



## In this Issue

Benefits of Bonding

News Briefs

FoR's New Pet Sitting Policies

Easter Events

Petco Grant Awarded to FoR

Flagging Rabbit Breeders online

Health Corner:

GI Stasis

Volunteer Spotlight:

Adoption Events

Care FoR Baby Bunnies

Featured Rabbit

Upcoming Events

## The Long Term Benefits of a Partner

*By Amy S.*

In past issues, we've talked about bunny speed dating and how to bond bunnies. Now it's time to consider the benefits of bonded bunnies. This article ends this series by circling back to the beginning: Why should I find my rabbit a partner?

Rabbits are social creatures. Think about wild European rabbits, the ancestors to domestic rabbits. They live in warrens, where many live and work together in groups for protection from predators, acquisition of food, and raising their young. So it makes sense that their domestic cousins may share this social characteristic. Many experts report that domestic rabbits are generally happier when bonded to a partner. Although inferring the mental life of a rabbit may involve some creative interpretation, there are certainly behavioral signs of happiness, such as excited binkies and comfortable, cuddly, flops. Bonded rabbits sleep together, eat together, groom one



Two recent FoR bunnies who found each other and a forever home. The basket, sadly, did not survive.

Photo: Beck B.

another, play together, cuddle, and communicate in ways that humans cannot. In addition to emotional support, partners could also offer physical support when one bunny is ill and needs some help (for example, to balance). When rabbits are stressed - for instance, when going to the vet - the company of another rabbit can be comforting. Consider the reverse scenario - the behavioral signs of sadness or stress one may see when a bunny is separated from his/her partner. For example, they may become more destructive, withdraw, lose their appetite, or for some smaller breeds, become more hyperactive.

Taking a step back, let's look at the more obvious and observable benefits for both bunnies and their humans. When they have a partner, rabbits experience less boredom and loneliness, especially when their human parents aren't home, because they always have a companion. Importantly, less boredom often means less destructiveness in the home. In addition, most bunny owners with two or more bonded bunnies could easily

tell you how happy it makes them to see their bunnies snuggling together - quite an adorable sight! Finally, when you adopt a partner for your rabbit, you are simply rescuing another rabbit in need of a forever home.

One extra thing to note is that doubling the number of rabbits in the house does not necessarily double the expense or the work if they are bonded partners. They can share their living space - whether it is the entire house, bunny condo, or x-pen - and you perform routine care activities in a similar manner (e.g., feeding them together, cleaning their shared litter box). The exception, of course, is medical expenses because each one needs to receive his/her own vet care.

Speaking of exceptions... keep in mind that there are some rabbits that, for whatever reason, simply do not seem to get along with other rabbits or are happier with just their humans or another species, such as a cat.

After reading the past few FoR newsletters, you should know where and how to find a partner for your bunny, how to bond them, and now, the benefits of having a partner - for both the bunny and you. So, if you have a solo bunny, you may want to consider finding him/her a friend. And if you are just starting your search for a rabbit to adopt, you may want to consider adopting an already bonded pair.



Chloe and Maddie: Two peas, still searching for their pod

Photo: Robin S.

**Bunny Personals - Single and Ready to Mingle**



**Jojo**

I'm a young active foodie and love to socialize. I'm waiting...



**Theodocia**

I'm a larger lady. I speak my mind, but am gentle when it matters.



**Helen**

I want to know what love is. I want you to show me.



**Nutmeg**

Seeking an attentive human as a life-partner.



**Garth**

Loving dad with empty nest syndrome. Party time! Excellent!



**Zoey**

I'm a tidy gal- can't you tell by my perfect eyeliner?



**Greta**

I've experienced loss in my life and am ready for some stable companionship.



**Manny**

I'm an easy-going guy, personable and love attention. I'll even show you how happy I am with acrobatic binkies!



**Henry Kissinger**

I have dealt with years of upheaval. I'll reward your kind offer of stability many times over.



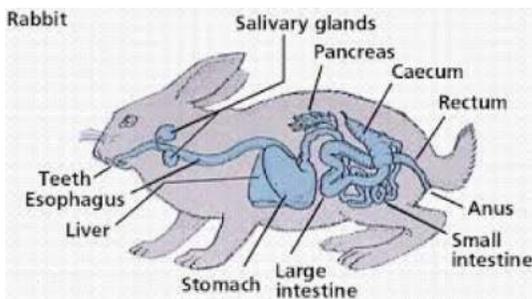
**Franny**

Let's be housemates! I am very considerate. But I just might follow you into the bathroom. That's ok, right?

## Gastrointestinal Stasis (GI Stasis)

By Steph M.

In my experience, one of the great advantages of adopting through Friends of Rabbits was getting a really great primer on taking care of a bunny at an adoption day. I grew up knowing dogs and cats, but to my surprise, rabbits have a lot of unique care considerations. I had already read a great book, "A House Rabbit Primer" by Lucille C. Moore (highly recommended, by the way) – but FOR drove home one point in particular, the importance of paying attention to your rabbit's gastrointestinal (GI) tract, namely watching for signs of GI stasis, a potentially fatal condition in which the digestive system slows down or stops completely.



The primary function of the digestive system is to digest food and absorb nutrients. The caecum contains a natural community of bacteria and fungi that break down cellulose. Another function of the digestive tract is protection from toxins, or pathogenic

The most common causes of GI stasis include improper nutrition, stress, or pain from an underlying condition (e.g., overgrown teeth or excessive gas emitted by bad bacteria in the gut). Improper use of antibiotics can lead to GI stasis due to an overgrowth of unhealthy bacteria when the friendly gut microbes are eliminated (called microbial dysbiosis).

So that's the scary news – there are lots of potential triggers for GI stasis. But, the sunny side is there are also a lot of things that you as a responsible bunny owner can do before stasis strikes, as well as address it if you suspect it is occurring.

### Before Stasis Strikes

**1. Feed Your Bunny a Healthy Diet that Includes Lots of Fresh Hay & Water:** Rabbits need constant access to hay 24/7 to help keep their teeth from overgrowing (did you know that their teeth NEVER stop growing and that chewing is a natural

way for them to trim their teeth?) and to keep their GI tracts supplied with ample roughage/fiber. Fresh water should also always be available.

**2. Be a Poop Detective, Daily:** Just like you feed and pet your bun, checking to make sure droppings look normal in volume and consistency twice daily can help you notice irregularities. If you notice decreased production, unusual changes in size (e.g., much smaller poops than usual), or very stringy, furry poops, be on guard.

**3. Know Your Bun's Behaviors:** Bunnies can't talk to us (though wouldn't it be fun if they could?), so it's up to us as responsible pet owners to know their body language. If you start to observe that your bun is sitting strangely or acting funny (maybe you observe hunched posture or that your bun didn't greet you this morning and was just staring into space when you brought breakfast) – this may be a sign that something is amiss.

**4. Have a Rabbit-Savvy Vet on Speed Dial:** When possible, a rabbit-savvy vet should be performing yearly checkups on your bun. Even if this is not the case, do a little homework to know who you would call in an emergency if your rabbit gets sick with GI stasis or some other health issue.

**Bottom Line:** If you detect any poop/eating/energy level irregularities for 12 hours, consult a rabbit-savvy veterinarian to see if emergency care is needed. Remember, your bunny might not make it another 12 hours once it has been in stasis for half a day, so be prepared to take action quickly if needed!

The single most important fact that could save your rabbit's life is knowing that if you observe that he or she has stopped eating and pooping for 12 hours, usually accompanied by uncharacteristic lethargy, their life is in critical danger. This is called GI stasis, and can kill a rabbit quickly and unexpectedly if left untreated!

## Addressing Stasis

**1. Emergency Triage:** When you take your bun to the vet, they will most likely begin with a physical examination to try to determine the cause of the stasis. If the stasis is not related to a blockage or teeth issues, they may initiate "emergency GI stasis protocol." This protocol generally includes administration of subcutaneous fluids, medication to encourage GI motility, pain medication, and recovery food (like CriticalCare). Your vet may watch your bun for a period of time until he/she shows signs of improvement. Don't forget to bring your rabbit's bonded pal if at all possible.

Note: For experienced bunny owners who have gone through stasis before, a vet may prescribe an emergency stash of medications for administration at home at the first sign of stasis. This, of course, is based on mutual trust between an owner and vet, and not all vets will determine this is appropriate. Talk to your vet if your rabbit has a special condition where this may be warranted.

**2. Administer Medications at Home:** GI stasis can take from a few days to several weeks to fully go away. During that time, you will likely need to medicate your bun - your bun may not love the meds, but knows you're giving them because you love your bun!

**Bottom Line:** The goal of treating GI stasis is to get your bun back to eating and pooping normally - and to restore normal energy levels. A successful triage will result in *improvement* fairly quickly (restored GI motility), sometimes within hours. But be patient with getting back total normalcy - as long as you continue to see improvement and no regression, your bun should be back to binkies and nose bumps soon!

The information provided here is NOT meant to be a substitute for advice from a medical professional, but I do hope that it can provide some general pointers on things that every bunny owner should keep in mind as part of their goal to ensure a long and happy life for their bun!

### References:

<http://myhouserabbit.com/rabbit-health/gi-stasis-in-rabbits-a-deadly-condition/>  
<http://articles.extension.org/pages/61402/the-digestive-system-of-the-rabbit>  
<http://rabbit.org/gastrointestinal-stasis-the-silent-killer-2/>  
<http://myhouserabbit.com/rabbit-health/gi-stasis-in-rabbits-a-deadly-condition/>  
[http://www.meditrabbit.com/Unsafe\\_medication/dangerous\\_antibiotics.htm](http://www.meditrabbit.com/Unsafe_medication/dangerous_antibiotics.htm)

<http://myhouserabbit.com/rabbit-health/gi-stasis-in-rabbits-a-deadly-condition/>  
<http://myhouserabbit.com/rabbit-health/gi-stasis-in-rabbits-a-deadly-condition/>  
<http://myhouserabbit.com/rabbit-health/gi-stasis-in-rabbits-a-deadly-condition/>  
<http://rabbit.org/gastrointestinal-stasis-the-silent-killer-2/>

## News Briefs

### Friends of Rabbits Has New Pet Bunny Sitting Policies and Rates

By Pam H.

At long last, Friends of Rabbits now has official pet sitting policies and rates, to help streamline the service for both rabbit 'parents' and FoR volunteers. Rates are determined by supply cost and there are special accommodations and discounts available. Please contact us for more information or to discuss your specific needs.

#### Daily Rates:

The basic daily rate is \$15.00 for a single rabbit with an additional \$5.00 for a pair or trio in the same space. For a second rabbit in a separate space, the daily rate is \$10.00 per rabbit. For groups larger than a trio, the rate will be determined on an

individual basis, depending upon the number of rabbits and space required.

#### Weekly Rates:

The weekly rate is \$90.00 for a single rabbit and \$125.00 for a pair or trio in the same space. For a second rabbit in a separate space, the weekly rate is \$60.00. Again, for groups larger than a trio, the rate will be determined on an individual basis, depending upon the number of rabbits and space required.

#### Special Requests:

The rate for special feeding requests varies with the requirements. For example, it would be \$2.00 extra per day for twice daily salad (rabbits are normally receiving evening salad only as part of the daily rate)

The rate for administration of medications varies with the number, type and frequency of medications

and cooperation of the rabbit. For example, it would be \$5.00 per administration of subcutaneous fluids with an uncooperative rabbit that needs a second person to assist. A cooperative rabbit would be \$2.50 per administration.

Caring for a rabbit with special needs requiring significantly more time and availability for the caregiver will vary with the requirements. For example, a rabbit that needs to be changed and washed every 4 hours (including night changings) would be \$8.00 extra above the basic rate per 24 hours.

When there is a pet sitter available for in-home care, the rate is \$25 per visit. With more visits and rabbits, the rate will be determined, depending upon the requirements.

#### Other Fees:

Transport to a pre-scheduled vet appointment is \$15.00 per visit for a special trip or \$5.00 if the pet sitter has a concurrently scheduled vet visit with the same veterinary practice with a Friends of Rabbits foster or sanctuary bunny.

For urgent care or emergency vet transport, the fee is \$25.00 per visit.

#### Discounts:

Housing is normally in a 4 x 4 foot pen, either with or without the use of a pool as flooring. Some pet sitters can provide larger pens, depending upon the available space. For space smaller than 4 x 4 feet (usually a 2 x 4 foot cage with a plastic bottom), discounts are provided. For example, if the rabbit is housed in a cage as above with no exercise pen, the fee will be reduced by \$5 per day.

Fees for volunteers will be reduced by 20%.

Fosterers will only cover the actual costs (e.g., food, litter, etc.) for short term sitting.

Rates for special situations will be determined depending upon the circumstances. Examples of special situations could be low income, long term bunny sitting (4 weeks or more) or temporary sitting for people who are away on military deployment.

## Thank You Petco!



By Mara H.

*Great news!*

Friends of Rabbits has been awarded a \$2500 grant from the Petco Foundation! We applied for this grant to support more foster homes and adoption events in Virginia, where many of our adopters live. Friends of Rabbits will use these funds for new bunny condos, x-pens, toys and accessories to expand our foster network in 2016.

*And the news gets better!* Last year we began holding monthly adoption events at the Burke VA Petco. So we were very happy when the store selected Friends of Rabbits as a beneficiary of their annual Tree of Hope Fund for homeless animals. We recently received a check for \$2452 to help care for our rabbits. If you are in the area, please stop by the Burke Petco to thank store manager Sol Griffin and his staff for their support!

## Easter Triple-Header: Fundraising, Adoption, and Education Events

By Amy S.

Easter is a great time of year to take advantage of the public's interest in the "Easter Bunny" to promote and raise money for FoR and educate the public about rabbits. That education includes discouraging impulsive purchases of cute little bunnies who will later be abandoned. Seizing this opportunity, FoR organized three separate events in Maryland on the Sunday before Easter.

In the morning, Susan W. led a group at the Robinson Nature Center in Columbia during their Spring Egg-stravaganza for Tots. FoR volunteers from Girl Scout Troup 1592



Photo: Amy S.

Floppy and Lopsy entertain some visitors at Bark!

introduced the rabbits to the small children, providing the families with lots of details about each rabbit.

In the afternoon, Robin S. led a special adoption event at the Bark! pet store in nearby Clarksville. Foster bunnies were present for interested individuals and families to meet, and as usual, there were plenty of opportunities to educate people about rabbits as pets. In addition, there was a special Easter photo booth. For a small donation to FoR, children could pose with one of the kid-friendly (calmer) foster bunnies and have their parent snap a photo or get a photo from the FoR photographer. There were plenty of children who stopped by to meet the bunnies and get their photos taken. The FoR buttons and pretend rabbit ears were also a big hit.

A fair amount of the interest in the adoption event and photo booth at Bark! was generated from just across the shopping center at Great Sage, where they were hosting a special Friends of Rabbits Benefit Day. This vegan restaurant, popular among FoR members, generously donated 10% of the day's sales to FoR. In addition, their advertising of the event helped promote FoR and the great rescue work of our members. At the restaurant, the Girl Scouts and volunteers shared information about rabbits and how FoR helps the community through



Photo: Robin S.

Loppy gets photographed with a young friend.

rabbit rescue, passed out FoR buttons (the kids loved them!), collected individual donations, and directed families who were waiting for a table to see the bunnies at Bark!

The sales at Great Sage generated over \$1000 for FoR, with the individual public donations at Great Sage and the Bark! photo booth earning an additional \$230. In addition to the monetary benefits, interest in FoR spread widely that weekend. Between these three Easter events and two additional events that weekend (VA adoption event and Pet Expo), the FoR Facebook page received over 120 new "likes."

None of these Easter events (or the other events that weekend) could have been successful without the many FoR volunteers at the different locations - some at multiple locations - throughout the day. Although too numerous to name everyone, these hard-working volunteers included Susan S., Mara H., Brittney B., Ted M., Marilyn D., Andrew M., Sarah C., Melanie L., and yours truly. Thank you to everyone who donated their time, energy, and effort!

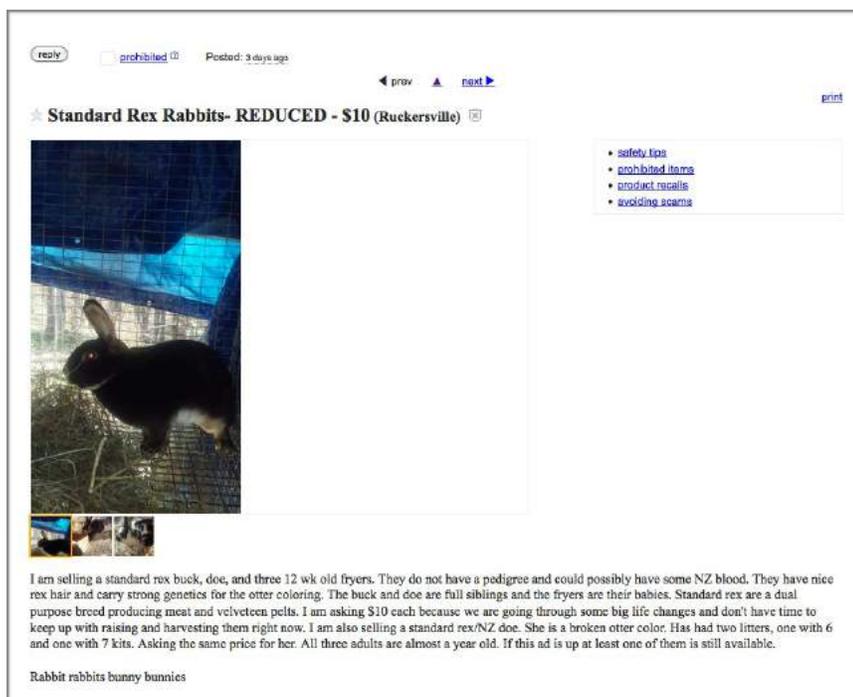
## Flagging Rabbit Breeders on Craigslist

*By Robin S.*

Most of you don't know me, because I've only been involved with Friends of Rabbits for a couple of years. I've done animal rescue and shelter work for over forty years, and most recently I've concentrated on reuniting lost pets with their owners.

That's how I've come to spend so much time on Craigslist. It's a wonderful resource, and full of great connections, but it's also become a haven for dog-flipping, buyer-swindling, and an outlet for breeders- in spite of the fact that breeding and selling animals is specifically banned in the Craigslist terms of service.

Commercializing animals tends to promote poor treatment of the animals as it places a tangible value on their lives. And for every animal that is obtained from a breeder, a homeless animal in a shelter loses a chance to find a forever home, and faces euthanization. Rabbit breeders are advertising on Craigslist by the dozens, especially around Easter. As if we don't have an overpopulation problem with small animals, the folks in the animal rescue community often spend time flagging (i.e. asking Craigslist to take down) ads for dog and cat breeders, but not breeders of any other species.



Screenshot of a meat rabbit breeder's ad on Craigslist. Posts can be flagged for removal by clicking 'Prohibited' at the top.

It takes three flags to have an ad removed, and we need to do this all year round in order to convince these breeders that it's bad business. All you have to do when you find an ad is click on the word "Prohibited" at the top of the screen, and then go on to the next one! As one volunteer recently noted: "It gave me insight into what many of the shelter rabbits and rescues went through in their previous lives." Flagging these ads is one step in breaking the cycle, as many of these breeders' animals end up in shelters, and become part of the endless queue of homeless rabbits that shelters struggle to house, of which only a fraction are adopted or saved by FoR or similar organizations. The others don't meet such a happy fate.

Obviously the "Pets" page on your local Craigslist is the place to start, but it doesn't end there. To cast a wide net, do the following searches:

<http://washingtondc.craigslist.org/search/ccc?query=bunnies>

<http://washingtondc.craigslist.org/search/sss?query=bunnies>

as well as the same searches using the word "rabbit" instead of bunnies. While you're at it, keep your eyes peeled for buyers looking for bunnies and guinea pigs to feed to their hunting dogs - I kid you not.

And if you have the time (and want to feel good about the crusade) why not take out all the breeders! But don't flag the private families trying to rehome their pets (but do watch out for breeders in disguise), and especially don't flag the rescues!

Right now, we have a bunch of volunteers monitoring Craigslist, so if you look now you might not see many ads from breeders. But please keep checking - as the first volunteers' energy wanes, be there to pick up the slack!

**If you find cases of abuse:**

Unfortunately, animal abuse cases of all types are relatively hard to prosecute, but if you do see a case of neglect, make a note of the location and the URL of the ad, copy the ad, and contact their local animal control (and surrounding ones if you're not sure of the location).

**You can also email a complaint to the legal page of Craigslist at:**

<https://sfbay.craigslist.org/contact?step=form&reqType=legal>

**Volunteer Activity Spotlight**

**The Always Critical Adoption Events- Getting Involved to Increase Adoptions**

*By Maxine K.*

Adopting a house rabbit is a life-changing decision that requires careful thought and consideration. While books and internet resources are certainly helpful for researching whether a rabbit is right for you, there is nothing like interacting with rabbits "up close and personal" to give you a feel for these gentle, intelligent creatures. Adoption events fill that void by allowing potential adopters to meet a large number of adoptable

bunnies in a single day. Adoption shows also serve to educate the public regarding proper companion rabbit care, feeding, grooming, medical needs, social dynamics/behaviors, and the importance of spaying or neutering in battling the escalating overpopulation problem.

Friends of Rabbits (FoR) hosts regular adoption events two to four times per month at local pet stores in Maryland and Northern Virginia. These events are open to the general public and are free of charge. Each event offers 8-16 (counting pairs as twos) adoptable rabbits plus volunteers and fosterers on-site to answer questions about basic rabbit care and behavior.

FoR has many rabbits available for adoption, either as pairs or as single males and females. These rabbits come from a variety of different backgrounds and situations. Before buying a rabbit from a pet store or breeder, please consider the advantages of adopting:

- 1) For every rabbit bought from a pet store, a shelter rabbit dies. When people adopt from Friends of Rabbits, they truly save a life, enabling our foster volunteers to pull another rabbit in need from local animal control facilities.
- 2) All of our rabbits have been spayed or neutered, examined by a rabbit knowledgeable veterinarian and are being cared for in private foster homes. This saves the adopter the expense, worry, and pre-surgical behavioral problems of an unaltered rabbit.
- 3) FoR fosterers know their buns and can usually give you a clear idea of their habits and personalities, thus helping you to find the bun that is right for you. We evaluate every adopter's ability to provide a home for our rabbits, but we also evaluate our rabbits for how well they will fit into a given home.
- 4) Finally, FoR rabbits are usually potty-trained by the time they are adopted, thus saving their new owners countless hours that would have gone to litterbox training.

Our adoption events are generally planned several months ahead, but we have also scheduled events just one month in advance. The number of volunteers varies with the event and venue, but three to five are usually needed. There are a number of different tasks that must be performed in order to ensure a successful event. This includes everything from setting up pens/cleaning up the venue to watching over the rabbits, interacting with patrons, and assisting potential adopters in selecting the right food, hay, and treats for their new family member. Free literature about Friends of Rabbits, our adoption procedure, and general rabbit care are always available at the events.

In addition to the basic events held at local pet stores, FoR also partners with local businesses and animal welfare organizations in the community when planning/organizing adoption events. One example of this is the "Brews for Bunnies", fundraisers that combine fun, education, and adoption in a single event, open to the general public. Friends of Rabbits receive a generous portion of the evening's proceeds. Adoptable rabbits are on site for these events, as well.

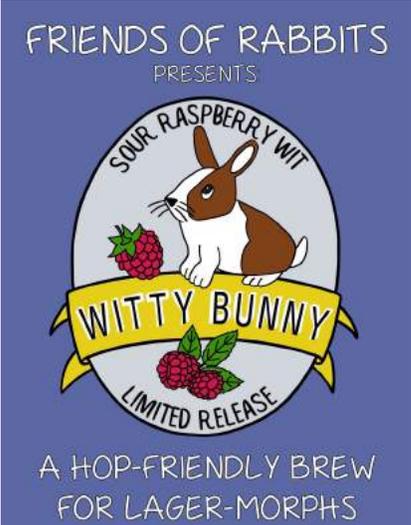
### FoR's Adoption Process

Prior to adoption, we ask that people fill out an application <http://www.friendsofrabbits.org/adoptionform.htm>.

If a potential adopter is interested in a particular rabbit on the FoR website, he or she can request that the rabbit be brought to an upcoming adoption event. However, Friends of Rabbits does not permit "same day" adoptions. The adoption process takes several days. There are a number of reasons for this. First, we want adoptive families to really consider their reasons for adopting a rabbit to ensure they are not making an impulse purchase. This also ensures that the right rabbit goes to the right family. Like people, rabbits have different personalities and different needs when it comes to a forever home. Our volunteers are able to help you find the rabbit that fits with your family, which may not always be the first one you are considering. Third, we do this so that there is time to educate people about house rabbits prior to adopting.

**If you are interested in organizing an adoption event at a local establishment, no matter how small, these events are critical to increasing our visibility and bringing our adoptable rabbits to interact with the public so they can learn the joy of rescuing rabbits and saving a life!**

**Our new T-shirts are now available!**



**Showcase your love of beer and bunnies while supporting FoR.**  
**\$25**

## The Do's and Don'ts FoR Mother-Does and Kits

---

*By Chris O.*

Since ancient times, the arrival of Spring has been celebrated with a wonderful array of rabbit imagery—from Renaissance oil paintings to chocolate bunnies at CVS. **Friends of Rabbits is often called upon by shelters to take in pregnant rabbits, particularly at this time of year.** But how do you prepare for the arrival of baby bunnies? From pre-birth nesting to the transition of the newborns' diets, the best practices include a mix of knowing when and when not to intervene.

When a female rabbit is pregnant, you will be able to feel the little ones growing in her womb. It is important to separate the mother from sexually mature males, create nesting for the newborns, and oversee the special diets of mother rabbits and their litters.

Separating the mother from unneutered males is critical so that she does not conceive again- rabbits can conceive within 15 min of birthing a litter. Nevertheless, it is advisable to keep the father nearby if he is bonded with the mother. Rabbits are social creatures and you may make a case-by-case judgment of how much the father and the mother appreciate—or need—each other's company. FoR recommends spaying and neutering all mature rabbits to avoid overpopulation and to curb behavioral issues.

Pregnant rabbits often begin making a baby nest only a few days prior to kindling. You might consider making a shelter earlier on in the pregnancy, so that you can have it ready to supplement the mother's preparations. She may begin to pull out her fur, but do not be concerned; she is creating little fluffy blankets for her children.

Cardboard makes for an easily customizable hut, but wood is less likely to become a vanishing snack. Whichever safe material you choose to use, try to create an enclosure that is roomy enough for the mother to come in and out, but small enough to prevent the newborns from spreading out and isolating themselves. You might consider an entrance lip or obstacle that prevents the babies from getting out, but which the mother can easily hop over. You may add hay for additional bedding.

Although a newborns' body temperature is crucial to their ability to digest nutrients, rabbits cannot tolerate heat very well. Like any living being, each rabbit will fare differently from another other, but it is generally accepted that sustained temperatures in the high 70s and above can become a health concern. This is especially true for newborns, who have fewer methods of regulating their own temperature.

Baby rabbits should nurse for at least two months, although you may gradually introduce pellets around two weeks after birth. Mothers often nurse their young after twilight and before dawn. They will not lie near their litter, like cats, but naturally keep their distance from their offspring except when nursing. In spite of this instinctual habit, do not physically separate the mother from her young! To monitor the newborns, make sure that their bellies are rounded and their bodies are warm.

If one cannot get enough nourishment while feeding with the rest of the litter, you may provide that individual with a separate space and time to nurse. Recently, FoR member Susan S. saved a baby bunny with this practice. Unfortunately, some babies do not learn to suckle properly, and although there is an extensive amount of

**Friends of Rabbits recently took in 3 litters of baby rabbits that are now fostered by volunteers, but there are more bunnies needing help still at the shelters!**

If you would like to become a fosterer and help us save more rabbits, please email [info@friendsofrabbits.org](mailto:info@friendsofrabbits.org) or call 703-627-7892

An existing FoR fosterer will contact you to set up an interview time.

If you decide that fostering is for you, a home visit will be arranged to determine if your space can be set up to safely foster rabbits. Once you are approved as a fosterer of FoR, you will be added to the fostering Google Group for facilitating communication and updates.



literature on hand-nursing a rabbit, be prepared for heartbreak despite trying your best, as the mortality rate is very high. If you have multiple adult female rabbits, keep close track of which ones are producing milk for their young. If the litter's biological mother dies, you may introduce a foster mother.

The first several weeks of life are critical and sensitive. For a comprehensive overview of caring for mother-does and newborns, please see <http://www.rabbit.org/care/babies.html>.

### When to Intervene and What to Do

- The father and mother can still get to each other - keep them close, but physically separate.
- The kits are sunken-bellied, frequently vocal, or bluish in color - consider giving these kits separate time and space to nurse; if they are not suckling properly, consult [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

### When NOT to Intervene

- The mother is hanging out away from the nest - this is normal; it comes from an instinct to avoid drawing predators to the newborns.
- The mother is licking a newborn's anus - this is normal; it facilitates excretion and is necessary for young kits.

## Rainbow Bridge Bunnies

"Goodbyes are not forever, goodbyes are not the end. They simply mean I'll miss you until we meet again." -Unknown



### Rainbow Bridge Memorials

\$15 for 200 words and a picture

Contact Beck [editor@friendsofrabbits.org](mailto:editor@friendsofrabbits.org)

### Chesterton and Miss Marni

Submitted by John.

Chesterton von Fancypants was a regal fellow, despite his humble beginnings. He was found by NYC animal control in Central Park with his brother Jasper in early 2007. Though malnourished and infected with *E. cuniculi*, they quickly established themselves and demanded separate domains in

our small Manhattan apartment. Chester was a watcher, who would view the world through his piebald eyes while perched high on the arm of the sofa. In 2009, he met his intrepid life partner, Marni Halfmoon, a dutch who explored everything and sought love above all. We moved to Washington, DC together while Jasper stayed behind with his special human.

Marni and Chester's bond stayed unbroken until the end, together through another move to Baltimore in 2011, car rides to NY, and many trips to the vet after Chester was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2014. They stayed strong through it all, but Chester succumbed to his illness in June 2015 and Marni followed him one month later. They are survived by Jasper and all the humans that knew and loved them.

### Harvey's note

Hi Mom, it's Harvey. I made it safely to the Rainbow Bridge. It's beautiful here. I'm healthy and whole again - no more arthritis pain or hind end syndrome. I can run and binky like I did when I was young. The only thing is I miss you guys.

As you know, my past life was not a happy one, but everything changed the day you adopted me. Thank you for seeing past my red eyes and giving me a second chance at life. Your companionship meant the world to me. I looked forward to the evenings when you would sit next to me and pet me.

Please don't cry when you think of me. We spent three wonderful years together. I wish it could've been longer, but I'm grateful for the time we had. You made my last three years the best years of my life.

Remember, dear friend, I am never really "gone". I will live on in your heart forever, and I will be right here waiting until we meet again at the Rainbow Bridge.

## Sigi's Story

By Pam H.

Sigi is an adorable little dark brown mini-rex. His original "owners" had named him Chocolate. He was living in a backyard hutch under deplorable conditions. Both he and his mate had been neglected, starved and left outside in the heat, cold and rain with no cover over the cage. The neighbors were doing their best to watch out for the pair and feed them when possible. The conditions became so bad that the neighbors finally called the local sheriff. He came by and said, "Well, they are still alive" and did nothing to help them. Soon after, Chocolate's mate passed away. The "owners" then threw Chocolate out of his hutch and presumably over the fence. He was found in a kind neighbor's garden, who took him in and sent out a plea for help on the internet as it appeared that his back may have been broken. He could neither use his back legs nor perform his normal bodily functions on his own. He was eating some on his own but was not drinking water. A group of good people came to his rescue, raised money for an emergency vet visit and then transported him to Lori Sundberg with Friends of Rabbits. Lori renamed him Sigi (short for Siegfried, which in German means victory and protection or peace) and brought him to our fabulous veterinarians who specialize in exotics.



Photos: Pam H.

Sigi's strange stance when he arrived in FoR care.



Sigi's stance and outlook has vastly improved!

Sigi's original assessment at the emergency veterinarian indicated that he did not have a break in his spine, but he probably had a compressed disk, which is very painful. He stayed in the hospital for 5 days, receiving pain medications and laser therapy. Due to his inability to move very much, Sigi was housed on special bedding so that he wouldn't get urine scald.

During his first few weeks, Sigi sat in a strange position with his hind legs under him, sticking straight forward.

The back feet dragged under and then were pulled upright with each creep. Over a period of weeks, the creeping improved and he was able to start hopping a little. We were able to start him on acupuncture, which helped a lot. His hopping continued to improve and he started doing mini-binkies. This was one little trooper! After a couple of months, we had another set of x-rays done on

him. The x-rays showed that he had had an injury to the spinal lumbar region. It was not fractured but has healed with a dramatic shift in the spine. It is curved like he has scoliosis. As a result, his left leg sits a little higher up. When he hops, his left foot slightly curls under. This is likely permanent; however, everything looks stable and he has had exceptional improvement over the past few months. As long as he continues to improve, we will continue with laser therapy and the acupuncture. He is young, which is an asset for him. Sigi has been neutered and he is using a litterbox with the side cut down. Recently, he shed his entire coat very quickly. His new coat is coming in as a handsome dark brown color. He is safe now with Friends of Rabbits and appears to be a happy boy. Our next steps may include looking for a friend for him. Wait and see!

### For Fostering and Sanctuary Wishlist

Baby Scale

Dymo address labels

Donut beds /vet beds (fleece)

Sponges

Rubbing alcohol

Carriers with top openings - small and medium

Air filters (large HEPA with pre-filter, charcoal)

Post-it notes

Paper Towels

Bath towels/Hand towels

Eco-friendly laundry detergent

Pet Strollers

Vinegar

Storage bins

Large trash can with lid (Prefer rectangle and wheels)

Ceramic water bowls

Cement mixing tubs (approx. 20 inches by 26 inches) (need 10)

5 ft swimming pools (need 10)

Bungee cords

# Events Calendar

**Saturday 4/16**, 12-3 PM - Adoption event at Petco  
9230 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke, VA

**Saturday 4/16**, 10 AM-1 PM - Pat Fort Memorial  
Animal Fair Owen Brown Interfaith Center Columbia,  
MD <http://www.obicolumbia.org/>

**Sunday 4/17**- Adopt an Amazing Animal Day at  
Robinson Nature Center.  
6692 Cedar Lane Columbia, MD  
All ages/Daily Admission or Free with Robinson  
Annual Pass. After a puppet show of *The Tortoise  
and the Hare*, meet adoptable rescue turtles and  
rabbits! Collaboration with Mid-Atlantic Turtle and  
Tortoise Society (MATTS).

**Every 3rd Sunday** 12-3 PM Adoption events at Pet  
Supplies Plus - next events **4/17, 5/15 and 6/19**  
7007 Manchester Blvd. Franconia, VA

**Saturday 4/23** 4-6 PM - Adoption Event at PetValu in  
Gaithersburg, MD.  
515 Quince Orchard Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

**Sunday 4/24**, 12-3 PM - Adoption Event at PetValu in  
Ellicott City, MD  
<http://us.petvalu.com/events-calendar/event/petvalu-us-adoption-event-ellicott-city-md-turf-valley-towne-square-3/>

**Sunday 4/30**, 12-3 PM - Adoption Event at Bark! In  
Gaithersburg, MD  
235 Kentlands Blvd, Gaithersburg, MD

**Sunday 5/15** - 12-3 PM - Adoption Event at Pet  
Supplies Plus 7007 Manchester Blvd. Franconia, VA

**Sunday 6/19** - 12-3 PM - Adoption Event at Pet  
Supplies Plus 7007 Manchester Blvd. Franconia, VA

**6/17-6/20 Taking Action for Animals  
conference** - FoR will be exhibitors at Taking  
Action for Animals, the premier national  
conference for animal advocacy. Volunteers  
needed! Help us bring awareness to others  
who share our passion for animal well-being.

Get your rabbit supplies from  
FoR and support rabbit rescue!\*

treats, toys, hays, pellets, bedding and  
much more — all your bunny needs in  
one place.

Full-service pickup locations:  
**Columbia, MD**  
**Arlington, VA**

Limited pickup:  
**Bethesda, MD**  
**Fairfax Station, VA (hay only)**

**\*ask about our volunteer discounts!**

**Saturday 6/25** - Adoption Event at Bark Rockville  
1643 Rockville Pike Rockville, MD

**Saturday 7/9** - Adoption Event at Bark Silver Spring  
10737 Columbia Pike Silver Spring, MD

**Sunday 9/11**, 10am-3pm - Loudoun Pet Expo  
An event to promote community support and  
awareness for pet/animal businesses, organizations,  
non-profits and rescues. Free family-friendly event.  
Volunteers for our table are needed.



**Saturday 10/22** - Adoption Event at Bark Kentlands  
235 Kentlands Blvd, Gaithersburg, MD

