



Sacramento Chapter

P.O. Box 19850
Sacramento, CA 95819-0850
tel (916) 863-9690
fax (916) 372-8858

Board of Directors

Margaret-Rose Batterman
Chapter Manager

Brandon Chee

Susan King

Barbara Koenigsmark

Jill Walker

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Dear Mr. Cohen,

We have recently been contacted by several CW 31 viewers who were distraught by a segment you ran about a photographer who takes pictures of small children with bunnies to raise funds for Juvenile Diabetes. Although the philanthropic angle of the story may have been well-intended, the viewers who contacted us were horrified by the inappropriate treatment of the rabbits by your reporting staff. We have since watched a replay of the show and we wholeheartedly - and sadly - agree.

Specific examples include:

A toddler boy dropped a gray rabbit multiple times. Your anchor in the studio, Lori Wallace, remarked lightheartedly that "bunnies are so resilient."

After the rabbit eventually bit the child, he was momentarily removed, but then placed into the lap of an eight-month-old child by your reporter Kristina Lee. When the infant began to hit the rabbit, the adults present made no effort to ensure the rabbit's safety. Instead, the on-set anchors laughed.

As longtime animal advocates who work to educate the public about responsible pet ownership and care, the Sacramento House Rabbit Society is very disheartened by the callous behavior shown by your staff. Rabbits deserve to be shown the same respect as any other kind of domestic pet. Baby bunnies are not at all "resilient" and can be seriously injured by a fall or by blunt force. Would someone have intervened if the toddler had been repeatedly dropping a six-week-old puppy?

Every year in the weeks following Easter, literally hundreds of baby rabbits are deposited in local shelters, by parents who consider them to be "throwaway" pets. Part of the mission of the Sacramento House Rabbit Society is to help reduce the overpopulation problem at the local shelters through public education about responsible pet ownership. We have an extensive foster rabbit program, and we provide free information to the public about training, caring for and living with these sweet and intelligent animals.

Ironically, we recently sent you information about an upcoming Sacramento House Rabbit Society fundraiser ("Run for the Buns") to support rabbit rescue efforts in Sacramento. Although we're disappointed in your recent coverage, we trust that you'll be willing to take the time to commit to a responsible story about rabbit ownership and care. You are of course welcome to cover the race day events, but even more importantly, we would love to work with you on a story about rabbit overpopulation in Sacramento and what your viewers can do to ensure that they don't become part of the problem. It's a timely issue, and one that is clearly close to the hearts of many of your viewers.

We would be happy to provide adorable visuals to accompany your story (just please, don't drop our rabbits!).

Call us at 916-863-9690 or email us at: adoptions@allearssac.org

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Margaret-Rose Batterman
Chapter Manager/Pres.
Sacramento House Rabbit Society