



House Rabbit Network

P.O. Box 2602

Woburn, MA 01888-1102



Dedicated to educating the public and to fostering and adoption of companion rabbits. 781-431-1211 or www.rabbitnetwork.org

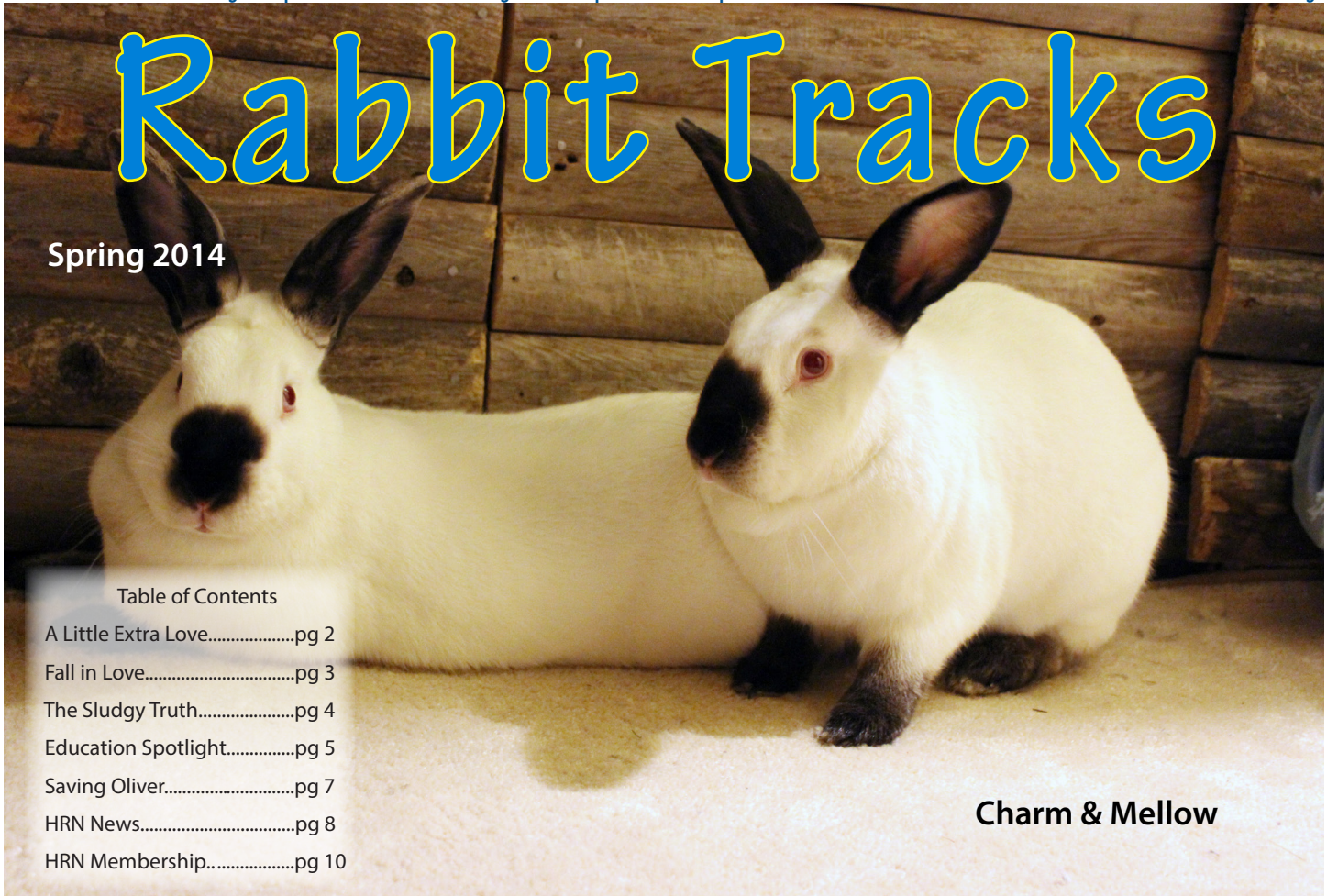
Rabbit Tracks

Spring 2014

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Charm & Mellow



A Little Extra Love...

by Suzanne Trayhan

As a rescue organization, we are dedicated to finding homes for rabbits. We don't make any distinctions among them and think that all rabbits deserve to find a good, loving, forever home. While this is a noble concept, it is one that has been difficult to implement.

When we pull rabbits from the shelters, we get in all types. We take in a variety of different breeds, including Netherland Dwarves, Lops, New Zealand Whites, and mixed-breed rabbits. Some are very social; others not so much. Then there are rabbits with health problems. Most rabbits are fairly healthy or have minor issues that can easily be solved. Others have more serious issues that may require lifelong care. These may include problems such as kidney issues, UTIs, molar spurs, or poopy butt. Sometimes the rabbits are healthy, but old.

Sadly, most people favor healthy rabbits of certain breeds. This fact encourages us to pull those types of rabbits from the shelters to become part of the House Rabbit Network. These healthy rabbits of more popular breeds are never in any real danger because they're adopted more quickly. When a cute Lop or small bunny arrives, most are placed in homes within a month. This isn't true for rabbits with health or social issues, large mixed-breed rabbits, or New Zealand White rabbits. All the rabbits, especially the not-very-adoptable ones, deserve a good home. How

ever, many people refuse to even meet them, or if they do, claim that they "just didn't feel a connection." These rabbits can take over a year to find a home, if they are placed at all. Sometimes we get into situations where a third or half of our cages are filled with tough-to-place rabbits. This, in turn, makes it harder for us to help the shelters because we aren't getting the turnover that we need.

Many times we have had three or four people interested in the same popular rabbit. The ones that don't get the rabbit typically don't adopt another one. The people who do get the adoption are proud of themselves for saving a life, but could

"...it takes a little extra love and willingness to open your heart to a special bun..."

have helped even more by adopting a less adoptable bunny

which would save many lives. Not only would they save the life of the adopted bunny, but they would free up that cage. Since that cage may have been occupied by that new rabbit for several years, indirectly they're helping to save the life of every rabbit that goes through that cage over the next couple of years.

What does it take to adopt these rabbits? Most of the time it just takes a little extra love and a willingness to open your heart to a special bun. It can be as simple as adopting a wonderful rabbit with a great, outgoing personality who has pink eyes or is older. It can be a willingness to take a bunny with poopy butt and give him butt

baths once a week. It really isn't that much – and the love you get in return from these rabbits is huge. Caretakers often develop a tighter bond when they're providing extra care for their pets. With older rabbits it can mean leaving yourself open to be hurt when they die. However, you get the satisfaction of knowing you made their last year or two great. If you don't feel you can handle the extra medical issues, then adopt a large mixed-breed rabbit or an up-eared rabbit with pink eyes.

If you aren't sure about taking an ill rabbit for financial reasons, consider becoming a sanctuary home. You can take in rabbit(s) that are considered too ill to have a good chance of finding a home, and HRN will pay for all the medical bills. You'll need to provide the day-to-day care, and, of course, the love that these rabbits need.

Another option is to split the difference. Choose one bunny that you really like and try pairing him or her with a less adoptable bun. This way you'll have the type of rabbit that you favor, as well as provide a home for a rabbit that may have never found one.

Next time you're adopting a rabbit, instead of gravitating towards the Lops or cute dwarf rabbits, open your eyes and look at the others. All the rabbits deserve a forever home with someone to love them. It takes a special person to provide a home for the less adoptable rabbits, and you'll truly be doing a good deed. All it takes is a willingness to open your heart and a little extra love.



Fall in Love with a Ruby-Eyed Bun

HRN has many precious, ruby-eyed buns that would make wonderful additions to your family.

Xavier

Birthdate 6/24/2012

Himalayan; white and brown; 4 lbs

Xavier was born in our care almost two years ago. His mom was a rescued bun. He's a shy, sweet boy who is very affectionate once he gets to know you. He loves exploring and figuring out new toys. He's a great climber and jumper, so a high exercise pen or a room where he can play is a must for him.



Holly

Birthdate 1/2011

Californian; white and black; 8 lbs

Ms. Holly came to us four months ago. She is a beautiful lady who spent much of her life as a breeding rabbit. She has come to enjoy being patted, and is friendly and curious about people. Holly loves to exercise and play.

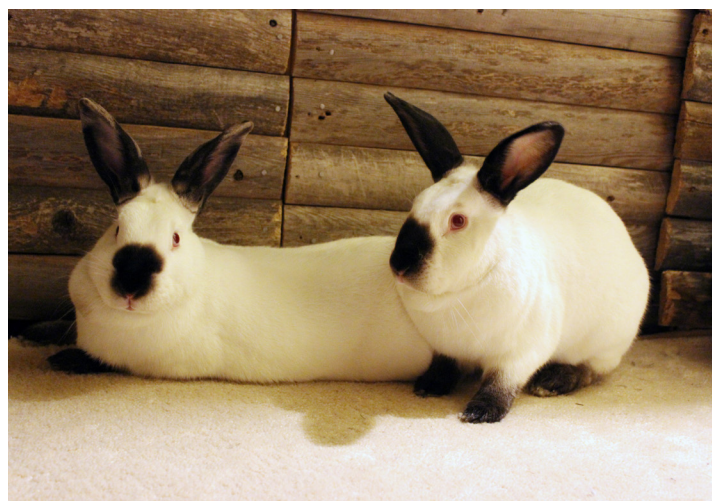


Charm and Mellow

Birthdate 4/2012

Californian; white and black; 7.4 lbs

These two boys have been in our foster care since they were four weeks old. They've been with us for a little over a year and a half. Mellow enjoys relaxing and likes to sprawl out flat on the floor. This little guy also likes his cuddle time. Charm stays busy exploring and kicking up his heels. They enjoy cuddling together in their spacious litter box.



Fall in Love with a Ruby-Eyed Bun continued

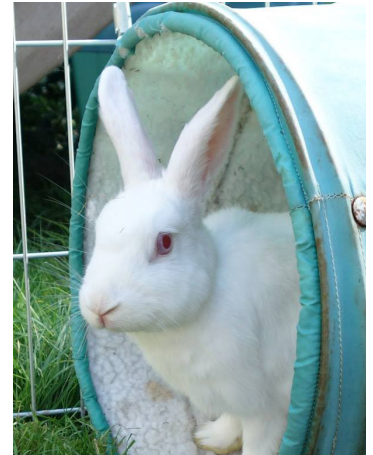
Rasta
Birthdate 10/2012
Mix; white; 5.5 lbs

Rasta is a shelter favorite with his cute helicopter ears and his fun, playful nature. He came to us seven months ago as a stray. He loves to run around and explore. Rasta is a very friendly bun who loves pats and attention.



Ivy
Birthdate 2/2013
Florida White; 4.5lbs

Ivy became part of the HRN family as a stray almost a year ago now. She's a shy, gentle bunny who likes to be petted. She enjoys rearranging her cage, and loves to dig in the grass. This young lady has excellent litter box habits.



Other beautiful pink-eyed buns at HRN include Dani, Hazel, 5 O'Clock, Merlin, Jaxx, Becker, Tommy, Sheldon, Dennis, Star and Mama, Dove and Sparrow, Laces, Annie, Dani, Vanilla Bean, Pandora, and Bridgette.

The Sludgy Truth about Calcium

by Astrid Kruse, DVM

Bunnies are amazing. Aside from super soft fur, binkies, and fat tongues, they also get rid of extra calcium through their urinary system – instead of not absorbing the excess in the first place and just pooping it out, which is what most other species do. (Eat a lot of Tums, and your human urine will look the same.) Because of this funky way of dealing with calcium, some bunnies are predisposed to developing a cement-like sludge or even calcium oxalate stones in their kidneys, ureters, and bladders. However, and importantly, most bunnies no matter what the diet may never develop urinary problems. A minority of bunnies no matter what the diet will often have uncomfortable sludgy urine. You don't know which kind of bunny you have until there is an issue.

Rabbits do have a minimum calcium requirement that is important for health, especially for bones and

their continuously growing teeth. Rabbits quickly develop osteoporosis (bone thinning) in response to dietary calcium restriction, which affects the spine first, possibly causing back fractures. Many vets believe that rabbit dental disease, aside from that found in dwarf bunnies bred for abnormally-shaped skulls (cute but deformed), is partially caused by softened bones from chronic calcium and vitamin D deficiency. I see at least ten rabbits with dental issues for every one rabbit I see with urinary problems. There is some discussion that most indoor pet rabbits are actually calcium deficient since they have limited access to unfiltered sunlight for normal vitamin D metabolism, so I recommend unlimited high calcium vegetables for the normal bunny. If possible, opening windows and supervised time outside on moderate temperature days is encouraged.

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Education Spotlight

by A. A.

When people think of shelter animals, they usually picture dogs and cats. Even though rabbits are the third most-surrendered animal, they're not on the radar. This is one of the many things that HRN volunteers hope to change with education events. In addition to raising awareness about the need for rabbit rescue, the volunteers teach people about house rabbits and their care, with the goal of helping people make an informed decision about adoption.

HRN attends about 25 events per year in the Metro Boston area in various places, such as Petco and PetSmart, as well as the Boston Vegetarian Food Festival, Pet Rock in Worcester, and the Woburn Mall Easter/Spring Festival. In-store events present a great opportunity to educate customers and also to teach employees about rabbits and provide them with information so they can educate future customers. Large festivals are wonderful because they attract the most people.

A lot of time and effort goes into making these events a success. Visual interest is important in bringing people to a booth, so volunteers will have a photo collage of bunnies at play, and if the event is not too busy and stressful, a cute "spokesbunny"



HRN volunteer, Sasha Roberge, holds a bunny for others to pet at a local event.

from our rescue will accompany them. They also bring examples of things that are bad for rabbits, such as pine shavings and unhealthy "junk food" along with signs explaining the danger of these items. Volunteers discuss some of the basics such as feeding, litter box training, bonding, and spaying and they also hand out copies of *Rabbit Tracks* and educational articles from the website.

There can be a need for creativity when a real rabbit can't be used to assist. For the Lowell Humane Society "Steps for Pets" event, which is a walk to raise money for rescue groups, HRN volunteers set up a demonstration of what not to do for rabbit housing. A stuffed bunny was placed inside a cramped cage

with a sign explaining why a rabbit shouldn't live that way.

There are also many misperceptions about rabbits that volunteers try to correct, with some of the most common being that rabbits can live outside in a hutch, they're "boring," they all like to be held, and they're great gifts or starter pets for children. People come away from the event knowing that rabbits have personalities, they need to run around and play with toys, and they need attention. When people view rabbits as companions, they understand that a rabbit is part of the family like a dog or a cat and not a toy that can be forgotten about when everyone is bored of playing with it.

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Education Spotlight continued

The Woburn Mall Easter Festival is a particularly good opportunity to talk to parents and dissuade them from treating a rabbit as a holiday impulse buy.

The task of educating the public face-to-face isn't always easy. Some people take umbrage at being told that they're doing something incorrectly, others make sick jokes about eating rabbits. But the volunteers remain good-natured because of how much good the education events do for shelter bunnies. Getting those who may have previously known nothing about rabbits interested in adoption or volunteering is worth it. The best possible outcome is for more bunnies to find forever

homes with people who know exactly what to expect.

The education process continues when people who were at an event come into the shelter expecting to adopt. Even at this point, some of them leave with the realization that a rabbit isn't the right pet for them. It's better for a bunny to wait a little longer than to go home with someone who's ill-equipped to care for him/her. For this reason, adoptions aren't done on-site at the events, but photos of HRN bunnies are available for potential adopters to see.

For information on upcoming events, visit our website at www.rabbitnetwork.org or our Facebook page.

To volunteer, please call the hotline (781) 431-1211 or send an email to info@rabbitnetwork.org.

The Sludgy Truth about Calcium continued

Normal rabbit urine can range from yellow tinged to chalky, and sometimes comes in fabulous disturbing colors like orangey or red from the plant pigments in their diet. It may even dry into a flat, slightly crystallized mark. It is not normal when a bunny strains to urinate, urinates when the abdomen is touched, or leaves little sand dribbles like on sand castles. With any urinary signs like these, your bunny needs to see his/her rabbit-experienced vet to assess the problem and treatment options.

Bunnies that have problems with calcium in their urine should

definitely be encouraged to drink as much as possible by providing fresh water in several bowls and feeding greens that are thoroughly wet, and usually need fluids injected under the skin as well. Increasing exercise as much as possible may also help by decreasing obesity, improving mobility to posture normally to urinate, and shaking up sludgy urine. Sludge bunnies should also be fed only lower calcium hays like timothy or oat (never alfalfa). Do feed low calcium, moistened leafy vegetables like romaine, and cilantro. Avoid high calcium vegetables like arugula, collard

greens, spinach, broccoli leaves, celery, kale, and mustard greens. I also recommend avoiding pellets (unless there is a concern with being underweight) – pellets are a dehydrating, unnatural food. However despite these common precautionary measures, there is no proven link between diet and urine sludge.

Unless your rabbit has a urinary issue, be mindful that calcium is not evil but a necessary mineral in the diet for bone and tooth health, and normal nerve and muscle function just like in humans. Make sure your bunny gets the right amount of calcium!



Saving Oliver

by Sadie MacMillan

One day last November, the Somerville Animal Control department brought a mixed-breed bunny to a local veterinary hospital. He was gravely injured, with wounds on his skin and a badly broken leg.

The hospital reached out to the House Rabbit Network. The House Rabbit Network took him in and the bun was brought to an orthopedic surgery specialist at VCA Wakefield to see if they could save the broken leg. Oliver (as he came to be known) bravely underwent two surgeries and lived for a while with a pin in his leg, but in the end his leg was saved.

Most rabbits that come to HRN don't require nearly as much veterinary care as Oliver did, but cases like his cost HRN a disproportionate amount of money. Because rabbits are exotic pets, it can sometimes cost more to perform medical procedures on a bunny than on a dog or cat. Oliver's expenses came to a total of \$1,650, one of the highest medical bills HRN has paid for a single rabbit.

Nevertheless, we're overjoyed to report that except for a slight limp, Oliver made a complete recovery and went home with a forever family earlier this year. According to his new family, "He is just the most lovable bunny. He always wants attention. When he is out, he follows us around like a dog. If you are sitting on the floor, he loves to snuggle between your

legs. His previously broken right leg doesn't seem to bother him, but it does make his binkies all go clockwise. We are so glad that we have him." He even has a girlfriend bun at his new home.

Sick and injured rabbits like Oliver get a second chance through HRN, thanks to our members' gen-



Oliver recovering from an operation.

erosity. One way of helping HRN is to directly sponsor one of the rabbits with higher medical costs. Sponsorship of those rabbits lets us spend more of our resources on the things that all of our bunnies need – like wood pellets, hay, and of course, vegetables.

We're still hoping to receive money to help us cover Oliver's medical costs. If you'd like to sponsor Oliver, please visit our website at www.rabbitnetwork.org/sponsor.shtml. You'll also find a list of other rabbits there that are currently seeking sponsorship. Donations in

any amount will be greatly appreciated and will enable us to continue to help sick buns recover to enjoy the happy (or should we say hoppy) lives they deserve.

You can make your donation directly from that page through PayPal, or if you prefer to use a check or money order, you can



Oliver relaxing at his new home.

make the payment out to House Rabbit Network and specify in the memo section the name of the bunny you would like to support. You can send your payment to P.O. Box 2602, Woburn, MA, 01888.

As always, HRN and all of its bunnies are deeply grateful for our members' generosity. Thank you, and enjoy this lovely season!



HRN News

HRN Volunteer Donates Contest Prize

Bunspace.com, an online community for rabbit lovers, had a “My First Bunny” contest sponsored by Dee Dee. It was a photo contest that asked people to send in the best photos of the first bunny that they ever had. Our very own Tina Forbes sent in photos of her precious Bun-Bun, and won first place! She donated her \$100 prize to the House Rabbit Network. We are so grateful for her generosity.



Bun-Bun, a picture perfect rabbit.

Whole Foods 5% Day to Benefit HRN

On Wednesday, April 16 the Whole Foods in Woburn, MA donated 5% of the store’s net sales that day to the House Rabbit Network. In total \$4,166 was given to HRN. Thank you to Whole Foods in Woburn, everyone who shopped in the store that day, and all the volunteers who helped out with the event.



Intern at HRN Makes a Real Difference

Kelly Rogers, a senior at Westford Academy in Westford, MA pursued an internship as part of her high school experience. She has always loved animals, and would like to run her own shelter someday.

Kelly found her way to HRN and is now volunteering at our shelter and doing some fundraising for us. Her most recent fundraising effort was a yard sale that she set up on the front lawn of one of the elementary schools in her town. She collected items from both her immediate and extended family. Despite the somewhat rainy weather, she collected \$227 for HRN. What a wonderful way to help the buns. Thanks Kelly!



Kelly Rogers raising money for HRN.

HRN News

Save the Date

The House Rabbit Network's Flatbread Fundraiser will take place on September 23, 2014, from 4-6 pm at the Flatbread Restaurant in Bedford, MA. Flatbread will donate money to us for every flatbread pizza purchased. We'll also have a Pick-a-Prize Auction that night. We'd be grateful for any donations for the auction like gift cards, gift baskets, gift certificates, or other creative ideas.



Giggles Fundraiser a Success!

On April 13 the House Rabbit Network held its much-anticipated fundraiser at the Giggles Comedy Club, where about 60 people joined us for an enjoyable evening of comedy, pizza, and auction prizes. Thanks to the generosity of local businesses and individual donors, we had a lot of great prizes up for grabs, including gift baskets and gift certificates to local dining, entertainment, and retailers. With event tickets and auction tickets we raised \$1,605 that night! HRN is extremely grateful to the volunteers, guests, and donors who made this night possible.



Giggles Fundraiser Donors

Boloco
Busy Bunny
Carol Youngclaus
Cheryl Arena
Courtney Hughes
Cruelty Free Consumer
Dan Almgren
Especially For Pets
Flair
Franny McKeever
Fred Tate
Friends of HRN

Heather Toland, Arbonne
Improv Asylum
Jenny Mullen
Laser Craze
Lindt & Sprungli
Owls and Friends
Stephanie Pereira
The Fireplace
Tina & Chuck Forbes
Trader Joe's

2014 Adoption Total

So far 2014 has been a good year for buns. 87 rabbits from HRN have gone on to happy homes with their forever families.
We wish them well.

Join HRN ... or ... Please Renew Your Membership

Through our network of dedicated volunteers and members, HRN is making amazing strides to improve the welfare of house rabbits everywhere. Your support can only further our goals, so become a member and get involved.

Visit our website to find out how to help: www.rabbitnetwork.org

If you are not already a member, please join HRN!

Your membership dollars will go toward rescue and rehabilitation, community outreach and education, and veterinary expenses.

Help make a difference in a rabbit's life. They're counting on you!



Contact House Rabbit Network:

info@rabbitnetwork.org

781-431-1211

P.O. Box 2602

Woburn, MA 01888-1102



House Rabbit Network Membership and Ordering Form

Your membership donation is tax deductible and will be used for medical costs (spays/neuters, veterinary bills) and education expenses. All members will receive a copy of our newsletter, *Rabbit Tracks*, when it is published. Currently, we are publishing three issues per year. To join, fill out this page and mail it with your check payable to:

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Choose your membership level:

- Dwarf\$ 15.00
- Mini Lop\$ 25.00
- New Zealand.....\$ 50.00
- Flemish Giant.....\$ 100.00
- Mix (other)\$ _____

Choose your newsletter delivery preference:

- PDF format via email
(significant savings for HRN)
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