

Rabbit, Rodent & Ferret News



Chateau Lapin or ... Housing the Royal Rabbit

Kathy Smith shares her insight about creating a happy environment for your companion rabbit on page 4.

Living Spaces For Your Guinea Pigs (The Bill Gates Compound vs a Jail Cell)

Mary Lawson explains how to make your cavy companion's house a home on page 6.

Noah - A Love Story

Rebecca Donley's tale of adopting a special needs rabbit on page 3.

Rodent Housing Rules - Keeping Small Rodent Friends Healthy and Happy

Sandi Ackerman details the basic rules for proper rodent housing on page 6.

Dear BLRRFH...

Stories from our adopted friends and their families on page 10.



BLRRFH University

Join us for a workshop to learn more about living with your small companions. Details on page 13.

2

Noah – A Love Story

By Rebecca Donley

My sweet, beautiful rabbit Lucy spent the first 5 years of her life at the Colorado HRS, well cared for but yearning for a home of her own where she would have room to run and play. She watched many other rabbits come and go over the years – there were always rabbits more attractive to adopters than the “plain” white rabbit with the red eyes. So when she first came to live with me 5 years ago, she couldn’t get enough of playing outside and would spend all day there, under the shade of our huge oak tree, coming in only when I went to get her.

As she got older she preferred to spend more time indoors, snuggled with her companion on a soft fleece bed. When she recently lost him to a fast-moving enteritis, she once again took to sitting outside all day, only now without the bunny hops and sprints that we used to see. It broke our hearts to see her so alone with no one to groom and snuggle with, so we went to BLRRFH to find her a friend. We were introduced to several eligible males, but then I was asked if I would consider Noah. Noah is a blind rabbit who had been first dumped on a golf course to fend for himself, then struck so hard with a golf club that he lost both his eyes and suffered a crushed skull. I wasn’t sure what having a blind rabbit would entail but decided that if Lucy liked him, he had a home with us. Noah had previously been introduced to other females

but because of his blindness it had failed. Noah would lunge at them (or at the space where they had been), his blindness bringing out some pre-emptive aggression.

I try not to get attached to uncontrollable outcomes and I needed to stay neutral to do the best thing for Lucy, but as I left her at BLRRFH to try to bond the two, I found myself hoping against hope that they would get along. I had, of course, become attached to Noah already. I returned the next morning to find the twosome happily hanging out together in an exercise pen, having bonded so quickly that they spent their first night together! Bonding this fast is highly unusual but apparently, it was love at first sight for Noah and Lucy. Each has a hopeful and loving spirit that survived hardship, and I think they saw this spirit in each other immediately.

As soon as I got Noah home and set him in our “rabbit room” — we have three other rabbit pairs — I realized I would need to do some remodeling. Lucy’s condo featured a ramp from the first floor to the second and surely a blind rabbit couldn’t negotiate a ramp. While I was standing there considering options, he sniffed a shelf in the play area, and then jumped up on top of it! After hopping down he proceeded to make the rounds of the rabbit room, meeting the other rabbits, bouncing around, and

generally making himself at home. I was starting to think maybe his blindness had been exaggerated. I widened Lucy’s ramp and put sides on it for his safety and before the end of the day he was racing from the first floor to the second and back as if he’d been doing it all his life.

I called BLRRFH and asked if they were sure he couldn’t see. They pointed out that he had no eyes, a fact it’s hard to argue with. But I still wonder, while watching him hop confidently around the house and the yard, negotiating furniture, trees and plants and fence lines with ease, if maybe he doesn’t have some kind of sixth sense that allows him to see more than we think he can. At any rate, regardless of what we all believe, he doesn’t seem to know he’s blind.

After several days, he was racing around the bunny room, tossing his head and shaking his behind in the universal bunny expression of happiness. And, of course, indulging in that favorite of all rabbit activities, “marking” in front of the other pairs’ cages, just in case anyone thought he didn’t belong.

Lucy and Noah have stayed madly in love. They are rarely apart, hardly ever even occupying separate floors of their condo. They lay side by side with as much of their furry bodies touching as possible and their heads buried in each other’s sides. They spend much of the day in simultaneous grooming. I have other pairs who act this way after having been together for years,

Cont’d on page 11





Chateau Lapin or ... Housing the Royal Rabbit

By Kathy Smith

Whether your rabbit has already taken over as king of your castle or still allows you the illusion that you are in charge, he needs to have a spot in your house that he can consider his territory. Your house plan, family, and lifestyle as well as your rabbit's personality will determine if his personal space will be a cage, condo, exercise pen, or room of his own and whether his space is in a quiet corner or in the center of the action.

Cages

Before shopping for a rabbit cage, take time to consider where it should be located. If your rabbit will spend much time in a cage, make sure you choose a location that will accommodate a large (minimum 2' x 3') cage. Avoid placing your rabbit's cage too near a doorway or in a drafty area. Rabbits enjoy natural sunlight, but ensure he is not in full sunlight on hot days. If room size seems to be limiting cage size, either change to a non-cage housing option or consider another area of your home as your rabbit's primary space.

The cage should be at least six times the size of your adult rabbit fully stretched out and should be tall enough for him to comfortably stand on his hind legs. There should be plenty of room for a litter-box in addition to food, water, toys, and a place to stretch out. Make sure the door is wide enough to fit a litter-box through (without having to tip it!) and large enough for you to reach all the corners when you clean. Better yet, find a cage that also has a top opening.

Avoid wire bottom cages as they were not made for soft rabbit feet. KW Cages sells well-built cages in a variety of sizes and styles. You can also contact fence companies in your area to see if they will custom-build a cage for you. If you have a cage custom-built, in addition to a side door for your rabbit to use, ask about a top opening for

ease of cleaning and feeding.

Dog kennels, available at most pet supply stores, come in a variety of sizes and can also make good rabbit enclosures. Their solid bottoms protect carpet from accidents during litter-box training, can be removed for easy cleaning, and have no wire to irritate feet. Large doors make it easy to use any size litter-box and allow easy access for cleaning.

Condos

One (48"W x 20"H x 28"D) and two story (48"W x 42"H x 28"D) wood condos with wire sides and top are available through the Best Little Rabbit, Rodent & Ferret House and make a wonderful enclosure. The two story condo features a ramp and an enclosed litter box area and both have linoleum floors.

If you have limited floor space, consider a two or three-story condo. An inexpensive method is to use Creative Cubes (closet organizers) available at many different stores. These "cubes" are sold as flat square plastic grids that can be assembled in an almost limitless variety of configurations. Modular design allows you to make the most of the floor space you have available, regardless of its shape! Be sure to create a solid floor that also provides traction for your rabbit to stand and easily move around on.

Of course, if you are talented you can always build a cage that fits into your lifestyle and home decor. Some people take a built-in cabinet or piece of furniture and redesign it into an awesome, multi-story rabbit cage. Others turn their rabbit cage into an attractive piece of furniture such as a coffee table, end table, or nightstand. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination. Make sure that any enclosure you build for your rabbit is well ventilated. Rabbits should never be kept in an aquarium or any enclosure that is completely enclosed on all but one side.

Exercise Pens

Exercise pens are a good way to give your rabbit more space than a cage while still protecting your furniture, woodwork, and wires from his teeth. They can be used instead of a cage, to provide an exercise area in another part of your house, or in conjunction with a cage to give your rabbit more space when he can't be supervised. Exercise pens are also useful for creating a confined neutral territory for bonding, if

you decide to find a companion for your single rabbit.

Exercise pens can be purchased at many pet supply stores and come in a variety of sizes and heights. Shorter pens are easier for humans to step over, but they are also easier for your rabbit to escape from. If you have a rabbit with Houdini tendencies, KW Cages sells a wonderful, versatile exercise pen. The green plastic coated pens can be purchased with an optional lid — a wise investment if you have any doubt about your rabbit's ability to escape. Doors can also be put in the pens to allow your rabbit to come out when he pleases. Pens can be placed side-by-side, and doors can easily allow you to have two separate spaces or one larger one.

Your rabbit may decide to tear at the carpet along the edges of his pen. If this happens — of if you want to prevent it from happening — use carpet samples over your carpet and set the pen on them. This is also a good way to protect your carpet from litter-box training accidents. If your rabbit is not yet trained, consider placing one of the heavy plastic chair mats or a piece of linoleum over your carpet or hardwood floor, then add carpeting or towels to give your rabbit a



Shaman in his single story condo.

comfortable surface to lie on.

If your rabbit(s) show no interest in escaping, KW pens can be used modularly to create exercise areas to fit almost any need. It is easy to separate and reconnect panels by removing the spiral coils that hold them together. Panels can be used in conjunction with furniture and walls to create room separators.

Exercise pens can also be used as a protective barrier for precious possessions or simply to protect woodwork and carpet edges from your rabbit's desire to dig and chew. If you use this approach, make sure the pen's edges are securely anchored by furniture and that you have thoroughly blocked access to the far side of the barrier. Plan to spend a few hours with your rabbit in his new environment, surreptitiously observing his behavior and making appropriate adjustments in the barrier's placement.

Cont'd on page 14

Adopt A Rabbit



Emily and Horatio

Emily and Horatio were abandoned at Woodland Park, most rabbits left there die within a couple of days. These two 6 month olds were very lucky that a kind human found them. They are a bonded couple and want to find a home together.



From left to right

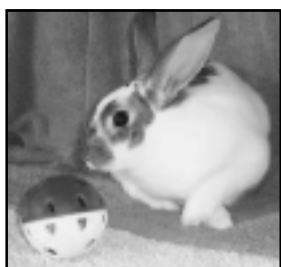
**Duke, Pearl, Bailey, Daisy,
Fiver and Hazel**

Daisy is a friendly and outgoing bunny who is about 1 1/2 years old. Duke, Pearl, Bailey, Fiver and Hazel were born May 2nd and are very well socialized.



Cassandra

Cassandra has the very fine hair described as "rex" and is a very sweet, thoughtful 2 year old bunny. She has been on a diet since arriving and has slimmed down. She will need to remain on a diet to keep the weight off.



Twizzle

Twizzle is a 2 year old who is very social and wants to share her life with your boy bunny.



Amy

Amy is a beautiful black rabbit who is under 2 years old. She's friendly, enjoys being brushed and wants lots of interaction with humans.



YoAnna

YoAnna is a 1 1/2 year old who is quite friendly and enjoys lots of petting. She needs a large place to bunny dance. Do you have a boy bunny who would like a nice girlfriend?



Lacy

Lacy is a "half lop" who was abandoned at Woodland Park. She's a substantial girl at 7 pounds and is about 1 1/2 years old. Lacy is a sweet, affectionate lady who is looking for a family to keep her safe and adore her.



Bonnie

Bonnie is a tiny 1 year old rabbit. She doesn't necessarily want to be picked up, but she loves to be petted. Bonnie is looking for a permanent loving home.



Tyra

Tyra is a beautiful orange, 1 year old bunny. She loves attention and adores the companionship of her human friends. Tyra is very energetic and always wants to know and get involved with what is going on around her.

Rabbits can be wonderful companions, but are not for everyone. They have the intelligence of a 2-3 year old child and will challenge you at every turn. They understand what "no" means, but also understand when your back is turned! They can frustrate you if you allow them to run around unsupervised, or if you have not "bunny proofed" your home. On the other hand rabbits seem to have a great sense of humor. They will do joyful dances, leaping high into the air. They totally understand that they are entertaining you when you laugh out loud at their antics. Rabbits are social animals and prefer to live in pairs. There is nothing that warms your heart more than watching two bunnies laying side by side grooming one another. If you have a single bunny, please consider adopting a companion. We do bunny bonding at our shelter and send them home as a happy couple.

Adoption fee for a spayed or neutered rabbit is \$60.

Living Spaces For Your Guinea Pigs

(The Bill Gates Compound

vs a Jail Cell)

By Mary Lawson
Cavy Companions

When I brought my first guinea pigs home with me from PAWS in December 1995, I knew very little about their needs, and even less about them. For the first month, my boys Boe and Duffy lived in a 1½' x 1' cage, and on pine shavings no less! I didn't know anyone locally then who knew much more than I did, so I found a lot of information on my own. The first two things I learned were NOT to use pine shavings, and that guinea pigs need ROOM. I thought "room" meant a 2' x 1' cage from a pet store. Did I ever have a lot to learn!

As native South Americans living in the foothills of the Andes Mountains, guinea pigs have a lot of space. Domesticated guinea pigs need as large a cage as is possible, plus time out of their cage to explore, mark (telling other guinea pigs "I've been here"), and move about at leisure. This article will help you to make your guinea pigs' life more enjoyable.

Cubes and Coroplast (C&C) Cage

Let's face it: pet stores and their cage suppliers just don't have a clue about what guinea pigs need, and evidently they don't care. From Hagens to Super Pet brand cages, there is nothing out there in the least suitable for ONE guinea pig to live in, much less, two. And keep in mind the ridiculous pricing of these too-small cages!

Enter the Cubes-and-Coroplast ("C&C") cage. An easy-to-follow, very detailed website contains the "how to's" of making one yourself. It is: www.cavycages.com. The good news for those of us too busy to make one, or who want to support the not-for-profit efforts of Best Little Rabbit Rodent & Ferret House ("BLRRFH"), is that

the cage can be made for you at very reasonable prices.

The coroplast comes in white, yellow, fir green, royal blue, black, and red. The grids are available in white, yellow, royal blue, black and red.

So, what is "coroplast" and what are "grids"?

"Coroplast" is a sturdy, easy-to-clean, lightweight, plastic-coated cardboard material. It comes in a 4' x 8' sheet that cannot be bent, and can barely be bowed, so many people find it difficult even to get home. "Grids" are square-ish, coated wire pieces that come in kits sold as Cube Storage. They are available at Fred Meyer, Costco and Target, and the 6-cube kit will make a 3 grid x 2 grid cage.

The "cavy cages" website pictures a 4 grid x 2 grid example, and while this size is wonderful if you have the space, the 3 grid x 2 grid is a nice size for two guinea pigs. The "grid" kits come with round "connectors" which, if you are making the cage yourself, are used to connect the grids around the outside of the coroplast tray bottom. The cages available from BLRRFH are assembled with plastic cable ties connecting the grids, so that the grids fit on the inside of the coroplast bottom. CAUTION: If you make the cage yourself, decide in advance if you want the grids on the outside or the inside of the coroplast tray as your dimensions will differ. If the grids are to be outside using the connectors, your tray measurements will need to be calculated to clear the rounded bottom of the connectors. If the grids are to be inside the coroplast bottom, you will need to take into account the grids being cable-tied side-by-side. Having made several of these cages myself, if I had it to do again, I would buy them already assembled in a heartbeat!

Another idea for a nice guinea pig living space is to purchase a 24" high, metal exercise pen. This pen has sections that are hinged, and with an inside diameter of 16 sq. ft., it can be configured according to the area in which the guinea pigs will live. You

could use an entire sheet, or large part, of coroplast for the bottom and place the exercise pen on top of it. IMPORTANT: A thick towel must be placed over the coroplast to give the guinea pigs traction and comfort, AND this towel must be replaced every day with a fresh one.

Bedding

If you choose the C&C cage, there are three types of bedding options: (1) the preferred bedding is Carefresh; or (2) a towel or towels that cover the entire bottom of the coroplast tray, which MUST be replaced every day; or (3) a 50-50 mixture of Carefresh and White Shavings, or aspen shavings. In my opinion, shavings do not absorb urine very well, and when wet it is heavier to pick up, but some people like it because it makes the Carefresh go farther, i.e. wood shavings are much cheaper than Carefresh. Remember: guinea pigs are clean companion animals, so if their area smells YOU are not doing your job as a caretaker!

Whether you use a C & C cage or an exercise pen set-up, think "bigger is better." Treat your guinea pigs as you want to be treated: you need a lot of space to live in; so do guinea pigs.

Weeks!



Cubes and Coroplast guinea pig enclosure.



Rosencrantz, the degu's double decker "ferret" enclosure.

Rodent Housing Rules - Keeping Small Rodent Friends Healthy and Happy

By Sandi Ackerman

1. All little creatures should have fresh air to breathe. Air flows in a vertical direction, not horizontal. In other words, an aquarium or

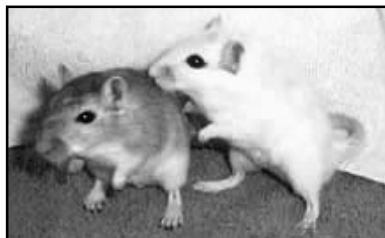
other enclosure with a wire opening that is only on top of the enclosure will not provide adequate circulation, because air will be flowing across the top of the wire, but will not go down into the aquarium.

2. Avoid the very pretty totally plastic enclosures like the plague. The tiny little holes in the sides of this type of housing do not provide adequate ventilation for your small companion.

3. Some manufacturers are now combining the attractive plastic housing with the more humane wire sides. This type of housing is generally acceptable for very small rodents,

Cont'd on page 14

Adopt A Rodent



Snicker and Doodle

Snicker and Doodle were born around February 2004. These two gerbil brothers are great friends and must stay together.



Callie, Stormy, Rainy and Cocoa

These four young guinea pigs, born in April 2004, are all very personable and ready to find their new homes. Guinea Pigs are herd animals and are happiest living with others of their kind. If you have a single guinea pig, consider adopting a friend for him.



Cocoa Puff

Cocoa Puff was born in August 2002. She is a friendly little girl...and very attractive too! She is looking for a loving permanent home to call her own.



Henrietta

Henrietta was found running across a grocery store parking lot. She's quite friendly when she wakes up on her own (*Hamsters are nocturnal and should be allowed to sleep during the day*)



Amelia and Sally

Amelia and Sally are 4 year old female sugar gliders. Sugar gliders are fun to watch if you're a night owl, but generally do not want to be held. They must have a large "flight" cage and you must be willing to prepare a special diet daily. They are time consuming and take a lot of specialized care. (*Yes, we know they're not rodents, but our shelter name is already too long!*)



Baby Rats

We have 3 black and white hooded boys and 5 beige colored boys who were born in May of this year. They are well socialized, but very active and have been handled a lot!



Sugar

Sugar was born in August 2002. Although Sugar and Cocoa Puff have lived together for a year, they are now happily part of a herd of four and can be adopted individually as a friend for your guinea pig.



Alice

Alice was abandoned in a grocery store parking lot. She's possibly one year old and very social. Alice has happily moved in with three other rescue pigs while she is waiting for her permanent home.

(Hamsters, gerbils and mice are not good companions for small children. Because of their size, a child can easily drop or injure them.)

Rodents are intelligent, curious and social animals who do best in pairs or family groups. They make wonderful and amusing companions to their human families. Rodents seem to always be on the go, building nests, communicating with their kin, playing, grooming and exploring.

Adoption fees: \$10 - for mice, gerbil and hamster family groups, whether individuals or paired.

\$10 - for individual rats

\$45 - for individual spayed/neutered guinea pigs

\$50 - for individual spayed/neutered chinchillas, \$85/pair

\$50 - for degu pair (male neutered)

**** Gerbils, Chinchillas, Degus & Hamsters all enjoy daily dustbaths! ****

A Ferret's Home Sweet Home

By Wendy Jassman

A ferret's cage should be their castle. Things you need to consider for your ferret's comfort are cage size, proper wire spacing, flooring, sleeping areas and access to food and water.

When choosing a cage for a single or pair of ferrets, select one that is a minimum of 30" x 30" x 22" and will allow for plenty of hiding and sleeping spaces, room for play, a litter box as well as an area for food and water. To ensure your ferret's safety, make certain their head will not fit through the bars (bar spacing should be no wider than 1") and secure door latches are a must. Ferrets are clever and persistent and can manage to get doors open, sometimes an extra latch or twist tie can solve the problem.

Many cages are made with wire floors and shelves and must be covered with vinyl flooring. Ramps should also be covered with vinyl or cloth. You can purchase vinyl flooring at hardware stores or you can find scrap vinyl at many thrift stores. Make a small hole in each of the corners of the vinyl and affix to the cage with twist ties to keep it flat. Towels, baby blankets, or an old t-shirt can be placed over the vinyl flooring giving your ferret traction and keeping their feet comfortable and safe.

Bedding and hiding areas should be provided as ferrets like to burrow. Hammocks should be easily accessible and hung low or next to shelves allowing your ferret to safely crawl in and out.

Water bottles should be hung where they can be easily accessed and food bowls placed where water won't drip into them. Food and water must be replenished daily.

Ferrets back into corners when relieving themselves, the litter box(s) should be put in the corner your ferret chooses to use. To prevent your ferret from tipping and/or moving the litter box, a clamp can be used to clip the litter box to the cage. Keeping your ferrets home clean will reduce odors and ensure a healthier environment. Scoop litter box and add clean litter daily. Use white vinegar and paper towels to wipe box clean of any urine and feces. The litter box should be washed with soap and water at least once a week (have a few extra boxes for cleaning day) and bedding should be washed every other week (use mild soap only, no fabric softener or dryer sheets). A ferret sleeping bag, old t-shirt and/or blankets can be placed in the corners where there is no litter box to prevent "accidents."

To prevent heat stroke, do not place cages in direct sunlight or near a heat source such as a fireplace or heater. Keep cage and play areas cool during summer by using fans; you can also fill plastic bottles with water, freeze and place near your ferrets. Limit outdoor walks on a leash to days below 70 degrees.

A cage is for your ferret's safety when you are not there but out of cage time is essential for your ferret's well-being. Play time should be at least 2 hours a day (the more the better.)

If you choose to let your ferret have free run of the house you must ferret proof. Eliminate dangers such as appliances, open doors and windows, plants, fish tanks, laundry areas, reclining furniture and other pets that may hurt your ferret. Another option is providing your ferret with their own room that is free of danger and escape proof. Doors can be blocked using Plexiglas fitted to the doorway with brackets to hold it in place. Barriers should be smooth and solid and at least 30"

tall. Ferrets will climb or jump unsuitable barriers.

Ferrets need physical and mental stimulation. Provide items like tunnels, hard plastic infant toys, toys with bells, balls and paper sacks. Ferrets also love to dig, a storage container filled with puzzle pieces or rice, makes an excellent and inexpensive activity for your ferrets. They also love to play with you! Spend quality time playing and bonding with your ferret friends.

Note: Ferrets should never be caged outdoors as it would expose them to dangers such as wild animals, temperature changes, loneliness and uncaring individuals.



Ferret enclosure filled with fun.



Live Adoption Area Cameras

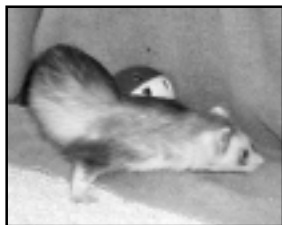
The BLRRFH shelter cares for hundreds of rabbits, rodents and ferrets each year. To help increase visibility and interest in our adoptable animals and to help ensure their safety, we are planning on installing live security and internet cameras.

In our new shelter, the adoption areas are located toward the back and cannot always be seen by staff or volunteers and we have had a dishonest member of the public attempt to steal a ferret. BLRRFH is committed to ensuring the safety of the animals in our care and feel that incorporating security cameras into the adoption areas will discourage theft and keep our animal friends safe.

Live internet cameras will enable us to increase the visibility of our adoptable animals and capture all the fun and excitement of our rabbits, rodents and ferrets at play on our web site, www.RabbitRodentFerret.org.

You can make our dream a reality by donating cash, equipment or expertise to the Live Adoption Area Camera Fund. For more information, please contact Sandi at (206)365-9105 or Sandi@RabbitRodentFerret.org. Thank You!

Adopt a Ferret



Teaka

Teaka is a feisty silver mitt who was born around October 2002. Teaka is very playful, but can be rough with your hands. She is looking for an adult only home.



Jester

Jester is a dark sable male with two protruding lower canines which give him a lot of character. He really enjoys the company of other ferrets and is looking for a home with another ferret.



Simon

Simon, born January 2002, is a sable ferret who was left behind when his people moved. He has a carefree and playful disposition.



Gracie

Gracie is a dark sable who is about 3 months old. She loves to play with both ferrets and people. Gracie needs a home where there are other active younger ferrets who can keep up and play with her.



Carmen

Carmen is a dark sable ferret who was born in February 1999. She was turned in to the BLRRFH shelter with her friend Alvin. Carmen is quite playful and has a sweet personality.



Ozzie

Ozzie is a silver mitt who is about 3 years old. He adores being held and talked to and he loves to play in his puzzle box.



Solomon

Solomon is a 1 year old, dark eyed, white ferret. He's a handsome devil who would love to stay with Gracie if possible. He's a laid back guy who enjoys being held.



Laura

Laura is a silver colored female, born in January 2000. She's a very nice girl who has been with us since December 2002. Laura is ready to meet a family who can provide a loving permanent home she can call her own.



Dimitri

Dimitri was born in June 2001. He is a silver and sable ferret with a white bib and feet. He is playful and would like a home with another ferret friend.

Ferrets are full of joy and seem to think life is very funny! They are social animals and need to be kept in pairs (they play hard as only another ferret can and rest even harder). If you decide a ferret is the right companion for you, please plan on bringing them into your home when you have at least 2-3 weeks to train them to use the litterbox and to come to a squeaky toy. Currently, we have close to 50 ferrets at the shelter who are waiting to find their human companions. Some of the ferrets in our shelter are considered "permanent residents" because their age or health makes it hard to find adoptive homes, so we are always on the lookout for foster homes for them. If you are interested in fostering or adopting, please come visit us at the shelter.

The adoption fee for a healthy younger ferret is \$100. This includes distemper vaccination, a microchip (so they can find their way home if ever lost) and their teeth have been cleaned.

Dear BLRRFH...

Bunny time: Adopting Johnie and Jasmine

From Emiko Tajima

As soon as I met Johnie, I knew he was the bunny for us. Johnie got a tough start in life — turned in to a shelter only a few months old, with a dislocated foot that apparently never got medical attention and is therefore permanently bent — yet he is a sweet, gentle and trusting little guy. My husband and I had lost our very dear rabbit, Juniper (of the “bossy girl bunny” variety) some months before. Although we had two cats and a dog in the household, the house felt empty. At a certain point I realized it lacked “bunny energy”. When I visited BLRRFH, I was immediately drawn to Johnie. I wasn’t sure how well he’d be able to get around with his bent foot, but he was sweet and so cute, and clearly loved to be petted. “This is the one.”

When we brought Johnie home, to our surprise and delight, Johnie ran around the carpet, leaped in the air with his heels kicked out to the side, ran up to each of us, “chinned” our feet, then, several aerial maneuvers later, flopped down, legs stretched out behind him. He was happy. We were

smitten. Johnie continues to wow us with his jumps and aerial twists, and endear himself with his gentle nudges and the way he flattens out when we pet him. Our other animals have enjoyed “bunny time,” our new evening activity in which we all sit on the rug and let Johnie jump for joy around us.

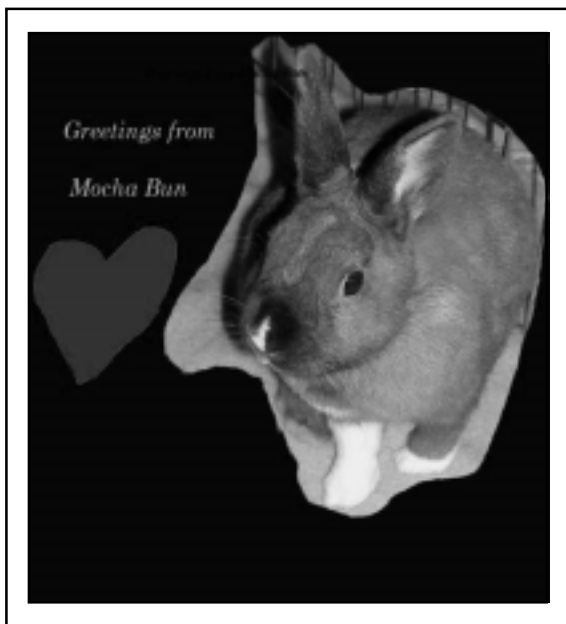
After we’d had Johnie for about six months I began to feel badly that Johnie was alone for much of the day, whereas the other animals had each other, and the run of the house. Such a social bunny needed a companion. Enter Jasmine. BLRRFH helped to identify a possible mate — a quiet, black and white, mixed breed female, found dropped off in Woodland Park. I didn’t feel a strong bond to Jasmine when I first met her, but this was really to be a companion for Johnie; I just wanted a bunny he’d like. Their introduction and bonding period went very smoothly and I brought them home. Within a couple days, they were grooming each other and sleeping nuzzled up against one another. A great match. Jasmine took longer to warm up to us though. She was very wary of being touched, and it was weeks before she would even venture out of their enclosure. Actually, during much of that time Johnie wouldn’t come out either — it seemed that if Jasmine was staying in, so would he. Slowly though, Jasmine began to

trust us, and her true personality (rabbitality?) began to emerge.

Almost a year later, “Jazzy” is now a friendly, mischievous, and delightfully opinionated bunny whose antics are most entertaining and endearing. She’ll rearrange things I place in their enclosure until it is just so. She’ll rattle the cage door when she wants attention, or to be let out, or just to make noise. She also grooms Johnie several times a day, which he adores. She’ll put her paws up on my leg, look directly at me and demand a pet on the nose, to which she grinds her teeth with pleasure. As I write this, Jazzy and Johnie have returned to their cage after an evening of running around from rug to rug. Both are laying flat, legs stretched out, content, telling me it’s bedtime. Ah, bunny energy, again.



Left to right: Jasmine and Johnie



Mocha

Greetings From Mocha Bun!

From Marty and Mary

This is a photo of “Mocha”. Mocha is about two years old and was adopted from BLRRFH in May of 2003. At the time, I was volunteering for BLRRFH when I became acquainted with her. She was fairly aggressive and would lunge at and try to bite any hand that would clean her hutch and leave food for her. I found that she was actually very sweet when you took the time to try to pet her and calm her down. Figuring that she probably would have spent a long while at the shelter, my wife and I decided to adopt her as we were looking for a mate for our male rabbit “Winston.” Mocha and Winston were introduced and bonded within about three weeks. Mocha has been a great companion for Winston and an excellent addition to our household.

It’s nice to come home to a great pair of bunnies.- Marty and Mary

Poncho and Tony

From Peggy Hanson

We went to the BLRRFH shelter to find a friend for lonely Tony the white rat. We were shown a lively group of three boy rats, and it was hard to decide who was the finest of them. My daughter and I shoulder-tested all of them, and noticed Poncho would sit on our shoulders even though we were new to him, interestedly looking around and very curious, but also fairly calm. Poncho began vibrating his jaw and we were told that when he ground his teeth, he was "purring." We thought he would make a great pal for Tony and brought him home. After a severe disappointment where Poncho thought he was going to be "tutored" at the vet but ran into a different procedure while there, they got along just fantastic!!

They snuggle together in their fleece-lined tube, explore the rat-proof bathroom together, snuggle sweetly with us, and wander about the planter under supervision, sniffing everything to take it all in. They have two stories to their home for those times when they get cheese and have to each run to a different corner so the other one won't get it. That is about the only time they are competitive. Poncho is the ultimate pack rat. He started by grabbing and hiding rodent block after rodent block, coming back for more. Now a treat has to be pretty gourmet for him to do that. I guess he is getting spoiled. While Tony has turned into the quiet older guy these days, Poncho is eager to greet anyone new and is an excellent spokesman for the species!

P.S. I forgot to add the cutest thing they do since Poncho arrived. When I give them this or that food scrap such as apple peels, they carefully consider it and if it is not something they want to devour immediately, they will put it in their food dish! Sort of a feeling of "You just never know, this could come in handy later..." I am very impressed with rats' intelligence!!!



From left to right: Charmayne, Poncho with Peggy Hanson and Ivana.

Noah - A Love Story

Cont'd from page 3

but Lucy and Noah did since the day they met – it truly was an instant love bond.

Apparently, Noah has chosen to focus on the acts of kindness that he has received from humans – his rescuer who found him wandering blind and scared, the vet who donated weeks of time and money to keep him alive, the Best Little Rabbit Rodent & Ferret House for sheltering him after his recovery, and his numerous well wishers who gave him time and attention at the shelter – rather than the acts of a few unbelievably cruel ones. He is incredibly friendly, loving and relaxed around people. He loves to be petted and snuggled and will stretch out to his full long length to enjoy it, feet stretched out behind him and head on the floor.

We help Noah to the outside play area when it's his turn, as he's still learning to negotiate the system of ramps that

leads there, but I have no doubt that soon he'll be going in and out all on his own. Just recently, he descended the ramp from the deck to the yard – an elevation drop of several feet. Lucy stays close to him while he nibbles on the grass and explores the plant life and the smells of the other bunnies. When the weather is right, they spend long hours laying side by side on the cool grass, the breeze ruffling their fur as they wake briefly to the sound of a crow or a lawn mower before dozing off again.

For awhile after Noah came I had trouble fully enjoying him because every time I held him, watched him doing cute and brave things, or saw him snuggling happily with Lucy, my heart would break thinking of what had been done to him. I would replay an imagined scenario in my mind and struggle to understand how humans could be so cruel. But as I watch him live his life peacefully and joyously, happy in each moment as it arrives, I realize that he long ago left the past where it should be, as I needed to do. He has taught me and my family something about life and love that Lucy already knew. Watching and loving him, I remember to enjoy each day as it

comes, forgetting the past and letting the future unfold in its own time. Now, when I look at Noah, what I see is not an injured rabbit, but a bright, joyful, loving bunny living his life to the fullest. We hope it is a very long one.



Noah

Thank You...

...To our donors

Your generosity enables us to save and improve the lives of countless rabbits, rodents and ferrets. Thank you for being there.

Alayne Boyko
Alice Ruby
Anna Pedroso
Anonymous Donor
Archie and Marie Causland
Bruce and Karen Clark
Carolina Koslosky
Cathleen Cerna
Dave Parry
Erika Snyder
Gerrie Margell
Jan and Don Davidson
John, Tracy, Haley and Sadie Ball

Karin Scott
Kit Jagoda
Kurt Hellwig
Lisa Halston
Matt Andrews
Monica Cook
Nancy Cordner
Oleine Hedeon
Rhett Powers
Robert Kleima
Roxie Common
Ryan Fox
Shawn Larsen

Sue Warme, DVM
Susan Moore
Ted and Candice Hoffman
Tony Earl
Vidette Buchman

Animal Sponsors:
Alice Ruby
Ronni Sportsman
Veronica Skeels
Mitzie Willbanks



Special Thanks to...

We would also like to thank our volunteers and supporters who have contributed their time for a variety of tasks and projects as well as donating items we use every day.

Linda Keaton, *weekly brushing and loving attention for our bunnies*
Carolina Koslosky, *for veggies*
Angie Lisby and Ken Lanter, *for picking up a donated refrigerator*
Mary and Robbin Lawson, *for donating a digital camera*
Gerrie Margel, *chicken soup for our sick ferrets*

Patti Polinsky, *for veggies*
Ann Reimer, *for donating a refrigerator*
Gayle Schneider, *for veggies, laundry soap and all the other stuff*
Sheridan Beach Swim Team, *for donating towels*
Mitzie Willbankz, *for ferret bedding*
Angie Lisby *for preparing veggies*

Woodland Park Tree Rescue Team Work

In June, we assisted Seattle Animal Shelter (SAS) volunteers, Erin Sharwell and Anna Pedroso with a rescue at Woodland Park. The volunteers discovered that the Park was about to cut down a large maple tree that housed a family of feral rabbits in its roots. Since the SAS volunteers had never before trapped rabbits we agreed to team up with them to share our knowledge of the safest way to gather the rabbits so that they could be relocated.

As a team, we successfully trapped all 10 of the rabbits, then we blocked the warren entrance so other rabbits could not move in during the 3 days until the tree was removed. As advertised, the tree was taken out on June 21st under the watchful eye of Erin, who was there to make sure that no rabbits had been left behind.

One of the very young bunnies is being socialized in the hope that he will find a good indoor home, while the remaining rabbits will be altered and relocated to Rabbit Meadows Sanctuary.

Volunteer Spotlight

It had been a while since we had a Rabbit Meadows Sanctuary work party, and in that time the rabbits who reside there have had a little party of their own. They've kept themselves entertained by digging warrens just about everywhere. Occasionally, we have to carefully chase the rabbits out of the warrens and fill them in. (We do this for their safety as they are not very good at building sturdy warrens and the ground begins to become unstable.)

Thank you to Janet Myers, Larry and Susie Gearheard, Art and Kristin Fraser, Christina deMille, Erin Sharwell, Tara Causland, Beth and husband Shipley and Marilyn Knudsen for all your hard work to ensure the Rabbit Meadows Sanctuary residents remain safe.

*In Loving Memory
of our Ferret Friends*

Abbey
Amy
Sally



*In Loving memory
of our Rabbit Friends*

Gramps
Parsley
Joey
Spot

BLRRFH University

Join us in our new education room for informative workshops about rabbit, rodents and ferrets. These workshops are designed to give you a better understanding of your small companion animals and their needs.

The BLRRFH education room is located just behind the shelter (in the same building), parking is limited and advance registration is encouraged. You can preregister by calling 206-365-9105 or e-mail info@RabbitRodentFerret.org. A \$10 donation is requested to help cover costs related to the classes.

Please do not bring your animals, veterinarians will not be able to do examinations. Nail trimming and other hands on demos will be done with our shelter animals.



Rabbit Workshop

Saturday, September 11th 2004
3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Topics:

Rabbit Health

Diane Mitchell, DVM of SnoWood Veterinary Hospital in Woodinville will talk about rabbit health topics and concerns.

Rabbit Care

Jana Rickel will teach you how to care for your companion rabbit and about understanding their language and behavior. Discussion will also include appropriate housing, toys and ways to keep your rabbit entertained, exercise requirements and litterbox training.



Guinea Pig Workshop

Saturday, September 25th 2004
3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Topics:

Guinea Pig Health

Kristin Kemper, DVM of SnoWood Veterinary Hospital in Woodinville will teach you about guinea pig health and well-being.

Guinea Pig Care

Mary Lawson of Cavy Companions will share her knowledge about caring for your guinea pig. Discussion will also include behavior, diet, appropriate housing and exercise requirements.



Ferret Workshop

Saturday, August 28th 2004
3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Topics:

Ferret Health

Barbara Deeb, DVM of Allpet Veterinary Hospital in Shoreline will discuss ferret health topics with a special discussion on insulinoma disease.

Ferret Care

Wendy Jassman of Best Little Rabbit, Rodent & Ferret House and Terri Noren of Little Dudes Ferret Ranch will share their insight about caring for and happily co-existing with your ferret friends. Discussion will include appropriate housing, toys and ways to keep your ferret entertained, exercise requirements, litterbox and behavior training.

Help the animals, become a Volunteer!

We could not do our lifesaving work with out dedicated volunteers who donate their time and expertise. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please stop by our shelter, e-mail us at Info@RabbitRodentFerret.org, or call us (206) 365-9105. Thank You!

We currently need volunteers for:

Data Entry, *bookkeeping, incoming animals, etc.*

Shelter Cleaning, *help is always needed (we need someone who can clean and mop floors once a week)*

Fold/Staple Newsletters

E-Bay, *manage an E-bay auction for us*

Window, Parking Lot Cleaning

Adoptable Animals, *take photos and update web page*

Rabbit Meadows Sanctuary, *cleaning every 2 months*

Distribute Brochures, *to veterinary clinics*

Trim Ferret Nails

Prepare and Hand Out Veggies

Trim Rabbit and Guinea Pig Nails

Clean Rodent Cages, *once a week*

Cont'd from page 4 (Rabbit Housing)**The "Gated Community"**

Gates provide one of the most flexible ways to share your home with a companion rabbit. Even if your plan is to ultimately give your rabbit full run of all or most of your home, it is best to start him in a small area. A bathroom, laundry room, kitchen or other uncarpeted area is a good place to start because litter-box accidents are easier to clean up. These rooms also tend to be easier to bunny proof since most electrical outlets (and therefore cords) are either behind heavy appliances or at countertop level.

Most — though not all — rabbits can be successfully confined to a limited area of your home with one or more baby gates. This approach is psychologically appealing to many people who prefer not to keep a companion animal caged, and the no-cage arrangement encourages you to have more direct contact with your rabbit. A no-cage arrangement can also be very practical physically if your home is like mine and is tight on floor space. It is possible to find room for a litter-box and food bowls in a bathroom or laundry room that could never accommodate a 2' X 3' cage!

Pressure mounted, adjustable gates allow you to gradually expand your rabbit's space or to vary his freedom depending on which humans are home. You can use them to confine your rabbit to an area or to close off rooms that cannot be adequately bunny-proofed.

Gates are available at pet supply stores, toy stores, and discount stores. They come in a variety of sizes and with a variety of features. Your rabbit's personality, your home's design, your family, and your lifestyle will dictate what will and will not work for you. If you can easily step across a gate, there is probably no need to pay for the one-hand release feature (which does wear out with use) or to mar the wall or woodwork by permanently installing the gate. Gate hopping is actually good exercise for adults and if you have children the gate may be an excellent way to ensure that your child's playtime with the family rabbit is supervised.

Your rabbit's personality will also help dictate what type of gate will (and will not) work for you. Not all rabbits will try to jump over a gate... some will try to chew their way through or around a plastic gate. Some people prefer wood framed gates with crossed pieces of wire between since rabbits cannot chew through the wire — although a determined rabbit might be able to destroy the frame.

Private Space

Wherever your rabbit's space, it should include a place he can retreat to when he wants to be left alone. This can be as simple as a cardboard box or as luxurious as a one-story cat condo. All family members should be taught to respect his privacy when he is in his area. Some rabbits do not object to being petted and given treats when in their private space while others prefer to be left completely alone — your rabbit will let you know what he prefers. Both children and adults should be taught to not reach in a pull a rabbit out of this "human free zone." Note: Many rabbits will retreat to this safe area when you are trying to catch them for a vet appointment. This is the one time you may have to drag him out of his private space!



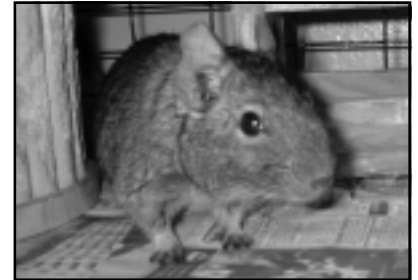
Morgana in her exercise pen.

Cont'd from page 6 (Rodent Housing)

such as mice or the dwarf hamsters. However, even the three story variation of this type of housing is too small for rats and just barely adequate for golden or teddy bear hamsters. And of course, gerbils will just eat their way out of a plastic house overnight.

4. In general, you want to provide your rodent with the largest cage you can afford or have space for. Some of the smaller cages manufactured for ferrets (which are way too small for that species) can be perfect for rats. Some of these cages must be covered with 1/2 inch "hardware cloth" (not really cloth, it's just a name given to this type of wire.) This will be necessary if you have young rats or smaller animals that can fit through the larger wire spacing of ferret cages. Look for used "ferret" or "rabbit" cages at thrift stores and at our shelter.

5. Once you have acquired an appropriate size wire cage, you'll want to furnish it. Most rodents enjoy the soft comfortable feel of fabrics, just as we do. You can purchase or make your own hammocks (from hand or dish towels). Use a round oatmeal box with both ends removed and put the arm of an old sweat shirt through the box, then fold the ends back over the outside of the box to make a nice soft house (You can use string to hang this from the cage.) If you have an unsprayed apple tree, cut a small branch and put it inside the cage for both climbing and gnawing enjoyment. Use your imagination and change the furnishings frequently to stimulate your rodent friend. We found that our gerbils enjoyed a cloth dog toss toy to sleep in and it took them the longest time to take it apart.



Rosencrantz the degu.

Your rabbit, guinea pig or rodent will enjoy gnawing on safe fruit tree branches. Apple and pear trees are safe. All trees which have pits in the fruit (cherry, plum, apricot, etc.) have arsenic in their branches and should not be fed fresh. If you allow the branches from these trees to thoroughly dry, the arsenic will dissipate during the drying process and no longer be harmful.

Did you know?

Vinegar is a great safe cleaner to remove rabbit (and guinea pig) urine stains from houses and litterboxes. If used weekly you'll keep litterboxes looking like new. If you didn't know about vinegar and have let the urine build up in litterboxes or cages then use CLR (calcium, lime, rust). This cleaner is an almost magic, easy way to remove urine buildup. If there is a minor buildup you can dilute the CLR with water, or for major buildups use it full strength. With very little rubbing, the urine will all come off and you won't have to purchase new litter pans. CLR is toxic, so be sure to rinse thoroughly and dry before letting bunny return.

"Rabbit urine has a pH of around 8.2 which is alkaline. Since their urine is the main clearance route for calcium (unlike any other animal), rabbit urine always contains some amount of calcium carbonate, i.e., lime. Calcium carbonate is a base (alkaline) and probably contributes to the urine's alkaline pH as well as its spiffy reaction with vinegar (i.e., acetic acid)." Jana Rickel

Wish List

Baby Incubator

White Vinegar (*we use it by the gallons for cleaning*)

Bleach (*not Clorox, they test on rabbits*)

Paper Towels

USB Zip Drive

Laundry Soap (*bulk containers*)

Towels (*primarily bath towels, but other sizes as well*)

Black garbage bags (*33-36 gallon bags*)

White 13 gal garbage bags (*9 ml*)

Overhead Projector

Adobe Software-Windows:

InDesign v.2.0

GoLive v.6.0

PageMaker v.7.0

Walk-in Refrigerator (*keep veggies fresh for shelter and sanctuary rabbits*)

Heavy Duty Stapler

Dish Sponges

Security Cameras

Baby Blankets

Rugs (*bathroom and throw rugs*)

Van good, used van to transport veggies, hay and animals

Plastic Stacking Chairs *for our new education room*

The Deluxe Bunny Condo

This multi-level condo makes a comfortable home for one or two bunnies. Easy to clean with plenty of room to play and hide! Approx. w48" x d28" x h42." The Deluxe Bunny Condo is available at the BLRRFH shelter and sells for \$270.



"Sponsor a Furry Animal"

Who says money can't buy happiness? It can when you Sponsor a Furry Friend. You can choose an individual animal in the shelter or a particular species. Your sponsorship will include a color photo of your sponsored animal, a photo frame magnet and a short biography. A sign, with your name, will also be hung on your sponsored animal's cage. Sponsoring a rabbit, rodent or ferret in our shelter will help us pay for the much needed supplies, medical care and food that is required to care for them. The minimum sponsorship is \$40 a year. You can pay for your sponsorship with a 1 time donation or with a monthly automatic credit card donation. Please see mail-in form on page 16.

Thank you!

Peakaboo is just one of the many animals you can sponsor at BLRRFH.



Become a Member!

When you become a member of BLRRFH or HRS, you are helping to support our rescue efforts. You are helping to provide spay/neuter, vaccinations, surgery, lab costs, medication, food, shelter, toys, litter and everything else that is needed to ensure quality care of the animals at BLRRFH and at Rabbit Meadows Sanctuary. You are also helping the rabbits, rodents and ferrets find permanent loving homes.

Your membership will include:

Our quarterly newsletter, *Rabbit, Rodent & Ferret News*

Membership card

5% discount on merchandise when you visit our shelter

We rely entirely on donations and could not provide the high quality care for the animals in our shelter and at the sanctuary without the generosity of people like you. Please see back page for membership dues and mail in form.

Become a BLRRFH Constant Companion!

Become a constant companion to the animals with an automatic monthly credit card donation. Your monthly donation will provide a dependable source of income so we can continue to do our lifesaving work.

Thank you for your support!



Best Little Rabbit, Rodent & Ferret House

14317 Lake City Way NE
Seattle, WA 98125

NonProfit
US Postage Paid
Bellevue WA
Permit No. 225



Yes, I want to help the animals at the Best Little Rabbit, Rodent & Ferret House!



☐ Yes, I would like to become a member of

☐ BLRRFH \$15 (1 year membership)

☐ National HRS \$18 (1 year membership)

☐ Both \$31 (a \$2 savings for a 1 year membership)

☐ I would like to give a BLRRFH membership to a friend/family member. Please enclose the name and address of the gift recipient separately.

☐ Yes, I would like to donate \$_____ to the Live Adoption Area Camera Fund

☐ I have enclosed my company's matching gift form.

☐ Yes, I would like to Sponsor a Furry Friend

(\$40 minimum for sponsorship) see page 15 for details

☐ Rabbit ☐ Ferret ☐ Guinea Pig

☐ Rodent (_____)

(If you are sponsoring an animal as a gift to a friend or family member, please enclose their name and address separately.)

☐ Please enroll me as a BLRRFH Constant Companion and charge my credit card \$_____ monthly.

(For more information on membership or BLRRFH Constant Companion program, see page 15)

I have enclosed my gift of \$_____ to help the animals.

☐ I have enclosed is my check payable to BLRRFH or HRS

Please charge my credit card ☐ M/C ☐ Visa

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip _____

E-mail _____

I would like to receive my newsletter ☐ on-line ☐ in the mail.

Please mail form to: **Best Little Rabbit, Rodent & Ferret House**
14317 Lake City Way NE
Seattle, WA 98125

Expires ____/____ Signature _____

Thank You!