Growing Old Comfortably
By Bill Velasquez, NMHRS President

As I approach my 50th birthday, I am learning a lot about how a body ages. Luckily, I am not alone. I have company in my home to sympathize with. All of the permanent resident bunnies in our home are over five years old and a few of them are approaching ten. Your elder bun is not much different than elder humans.

Defining old in a rabbit, though, can be tricky. Since most rabbits will live 10+ years in our homes, we start looking for signs of aging after they are 6-7 years old. This can vary depending on breed, though. Larger breeds may not live as long and can develop signs of age sooner.

Like me, your bunny may start moving more slowly. Gray hairs can start to appear around and behind the ears or elsewhere on the body. Their fur may start to thin. Calluses may appear at the nail bed. One of the more prominent signs I have noticed is trouble hopping in and out of a litter box. A once spry bunny may now be unable to clear the edge of the box. She may slowly stop using the box completely and as reaching to eat cecals and clean her bottom becomes more difficult to accomplish due to joint pain, you may find your bunny needs her bum cleaned on a regular basis. Her teeth may start to hurt and spurs may develop, meaning that eating hard pellets can be painful and she may stop eating them altogether. Her sight and hearing may not be what it used to be. All of these symptoms can come slowly or a few at a time. The important thing is to recognize them and help your bunny to remain comfortable throughout her elder years. Use your own powers of observation to figure out ways you can help. Also keep in mind, though, that we have several Educators that have elder buns themselves and can give you lots of tips to help your bunny age comfortably! Below are just a few ideas, but feel free to contact any of our Educators for more ideas.

Alfred is the elder statesman at our home. We know he is nine because he was born in the shelter, so unlike most rabbits, we have an exact birthdate. We noticed that he is no longer able to hop and really just scuffles about now. He has days when he can keep his bottom clean and days when he can’t. He tries to scratch his ears with his hind legs, but really only paws the air now. In an attempt to make things easier on him, we purchased low entry dis-

(continued on page 2)
abled rabbit litter boxes. He doesn’t have to jump the edge anymore—instead he kind of waddles across it. We purchased an orthopedic dog bed and placed a blanket and donut bed over it. This is where he spends much of his time now—searching for a comfy spot for his aging bones. He does chew on the donut bed, but does not chew on the orthopedic bed. We have another bunny who rests on synthetic sheepskin because he can’t always get up to the litter box before he pees. So he spends periods of time peeing where he sits. The synthetic sheepskin keeps the urine away from his delicate skin and is washable.

We started Alfred on myristol pellets available from the Colorado HRS store (www.coloradohrs.org) a couple of years ago. This is intended to help him with joint pain. We also tried the Oxbow joint supplement when it came out. Both seemed to help some; however, when we started him on a regime of Adequan shots, that seemed to help the most. Your vet may also suggest putting an elder bun on daily doses of metacam. I am personally not a fan of daily meds like that. So we only use it when it seems like he is having a harder than normal time moving around. As for the trouble scratching his ear, that has not improved so I try to do that for him. Since he is trying to clean them, when I clean them for him, he really enjoys it! Colorado HRS sells an ear cleaner at the coloradohrs.org store.

Alfred’s sight and hearing still seem good, but we have an elder girl who either doesn’t want to hear us anymore or can’t. With deaf bunnies, it is important to try not to startle them by sneaking up on them from behind.

Yet another elder bun, Mr. Bear, has trouble chewing hard foods now. Although his teeth have been checked and determined to be fine, he has a chronic ear infection that probably causes him pain when he eats. So we supplement with softer food, including a vegan shake that he likes. He is visibly thinner and frailer than when he first arrived in our home six years ago, but he still enjoys his life and is very bonded to his mate. So he is living a full life.

When elder buns do get sick with GI or other issues, it also takes them a little longer to bounce back. You can expect longer recovery times because their bodies are already compromised. We have had great luck with a couple of Oxbow supplements: Urinary Support and Digest Support. Both show signs of helping some of our elder buns.

Before your bunny ages, it is good to have a blood work baseline. During your next vet health check, you should check in to having this done. Your Vet can give you the pros and cons of having this done before your bunny gets sick.

Inevitably, like people, some rabbits will become so compromised in their elder years that specialized care will be required. There are several disabled rabbits support groups available for advice and support. We can connect you with those or one of our experienced Educators for advice.

Like caring for an elderly person, caring for an elderly bunny means you will spend more time with them and bond closer to them. You get set in a certain routine and after a few weeks it is just habit. The upside is that your bunny grows closer to you. The downside is that losing them is that much harder. May we all be so lucky as to have a loving caretaker in our final years.

Elder buns are a lot like elder people—so much of what they do looks cute, but remember it may also be painful. Help them manage the pain and new limitations and they will enjoy all of their years fully! For more information about caring for elder buns, ask an Educator or visit www.rabbit.org/elderbuns.
“Love me, love my pet.”

For single pet owners trying to navigate the minefield of the dating scene, it’s a valid concern. How often has that issue been ignored in hopes for the best, but the new significant other finally throws out the ultimatum: “It’s me or the dog/cat/other species” and the pet suddenly finds itself in a shelter?

When I met my boyfriend, I knew this would be an issue. He was not an animal person whatsoever; the whole concept of having “pets” was more than a little weird to him. While growing up in rural New Mexico, off-roading and shooting cottontails was considered a fun way to pass the time. Horrible news to a bunny lover, and perhaps a dealbreaker to some, but I figured what’s past is past and forged on.

Then came the inevitable rude awakening upon cohabitation negotiations: My 3 rabbits could not, by any means, live in the house. However, we could build the best outdoor shelter for them, built entirely to my specifications to address all my concerns. And build it, we did. It lacked for nothing: window screen to keep out flies, hardware cloth so predators couldn’t tear through the window screen, landscaping bricks for a floor, every gap and crevice caulked and weathertstripped. A portable swamp cooler kept them comfortable when the air surrounding the structure passed 100 degrees. I was happy to see that not a single bug penetrated that fortress.

Then winter came, with another slew of protections: a thick carpet and pad over the bricks, and styrofoam insulation panels and heavy plastic around the structure to hold in the heat from the oil-filled radiator heater. A heavy blanket covered the door to keep out any drafts. Even on the coldest nights when the mercury plunged into the single digits, the indoor temperature remained in the 50s. My bunnies, a bonded pair and a single, actually seemed pretty happy out there and I spent a lot of time with them.

That February was a hard month on my ageing buns. First one died, then another. Less than two weeks later, my boyfriend said, “Butterscotch must be lonely out there.”

“She might be, but I’ve been spending time with her every day,” I said.

“I think she’d be happier if she came inside.”

I didn’t say a word. He had made the decision.

So Butterscotch moved inside and spent the final 5 months of her life in a pen off the kitchen. Spring and summer was full of regular field trips to the screenhouse. Butter-scotch was quite a character, and in that time he began to see for himself what interesting creatures rabbits are.

A few months after Butterscotch’s passing, I ended up with another rabbit through a petsitting situation that became permanent. She was the cuddlebug that every rabbit owner dreams of. The screenhouse was winterized, but Snowball never made it out there. I suggested it, but he felt that Snowball would be better off indoors. Again, I didn’t say a word. Again, it was his decision.

This made it easier for their nightly cuddle sessions. My attention was increasingly taken up with homework, so the bond between them strengthened. I was the food provider and litterbox cleaner. After a year or so, Snowball is now let out of her pen for hours at a time and roams around a few blocked off rooms (we still have problems with pee, despite two litterboxes).

It has been fascinating to watch the transformation over the last 4 years. I never forced him to love them, I never issued that demand: Love me, love my pet. It organically grew, as he observed their behavior and fell under the same spell that we rabbit lovers are so familiar with. He tells me that he finds himself educating his co-workers when they repeat myths and misconceptions about rabbits. He now knows better than me when Snowball is ready to be picked up: the tilt of her ears tells him when it’s OK. It is more than I ever expected, and a happy ending for what began as an irreconcilable difference.
Adoptable Buns
Hope and Bootsy

Hope and Bootsy are a bonded sister pair that must be adopted together. They have had a rough start in life and are eagerly awaiting their forever home. They have been in the shelter for a year now. Recently, Hope the lop was accidentally adopted out as a single bun and her sibling was left behind to grieve the loss of her sister. Luckily with some assistance from NMHRS Hope and Bootsy were reunited but not before suffering a lot of stress due to the separation. Because of this they are taking a break from the shelter and are currently in a foster home. Now more than ever they need to find a forever home where they can live happily together forever. Could you be the loving bunny parent these two so deserve?

Garbanzo

I am a pretty baby bunny boy named Garbanzo. I have very pretty fur. My foster mom says these pictures don’t do me justice. I guess you should just meet me to see for yourself how very beautiful I am. I love spending time with my brother, Pita. We like eating dark, leafy greens and relaxing in boxes and dark spots. I like an occasional pet, but not a big fan of being picked up. I want a home where Pita and I can learn to trust humans and grow up to be happy, healthy rabbits. If I sound like the bunny for you, please contact my foster mom at: tammy@e-solved.com

Note: Garbanzo will be available once neutered.

Cous Cous

This adorable bunlet was the runt of the litter, and therefore super-special. He’s very active and playful and loves small dogs and chases them around when he wants to play. (He hasn’t met large dogs yet.) He prefers to stay on the floor when playing with humans. My brother, Falafel, and I are looking for a home where we can run, jump and grow up to be happy rabbits. If you would like to give Cous Cous his forever home, contact: tammy@e-solved.com

Note: Cous Cous will be available once neutered.

Archie and Smokey

Archie and Smokey are two very independent-minded rabbits in need of a forever home. They are sisters and have looked out for one another since they were born at the Albuquerque city shelter in 2012. They are wary of outsiders and tend to be very shy. But what can you expect when it’s been you and your sister against the world since day one? Archie is a gorgeous, pure white diva with exotic pink eyes and Smokey sports an elegant sable coat and the mysterious aura to match. If you can handle two strong women who are as independent as they are beautiful then Archie and Smokey are your girls...I mean ladies (sorry, Smokey). Please help them find their forever home.
“We Owe It to Maggie”
By Ned Nevera

Maggie’s story starts out like that of so many other NMHRS rabbits. She came to the Albuquerque shelter in the late summer of 2013. She was surrendered along with a number of her brothers and sisters for some reason or another. Unfortunately, in addition to being surrendered and losing her home, Maggie was also pregnant. So, if you’re keeping score, in late August, Maggie was abandoned, alone, and preggers.

And then NMHRS got involved in her life.

After Maggie had her babies, the CABQ shelter worked with us to find her and the Mini-Maggies (her kits) a foster home. One of our long-term foster parents took her in and provided the quiet, stable environment Maggie needed to raise her babies. NMHRS volunteers Cathy S., Victoria P. and Bill V. provided support and guidance to the foster mom, and the Mini-Maggies flourished.

But just as Maggie was finishing up her motherly duties in mid-October, disaster struck and Maggie got lost in her foster family’s neighborhood. The poor thing seemed positively star-crossed. She had survived so many challenges in such a short time, but being lost in an Albuquerque neighborhood...well, that just seemed to be Fate’s final blow.

Despite long odds, Bill V. encouraged the formation of a search party to try and rescue the lost rabbit. “We owe it to Maggie,” he wrote. So, in spite of odd hours, long distances, a search area of a city neighborhood and little chance of success, a group of NMHRS volunteers (or, as I call them, “Crazy Rabbit People” or “My Friends”) took on the daunting task of finding a lost, scared bunny in the 32nd largest city in the United States. Because...we owed it to Maggie.

The first effort was launched on a Sunday morning with Dennell S., Victoria P., Cathy S. and Theresa M. looking under bushes, knocking on doors, peeking over fences and pounding the pavement. The team combed the neighborhood, but not a sign of Maggie. Another effort was staged that night with Liz S. and Ryan joining the search. Flyers were posted and distributed. Doors were knocked on and some friendly folks even allowed us to search their backyards. Throughout the early evening and as the sun set, there was more looking, more walking, more borderline trespassing. But still no Maggie.

A couple more searches were conducted during the week. We owed it to Maggie, you see. Unfortunately, the only things the searches turned up were cat sightings and some suspicious looks from the locals.

The team planned an e-a-r-l-y morning search for that Wednesday because you don’t earn the title of “Crazy Rabbit Person” without thinking it’s perfectly reasonable to wake up at 4am and go looking for a rabbit in a strange neighborhood before heading into work. It’s what we do.

Now, I don’t know if you believe in karma, fate, luck, hard work and persistence meeting opportunity, the Flying Spaghetti Monster or the “Force,” but you have to believe in something to not completely dismiss what happened next. A search team member received an email titled “rabbit found” and a short message: “hello, I have your rabbit, she was in the street and I now have her in my bathroom, please call me.”

No way.

The rescuer was contacted, a team member was dispatched, and sure enough, there was Maggie in the bathroom! Working on her second carrot of the morning.

The rescuer had seen the flyers the team had posted and knew there was a lost rabbit in the neighborhood. Returning from a class at about 9pm, her car’s headlights caught Maggie hanging out in the middle of the street. A 20-minute foot/paw chase ensued and the rescuer (who—more luck?—used to have pet rabbits as a child) managed to corral Maggie. A reward was paid and Maggie was—finally!—headed home.

So Maggie’s story ends like so many other NMHRS rabbits. Sure, it was more eventful than anybody intended it to be. However, the basics are the same: a rabbit in trouble meets the Crazy Rabbit People (NMHRS) and through a lot of hard work, genuine concern, compassion, persistence and a touch of criminal trespass, finds a forever home. All because a bunch of really great people believed that “We owe it to Maggie.”
Many people are unaware that NMHRS partners with local shelters in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Las Cruces and Las Vegas to assist shelter rabbits. While the level of NMHRS involvement differs from shelter to shelter, there is no question that adoptable rabbits are benefitting from the expertise that NMHRS shares directly and indirectly with local shelters.

My own volunteer efforts with NMHRS and Santa Fe Animal Shelter and Humane Society are one example of how partnering together benefits both agencies and the rabbits they serve. My role as Santa Fe shelter coordinator for NMHRS currently comprises several different areas of activity including educational support, socialization, rabbit care, training, behavior evaluation and adoption assistance.

It wasn’t always that way. When I began volunteering at the Santa Fe shelter in 2011, their dedicated shelter volunteer of nine years, Beth Wagner, was about to move away. She encouraged me to advocate on behalf of the rabbits at the shelter in her absence and invited me to accompany her on a daily visit to the bunnies. How very glad I am that I did!

What began as occasional visits to check in on the shelter bunnies grew into an ongoing passion during the ensuing weeks and months. I would drop in a few times a week to socialize the adoptable bunnies and let them out to exercise/romp around the shelter, clean out litterboxes and food/water dishes, and tidy up the kennels. I would also offer guidance to those considering adoption - and to many others who passed through the shelter lobby and noticed the bunnies - and share the basics of proper care/diet/housing and dispelling common rabbit myths. Most people are very receptive to learning more about companion rabbits: Who knew that a rabbit could be litterbox trained?

My rabbit education efforts also reach children. During the shelter’s summer and winter Critter Camps, animal-loving kids aged 9-13 spend an hour learning about the needs of rabbits. They spend “floor time” with the bunnies and particularly enjoy making treat bags to leave behind for the shelter bunnies.

With the arrival of the new Santa Fe shelter volunteer coordinator, my role as bunny volunteer expanded. I took on training sessions for new shelter volunteers who specifically requested to work with the rabbits. These monthly bunny training sessions mean that some 30 newly trained volunteers may return to socialize and exercise the rabbits.

Coordinating a NMHRS volunteer presence at large off-site shelter adoption events in Santa Fe is perhaps one of the most important ways the two organizations collaborate to find rabbits good homes. The shelter often receives grants to assist with marketing and publicity, and NMHRS is invited as a participating animal agency to provide expertise on rabbit care and assistance in vetting potential adopters. These big events give NMHRS a larger audience for outreach efforts and potential adopters. Of course there are always the free nail trims for local rabbits!

In return, NMHRS has assisted the shelter by donating rabbit-appropriate kennels and temporarily fostering shelter rabbits for medical/behavioral reasons, and providing bonding assistance when someone is interested in adopting a friend for their single rabbit.

Since last summer, the shelter has asked me to carry out behavioral evaluations of all rabbits surrendered or brought in as strays in their Admissions facility. Whenever a new rabbit enters the system, the bunny is checked for its behavior and general health status. Any concerns are communicated to the shelter vets and the rabbit undergoes spay/neuter surgery. These steps ensure the new arrivals are expediently transferred into the Adoptions building for re-homing. Relevant information about each rabbit is given to the adoption counselors so the rabbit goes to an appropriate home.

Working together in these ways, much can be achieved by local shelters and NMHRS on behalf of rabbits. It’s very rewarding to see the same rabbits that enter the shelter—sometimes in rough shape—bound for homes where their caretakers have been given guidance on proper care for their new rabbit friend(s).

I encourage you to consider getting involved. There is much to do and your local shelter rabbits need you! If interested, please contact the relevant NMHRS/shelter coordinator below and they’ll help get you started!

**ABQ:**
Ned N. 
nednever@aol.com

**Rio Rancho:**
Victoria P. 
pereztori10@aol.com

**Santa Fe:**
Iris K.M. 
iris.klimczuk@gmail.com
Part 1: The Causes of Rabbit Obesity

Last year a beautiful angora rabbit came to live with me and my other buns. My husband quickly dubbed this loveable fellow “BFB” for Big Fat Bunny. Unfortunately, it was true. “BFB” weighed in at a whopping 13 pounds with rolls of fat on each side of his body. He didn’t hop, he clomped. Standing up on his hind legs was impossible. How could a natural herbivore get so fat?

Rabbits are often overfed by well-meaning but over-indulgent human caretakers. Sugary foods such as bananas, raisins, and carrots can cause weight gain, as can certain “gourmet” rabbit food mixes which contain fatty nuts, seeds and treats such as yogurt drops. Pet food advertisers capitalize on our human desire to feed our rabbits exciting foods, when they really require large quantities of indigestible fiber such as grass hay to maintain a healthy balance of intestinal flora. Sugars can upset this balance, leading to an overgrowth of gas-producing bacteria and yeasts.

Rabbits should be fed a limited, measured amount of plain, high-quality, timothy-based pellets (with no dried fruits, nuts, corn, peas or seeds). Cheap, mass-produced pellets are usually made from alfalfa hay, which is a legume and contains high levels of calcium and protein. This is fine for buns under a year old, but not for adult rabbits. Lots of water and fresh greens such as romaine and cilantro provide healthy calories for rabbits.

Another cause of rabbit obesity is a sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercise. Good digestion requires movement. Rabbits kept in cages often do not have enough room to run and play. This can lead to weight gain and arthritis.

If your rabbit is overweight, consult with your veterinarian about safe ways to help your rabbit. When changing foods, gradually mix the new food with the old, allowing a week or more to make the switch. Sudden changes in foods can cause rabbits to stop eating or develop painful gas.

In the next issue, “BFB’s” story continues in “My Big Fat Bunny, Part 2: The Deadly Dangers of Rabbit Obesity.”

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Epitaph on a Hare

by William Cowper

William Cowper (1731-1800) was one of England’s best-loved poets and hymn writers. He was plagued with severe attacks of depression throughout his life. After one such period, he was given 3 young hares by a neighbor who didn’t want them anymore. He had been looking for something that would “engage my attention without fatiguing it” and these hares fit the bill perfectly and were his treasured companions. Here is an elegy he wrote for Tiney, who lived to the ripe old age of 9.

Here lies, whom hound did ne’er pursue,  
Nor swifter greyhound follow,  
Whose foot ne’er tainted morning dew,  
Nor ear heard huntsman’s hallo’,

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,  
Who, nursed with tender care,  
And to domesticate bounds confined,  
Was still a wild jack-hare.

Though duly from my hand he took  
His pittance every night,  
He did it with a jealous look,  
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,  
And milk, and oats, and straw,  
Thistles, or lettuces instead,  
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,  
On pippins’ russet peel;  
And, when his juicy salads failed,  
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,  
Whereon he loved to bound,  
To skip and gambol like a fawn,  
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,  
For then he lost his fear;  
But most before approaching showers,  
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons  
He thus saw steal away,  
Dozing out all his idle noons,  
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humor’s sake,  
For he would oft beguile  
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,  
And force me to a smile.

But now, beneath this walnut-shade  
He finds his long, last home,  
And waits in snug concealment laid,  
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more agèd, feels the shocks  
From which no care can save,  
And, partner once of Tiney’s box,  
Must soon partake his grave.

This is a multi-part series of articles about one big bunny’s journey on the road to healthy weight loss. Stay tuned for the next installment in the Winter issue!

My Big Fat Bunny

By Criss Starr

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Here lies, whom hound did ne’er pursue,  
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Must soon partake his grave.
I’ve always suffered from depression, but in 2009, after many unsuccessful treatments, I became completely disabled. Over the next four years, I had several hospitalizations, various types of therapy, and aggressive medication changes, which left me critically ill and exhausted from trying to fight. I slowly began to get better in 2013, after finding a good combination of medications and therapy, but those four years had taken their toll. I was still not able to work much and doing basic things around the house left me worn down.

What kept me going was my rabbits. I knew they needed me and that I had to be strong and do my best for them. Late in 2013, noticing one of my single rabbits (Joseph) seemed lonely (he had unbonded with his mate), I began to investigate finding him some companionship. I started my search at the Santa Fe Animal Shelter and Humane Society, where I met the lovely Iris Klimczuk. She introduced Joseph to several bunnies at the shelter who were looking for their forever homes. Despite knowing full well that it was up to Joseph to pick a mate, I fell in love with several rabbits myself and hoped Joseph would pick one of them! One of these rabbits was a bun called Bailey. He had been at the shelter for many months, and was growing more and more depressed and withdrawn, waiting desperately to find a home.

I thought about Bailey often, disappointed that Joseph had not chosen him! I felt a bond with him in our shared experience of sadness. I thought of various scenarios in which I could bring Bailey home, but I didn’t have the room to take on another single rabbit. I started thinking about other ways that I could help rabbits like Bailey, and with Iris’ guidance, I began to volunteer at the Santa Fe shelter and help with their rabbits.

I wasn’t sure I had the energy or the emotional strength to work with animals that were not my own. Still recovering from my own issues, I felt fragile both physically and emotionally. I wanted to give it a chance though, as my heart went out to those sweet buns who were desperate for some special time with loving humans. The first rabbit I met at the shelter was Attie. When I approached her cage, she hopped right over to me, stuck out her snout and demanded some petting. She loved it when I talked to her. Attie, and her daughter Kloi, along with her other children, had been at the shelter for almost nine months. I learned that pairs of rabbits had much more difficulty getting adopted.

I began to go in as often as I could, thinking of how happy Attie was to see me when I approached her. Some days, I woke up tired and feeling sick, and thought how nice it would be to stay in bed. But I would think of the buns waiting there for attention, and that motivated me to get up and leave the house. Sometimes the drive to the shelter was taxing, but once there, with the buns out of their enclosures for some exercise, my physical symptoms were quickly forgotten.

Volunteering can mean many things, depending on what the volunteer is able to do. My goals each day I visited were to get all the bunnies out for a run, tidy up their cages, change the litter if needed, and feed everyone a handful of salad and a few carrots. Sometimes I would bring in special greens or treats as a surprise. If I went to the shelter during business hours, I would also spend time answering questions and showing people the rabbits. Many people had only ever seen rabbits in hutches before and were quite surprised and delighted to see how fun they were to have indoors, playing, romping, and visiting. Once I finished my duties, I’d be covered in fur, sweating and achy from the activity.

My body wasn’t used to moving so much, as I’d spent most of the past four years in a horizontal position. But I felt good after these sessions, tired from a good few hours of work and movement. I finished up every visit by sitting with Attie on my lap (sometimes inverted). She loved to be petted, kissed, and cuddled, and would tooth purr happily as I spent time with her.

Aside from the physical work I did, I also very much enjoyed seeing the bunnies’ personalities evolve as they became used to trusting humans. One rabbit, Daisy, a big New Zealand, arrived shortly after I began volunteering. She was found roaming the streets, and her physical state suggested she had been confined to a hutch most of her life. Initially, she spent most our time together hiding in her cardboard box, very shy and unsure. Eventually, she would come out of her cage and roam around, curiously but cautiously. If I approached her, she
Field Reports from NMHRS Events

One week, give or take a day, and the New Mexico House Rabbit Society managed to:
• coordinate 3 events
• educate more than 500 people in basic rabbit care and promote the “Make Mine Chocolate” Easter campaign
• and raise over $1,400 for rabbit care and rescue efforts.
Here’s how WE did it….

April 12 2014 – Rio Rancho.
Melissa K. coordinated an outreach event in conjunction with the NM National Guard’s Annual Easter Egg hunt. In 2013, Melissa brought along some rabbit info and “Make Mine Chocolate” promotional information to supplement her safety information presentation. The rabbit information was such a hit she decided to invite the NMHRS and the Tiny Toes Rat Rescue to the 2014 event. Melissa and Regina S. brought along their rescued rabbits and for 3 hours introduced and educated over 200 National Guard family members to the wonders of house rabbits. As always, the rabbits, along with the Tiny Toes rats, were a huge hit.

April 19, 2014 – Santa Fe.
April 19th saw our Santa Fe volunteers in action at the NMHRS Estate Sale/Bake Sale held at Giaccone Fritz Fine Art on Canyon Road. Conceived and organized by volunteer Palin W., the Estate/Bake Sale combined quality resale clothing, jewelry, ceramics and other fine items as well as the sale of delectable home-baked goods made by our volunteers. Tickets for the NMHRS quilt raffle and a beautiful gourmet Easter basket were also sold at the event. In four hours, the team of volunteers comprising of Marie A., Bonnie G., Ginny G., Kevin H., Liz H., Iris K.-M., Vivian N., Beth W. and Palin W. had raised a total of $1305 for NMHRS. Wow!

April 19, 2014 – Albuquerque.
Victoria M. coordinated our support of the annual Mama’s Minerals Easter Egg hunt. Mama’s sponsors a very popular egg hunt that has grown into a pre-register, ticket only, two session event in just 3 short years. NMHRS has been at all three events and now we’re considered part of the program! This year volunteers Erin, Regina, Kyle, Victoria M. educated and introduced as many as 300 people…and more importantly…as many as 150 kids to our rabbits and got them to promise to “Make Mine Chocolate” for Easter. In addition to hours of outreach, Victoria, with her face painting, and Regina, with her beautiful headbands, raised over $100 in donations.

Quilt Raffle Winner!
Congratulations to O. B. Martinez of northern New Mexico for winning our latest gorgeous quilt, handmade by our amazingly talented volunteer Deb V. This one was a stunner visually—and raised $1965 in ticket sales and donations! This overwhelming success guarantees another quilt next year. Keep an eye on our Facebook page and website for the next Quilt Raffle!

Handsome, distinguished, greying NMHRS spokesman... and Ned holding him.
We would like to thank Bohannan Huston, Inc. for continuing to print our newsletter at no cost to NMHRS.

Healing Through Volunteering
(continued from page 8)

would scamper off back to her box. After several months, though, she became more and more trusting and interested in humans. She spent less time hiding in her box, and would approach me for some petting. I learned that she liked to be held and have her ears gently stroked. She loved gentle nose rubs, and I felt immense joy feeling her little jaws grinding away happily as I rubbed her cheeks. It was delightful to see her personality blossom when she learned that humans could be kind and loving. She became much more outgoing and let her likes and dislikes come out. It warmed my heart to see her trust and be able to receive love.

One of the most difficult emotional parts of volunteering is bonding with all the rabbits and having to leave them behind each day, wondering if they will still be there when I next visit, and if they will go to a good home. As I began to grow closer and closer to Attie and her daughter Kloi, I would wake up with worry each morning that they would be gone. One of my elder buns, Jake, had recently lost his mate and was quite depressed, and I wondered if I might be able to make a trio. I brought Jake in, and both girls immediately began grooming him—love at first sight! The three of them now live happily together here with me. I’ve met many wonderful rabbits that I wished I could bring home with me! Slowly, I’ve learned to just give as much love as I can, but try and remain detached enough so that I can adjust to the changes as bunnies come and go.

People often tell me that it would be “too sad” or “too hard” to volunteer in that kind of setting. I find it to be a very pleasant, caring, and happy atmosphere for the bunnies. And I know that even though I’m at my limit of bunnies in my own home, I can still give love to bunnies waiting for their forever homes.

There is much research on the benefits of volunteering on mental and physical health, suggesting a positive correlation. I can say that it has very much helped me come out of myself, my pain, and provides a focus for me. It has been a critical part of my healing, and since starting out, I’ve gotten so much better that I am growing in other areas of my life too—I’m able to work more, enjoy interacting in close friendships, and participate in a range of activities that previously I was unable to. I also find my self-awareness growing and feel stronger emotionally.

If you’ve been thinking about volunteering, there’s no time to wait! You can partake in many types of activities that fit with your skillset and personality. It is a rewarding and healing experience, and you will never regret the time you give making an animal’s life happier.

Albuquerque Summer Events Lineup for NMHRS

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<tr>
<th>JUNE</th>
<th>AUGUST</th>
<th>SEPTEMBER</th>
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| Sunday, June 22 PETFLO West 3601 Old Airport Rd NW 11am - 3pm | Sunday, August 22 PETFLO San Mateo 3600 San Mateo Blvd NE 11am - 3pm | Sunday, September 28 is *International Rabbit Day!*
| Sunday, July 20 PETFLO West 3601 Old Airport Rd NW 11am - 3pm | **We Need:**
|               | **YOU!**
|               | NMHRS foster rabbits
|               | Nail trimming experts
|               | To volunteer, contact Ned: nednever@aol.com |
|               | **CABQ Eastside Shelter 9820 Lomas Blvd NE 10am - 2pm** |
Upcoming Art Raffle

The third NMHRS raffle of the year features the artwork of Bregelle Whithworth Davis, a Utah-based artist who also happens to own two house rabbits, Edgar and Asterix.

As there is no House Rabbit Chapter in Utah, Bregelle has graciously offered to donate one or two paintings to be raffled off in the Giacobbe Fritz Fine Art gallery on Canyon Road in Santa Fe on **Saturday, August 2nd** at 4pm. We will have Bregelle’s work on display and a reception on Saturday afternoon from 2-5pm. Refreshments will be served.

Bregelle will be doing painting demos here at the gallery on August 1st and 2nd. Her work is acrylic on canvas and is meant to resemble silkscreen work with a contemporary bent.

Once the donated paintings are received, please look for the Givezooks link on the NMHRS website and Facebook page to purchase raffle tickets. Please mark your calendars for this unique opportunity to win fine art and see the artist at work!

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**Are you a supporter of New Mexico HRS?**

How you can help:

- **Volunteer** to be a Petco Rabbit Pal, shelter volunteer, fosterer, or outreach volunteer!
- **Use** your skills to help us with our website, PR and outreach, newsletter, and more!
- **Join** NMHRS and become a member!
- **Make** a donation to support our work helping homeless rabbits in New Mexico!

We also accept donations of food and other needed supplies.

- [ ] I would like to join New Mexico House Rabbit Society.
  - [ ] $30 for combined national House Rabbit Society and New Mexico HRS membership
  - [ ] $20 for combined national House Rabbit Society and New Mexico HRS membership for Students or Seniors

- [ ] I would like to make an additional donation in the amount of $___________

- [ ] I would like to volunteer for ____________________________________________
  **Area(s) of interest**

- [ ] Check enclosed (payable to NM HRS)
- [ ] Pay by credit card (circle one)
  - VISA  Mastercard
  - Card # ________________________________
  - Expiration date (mm/yyyy) _______________
  - Signature ______________________________

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**Send your donation to:**

**NMHRS**  
**PO Box 95226**  
**Albuquerque, NM 87199**  

New Mexico House Rabbit Society is a non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible as provided by law.