

Friends of Rabbits

Rabbit And Small Animal Rescue Newsletter

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Tips For Catching A Stray Rabbit

By Maxine K.

In the last newsletter, we discussed the plight of the Las Vegas Dumpsite Bunnies and the subsequent efforts made to get the surviving bunnies out of Nevada. But rabbit dumping is not exclusive to Las Vegas. It seems like every day on Facebook there is another post from a rabbit rescue or good Samaritan asking for help in catching domestic rabbits. And Friends of Rabbits (FoR) is one of those rescues. In the past few months, there have been domestic rabbit sightings in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax Virginia, as well as Brentwood and Silver Spring, Maryland.

During the month of August alone, FoR volunteers rescued more than 10 rabbits from an Alexandria neighborhood off Route One near Huntley Meadows Park. This was not the first time that a pet rabbit was discovered in the Park. Fawkes was rescued from Huntley Meadows as well. Although he has made great strides since his rescue and rehabilitation, he did not escape his experience unscathed. Fawkes underwent several surgeries to remove a large cluster of abscesses in addition to his front incisors. He currently resides at the sanctuary in Arlington. According to Pam H., "He is a fabulous little bunny. Very loving and is very food-oriented. I have been clicker training him. He can turn in a circle and stand. He will come running to the sound of the clicker."



Photos: Pam H.

Fawkes, now living happily indoors.

Each day, domestic pet rabbits are abandoned in "high kill" shelters or dumped on public property to fend for themselves. They live short lives, succumbing to predators, traffic and disease. Many of these rabbits are former "Easter bunnies" whose owners quickly lost interest when they realized the amount of work involved in caring for them. Fifty-nine percent of the rabbits in rescue are given up after less than one year of ownership. Thirty-four percent of those rabbits entered rescue because a child lost interest in their once beloved pet and their parents were either ill prepared or unwilling to assume the role of primary caregiver for the rabbit's needs.

Although dumping your bunny is never the right thing to do, stray rabbits are all too commonly found wandering the neighborhoods of DC/MD/VA. **It is important to try to help these rabbits and get them to a safe home as soon as possible, as rabbits are**

Inside this issue

Feature Article Stray Rabbits

News Briefs Summer Babies

Triple Match Met!

Basement Overhaul

Tributes Owl

Adoption Stories Max

Volunteer Spotlight Heat Wave
Emergency Help

Classifieds & Upcoming Events

Bunnacula Ball

Bunny Yoga

domesticated animals –they cannot survive if abandoned in the wild.

- ♣ Domestic rabbits have no defense against ticks, parasites, fleas, insect bites or fly strike, which result in sickness, inability to walk, maggots and painful death.
- ♣ Rabbits are easy prey and totally defenseless against cars, dogs, wildlife and guns.
- ♣ The diet of a domestic rabbit is radically different than that of its cousin, the wild rabbit. The domestic rabbit would not know the right things to eat.
- ♣ The stress of being released into a large field would easily frighten the rabbit to death; you don't ever want to hear a rabbit scream.
- ♣ The weather in the wild contributes to illness in your pet rabbit.
- ♣ They have no wild instincts to know where to go and hide.
- ♣ Injured rabbits are instant prey to a predator.

So, what should you do if you see a domestic rabbit running loose in your neighborhood or local park? First, make sure the rabbit you have spotted is truly domestic and not a wild cottontail.

Look for lop ears. Not all domestic rabbits have lop ears, but all rabbits with lop ears are domestic.

Guess at the weight. Wild rabbits are usually smaller than domestic rabbits. If the rabbit looks larger than 4 pounds, he's likely to be domestic.

Check the coloring. Wild rabbits all have the agouti coloring. That means they have variegated grey, brown, and tan fur. Domestic rabbits can also have this coloring, but unlike their wild cousins, their bellies are usually lighter. They also come in a variety of other colors, including silver, palomino, chocolate, and tan, and they may have markings on their legs (often dark) or shoulder (often white), as well as spots, depending on the breed.

Watch for social behavior. Wild rabbits will be afraid of you and will probably run as soon as they see you. Domestic rabbits may be more social. They may even come towards you looking for food or attention.

Look at the head shape. Domestic rabbits will have a more curved forehead; wild rabbits have more triangular faces. Also, wild rabbits have thin ears, meaning you can almost see through them at the ends. [Wiki How: How to Catch a Pet Rabbit](#)

Once you've determined that the rabbit you've spotted is truly domestic, the next step is to try and "capture" him. One popular method is to surround the rabbit(s) with an exercise pen and place open carriers inside the pen with greens or food in them. Encourage the rabbits to enter the carriers, close the door and cover the carrier with a sheet or light blanket. Whatever you do, never chase the rabbit. You can slowly and quietly walk after them, but be patient and look for signs of undue stress. Wear gloves and long-sleeved clothing to prevent being scratched.

Gather some treats. To get a shy rabbit to approach you, try having some treats on-hand such as carrots, apples, bananas.

Block out some time. Rabbits are smart and fast. In fact, pet rabbits can run up to 35 miles per hour, faster than a house cat. In addition, their back legs are designed for jumping, meaning they can leap far away from you quickly. It could take several hours to catch a pet rabbit outside and it will likely take more than one attempt.

Gather some friends. It's much easier to catch a rabbit if you have several people on your side. With more people around it's easier to herd the rabbit where you want her to go.

Have a carrier ready. Have someone standing by with a carrier so you can pop the bunny in once you grab her.

Create a makeshift enclosure. The best way to catch a rabbit is to create a makeshift enclosure using an exercise pen. It should be tall and wide enough that you can create an enclosure around the rabbit outside. When you eventually surround the rabbit, more than one person will need to be holding pieces of the enclosure as you make it smaller around the rabbit.

Find the rabbit. If you haven't already spotted the rabbit, look for signs such as rabbit droppings or places where the rabbit has chewed on plants or dug small holes. These signs will help point you in the direction of the rabbit.

Close off escape routes. If you are in a yard, close off any escape routes before trying to capture her. Shut the gate. Cover any holes you find near the fence line, so she can't escape that way.

Guide the bunny away from traffic. Roadways are obviously dangerous for rabbits. If possible, guide the bunny away from these areas so she won't get hurt.

Surround the bunny. Watch to see where the rabbit hides. Build a large enclosure around her using the exercise pens. Slowly work the enclosure smaller by taking out sections while still maintaining a tight circle, making it easier to trap the bunny.

Pick up the rabbit. Once the enclosure is small enough, you should be able to gently pick up the rabbit. It is easiest to climb in the enclosure with the rabbit. When picking up the rabbit, make sure you support her back end, propping her feet against your body if possible.

Put her in the carrier. Once you've captured her, place her in the carrier for easy transport. Have the carrier in the pen with you so you don't risk her escaping again.

Once the rabbit is safe in your home, you have two choices. If you choose to keep the bunny, please go to the HRS website (www.rabbit.org) for education and information on the supplies you will need. Be careful not to overload him with too much food. A malnourished bunny can easily be made sick by a sudden diet of rich food. Feed free-choice timothy hay and water, and about a teaspoon of pellets the first day. Gradually increase pellets and add greens to the diet. Consult a rabbit-savvy vet as soon as possible to check the bunny for illness, malnutrition, and parasites. http://www.rabbitcare.org/catch_a_stray.htm However, if you decide that a rabbit is not the pet for you, please contact a local shelter or a rescue like FoR help and guidance with rehoming the rabbit.

Friends of Rabbits Columbia Supply Store

Open Daily

If you need information or assistance, please contact info@friendsofrabbits.org



Address: [10706 Vista Rd, Columbia, MD](http://www.10706vistaroad.com)

We carry all your bunny needs!

Standlee Timothy Hay and Orchard Grass-half and full bales

Binky Bunny Willow Toys & Tents

Oxbow food, treats & hay

We can accept purchases made with credit/debit cards, personal checks, and cash. Payments can be made through PayPal to donations@friendsofrabbits.org. (If you choose to pay with PayPal, please list which item(s) you purchased in the description.)



Summer Babies

By Amy S.

Is anything cuter than a baby bunny? (Helpful tip: the correct answer is no.) FoR frequently rescues babies and their mamas, and this summer was no exception. A number of foster parents are caring for these little ones. For example, Mei has been fostering Iris-Nicole and her four babies – Easter, Junior, Little Foot, and Tubs. The babies were born in May shortly after the Iris-Nicole was taken in by FoR. She had been released in the wild was pregnant at the time she was rescued by FoR. Sherry has been fostering a litter of eight babies and recently picked up another pregnant rabbit. Sometimes FoR rescues bunnies without even knowing they are pregnant. Surprise! That was the case with Wonder, a 4-month-old rabbit that FoR picked up in May after she was saved from a hoarding situation in Baltimore County. Less than a week after arriving at FoR, she surprised everyone by giving birth to three babies! Unfortunately, one didn't make it, but River Song (aka Trouble) and her brother Raven (aka Tribbles) are doing well. The mama and her babies have been well cared for by Shari, a first-time foster. The best news is that they have already found their forever homes. One family just adopted Wonder and another family is getting ready to adopt the siblings, who simply adore one another. Hurray for all those who save and care for the babies!



Photo: Amy S.

Wonder's babies, River Song and Raven.



Photo: Robin S.

One of Iris-Nicole's four babies.



Photo: Robin S.

Honey-nut's three spotted babies (above, and right)



Photo: Robin S.

Triple Match Goal Achieved!

by Beck B.

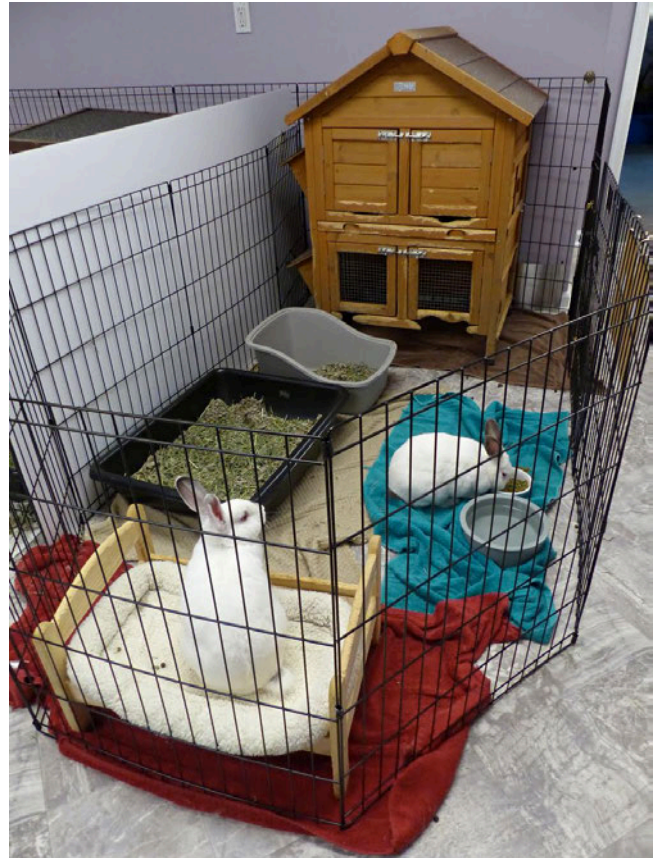
Friends of Rabbits held its annual Mothers’/Fathers’ Day giving campaign. A very generous supporter pledged up to \$30,000 in matching funds - \$2 matching for each dollar donated! We are pleased to say we met the goal! This will be a tremendous help, as this year we expect to spend over \$75,000 in vet bills, due to higher spay and neuter fees and the increasing number of rabbits we are rescuing, some requiring special vet care.

Columbia HQ Basement Overhaul

by Beck B.

It took several weeks, and a lot of sweat and effort, but the Columbia HQ basement renovation is complete. The space is now fully optimized for cleaning and laundry workflow, and can house the rescue rabbits with more condos and space than ever before! Special thanks to all the volunteers that

helped in this massive effort— the rabbits and humans of FoR thank you! The organization can now rescue and house more rabbits and find them their forever homes!



A Columbia HQ Basement rabbit condo setup.



Photos: Robin S.

The Columbia HQ Basement mid-renovation.



A comfortable rabbit condo space in the Columbia HQ basement.

tributes

Owl

by Elizabeth B.

Owl and I met through Friends of Rabbits my senior year of college and we had a great 10 years of adventures together. He was a wonderful study companion and greatly improved my college student diet by ensuring I always had greens, fruits, and veggies in the apartment. During graduate school, he provided emotional support after long days even though he chewed through my computer cable in protest against my late night homework activities. He was amazingly tolerant and handled our moves between four states with minimal pouting and protest. More recently, he delighted in the increased attention and treat volume as my toddler enthusiastically provided nose scratches, fruit, and Cheerios.

Owl's only fault was that he was unable to live forever. He was a wonderful friend and is deeply missed.



adoption stories

Dr. Max, Medicine Rabbit

By Mike P.

A few years ago, I began taking care of a sweet stray kitty I named Samantha, when she was pregnant with her second litter. I adopted her oldest kitten from her first litter, whom I named Sparkey. He lives with me and Max, my gentle giant Florida White rabbit.

I took Samantha to King Street Cats, an all-volunteer no-kill cat rescue shelter in Alexandria, Virginia, to find her a foster home until she gave birth. She would then be spayed and adopted into a nice home. I thought this would make her happy.

All of Samantha's kittens were born healthy, and Samantha went up for adoption, but she didn't appear to like that idea. When I visited her many times at the foster home and the shelter, she wasn't happy. Finally, she appeared to go on a suicide mission — she stopped eating and drinking. Vivian, the president of the shelter, called me and said, "She's killing herself. She's so very depressed and weak; you must come get her to save her life."

I rushed over to see Samantha, who couldn't even raise her head. I took her home knowing that she was familiar with my house and had spent many nights with me, her son Sparkey, and my rabbit Max.

I placed Samantha in her favorite high-back blue velvet chair in my living room and brought her a big plate of sliced turkey, which she always loved. But she wouldn't touch it. She was fading fast. Sparkey and I sat on the floor in front of her, both of us very worried. The mood in the room was very somber and gloomy.

Out of nowhere, Max came thumping down the hallway to see what was up. He stood up and looked his friend Samantha in the eye, glanced at Sparkey and me, and assessed the situation. All of a sudden, this crazy bunny began running laps around the living room at a phenomenal speed. Sparkey rolled over onto his back as Max started leaping back and forth over him. Max twisted his body in the air and performed stunts that would make a professional acrobat envious, including backward flips, showing off his sheer talent!

I began belly laughing, and if the cats could have laughed, they would have too. The cats and I were mesmerized. Samantha raised her head, her eyes open wide watching the incredible show, not wanting to miss a single second. The show lasted about 7 minutes. Samantha then sat up and started eating her turkey! I checked and her purr box was turned up full blast! Finally, Max flopped down next to Sparkey and looked directly at me as if to say, "There, I fixed it."

The doom and gloom in the room was replaced with joy and laughter.

After several weeks, Samantha regained her health and was happy to be home with her friends. She loved sleeping every night in her furry blue round cat bed under the blue velvet chair next to Max. But as weeks went on, she began to desire the outdoors again, so I agreed to let her out during the day and come in at night, but only for a month or so.

One cold rainy night Samantha didn't come home. I left the back screen door open, hoping to spot her through the door. Max and Sparkey watched me open the door every 5 minutes frantically calling out for her, but nothing happened. It was getting late. I went to take a shower, leaving the back door open. After I got



Max with feline friend.

[Continued on p. 12](#)

volunteer spotlight

Friends of Rabbits Volunteers Help the Arlington Sanctuary During Heat Wave

By Pam H.

On June 19 during one of the Washington DC area heat waves, the air conditioning for the Arlington Friends of Rabbits Sanctuary started to falter and the temperature inside was rising. There were about 20 rabbits staying at the sanctuary at the time, including several pet sitting bunnies and one bunny in assisted living. The air conditioning technician stated that there was a major coolant leak plus significant growth inside the system (e.g., mold). The vents needed to be cleaned and the entire air conditioning/heating unit needed to be replaced. The Arlington Sanctuary is in a condominium complex that was built for military housing in 1941 when insulation was not always installed. This condo is no exception. There is one large room plus a loft right under the roof where most of the pet sitting bunnies stay. I had renovated that room to have both insulation and air conditioning vents low on the walls so that the bunnies could enjoy the coolness in the summer and heat in the winter. However, when the air conditioning goes off during the heat of the summer, it is always an emergency because heat rises, and the attic room and loft become hot before any of the other rooms.

Within 10 minutes after the technician leaving, the air conditioning totally stopped. I had to move into action immediately. In a panic, I sent out an SOS to the Friends of Rabbits volunteer group while I scooped up as many of the single rabbits as I could fit into the car to take to Stahl Exotic Animal Veterinary Services (SEAVS) for boarding for a few days. Within a very short period of time, volunteers contacted me back saying that they could either take a few rabbits, help with transport, or help in other ways. The response was wonderful. Volunteers from both Maryland and Virginia took multiple rabbits. One volunteer nearby gave me a place to stay plus set up a space for a stasis prone pet sitting bunny I needed to keep with me. I was also able to set up two more bunnies who arrived for pet sitting after all the others were moved. Other volunteers anonymously paid the boarding bill for the bunnies at SEAVS.

It took several days for the vents to be cleaned and the air conditioning/heating system to be replaced. And still the volunteers were continuing to contact me to see if I needed assistance in cleaning up the spaces and getting the place ready for all the bunnies to return. Within 5 days, all was back to normal. The rabbits were all transported back to the Arlington Sanctuary by volunteers.

A huge THANK YOU goes out to all of you who were able to move into action quickly to help the bunnies and their caretaker (me). The bunnies and I are grateful to all of you, including those of you who contacted me offering your help when I was moving so fast that I was unable to respond back to you in a timely fashion. What a wonderful group of people you are!

Many regards,

Pam Hurley

Friends of Rabbits Arlington Sanctuary and Pet Sitting



Pam's Sanctuary Rabbits: Arwen (top); Belle, Miko and Eva (bottom)

classifieds

Help Wanted: Volunteer Opportunities with FoR

By Mara H.

Just a few hours a month of your time can help us save more rabbits!

Last year, Friends of Rabbits rescued 276 rabbits and placed more than 250 in adoptive homes. We could never have done it without the hard work of many volunteers – everyone from our dedicated fosterers to our talented webteam. You can be part of that effort, whether you can contribute only a few hours a month or several hours a week, whether you live in Maryland, Virginia, DC or elsewhere, whether you want to work “hands on” with the rabbits or help with online projects.

There are volunteer opportunities for every interest and skill set – fostering; rabbit care at the Columbia HQ or the Arlington Sanctuary; adoption counseling and events; community outreach; fundraisers and special events; rabbit transport; admin support; media and public relations; social media; web support; online fundraising . . . and more.

Here are a few of the key volunteer positions we need to fill:

Adoption Event Coordinators – Volunteers are needed to manage monthly adoption days in Virginia and Maryland. We regularly receive requests from pet supply retailers around the region to hold adoption events at their stores. Coordinators are responsible for managing one adoption day per month, and spending an additional 1-2 hours each month coordinating the event with store managers, fosterers and volunteers. Not ready to take charge, but want to help? We also need volunteers to commit to helping out at regularly scheduled adoption events - if you are already fostering, this might be the perfect opportunity.

Adoption Counselors – All adoption applications are reviewed to ensure that rabbits are going to good homes. Friends of Rabbits also assists adopters in creating a safe, suitable, and stimulating environment for their new pets. Counselors help screen new adopters, answer their questions, and provide advice on rabbit-proofing, housing, diet, etc. They also perform in-person or virtual home visits that are required before adoptions receive final approval. Finally, Counselors follow up post-adoption to make sure things are still going well and to offer support, if needed.

Volunteer Coordinators – We need a small team of two or three people to coordinate and monitor volunteer assignments. This involves working with the rabbit care manager at HQ to schedule volunteers for regular shifts at HQ, as well as organizing volunteers for various tasks and events, such as rabbit transport, fundraising projects and special events. Coordinators also help track volunteer hours.

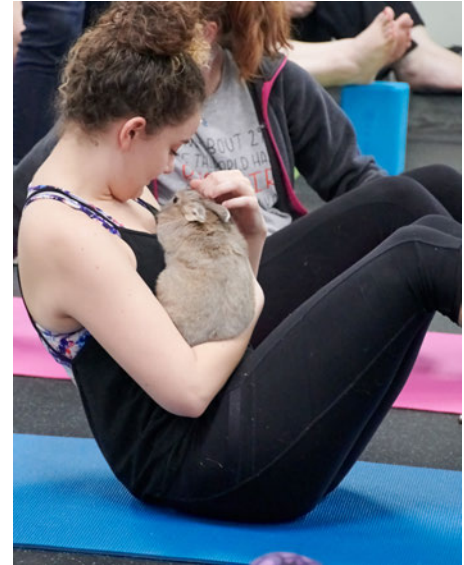
Newsletter Managing Editor and Writers – As you can tell from this latest edition, Beck has been doing an amazing job as Managing Editor. But after several years, she is ready for someone else to take charge. Beck will stay on as Assistant Editor so you won't be on your own. We also need people to write articles for each edition of the Newsletter (but please only volunteer if you can commit to meeting deadlines).

Greens Team Volunteers (Maryland) - volunteer(s) needed to transport and sort boxes of donated vegetable trimmings from the MOMs store nearest you to the house in Columbia on either Fridays or Saturdays. This is currently being done by one volunteer, collecting from the College Park store, which helps us keep our "reservation" for Saturday trimmings, but if we can't find a similar volunteer to do it four or five times a month, a team of volunteers will work.

If you're interested in joining our group of amazing volunteers, please send an email to info@friendsofrabbits.org with the subject line “Volunteer.” The rabbits would love to have you!

upcoming events

Bunny Yoga



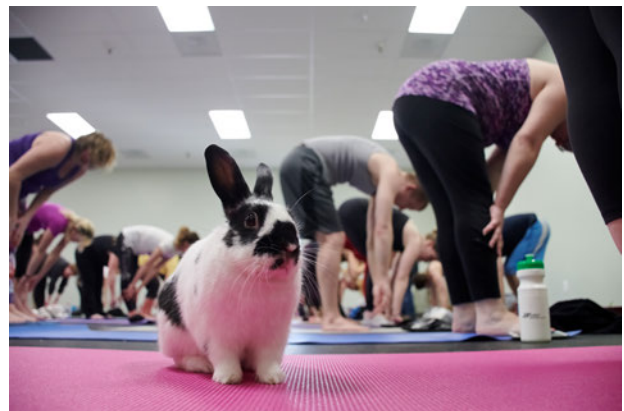
Bunny Yoga with Shannon & Colt returns to the Veterinary Holistic Center of Northern Virginia on **Saturday, November 3, 2018**.

Tickets will go on sale in late September. This is a very popular event - our first Bunny Yoga sold out in less than a week!

Be sure to watch your inbox and the Friends of Rabbits Facebook page for updates on purchasing tickets!



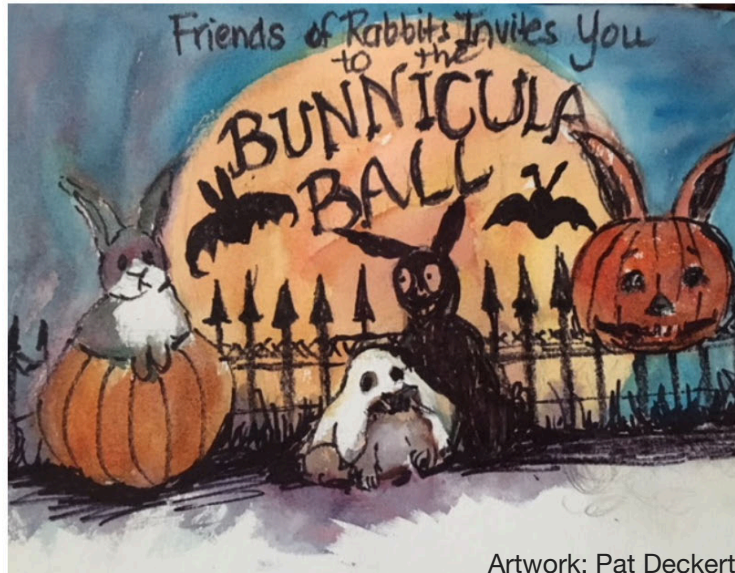
Photo credits: James Taylor



upcoming events

Bunnacula Ball Saturday October 13th

*Join us for a bunderful evening of food, drink
and fun in support of our rescue rabbits!*



Artwork: Pat Deckert

Friends of Rabbits is holding our very first Bunnacula Ball to raise funds for the estimated 300 rabbits we will rescue this year.

Admission includes a cool swag bag, scrumptious vegan buffet and abundant beverages (beer, wine, soft drinks and a specialty cocktail), plus a silent auction, scavenger hunt, costume contest and PRIZES!



Don't miss your chance to bid on this Kessler Bunny Castle in the silent auction!

This event will be held at Mara and Sam's House:
7829 Manor House Dr., Fairfax Station, VA 22039

Tickets \$40/person

Purchase Tickets [Here](#) or at Columbia HQ

Please no rabbits or children at this event.

upcoming events

Adoption Day at Columbia HQ

2nd Sunday of the month- email info@friendsofrabbits.org for more info and to schedule 'bunny speed dates.'

Upcoming dates: 9/9, 10/14, 11/11, 12/9, 1/13

FoR Grooming and Adoption Days!

4th Sunday of the month

At these Adoption Days, Friends of Rabbits in Columbia also offers grooming services and nail trims: Please email info@friendsofrabbits.org to schedule an appointment! Walk-ins are welcome, but have the possibility of a long wait time. Nail trim \$12, Grooming \$15, extra charge may apply for matting.

Upcoming dates: 9/30, 10/28, 11/25, 12/30

Events at **PET SUPPLIES PLUS**

Every Saturday 11AM – 12 PM – Adoption Event, featuring New Rabbit of the Week and a short Q & A. 11054 Lee Highway Fairfax, VA call Pet Supplies Plus to confirm (703) 359-2659

1st Friday of the month, Join Friends of Rabbits for Yappy Hour at Pet Supplies Plus in Fairfax. Donate to Friends of Rabbits and received 20% off a toy or a free self serve dog wash.

Adoption events at **petco**

3rd Saturday of the month 12-3pm Adoption event at Petco 9230 Old Keene Mill Road, Burke, VA

Adoption Events at **bark!**

Saturdays 12-3pm, please see schedule online for more info

DC Veg Fest

Saturday 9/15, 11 AM – 6 PM

Location: N St SE & First St SE Washington DC 20003

Join Friends of Rabbits at the largest vegan gathering on the east coast! Each year tens of thousands attend DC VegFest, including vegetarians, vegans, and meat-eaters alike (all are welcome!). Free.

Olney Vegan Fest

Saturday 9/29 12 – 4 PM

Location: Roots Market - Olney

Address: 16800 Georgia Avenue Olney MD 20832

Dr. Max. Continued from page 7

dressed, I went to the living room and to my surprise, Max was lying in Samantha's bed, which Max had dragged out from under the chair and placed in a spot in the living room with a direct view of the screen door. Perhaps Max was hoping Samantha would see her bed and be enticed to come inside?

I looked over at the door; Samantha's furry little face was looking in.

I turned to Max and said, "Maxwell Olaf, you're a smarter man than I am." Samantha happily came in, greeted both boys, and headed for the kitchen.

Samantha has been a happy indoor kitty for about 2 years now. She loves playing with her oldest son Sparkey and her rabbit guardian Max. She falls asleep with her head on Max's belly at night, and he loves it! Samantha still talks to her "boyfriend" kitty through the screen door, and he seems happy his family is safe inside.

I am sincerely blessed to have been given the gift of this furry family, all of whom at one time were homeless. And I'll always know that Max has the power to save the day.



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