Although bunnies and ducks are most often thought of together at Easter, one does not often see them choose to hang out together in the wild, or by choice in captivity. At our house, though, this strange pairing is a way of life all year around.

Our story started around Eastertime close to nine years ago, when Little Duck came into our lives as a rescue. He had been living in a dark crate at a feed store, as the last of a bunch of "Easter ducklings." We brought him home to our neighborhood in Orinda, California, starting him off under a heat lamp in our house. As he grew stronger and healthier, he moved into our backyard, where we built him a raccoon-proof pen and a house to sleep in at night.

He was just a small duckling then, but right away he developed an extreme attachment to our older rabbit, who had been a companion for years in our home. When that rabbit passed

away at the age of 10, Little Duck was beside himself. He paced and paced and refused to eat. Such a sad duck, and with his advanced age, we were worried he might die from heartache.

Last February, we were told that the House Rabbit Society was having an adoption day at the Oakland SPCA. We went to the adoption day "just to look." There we found Dash, who had made the trip from Sacramento to Oakland in the care of his SHRS foster mom Susan King, just for this one-day event. Susan told us that Dash was about two years old; she had been loose on the streets of Sacramento and had then had been in the pound for awhile before Susan took her in as a foster. Considering what she'd been through, Dash was surprisingly friendly and relaxed, and Susan was very helpful in providing us with information (and even letting us take a carrier!). We were excited to adopt a rabbit and

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A Hop, a Waddle and a Quack

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give Little Duck a true Valentine's Day gift!

Just as we'd hoped, the duck and rabbit became fast friends – it was love at first sight. Although Dash is a house rabbit, she looks forward to joining Little Duck in the back yard each morning; she literally bolts out of the door, full speed, to get to the yard! I have learned how to open the door and stand with my legs out of the way so as not to get mowed down. They spend countless hours alternating between napping, munching, and playing hide-and-go-seek. They never nip at each other or seem to get on each other's nerves, but they have definitely established their own pecking order. Dash rules the roost and Little Duck happily follows her around – usually three steps behind, in a straight line. Dash will often leap directly over Little Duck and then double

Although Dash is a house rabbit, she looks forward to joining Little Duck in the back yard each morning

back and kick up her heels if he's not paying enough attention to her or isn't following her in the yard (such as when he stops to eat a bug and she wants him to join her). When they get tired, they nap on the lawn or under a bush.

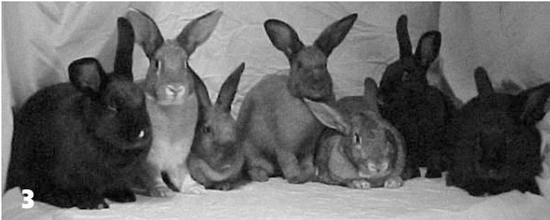
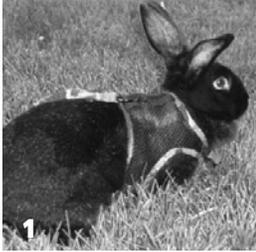
They love to eat together, and Little Duck will not start on his bowl until he walks over and sees that Dash is eating out of hers (he likes to keep track of her every move). Dash has to be separated when Little Duck eats his corn, but otherwise, they kindly share lettuce and Timothy hay pellets. They also have matching houses (his outside, hers inside) with the doors adjusted so that they can each put themselves to bed. When Little Duck walks into his own house for bedtime, Dash knows it is time for her to come in, and she runs for the door! Once they're in their respective houses, I close and latch their doors.

I am a teacher who works out of my house, and my elementary-school age students say that the highlight of visiting is learning about the unusual bond between the rabbit and the duck. I'm delighted that my little "odd couple" has had such an impact on the next generation, in that they prompt the kids to think about rescuing and caring for animals of all shapes and sizes. Dash is a true gift to her humans in her friendliness and desire to run up and be petted, and to her fowl brother in her endless patience for being followed (politely) around. It's hard to say who in our family has benefited from this adoption more, but we are all very thankful this holiday season to have Dash in our midst!

– Jenny Maguire



Rabbits Available for Adoption



1. Elvira is an active adult girl. She has great litterbox habits. She enjoys attention and being held.

2. Hobart Van Gogh is a special boy looking for the special home he has awaited his entire life. Hobart has fully recovered from an ear amputation and has been neutered. He would do best with a family that has experience handling rabbits and time to give him the attention he deserves. He must live where he will have air conditioning during hot weather.

3. Our names (left to right) are **Mimi, Rosie, Smudge, Pudge, Oscar, Napoleon, and Peanut**. Five girls and two boys. We were rescued from the same location and have grown up as a family (or herd, in rabbit language). Oscar is our fearless leader and Mimi likes to act like a mom to all of us. We are spayed and neutered. Our foster mom said it would be most unlikely we would all find a forever home together...but that we could be adopted as pairs or more to very special homes. Thank goodness we all get along and take care of each other!



4. Rhett Bunnler is an active male. He enjoys digging and shredding the yellow pages. He likes to be held and petted, but only after he has had a chance to race around and get his exercise.

5. Mikey is a curious boy who likes to play with his toys and give kisses.

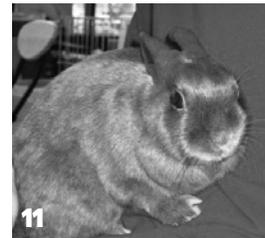


6. Dakota likes being petted and held. She has good litter box habits.

7. Eliza has excellent litter box habits and loves to explore. Her favorite hobby is deconstructing wicker baskets.

8. Sophie was one of a bonded pair, until she decided she wanted all the attention for herself! She is a very sweet and curious girl.

9. Hoppy Gilmore is an active and playful boy.



10. Eleu is a male mini-rex who loves to play with toys.

11. Misty needs a caring home due to a previous health challenge. She is a stable and very sweet girl who loves to be held.

12. Star, Joey, and Lilly are a comical trio of sisters who play with and groom one another. It would be wonderful to keep them together, but we are open to splitting the herd, for the right homes.

13. Cole is a smart, curious dwarf boy who enjoys being petted. He likes having plenty of space to roam.



Save the Date:

**Run for
the Buns
2009**



Details in next issue!

Sunday, March 29

Myxomatosis Returns to Northern California

Rare virus strikes in Marysville

For my birthday last year (October 2007) I was blessed with my two little female Holland Lops, Twitch and Thumper, which were given to me by a dear friend. Because we only have a two-bedroom house for four people (and three Basset Hounds), keeping them indoors was not an option, but we were determined to provide the best living arrangements possible. My husband carefully planned where the bunnies were going to be the safest and purchased the two-story condo with a six-foot run that I had picked out for my bouncing baby bunnies. Every morning before I left for work I would go visit them and give them fresh vegetables, talk to them and make sure they had plenty of hay, pellets and water. I would do the same when I got home at night. I enjoyed watching them kick up their heels, run their obstacle course and twitch their nose; you couldn't help but smile. Twitch and Thumper were indeed spoiled and well loved bunnies.

In July of this year I started to notice that Twitch's eyes were getting swollen and she seemed congested, so I took her to the vet. Her face and ears were also swollen. It appeared to be an allergy so the vet gave her an injection of steroids and antibiotics to put in her water. Three days later she appeared worse (her breathing was labored, sneezing, body seemed limp and her whole face was swollen), so I took her to the vet again. He gave me antibiotics to give her twice a day with a little pineapple juice

mixed in (she really liked that!) and told me to keep her in the house to see if the allergy would get better.

That night after I went to bed, my husband researched the situation and regretfully found exactly what Twitch was expe-

riencing, "Myxomatosis." This is a type of pox virus which is transmitted by bloodsucking insects (fleas and mosquitos) and grows in the skin of rabbits. He left the information on the table for me to read when I got up in the morning before I went to work. Unfortunately the first thing I found was my beautiful little multicolored bunny's lifeless body on the floor; she had passed away sometime during the night. I was brokenhearted!

I went to the table and found the literature my husband had left for me, and tearfully read about Myxomatosis. I then went out to see Thumper and saw early signs of the virus (slightly swollen eyes). I wasted no time contacting the vet to alert them of the information my husband had discovered (I brought the literature to the vet's office that day). I made an appointment for Thumper the following day.

On Friday, my husband, knowing that time was imperative, scrambled to find the serum, Equimune I.V., for Thumper. He drove to Loomis and picked it up and I met him at the vet's office with Thumper for the first of two injections. The vet ordered the Equimune I.V. for the second injection which was to be given Thursday of the following week. I brought Thumper in the house and kept her in a controlled environment to make her as comfortable as possible. She was given antibiotics twice a day with pineapple juice. For the first few days I did not see signs of the virus progressing and contacted the vet to make sure he had the serum. Everything was on track until the day before her last injection, when she would not eat anything. I came home during my lunch hour to see if I could get her to eat something...nothing, not even any of her favorite fresh vegetables or fruit. That night she still would not eat, her breathing was extremely labored and she was squeaking. I went to bed at 11 pm; just 40 minutes later, my husband woke me up to tell me that

Mosquitoes and fleas are carriers of the Myxomatosis virus.



Thumper was thrashing and squeaking loudly. While I tried to comfort her, my husband contacted the closest vet after hours in Roseville, which is 30 miles away. As hard as it was for me, I knew she was suffering. I woke our two boys to tell them where we were going and by 12:15 am we were on our way to Roseville. We returned home around 2:30 am. I contacted the vet when I got to work that morning – the morning of Thumper’s scheduled appointment – to let them know of the situation.

It was less than a week after we buried Twitch; another grave was dug for Thumper. My two little bunnies are now buried next to each other.

The Myxomatosis virus is aggressive and will take the life of a rabbit in 15 to 16 days. Because of the length of time it takes to build a rabbit’s immune system, the effectiveness of the Equimine I.V. serum is limited for a bunny who has already been infected. Remember that these little bunnies were less than a year old and very healthy before the onset of this virus.

There is a vaccine for Myxomatosis that can be given to rabbits over six weeks of age – but this vaccine is not available in the United States. Our vet made every effort to get the vaccine for future rabbit patients; he contacted a supplier in England as well as the manufacturer of the vaccine, but was unsuccessful.

I would like to thank my husband, our vet and the House Rabbit Society for their support and assistance getting the word out about Myxomatosis. I encourage all bunny owners to read the literature posted about this pox virus and watch for symptoms such as swelling of the eyes, face, nose, lethargy, loss of appetite, and limpness. If your bunny ever goes outside, there is a risk of contracting this awful virus. I have not gotten any more bunnies because I am not able to keep them indoors permanently.

The best news would be to get the vaccine approved in the United States. I do not want any more bunnies to go through what Twitch and Thumper did.

– Bobbie Tull (Marysville, CA)

Editor’s Note: Bobbie, we are so sorry for the loss of your bunnies. We realize what a personal and painful story this must have been to write, and we want to thank you for sharing your experience with our readers. Although Myxomatosis is relatively rare in Northern California, we have heard of at least four local incidents in the last decade, and it’s important that we raise awareness of this virus. Like you, we hope that laws will change and the Myxomatosis vaccine will someday be available in the United States.

Rabbit Lecture at UC Davis

On October 17, SHRS educators Jill Walker, Kirsten Macintyre and Barbara Koenigsmark presented a guest lecture on rabbit behavior and care at UC Davis. This annual event is for Prof. Anita Oberbauer’s Companion Animal Care and Management class, which consists of more than 100 undergraduate students who are considering careers in veterinary medicine. The lecture includes information on diet, health, training and bunny-proofing, but the highlight is always the rabbit tracing demonstration. This year’s bunny “model” was Barbara’s own rabbit, Kimmie.

Left to right: Professor Anita Oberbauer, Jill Walker, Barbara Koenigsmark and the entrancing Kimmie



SHRS Donates Cages to Butte Humane Society

Butte Humane Society's Executive Director Heather Schoeppach holds bunny Clementine in front of a just-delivered new rabbit cage. We're happy to report that Clementine was adopted the very next day, and this cage and three others like it are now providing a comfy home to the other rabbit residents at the shelter.



Several months ago, the Butte Humane Society in Chico contacted SHRS to ask for help. At the time, they had too many bunnies and inadequate housing. Their timing was fortuitous in that SHRS was about to order a shipment of discontinued deluxe rabbit cages from a company in the Midwest (see the Fall issues of *All Ears* for details). The Board decided to buy an additional four cages for the shelter.

Over the long Thanksgiving weekend, the four cages were delivered to the shelter staff, who were overjoyed at the donation. Although there were only four rabbits in residence at the shelter, their housing situation was less than ideal. The only cages available were made of bent, old wire and were so large that they could only be stacked on top of each other in the busy shelter lobby. The rabbits were exposed to constant noise and bustle, and the unfortunate bunny in the top cage was so high up she couldn't be seen by most potential adopters.

According to Lindsay Kingman, a Behavior Specialist for the Humane Society, the Chico shelter gets about 20 rabbits a year, which is quite a lot for a small shelter in a small community. "It typically takes us months to adopt out our rabbits," Lindsay explained. "We try to get them into the media as often as possible, but people just don't come to us for rabbits and other small pets." She added that their most recently adopted bunny had lived at the shelter for six months prior to finding a new home.

Fortunately, the Butte Humane Society already has many rabbit-friendly policies, including a \$20 adoption fee, a spay/neuter requirement and mandatory microchipping. Now, with the four new cages, the rabbits will also be more visible and comfortable. Best of luck to our friends in Chico – we were delighted to be able to help!

– Kirsten Macintyre

FOSTER SPOTLIGHT

Baby and Hana are a bonded girl/boy pair who are about 4 and 3 years old, respectively. Baby is a beautiful, curious brown rabbit who loves to be petted when you sit on the floor with her. Hana is an "airplane-eared" Californian mix with amazingly soft fur and a sweet disposition. Although Baby isn't crazy about being picked up, Hana doesn't seem to mind it (he likes to sit on laps, too!).

Baby was a former SHRS foster bunny who was returned to us when her owner moved to a smaller apartment. When SHRS learned that Baby now had a mate, we agreed to take Hana into the foster program as well. Although these bunnies are inseparable, they are also very friendly and outgoing with adults and children. Watch out for your pant cuffs – they both like to tug on them when they're not getting enough human attention!



Upcoming Events

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. We do offer nail trims for a \$5 donation, but please call our hotline at least 48 hours in advance to set an appointment time (so we'll be sure to have someone available for you!). Please also bring your own, sterilized clippers. Grooming and de-matting services are also available outside of Clinic hours, but by appointment only. Call our hotline for more information.

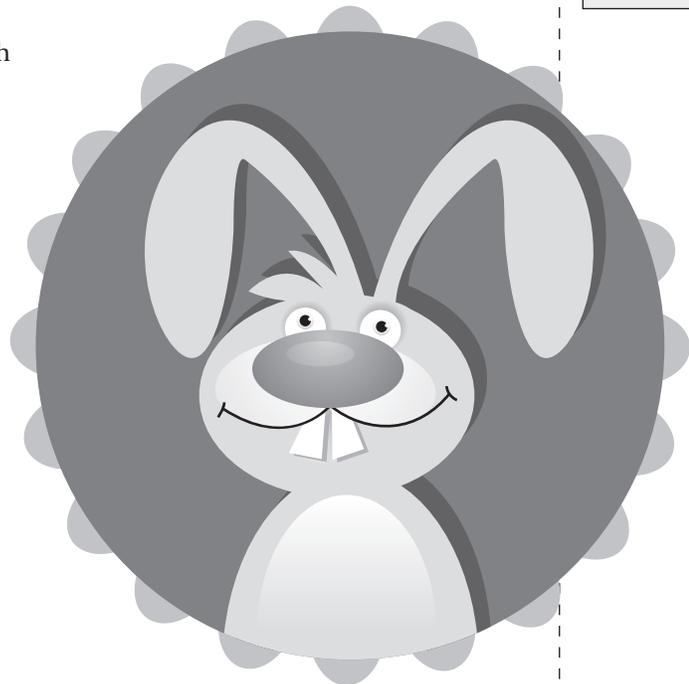
January 10 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Folsom PetCo 855 E. Bidwell Street	February 14 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Arden PetCo 1878 Arden Way	March 14 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Fair Oaks PetCo 8840 Madison Avenue	April 11 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Folsom PetCo 855 E. Bidwell Street
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Free "Mouth Check" for your Rabbit in January!

Did you know that your bunny should have his teeth checked yearly or twice yearly by a rabbit savvy vet? Because rabbits are prey animals, they rarely show outward signs of pain, which means a tooth abscess or other oral problem can go undetected. SHRS is delighted to announce that the Roseville Bird and Pet Clinic is offering their first-ever "Rabbit Mouth Check" clinic next month. This clinic is free and you do not need an appointment...just bring your bunny!

Saturday, January 10, 2009
3pm – 5pm
Bird & Pet Clinic of Roseville
3985 Foothills Blvd, Roseville, CA 95747
(916) 773-6049

Veterinary technicians will also be available to do nail trims upon request (\$15).



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membership
 expiration date



Not a Member?

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! *SHRS does not sell or share our member's information with any other organizations or companies.*

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 \$20. 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, \$20
- Please sign me up for both for \$35
- I have enclosed an additional donation of \$_____
- My employer _____ will match my donation to SHRS

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

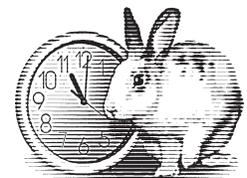
email address: _____

Return with check payable to House Rabbit Society to:
 Sacramento House Rabbit Society, P.O. Box 19850, Sacramento, CA 95819-0850

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 shelter rabbits to local adoption days
- Fostering



HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY