

Quarterly News from the
Sacramento House Rabbit Society



All Ears in Sacramento

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Leaping Into Our Second Decade: SHRS Remembers Ten Years of Rabbit Advocacy and Rescue

It all started with a little house party in Sacramento on a fall day in 1997, where a group of strangers met to talk about their pet house rabbits.

Shortly after relocating to the California State Capitol, Chicago HRS members Lisa and Troy Denkinger took the initiative to contact other bunny enthusiasts in their new town. At that party, a base group of volunteers formed, including Jan Gasber, Barbara Koenigsmark, Brandon Chee, Deborah Glassman, Lynn Radican, and Jill Walker (né Raymond).

Together they made the commitment to try to start an official HRS chapter. With assistance from Margo DeMello of the National HRS, the group filed their paperwork, named Jill as the first Chapter Manager in Sacramento... and they were off and running.

For the first few years, SHRS focused on

education efforts – holding “information days” and seminars at local pet supply stores and participating in a wide variety of public events ranging from Pet Expos to Girl Scout troop presentations and classroom visits. Members held bake sale fundraisers to attract new members, handing out HRS pamphlets with each rice krispie treat sold! Though their foster network was small, the volunteers worked hard to lay the groundwork for the chapter by establishing close relationships with local shelter managers and staff. The media also began to

recognize that there was a credible source for bunny-related info (which was especially useful at Eastertime!). The premier issue of the chapter’s newsletter, *continued on page 4*



Clockwise from top: Jill Walker, Kirsten Macintyre and Margaret-Rose Batterman (left), SHRS' trio of Chapter Managers

The Frenchy Connection

Far right: Rabbits are captured, spayed or neutered, and recuperate in the shed before being released back into the population

Last summer, I was contacted by a woman who is involved in cat rescue in Sacramento. She explained her neighbor was having problems with domestic rabbits overpopulating his property near Elk Horn Boulevard in Sacramento. Some of the rabbits had originally come from neighboring yards while others were likely abandoned on his property. Over time, the population had grown out of control.

At the caller's request, I telephoned the property owner, a man named Frenchy Forgeur. He explained that he thought there were anywhere from 30-50 rabbits loose on his property, all different ages and various breeds. They were tunneling all over the property and hiding in woodpiles, under sheds, under his house, and in drainage pipes. They were even digging holes in his neighbor's active horse pasture. Although the problem had started about four years ago, it had steadily grown worse, and he was feeling overwhelmed.

Frenchy had no desire to exterminate the rabbits, even though they'd become a nuisance.

He was upset whenever one was killed by a predator or on the busy road in front of his house. In one case, he even tried to nurse a sick young kit back to health; sadly, it did not make it.



Although SHRS has experience assisting with many large-scale rabbit rescues in the Sacramento Valley, it's rare that these rescues involve a property owner who is not only interested in containing the problem, but also concerned for the welfare of the rabbits and open to allowing them to remain on the land.

I agreed to visit his property to assess the problem, and as soon as I arrived, I could see rabbits roaming abundantly. They were feasting on grape leaves, lawn grass, duck feed, and chicken feed. Little baby bunnies were darting in and out of the woodpiles quick as lightning, while adult rabbits remained in the distance, observing us. We found a litter of five babies living under a shed, and knew there must be many more young litters hidden nearby.

We discussed options to get the population under control, and agreed that if Frenchy would catch the rabbits, SHRS would cover the costs of spaying and neutering, along with offering general help, such as donating food and supplies, loaning carriers, and providing physical assistance with sexing and checking conditions of health. It was no small feat, but since Frenchy was open to allowing the bunnies to live out their lives on his land (as long as they weren't repopulating!), it was a humane and fair solution.

The rescue effort started July of 2007 and continued for many months; it was a long, drawn-out process since Frenchy could only capture a few rabbits at a time, due to

Frenchy Forgeur has been working with SHRS volunteers to get his loose rabbit population under control



HELP US! →

These 4-week-old babies desperately need placement. They are currently in small confines, need socialization and relief from the heat.

They need your help!

Contact Margaret-Rose at mbatterman@gmail.com or the hotline at 916-863-9690.

Rabbits Available for Adoption

1. Chablis is a curious and busy young lop male. He also loves to dig and has been taking turns with Rhett destroying the yellow pages. He is easy to pick up and enjoys being held and petted.

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

3. Hoppy Gilmore is a young active and playful boy.

4. The Fab Five would love to stay together, as they have been since four weeks of age. They are all girls from three different Frenchy litters and get along famously. They are friendly and curious, and a joy to watch! Left to right: **Mimi, Rosie, Pudge, Peanut, Smudge.**

5. Sugar and **Pepper** are a young bonded pair. Pepper is an acrobat who kicks his heels up when he plays. Sugar loves to cuddle when she's not exploring.

6. Sophie was one of a bonded pair, until she decided she wanted all the attention for herself! She is a very sweet girl bunny who is very curious about her environment.

7. Smarty is a baby dwarf bunny who hopped right into an SHRS fosterer's yard! He (or she – too young to sex) is active, outgoing, loves attention and being held.

8. Dakota is a recent rescue. She is a sweet girl we are still getting to know.

9. Oscar and **Napoleon** are bonded seven-month-old boys. They are a little shy, but once held, they thoroughly enjoy attention and affection.

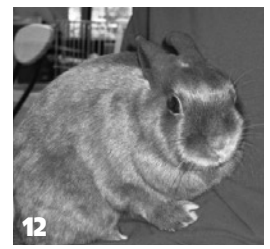
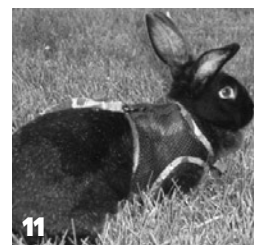
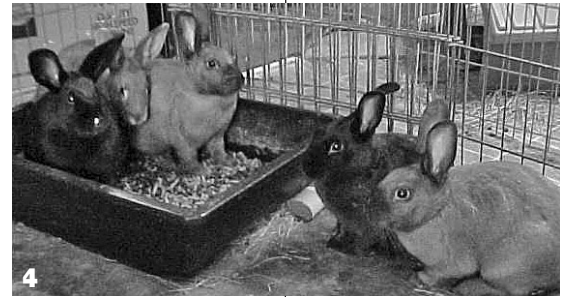
10. Eliza is a two year old girl. She has excellent litter box habits and loves to explore. Her favorite hobby is deconstructing wicker baskets.

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

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

13. Rhett Bunnler is an active young male. He loves to dig and has been having fun digging and shredding last year's yellow pages. He likes to be held and petted, but only after he has had a chance to race around and get his exercise.

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



Recent Adoptions

Dexter was adopted by Joel Marckx as a companion to his rabbit Sally.

Benjamin was adopted by Adrienne Graham.

Buttercup was adopted by Andrea Pomposa.

Maggie was adopted by Sharon Lowrey.

Celebrating Ten Years continued from page 1



Above: Volunteers Barbara Koenigsmark and Jill Johnson help longtime SHRS member Olivia Huff at an adoption day

All Ears in Sacramento, was issued in the fall of 1998, and the chapter's membership list began to expand steadily. The local hotline number was hopping, too – even in the early days, four phone line volunteers a week were needed to keep up with the steady stream of calls

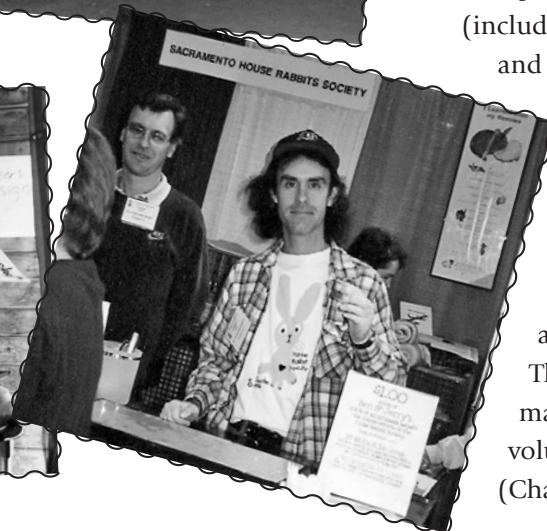
from the public.

In July 1999, an early-morning phone call from the Sacramento SPCA marked the beginning of the first true crisis the SHRS would face – helping the shelter rescue nearly 300 domestic rabbits from a backyard neglect situation. More than 20 devoted SHRS volunteers worked tirelessly for more than six months to physically staff the shelter (cleaning cages and feeding and medicating the rabbits), solicit donations (food, cages, misting equipment and other supplies), and to organize and hold weekly adoption events. Thanks to the help

Photos, clockwise:
Loose rabbits in need of help in Galt

Volunteer Danny Popp is in the fundraising spirit during the Pet Expo

Volunteer Jan Gasber kept up everybody's spirits (and cleaned cages daily) during the Fair Oaks crisis



of the local media and many, many new volunteers, more than 150 of the rabbits were eventually adopted or taken in by sanctuaries. Although the experience was exhausting – and heartbreaking, at times – for all involved, the experience was invaluable. Volunteers learned how to mobilize in a crisis situation, as well as how to care for sick rabbits, how to work with the media, and how to best accomplish the goals of the chapter.

Once the Fair Oaks bunny crisis subsided, SHRS's focus shifted more to its foster program. In 2000, Kirsten Macintyre became the chapter manager, and the number of foster homes jumped to 12. Many foster families began to take in more than one bunny at a time, and the first "special needs" rabbits were brought into the program. During these years, the SHRS volunteers truly mastered the art of making people/pet love matches. To date, the chapter has found homes for nearly 200 rabbits directly from its foster network, plus another 150 or so who were adopted from local shelters with SHRS assistance.

Margaret-Rose Batterman became SHRS chapter manager in 2004, and immediately began building on the chapter's well-laid foundation to expand the chapter's visibility and viability in the community. Through aggressive fundraising and the pursuit of grants, the chapter's financial standing quickly blossomed, and the SHRS was able to expand its rescue and educational efforts (including paying for more spays and neuters and other medical care, purchasing copies

of the *House Rabbit Handbook* to donate to California libraries, creating information packets for area shelters, and increased reimbursements to fosterers).

In 2005, the growing SHRS chapter also incorporated the use of a Board. The board consists of five members, many of whom are part of the original volunteer team: Margaret-Rose Batterman (Chapter Manager/President); Susan King

(Treasurer); Jill Walker (Secretary); Barbara Koenigsmark (Assistant Secretary) and Brandon Chee (Webmaster). According to the SHRS bylaws, the board is responsible for making policy changes and financial decisions for the chapter, taking current events and community needs into consideration. The board also plans public education events and fundraisers and ensures that the chapter maintains and cultivates a close relationship with Sacramento area shelters and veterinarians.

In 2006, the SHRS teamed up with a local yoga and wellness studio to sponsor a "Run for the Buns" fundraiser, a fun run followed by a silent auction and "chocolate spa party." Now in its third year, the "Run for the Buns" is fast becoming one of the most anticipated animal welfare-related fundraisers in the state capital.

Today, the SHRS is 160 local members strong, including a foster network of 14 homes. Regular activities include monthly adoption days (rain or shine!), a consistent presence at all local shelters, a regularly updated and informative web site, monitoring of the hotline, and quarterly production of the newsletter. Local shelters regularly call on members for assistance with crisis situations, and anyone who adopts from SHRS knows that their new bunny comes with a network of support and love that's just a phone call away. Additionally, active SHRS members are always finding new ways to give back to the community, including participating in the Delta Society's therapy animal program, conducting annual guest lectures for pre-veterinary students at the University of California, Davis, and simply sharing their love of rabbits with the public at large.

SHRS has come a long way from the days of selling rice krispie treats from folding card tables ... but it's because of those humble beginnings that the volunteer network is as strong as it is. Every member is an advocate, and educator and a friend to rabbits in their own way. We can't wait to see what SHRS will accomplish in the NEXT 10 years!

- Kirsten Macintyre



Run for the Buns 2008

The SHRS had a wonderful turnout for this year's annual fundraiser, "Run for the Buns," on March 22, 2008! This was our third year hosting this wonderful community event, which consists of a fun, noncompetitive race/walk. Participants could choose from three midtown courses of different lengths (a 1k, 5k or 10k). The event's starting and ending point was Healthy Habits Yoga and Fitness Studio on J Street Sacramento.

This year we had more than 100 registered runners, and it was quite a sight to see them jogging through midtown with their SHRS "bunny ears" perched on their heads! Our Run for the Buns t-shirts were also a huge hit (many thanks to our SHRS board member and resident graphic designer, Jill Walker, for the wonderful and whimsical design!). Chapter Manager Margaret-Rose Batterman also made sure to recognize the SHRS's 10 years of hard work with an anniversary carrot cake, sparkling cider and a special toast, fresh flowers and decorations.

We are grateful for all who turned out to support our cause - the SHRS grossed over \$4,300 in "bunny money." This will be used to cover the costs of spaying and neutering our foster rabbits, as well as for medical expenses and educational outreach efforts. We've sure come a long way from our first Fun Run in 2006, when we had about 30 runners!

We would especially like to extend our gratitude to Rose Zahnn, owner of Healthy Habits (and fellow bunny lover!), for graciously offering her facility, helping us get the word out and generally offering encouragement and support, and to our SHRS volunteers, who helped to make this special event run smoothly. Thank you, everyone!



Photos: Kay Nelson and her family were among those who strapped on their jogging shoes to participate in this year's Run for the Buns. Two of her children were even inspired to hop the whole first block of the course! We think they look awfully cute in their SHRS-issued bunny ears. Apparently at least one midtown Sacramento squirrel agreed!

HRS Volunteers Get the Word Out at Local Events

It's been a busy spring for our SHRS volunteers, who have been actively and cheerfully getting the word out about rabbit care and adoptions at several local community events. High visibility leads to greater exposure and more opportunities for education! Here are some of the most recent events in which we've participated:



- On April 19, fosterers Sydney Sadler and Susan King brought three bunnies to the annual **UC Davis Picnic Day**, the wildly popular community outing on the university campus. The SHRS booth was located alongside other exotic animal exhibits, including birds, snakes, lizards and even a giant tortoise. Thousands of people passed by, many of whom stopped to ask questions about their own rabbits. Almost all of the SHRS informational flyers, coloring books and business cards were snapped up by curious visitors. "It was exhausting just because of the sheer volume, but it was one of the best outreach experiences I've ever done," says Sydney.
- On May 17 and 18, volunteers Brandon Chee and Sonia Tedsen participated in the **"Super Adoption Day"** at the Country Club Plaza shopping mall near Watt Avenue. This event is sponsored by No More Homeless Pets in Sacramento County, a coalition of shelters and animal control agencies, rescue organizations and veterinarians. Although the day didn't directly result in the adoption of SHRS rabbits, it was a wonderful opportunity to reach out to people who are already considering adopting a pet, and to increase their knowledge about bunnies. Photos our wonderful foster rabbits lounging and looking cute at the event are still up on the No More Homeless Pets website, at <http://www.nmhpsacto.org/2008springphotos.html>. This great event is held twice a year, so look for our booth again at the fall Super Adoption Day September 27th and 28th!
- On May 24, the SHRS staffed an informational booth at the **Sacramento County Fair**, held at Cal Expo. This is the first time SHRS has done general public outreach at the fair, and our volunteers reported that they were a bit surprised about the location of the booth (adjacent to chinchilla, bird and guinea pig breeders, which had the unfortunate consequence of diluting the SHRS message of animal rescue and the importance of spaying and neutering). Still, any event where people can learn about proper care and responsible pet ownership is worth the time and effort. Many thanks to Glenda Muschetto, Brandon Chee, Sonia Tedsen, Jim McDaniel, Sydney Sadler, Susan King and Adrienne Graham ... these seven volunteers (and a number of patient foster rabbits!) rotated throughout the 12-hour shift. We appreciate your hard work!

Mail Bag

We'd love to hear from you!

Send us photos and stories of you and your bunny to be featured in an upcoming issue of All Ears in Sacramento.



Francis Carr, a longtime SHRS member who is returning to our area after several years of living in Alabama, recently sent us this lovely picture of her lop bunny, Autumn, on the beach. Autumn passed away earlier this year after six and a half wonderful years with her family. Thank you for sharing her memory with us, Francis. What a lucky (and well-traveled) girl Autumn was!

4 May 2008

Dear Barbara,

On behalf of my cousin Pamela Gordon and myself, I am enclosing a donation in memory of our aunt, Mary Peel, formerly of Mercy McMahon Terrace. Mary enjoyed visiting with you and Kiley and would always mention it when we spoke. We appreciate the outreach you made to Mary and the other residents at Mercy McMahon.

Mary moved to a facility in Pasadena when Pamela moved back to Los Angeles in 2006. She was still active and walking every day, although increasingly forgetful. But she passed quickly after suffering a stroke in February.

Please feel free to apply the donation to any of your programs or services.

Regards, Paul Briscoe

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.

July 12

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Folsom PetCo
855 E. Bidwell Street

August 9

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Arden PetCo
1878 Arden Way

September 13

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Fair Oaks PetCo
8840 Madison Avenue

October 11

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Folsom PetCo
855 E. Bidwell Street

The Frenchy Connection *continued from page 2*

lack of space to house them. Once the adults were caught and altered, they'd still have to be kept caged and quiet for a few days to allow for healing. The bunnies did fine being caged for a short time in a large covered shed, where they shared space with tractors and free-running chickens. However, most were not tame and would have been very hard to place. To date, 11 adults have been caught, altered and returned to the property.

The eight baby bunnies that were captured were another story. Because they are so young, many of them are considered good candidates for adoption. One, Oliver, has already been adopted out and we have seven more youngsters in our foster system. We also have a unique situation in that there are five young foster females in a "bonded herd" (see the "Fab Five" on page 3). They are from three different litters, but have been together since being captured when they were about four weeks old. We are hoping to keep them together and find special placement.

Almost a year after our initial contact with Frenchy, the bunny population is greatly controlled, but the saga isn't yet over. After

months of the population being free from new litters, Frenchy recently called to report finding seven new babies from a drainage pipe. He's also spotted a few new unaltered adult rabbits (likely more "fugitives" from neighboring yards). He's working on rounding up the new bunnies, and

we'll continue to assist with the spaying and neutering. Although Frenchy did contact his neighbors to discuss the problem, they were only lukewarm to his concerns – not objecting to the rescue efforts, but uninterested in participating or making an effort to prevent further expansion of the population. Even though it's been an uphill battle for Frenchy, we commend his commitment to doing the right thing, and were happy to have the opportunity to assist and to make a difference in the lives of the rabbits on his land.

– Margaret-Rose Batterman

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

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Top photo: A loose rabbit on the property

Bottom photo: "Sweetheart" is recuperating after her spay



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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: _____

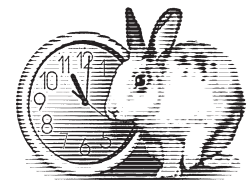
email address: _____

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