



Safe Haven Rabbit Rescue, Inc.

# Safe Haven Scoop

## Beyond the Adoptables

by Karen Augustynowicz

### Special points of interest:

- Dyani and Joy—stories of Survival
- Preparing for Disasters
- Adoption Updates - Always A Favorite!
- The Importance of Fiber—in our Educational Corner

Our website showcases the wonderful bunnies that we have for adoption. . . . . Those are the easy ones!

Many times our rescues are in need of so much medical care they may never make it to the adoption page; or it is a long time until they are healthy enough to be considered available for adoption. Most times you will never hear about them, but then, their stories of survival also deserve to be heard. In featuring these two stories, we hope that you will not only learn, but be inspired by the strength these bunnies show. And... it will give you something to tell people who question why you *do not* keep your bunny outside!

### *Dyani*

Safe Haven received a call from a young woman who stated that she had captured a bunny who had been running loose in a local condo complex. The residents had been leaving food out and eventually Jennifer was able to catch her.

During our conversation, Jennifer mentioned that the

bunny had what looked like a “puncture wound” on her back. Immediately, the red flags went off in my head—*Cuterebra*—and I knew I had to go see.

Sure enough, one look told me that this little bunny was playing host to bot fly larvae. The “puncture wound” on her back was the breathing hole for the parasite invading her little body. The bunny’s labored and loud breathing was an additional concern.

The term bot or warble describes the larval stage of a specific group of flies. Bot flies have no mouthparts and do not feed during their adult life. All of the energy the adult uses for mating and depositing eggs or larvae, is obtained and stored in the larva stage by parasitizing another animal. Bot fly species are very host and site specific. Several

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## Emergency Preparedness

by Irene Findley

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With the images of recent hurricane devastation still fresh in our minds, the need to fine tune our personal disaster plans becomes apparent. Do not rely on local emergency management because their provisions for animal safety may be uncertain. You *must* rely on your personal resources. To that end, the following essential tips could help save your pet.

### *Don't Leave Home without Them!*

- \* Select safe lodging that is at least 2 hours’ drive away that accepts both you and your pets (relatives, friends, animal-friendly motels).
- \* Maintain periodic contact to confirm that your arrangements are still in effect.
- \* Do not wait for a mandatory evacuation order.

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species of *Cuterebra* prey on rabbits and hares.

The female flies will lay their eggs along rabbit trails and near rodent burrows. The first stage larva enters a host body through moist openings and migrates through the body before establishing a development site with a breathing hole. It is the migration that causes nerve damage, respiratory distress and other symptoms

A quick call to one of our veterinarians and we were on our way. Her exam confirmed my thoughts. Once it was determined she was healthy enough, my new rescue was whisked away for surgery. All I could do now was wait - and come up with a name!

A very slight little girl, weighing 3.1 lbs, her features reminded me of a deer. Multiple browns colored her coat, the shape of her face and big brown eyes were very doe like. "Dyani" is the Native American word for deer, and so she was named.



Home from vet 8/17/05

Dyani's incision went from the middle of her right side up to the center of her back. I was told that there was a lot of infection and extensive cleaning was required. I do not want to be too graphic, so will leave it that the larva had died and decayed. She was sent home with pain meds and antibiotics. And, boy was she hungry! After checking out her new cozy environment, Dyani settled in and immediately began gobbling the hay and greens provided.



The healing process was going well until three weeks in when I noticed the incision beginning to rise. Unfortunately for Dyani an abscess was forming and more surgery was required.

This time 21 stitches, bandaging, and 30 days of Pen-G injections were necessary. A bundle of energy not happy with being bandaged, Dyani gave me the opportunity to practice my bandaging skills at least six times a day!



As I write this, I am happy to report with fingers crossed, that all Dyani needs to do now is grow back her fur! Her incision is healed well, she is eating well and is very active. She just seems to be sporting a Mohawk haircut as the darkest fur grows in first—right down the center of her back!

## The Miracle of Joy

by Irene Findley

Typical of many rescues, the exact origin of this little bunny will be forever shrouded in mystery. However, by blending key witness information with in-field experience, the events leading to her life-saving moment can be reconstructed.

She was purchased at a New York slaughter house by a New Jersey man. Once home, he turned her over to the children who took the frightened bunny outdoors to play. Several family dogs entered the picture and the stage was set for disaster with running, shouting, barking and terror... At this point the bunny sustained a gash above its tail. In time, the dogs and children were called away and the traumatized bunny was left outside to fend for itself.



Two days passed. The weather was hot and dry. A couple walking by noticed the bunny in the yard. The wound was now host to a full-blown maggot infestation. The "owner" agreed to take full responsibility after hearing the SPCA would be informed and the good Samaritans headed to the nearest vet with the emaciated bunny.

The prognosis was poor to guarded. The maggots had eaten the flesh down to the muscle and formed a pocket 1" deep and 2.5" long just above her tail. If the affected area had been underneath her tail the internal damage would have been fatal.



The name Joy was given to her as a promise of what lay ahead. More importantly, she was welcomed into a forever home. Wound management entailed wet to dry bandaging changed every other day along with an aggressive course of oral antibiotics. The possibility of skin grafting was not ruled out. Time would tell. After a week, her eyes began to lose their delirious look. With each bandage change she was rewrapped in a new color which brought smiles to everyone. Progress was slow but sure. The skin was growing back.

Finally, after three weeks the vet proclaimed the patient to be free of infection where bandage changes were no longer necessary and oral medication alone would suffice. No further surgery would be necessary. Everyone was thrilled at the rapid rate of recovery and the fact that Joy had never once picked at her bandages! For Joy, the nightmare is over and a new life is just starting. (Note: Joy has become a member of

## Adoption Updates

**Magic***Adopted by Sharon Hwang — 4/24/2005*

It's been 5 months since I adopted Magic, but I feel as if we've been buddies for ages. We bonded almost right away and now we're inseparable! He usually follows me from room to room throughout the house, unless he has more important plans, like "chinning" the entire house to claim it as his own. Sometimes he tags along so close to my feet that I accidentally step on him! But he's such a good sport that he just shakes it off and continues tagging along.



Magic currently is a free-roam rabbit in the house. His excellent litterbox skills earned him that status around 2 months ago, after some vigorous bunny proofing of the house, of course. He tends to hang out mostly upstairs in the bedrooms, only going down to go potty and graze some hay.

As a free-roaming bunny, Magic has a lot of playtime. His most favorite activity is discovering all the loose paper in the house and ripping it to shreds. Everyday he checks all the wastebaskets in the house for new papers. Magic also loves digging! He digs at everything from carpet, towels, boxes, and my knee. Yes, I have learned not to sit on the floor anymore when Magic is in digging mode. Bunnies have claws!

All of this playtime makes for one tired bun. Magic's favorite place to nap is right next to an air-conditioning vent in hopes that the central AC will cycle on. And when it does, he will spread out over the entire vent to catch all the cool air. As he falls back asleep with that coldness on his tummy, I often hear a quiet little tooth purr coming from that fuzzy pile of contentment.



Well that fuzziness may be cute, but it is a battle to keep all that Angora hair under control, especially when the bun does not like groom-time! When Magic sees those combs and brushes he puts on his running shoes. Thankfully we have negotiated a solution that leaves him struggle-free for groom time. He lets me groom him all I want, as long as I massage him simultaneously. Whew, I tell you, a bunny massage and matt-removal all at the same time is no easy feat!

I want to thank everyone at Safe Haven and everyone who supported Magic's rescue efforts. Without your help, I wouldn't have my adorable little guy here. So thank you!

*(Editor's note: Many of you may remember Magic's rescue story as the lead story in our first newsletter. This little guy came a long way and touched many hearts in his journey. How wonderful to be able to let everyone know about the enchanted life he is now living. Thank you Sharon!)*

**Jake***Adopted by Carolyn Ingram — 6/11/2005*

Jake arrived at our house on June 11, 2005. After some changes in my work schedule, my fiancée and I decided that our first bunny, Lucy, could use a little friendship of her own kind. I had seen Jake at Karen's after Lucy spent a weekend there while we were out of town. He was docile, friendly, and loved attention, so I asked if he was still available for adoption. He was, and on June 11, 2005, the adventure started!

At first, Jake and Lucy made it clear that neither one of them was fond of the other. Jake was in the process of adjusting to a new home, and then we throw a new bunny sibling into the mix, I'm sure he was very intimidated, to say the least. Lucy was out to prove that this was her territory, and Jake was not welcome here, I could see it in her eyes.

But, after a month of meetings, 2 sessions per day, for about 10 or 20 minutes, they eventually started warming up to each other. Once they accepted that the other was there to stay, and was not going anywhere, things seemed to get easier. Then, one day, they surprised me. They started eating salad off the same plate, without getting competitive, and I realized that the worst was over. The rest was easy.

They are now the best of friends, and it has truly been fun to watch them grow together. Jake still loves attention, and Lucy has learned to love it a little more as well, sticking her nose out whenever Jake does for a petting session. They groom each other, and they can often be found lying together in Jake's litter pan, just relaxing. Of course, as with any pair of friends, they do manage to get into their share of trouble, but they're so funny doing it, that all we can do is laugh.



Currently, Jake and Lucy are

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## Educational Corner

- \* Have carriers, extra bowls, food, water, litter box and a clean up kit and anything critical to your pet's well being ready to go.
- \* Take all medication necessary for your pet.
- \* Maintain a full tank of gas.

The following websites have many helpful ideas:

The Humane Society of the United States <http://www.hsus.org>  
Tel: 202-452-1100

Noah's Wish <http://www.noahswish.org>  
Tel: 530-6622-9317

### The Importance of Fiber

by Irene Findley

The rabbit's digestive system is designed to continually process plant material or fiber. There are two available types of fiber: crude fiber and dietary fiber. The presence of both types in a rabbit's diet is important in order to 1) maintain proper intestinal ecology and 2) support a continual flow of intestinal contents (gut motility).

Crude fiber, a coarse indigestible material such as cellulose and lignin, forms the cell wall of plants. Cellulose is technically a carbohydrate and can be partially degraded in the small intestine before moving on to the cecum where bacteria further break it down. Lignin is very tough and found primarily in starchy and woody plants. The passage of crude fiber in the digestive tract is extremely important because it sweeps digested food through the system which is then able to sustain growth of healthy bacteria in the cecum. The end product can then be absorbed to provide approximately 1/4 of the rabbit's daily energy requirement.

Dietary fiber includes semi-fibrous compounds, pectins and gums common in fruits, vegetables and legumes. It is softer and has a high water content which provides necessary moisture and bulk to digested matter. It is broken down into smaller particles and has a slower rate of passage. The diet of a domestic rabbit is too often overloaded with easily digested foods. Commercial pellets provide small particle fiber and many rabbits never benefit from the long fibers found in quality hay. Providing the house rabbit with untreated pine will satisfy gnawing urges while supplying much needed crude fiber.

Under ideal circumstances, wild rabbits maintain a balance between crude and dietary fibers by alternately grazing on tender shoots and fibrous twigs. The indigestible matter supports healthy motility while the smaller dietary fibers provide the nutrients. For example, a young plant shoot will provide a greater ratio of nutrition to crude fiber than a tough stalk that has replaced its nutritive value with ultra fibrous cellulose and lignin. The degrees of fiber and nutrition a plant has to offer vary depending on its state of maturity.

Results of ongoing research concerning the effect of total fiber in the diet are met with great interest in the rabbit community. While continuing to learn, we can already take a big step in meeting their dietary needs by allowing our house rabbits to browse through a diverse and balanced diet. They are, after all, connoisseurs of the plant world!

## Adoption Updates

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doing well, and are spoiled regularly by doting parents. They have proven to be wonderful pets and Jake has been a great addition to our family.

Thanks Safe Haven!!  
Carolyn, Mike, Jake and Lucy

### ***Snicker Doodles***

*Adopted by Wendy Milligan — 6/18/2005*

#### **The Adventures of Doodles and Milligan**

I had desperately wanted to get a pet when I moved to NJ and I thought a bunny would be perfect. Bunnies are so adorable, cute and playful, everyone seems to love them! Because I worked all day, as a middle school Science teacher, I knew I had to find a pet that I could leave alone during the day. I began to read and research about having a house rabbit as my pet. After very careful thought and buying all the “appropriate equipment”, I decided that I would wait until the end of the school year, so that I could have all summer long to learn, bond and work with my new companion. I met and spoke with Karen and Irene about possibly adopting a rescue rabbit. I decided on a light brown and white dwarf rabbit named Snicker Doodles (I like to call him Doodles) and our adventures began.

I was thrilled to learn that rabbits tend to sleep most of the day and are more active during dawn and dusk hours. I was also excited to learn that rabbits can be litter boxed trained. When I adopted Doodles he was already litter boxed trained and also was neutered. Doodles is kept in a large pen that is about 4 ft by 4 ft, this works very well for him as long as I am very careful to always keep his pen secure and locked. I feel strongly against rabbits being kept in cages. Rabbits really need space and room to move around and exercise and jump and play. A caged rabbit is not able to do these things that add to the quality of life for a healthy and happy bunny.



My bunny has taught me to be a healthier person by the way a rabbits needs to be carefully fed. I now have much more fresh green leafy vegetables and fruits in my diet because my bunny only eats these types of foods in order to ensure his optimal health. I am very careful to never stray and give my rabbit something from the store *labeled as a rabbit treat*. Although they market such products, I have learned that they are not good to give to your rabbit. The very best things you can feed your rabbit is a daily fresh supply of hay and a good mix of green leafy vegetables. Doodles' favorite treat, which I refer to as his “nightly candy”, is his papaya/pineapple tablet. Doodles just loves

his “candy” and will jump and run and do anything for them once he hears me shake the jar.

One of the most precious things to see is when Doodles does jump in the air, called a “binky” dance, around our living room. He is telling me in bunny language that he is happy and content with his new home and human family. I find it cute that he always waits for me and my husband to sit down and eat our dinner. Even though Doodles dinner plate of fresh salad greens (at least 3 different types of greens) and a slice of fruit is placed out for him, he always waits and loves to eat his dinner while we are eating our dinner. Doodles is part of our family and is very social in our home with us.

I love to relax on my couch in the living room in the evening and have Doodles sit right next to me, while I stroke his back and rub his ears. He especially loves his chin and jaw bone to be rubbed and massaged. After we spend some good quality time bonding, I always get a rather interesting reward from Doodles.....he licks my entire face and tends to groom my eyebrows too. I think he believes I am a rabbit like him?

Doodles usually ends his evenings, sitting along the top edge of our couch. He loves to sit up there and look down around the living room on his perch, but my husband believes he really loves to watch TV and movies with us. As soon as I announce it is bedtime, he is often like a child who does not want to be put to bed. Sometimes he will make me chase him around until I can catch him and pick him up to bring him into his pen for bedtime.



Prior to Doodles coming into my life, I knew nothing about keeping a house rabbit and was relieved to learn that Karen and Irene were willing to teach me everything I needed to know in order to give a rescue rabbit the best possible care and happy home. Safe Haven Rabbit Rescue has taught me so much about caring for rabbits. I am so thankful for their love, care and support to myself and Doodles. Adopting a rescue rabbit has been a very wonderful experience for me. As an educator it has given me even more opportunities to tell and educate the various people I come in contact with about rescue animal adoptions. I have learned so much and love my bunny so much that I can not ever imagine being without him. We are now checking into the possibility of adopting another bunny, so Doodles can have a wife and companion while we are out at work all day!

Adoption Updates (continued from Page 5)

**Joshua**

*Adopted by Anna Maria Marzullo & Family — 6/8/2005*

My pet rabbit, Joshua, is in every way a FUNNY BUNNY. Sometimes you can walk into his room and see him with one ear up....and one ear down. Or you could find him proud and regal on his box sniffing the air. Other times you can find him running around the table at an amazing pace. It is clear that Josh has very “strange” ways, and, of course, cannot live without those ways. Josh is white, and has HUGE jowls. But, those jowls are cute, and they help him eat. Speaking of eating, Joshua can “shave” in an instant. What I mean is, when Josh eats lettuce, half of it hangs out, and slowly the “beard” grows inwards. Another hilarious thing Joshua does is clean himself. Now you’re thinking, What is so funny about cleaning? I’ll tell you what: he (Josh) slides his paws down his face wets them again, slides, wets, slides, wets, and so on, standing on his hind legs while doing it!



My funny bunny has yet another thing that’s funny. When he is hungry and sees you coming he prances around between your legs anticipating his pellets. In the morning you can “snake charm” Joshua with a bowl of pellets; he will actually follow the pellet bowl! And when we give him treats, the food disappears in an instant. Josh is very mischievous. One time Josh actually climbed a tilted barrier to get upstairs! Sometimes Josh can be bored. In that case he hides under the couch or in his box. When Josh is FLAT he is happy. (And I mean FLAT !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!) The above is what I hope your rabbit will be like. (If you get one). Joshua is a very sweet and wonderful rabbit with fur like velvet; softer than a kitten’s! Josh is a rabbit with a heart of pure gold!



Written by Angela Root  
Age 10, October, 2005

**Out and About!** Plus, fun photos submitted by friends!



*Educational Table  
Mike's Feed Farm, Totowa  
October 2, 2005*



*Adoption Day  
Mike's Feed Farm, Riverdale  
October 16, 2005*



*Our Star 'Petunia'*

*Nutmeg Bruyer  
loves those carrot  
tops!*



*Kyle Martinez  
knows how to  
take a nap!*



Other ways to help.....

**Is your car sporting one of these?**

If not, hurry out to our website and order yours today! Only \$5, plus \$1 postage. Show everyone how you feel with these adorable magnets!



A donation of just \$10 will bring one of these lavender sachet bunnies to your home! Details on our home page: SafeHavenRR.org



**Upcoming Activities**

**Adult Education Course  
“Understanding and Caring for  
The Companion Rabbit”**

In association with Hunterdon County Educational Services, we offer this one session instructional course. Whether you are new to bunny parenting, have had bunnies for years, or are just thinking about it! This course will have something for you.

**Winter Semester Class dates:** Wed. Jan 25th, Mon. Feb 27th, and Wed. March 22nd, 2006

**Time:** 6:30—8:30 pm

**Location:** North Hunterdon HS, Annandale  
Registration details will be posted on our website and the HC website [www.hcesc.com](http://www.hcesc.com) late-November.

Ms. La-



Bunny Pette

Do you have questions about caring for your bunny? Or does your bunny need help getting you to understand him? If so, drop Ms. Bunny LaPette an email or a note to the PO Box. Email her at:

[BunnyLP@SafeHavenRR.org](mailto:BunnyLP@SafeHavenRR.org)

**Foster Homes Needed!**

There are many bunnies needing care! If you can take in one or two, please let us know.

**Join Us Today!**

**\$15 Annual Membership includes official membership card, newsletters, and early notification of special events!**

All membership and donation monies go directly to help pay medical costs (vet bills, spays, neuters) so that we may continue to rescue more bunnies!

**Love-A-Bun? Please Sponsor One!**

We cannot do it without you! With vet bills especially high as of late, our bunnies really need your support. You can choose a specific bunny to sponsor or let us choose the most needy. Either way, you will receive a key fob, complete with a picture of your sponsored bun!



Please Print Clearly!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 1 year membership - \$15

\_\_\_ Sponsorship - \$15 for \_\_\_\_\_ (Bunny's Name)

\_\_\_ Donation - Any amount greatly appreciated!!



Please make check payable to: Safe Haven Rabbit Rescue, Inc.  
and mail to PO 5057, Clinton, NJ 08809

THANK YOU!

Safe Haven Rabbit Rescue, Inc. is a federally recognized,  
tax-deductible 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.