

# Rabbit Sanctuary Newsletter

*Sponsor-A-Rabbit*



*A Program of Rabbit Sanctuary, Inc.*

**OUR MISSION: TO PROVIDE RESCUED DOMESTIC RABBITS  
A HOME FOR LIFE**

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### Roger EverPleasant

**T**he first year of Roger EverPleasant's life was bad and it's a miracle – lots of miracles – he survived. Most likely he was someone's pet. When they tired of him, they turned him out...dumped him...to make it on his own. He would have never survived but a kind person rescued him and took him to the Pickens County Shelter.

He was held at the shelter for several months as they hoped someone would adopt him. The sign on his cage read "Rabbit for Adoption. \$10." Then it was lowered to \$5. Nobody wanted him and his time at the shelter was running out. Desperate to find him a home, the shelter came across the Sanctuary on line. Sanctuary friends, Jim and Honey, volunteered to pick him up. "How handsome," commented Jim and Honey.

The first stop on his journey to us was a visit to Doc Hurlbert who echoed Jim and Honey, "How handsome!" After his initial check-up and later neuter surgery, all his rough times were behind him. Now, he's settled in at the Sanctuary and things have never been better. Here, he was introduced to the love of his life, Frost, a white female rabbit with pink eyes and ears just like him. Together they live happily in Rabbitat II in their natural habitat territory complete with an underground burrow.

Roger EverPleasant and Frost soon learned that weekends, Saturdays and sometimes Sunday, are the most fun and exciting. Weekends are not only a favorite time for Roger and Frost but for all the rabbits. The volunteers arrive to clean. As each territory is cleaned, the gate is left open and those residents go free out into the wide clay walkway. The walkway surrounds the nine territories within the 100-foot-long predator-proof main structure. It's a race track!

Vroom! Vroom! Roger EverPleasant sprints out of the gate and runs down the backstretch full throttle. He rounds the wide curve scattering dust into the air. Down the homestretch, without gearing down, he dodges the volunteers, wheelbarrows, and bales of straw with alacrity. He slams on the brakes as he reaches the finish line at the gate of his home territory. Now that he has proven he is the fastest runner on Earth, Roger EverPleasant casually hops along the long row of territories, from gate to gate greeting his rabbit neighbors. Through the wire gates he flirtatiously touches noses with the girls and spars with the guys. They stand upright on their back legs swatting at each other with their front paws like short kangaroos.

On one particular cleaning day, Becky left Roger EverPleasant and Frost's territory to get straw from the barn. On the way back to finish cleaning and put up the two rabbits, she stopped at the garden where Deb was planting kale. They yakety yakked and by the time Becky returned, Roger EverPleasant and Frost had gone back to their territory by themselves. The two exhausted rabbits lay stretched out, one behind the other, cradled in a deep furrow, eyes shut catching some zzz's. As Becky closed their gate, she observed, "That bonus time did them in."



***Sponsor Roger EverPleasant for yourself or as a holiday gift for a friend!***

***Your annual sponsorship fee of \$40.00 or more will help with the cost of food, medical care and bunny treats!***

### Bucky Billy

**B**ucky Billy greets everyone who enters the Bunny Healthcare Building. The little spotted lop is not quite a year old so everyone and everything is new and fun to him. He's never still a moment, and I've never seen him sleep.

Before I lock up the building for the night, I stand at the door and visually check the large room. "Is there anything I've overlooked?" I ask myself. "Can Bucky B get into any mischief?"

By day Bucky B accompanies me as I clean, do laundry, pass out salad, administer meds, and generally freshen up the (currently) eight resident rabbits. Let's get them set for another day! All have disabilities or are too old to live outdoors in the natural environment Rabbitats. It's Bucky B's job to visit and comfort them all. He's good at it...very good. They love him.

By night Bucky B undertakes his own projects and mischievous adventures. Early morning when I open up shop I face the consequences of his unsupervised night shift. One night he designed a house for himself by cutting two perfect circles in a cardboard box, one for entry and one for exit. He also "fixed" the phone, neatly snipping the cord in half. The room is quieter now. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment is his invention (patent pending?) of the "Perpetual Pellet Dispenser." He chewed a small hole in one corner of the spare 50-pound bag of pellets that was draped over a chair. With just a nudge of his nose, pellets pour out on demand.

There were some mornings when Bucky B did not come charging up to me, skidding to a halt at my feet like always. He was MIA. Where is he? Stranded...sitting high up on the third shelf of the large storage unit. Caged...sitting in the middle cage of the three-tier stackable unit. He had worked his way up from a step stool to the top of a large pet carrier and then up into the empty cage. Trapped...sitting in the laundry room. When I opened the door he came bounding out. Evidently he had pushed open the door; and once in, he pushed the door shut!

After 50+ years living with rabbits, I think I have them pretty much figured out – but Bucky B is always ahead of me. It's all good. Bucky B puts joy into life for all. Bucky B is the best medicine.

### The Rescue

**W**hen Sabrina Campbell arrived home from work at dusk last fall and stepped out of her car, Bucky Billy came running up to her from out of nowhere. As she walked down her driveway to her front door, Bucky B followed. When she swung open the front door, he hopped right into her house. Bucky Billy rescued himself!

But Sabrina gets credit for his rescue too. She knew such a little bunny could not survive on his own. She understood he was looking for a home, and she kindly took responsibility for him. A few months later she had him neutered and intended to keep him forever. But when the pandemic radically changed her life, Sabrina realized it was best for Bucky B to come and live at the Sanctuary.



*Sponsor Bucky Billy for yourself or as a holiday gift for a friend!*

*Your annual sponsorship fee of \$40.00 or more will help with the cost of food, medical care and bunny treats!*

## Deadly, highly contagious virus is killing thousands of rabbits in U.S.

*With no readily available vaccine, domestic pet rabbits in S.C. face potentially lethal health threat*

BY ERIK R. BOGART

**T**he year 2020 brought us the coronavirus pandemic; as contagions go, one is plenty. But in early May of this year, press reports began to appear about yet another horrific viral outbreak that is highly contagious, potent, and usually fatal—however, the victims of this virus are rabbits.

RHDV2 stands for rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus, serotype 2. It is a highly contagious disease caused by a calcivirus that affects rabbits. It does not affect human health, or the health of any other animals besides rabbits. Unlike other reported rabbit hemorrhagic disease viruses, RHDV2 affects both wild rabbits (including jackrabbits and cottontails) and European rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), from which our own domesticated rabbits are descended.

RHDV2 destroys cells in the infected rabbit's liver causing hepatitis; the virus also creates lesions on the heart, lungs or other organs that lead to massive internal bleeding, which explains why many of the rabbits who have succumbed to rabbit hemorrhagic disease are found with bloody fluid around their mouths and noses. It can also cause systemwide inflammation in the rabbit's delicate body. Death occurs from liver failure or hemorrhaging due to an impairment in the blood's ability to clot. The fatality rate is documented to be 90% in infected rabbits, according to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, who add that those rabbits that manage to survive the virus can go on to shed it for an additional two months or more.

RHDV2 is often a very swift and sudden killer, giving little warning. Rabbits innately tend to hide outward signs of illness in a lot of cases anyway due to their “prey species” psychology, but some rabbits who are afflicted might appear lethargic or lose interest in food. Lorelei D'Avolio, a New York City veterinarian specializing in exotic mammals, told the *Cut* (an online blog hosted by *New York* magazine) that she observed RHDV2-infected rabbits going into seizure-like convulsions and making horrible shrieks before suddenly passing away—a scene she described as “terrifying.” Unfortunately, it is all too typical that the only observed sign of the illness is sudden death.

What makes the RHDV2 virus a particularly formidable foe is that it is infectious and highly contagious. It can be transmitted to a rabbit not only by close contact with an infected rabbit, but can also be spread indirectly via a human or even through insects (like mosquitoes), birds or household pets like cats and dogs. A rabbit can also be infected through fomites (inanimate objects contaminated by the virus) or by ingesting an infected rabbit's contaminated food or water. While frequent hand-washing by a rabbit owner or caregiver certainly is helpful, the House Rabbit Society warns that humans could inadvertently spread the virus to a rabbit (even if the rabbit is kept inside) via the human's clothing or shoes that have been contaminated (for example, if a human walks on grass containing urine or feces from a wild or domesticated rabbit that was infected).

Even more ominously, it is a hardy virus that can survive for long periods outside the host. Viable virus has been detected for as long as 105 days on a fomite at room temperature and in decaying tissue of infected carcasses for up to ninety days, according to the USDA. The virus is not killed by freezing, and has been shown to survive heat of 122° F.

It was not until the RHDV2 outbreak earlier this year in the Southwestern U.S. that a rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus had been detected in the wild rabbit population in North America (previous strains of rabbit hemorrhagic virus had been found only in domesticated rabbits). It is unclear how the virus jumped to the wild population; because wild rabbits are essentially an entirely different species than our domesticated rabbits, many had previously believed that wild rabbits might be immune. Thus, the presence of RHDV2 in feral domestic and multiple wild rabbit species is yet another factor that is complicating disease control and eradication efforts. It is difficult to control and eliminate diseases that can be spread or maintained in wildlife populations. This makes it even tougher for state wildlife officials to track or stop the spread of the virus into other parts of the U.S. not yet affected.

A vaccine for RHDV2 already exists in Europe, but is not readily available here. This is because the vaccine is not yet approved or licensed for U.S. use. The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) presently still classifies RHDV2 as a "foreign animal disease," a designation given to animal diseases present outside of the United States. Currently, the vaccine can only be imported to a particular state by getting special USDA approval—and granting such permission will not be considered at all unless there are already documented cases of RHDV2 infections and deaths in that state. Even then, APHIS will only approve limited importation to authorized veterinarians in those areas with the approval of their State Veterinarian.

Part of the reason for the added bureaucracy is that the USDA cannot guarantee as to safety and efficacy of unlicensed European vaccines but will allow importation in emergency situations. Veterinarians will also be required to complete a federal application process before being authorized to administer the vaccine. The importation of the vaccine requires special permits, port brokers, and others to maintain the vaccine in the cold supply chain to ensure efficacy, according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. In addition, the companies that manufacture the vaccine have limited production capacity that would be otherwise make it difficult to keep up with U.S. demand.

The threat of the RHDV2 virus is of paramount concern to the Rabbit Sanctuary. "If we have to wait for the virus to arrive in South Carolina [before getting a vaccine], it will all be over," says Caroline Gilbert, Executive Director of Rabbit Sanctuary, Inc. The Rabbit Sanctuary already has stringent protocols in place to protect the health of its resident rabbits and to screen any incoming rabbits for any potential health threats. Furthermore, the Sanctuary is designated as "verified" by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, which recognizes sanctuaries that uphold the highest standards for the animals in their care—and is the only animal sanctuary of any kind in the State of South Carolina holding that designation. But even with the best biosecurity measures in place, "Getting the vaccine is the only way to be completely sure that the rabbits are protected," Gilbert says.

There might be some good news on the horizon, however. "I am told there is a vaccine in the U.S. that is in the process of getting approved so there may be something authorized in the U.S. in the future," said Dr. Boyd H. Parr, Director of Livestock Poultry Health at Clemson University, who is the USDA's State Veterinarian for South Carolina, in a recent email. The Oregon Department of Agriculture, in a July press release, indicated that a U.S. manufacturer is presently working with a university to develop a domestically produced, FDA-approved, new-generation vaccine for RHDV2 that, once approved, could be distributed widely and made readily available in every state without the necessity of any individual requests for special federal or state approvals. Hopes are that a vaccine will be ready sometime in early 2021, however at press time, nothing has been confirmed.

Presently, according to the USDA online map, there are seven states, all in the Southwestern United States, with reported cases: California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas. To minimize the spread of the disease, many states from coast-to-coast are implementing quarantines, limiting or restricting the state-to-state transport of rabbits, and cancelling exhibitions involving domestic rabbits. Experts recommend that any suspicious deaths of domestic rabbits be reported to their local veterinarian. It is further recommended that if you come across any single or multiple wild rabbits with no obvious cause of death, or with blood around their nose, mouth or rectum, to please notify the appropriate authorities. In South Carolina, contact Michael Hook of the S.C. Dept. of Natural Resources at (803) 734-3940 or via email to [HookM@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:HookM@dnr.sc.gov); and Dr. Barry Meade, Director of Field Operations for USDA APHIS Veterinarian Services at (803) 462-2910 or [barry.meade@usda.gov](mailto:barry.meade@usda.gov).

The Rabbit Sanctuary is making RHDV2 prevention and protection a top priority. At their June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, the Sanctuary's Board of Directors passed a resolution forming the Special Committee for RHDV2 Prevention and Preparedness, whose members will regularly report to the Board as to any new developments and, where necessary, make recommendations as to the implementation of any new biosecurity measures or other special operating procedures needed to deal with this issue. Readers of this newsletter should know how much the Rabbit Sanctuary appreciates your financial support as they continue their vital mission. Your donations are very much appreciated, as your continued financial support will help assure that our beloved Sanctuary bunnies will continue to stay safe and healthy in their "home for life."



## RapidRabbitNews



No, that's not a misprint. It's our new e-mail, and some of you may recognize it. In past newsletters, we asked our readers to share their e-mail addresses with us for the express purpose of our being able to reach out with time-sensitive information. We were thrilled when almost 100 of you responded. If you're interested in being added to our list, please let us know.

As luck would have it, RapidRabbitNews came in quite handy. Tractor Supply sponsored a contest for animal non-profit rescues/sanctuaries with grand prizes of \$25,000 for the 8 organizations garnering the most votes. We applied and were named a finalist.

The voting window was short and didn't coincide with our newsletter production schedule. So...enter RapidRabbitNews. We asked you to vote, post us on your social media, and pass along our opportunity to everyone you knew. We notified the media, sent word through NextDoor, posted on FB, and personally e-mailed family and friends.

Sadly, we were not one of the grand prize winners. Tractor Supply did not share how many votes each of the finalists received, so we have no way of knowing how close we came to winning. We will receive a \$250 Tractor Supply gift card which will buy a good supply of rabbit chow.

We'll continue to seize every funding opportunity that comes our way, and you can bet we'll be reaching out to you if there's any way you can help.

## Thank You Tractor Supply

Rabbit Sanctuary, Inc. was recently chosen as one of 25 finalists in the Tractor Supply Company Rescue Your Rescue Contest. We were not one of the grand prize winners who received \$25,000, but as a finalist, we did receive a \$250 Tractor Supply gift card, which we can use to buy feed and supplies for the rabbits. Thank you to Tractor Supply Company and thanks to everyone who voted for us.



## Woodmont Elementary School Students Raise Money for the Bunnies



Through popcorn sales, the Paws With A Cause Club at Woodland Elementary School in Greer, South Carolina, raised money to donate to the Rabbit Sanctuary. On February 21, Sanctuary volunteers JoAnne and Patrice visited the school to give a talk to the club, whose 20 members are a mix of 4th and 5th graders. After our presentation, the students gave us a check for \$329. A big thank you to the Paws With A Cause Club! It's wonderful to know that these students care about animals and are finding ways to help them.

**Rabbifacts**

by Amos Hummell



**Gentle Reminder**

It is not our intention to send unwanted mailings. With that thought, individuals will remain on our mailing list for one year after their last support of the Sanctuary. As a gentle reminder, the date of your last donation is included on your mailing label. Please check your label's date to ensure you continue receiving the Sanctuary's news. Our donors are the heartbeat of this organization. It is only with your support that we exist and the rabbits in our care have the future they deserve. Your faithful donations, large or small, are gratefully appreciated.

**Oops!**



In our last newsletter we thanked three companies who responded to our requests with donations of business cards, feeding dishes, and laundry detergent. In that article we failed to mention Bill C. at Chewy.com who sent us CareFresh Litter. We apologize for our oversight and send our sincere thanks to Bill and Chewy down in Dania, Florida!

**Legacies**

If you have named our Sanctuary as a beneficiary in your will, or are considering doing so, make sure that we are listed as Rabbit Sanctuary, Inc. The address is: Rabbit Sanctuary Inc., P. O. Box 80036 Simpsonville, SC 29680

**In Honor of People**

Sam Menze Adams by Sharon Menze

Sabrina Campbell by Bucky Bill

Pickens County Animal Shelter by Roger EverPlesant

Dale Stone by Becky & The Bunnies of Rabbitat One



**In Honor of Rabbits**

Pickens by Monica Stone



**In Memory of People**

Dennell Sandoval Newhall by Edward Nevera



**In Memory of Rabbits**

Ming & Milagro by Tom & Jenna Gutierrez

Hoppy by Steve & Becky Quinn

Hero, Bonny, Si Si, & Janey by Eric & Elaine Unger

Honey Bunny & White Lightning by Ron & Kari Ellison

# Thank You New & Renewing Members

*Includes donations given through October 30, 2020*

Lisa Alleman

Carol Brekke  
Nicole Brown

Lori & Tom Calhoun  
Don & Eleanor Campbell  
Grace Cantrell  
Susan & Doug Carland  
Cat Clinic of Greenville  
Teresa Cawley  
Phyllis Elaine Chartier  
Brandon & Maya Christen  
Mary Coleman

Dorothy Dahm  
Jane Daniel  
James Daniels  
P. J. Deitschel, DVM  
Julie Donath

Laura Elder  
Kaye Evatt

Catherine Faver  
Richard & Gloria Feinauer  
Bunny Girl Feinauer  
June & Ron Fisher  
Joel Freedman

Jenny Genone  
Lynn & Jean-Luc Glorieux  
Carl Gold  
Bob & Lianne Goodwin  
Ronald & Ladonna Greiner  
Martha Grigsby  
Jenna & Tom Gutierrez

Ann Harris  
Beverly Harrison  
Dora Hazard  
Healthpointe Veterinary Clinic  
Debbie Hedberg  
Doreen Heimlich  
Evelyn Henry  
Melanie Heredia  
Molly Hill  
Patricia Hill, DVM  
Dawn-Michelle Hiseley

Janey House  
Beverly Huley  
Becky Hummell  
Sue Ann Hurlbert, DVM

Douglas Ionnatta  
Shion & Punch Ishiguro

Phyllis Jacob  
Kathy Jayko  
Franklin Julian

Debra Keller  
Beth & Jamie Kendall  
Byron & Barbara Knuth

Tara & Nancy Landrum  
Marilyn Lautenschlaeger  
Jane Lewis  
Manuel Lopez  
Mary Alice Lorick  
Erin Luntey

Frank Macovec  
Dorothy Mattson  
Sandy McCreight  
Sharon & David Menze  
Marion Moir  
Karlene Moore  
Katy & Tony Moore

Holly & Gordon Nason  
Edward Nevera  
Merrily & Larry Nilles

Patti Packer  
Lillian Pais  
Maitland & Nola Pine  
Lori Puterbaugh

Becky & Steve Quinn

Suzanne Raboy  
Deb & Michael Reuter  
Sandia Rosche

Komei Sakai  
Teri Sardella  
Loretta Serafin

Lauren Shilling  
Faith Gabel Simmons  
Lee & Terry Spears  
Monica Stone  
Richard Strouse  
Meili Swanson

Robb Tucker

Eric & Elaine Unger

Carolyn Walker  
Betty Way  
Rebecca Weider  
Carey White  
Loretta Wroble  
Julia Wun

Elizabeth Zimmerman  
Ellen & Steffen Zinsser



One of the Sanctuary's wild Eastern Cottontails poses for the camera.





## Shop for the Holidays!

Visit our website for original holiday gifts!



### Holiday Ornament

Our lovely wooden holiday ornament featuring resident bunny rabbit, Little Flower. Ornaments are \$8 each including shipping.

### Sanctuary T-Shirts



Makes a great holiday gift!  
Don't delay!  
Order today!

Makes a great holiday gift for friends and family!

\$20.00 each including shipping!

### Hip Hop Bunny Collection



These adorable pendants are made of strong scratch resistant resin. Each comes in it's own container with a protective pouch and care instructions. They make great gifts! **On Sale now for 25% off the regular price!** Limited supplies! Get yours before they're gone!

### Amazon Smile

You can help support the Sanctuary by shopping at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchase to Rabbit Sanctuary, Inc.

### Binky Bunny

Shop at Binky Bunny to generate funds for the Sanctuary. [BinkyBunny.com](https://BinkyBunny.com) is a fun informative site for people with house rabbits. Their store includes hay and feed, treats, baskets, books, toys, and playhouses! Use the link below, and the Sanctuary will receive 7% of the purchase price.

### GoodSearch.org

You can help the Sanctuary by using a search engine. Go to [goodsearch.org](https://goodsearch.org) and enter Adopt A Rabbit then click verify. Each search will raise money for the Sanctuary.

### Shop at iGive.com to Help the Rabbits

Generate funds for Adopt-A-Rabbit by shopping on line through [iGive.com](https://www.igive.com). Join for free at [www.igive.com/AAR](https://www.igive.com/AAR)

A percentage of every purchase will be donated to the Sanctuary.

### HO! HO! HO!

Bunny sponsorships make great gifts for all your holiday giving!

Don't delay, sponsor a bunny today!



Photographs provided by Tania Drahun and Becky Hummell



Rabbit Sanctuary Inc.  
P. O. Box 80036  
Simpsonville, SC 29680  
[rabbitsanctuaryinc.org](http://rabbitsanctuaryinc.org)

OUR VISION: To see the DOMESTIC RABBIT win his rightful place as a valued and beloved COMPANION ANIMAL

The Rabbit Sanctuary provides a HOME FOR LIFE for rescued domestic rabbits. Rabbits given a second chance at life by kind people who, regardless of inconvenience, expense or even their own safety, made an extra effort to help rabbits in need.

Our Sponsor-A-Rabbit program, a virtual adoption program, offers an alternative to supporting the cruel pet industry and the bunny mills. For \$40.00 or more you can choose and virtually sponsor one of the Sanctuary's rescued rabbits. You will receive a photo of your rabbit, certificate of sponsorship, and sanctuary news letters. Sponsorship is renewable annually. Additional rabbit sponsorships are \$40.00 per rabbit.

Your support is vital to our ongoing work. Please help as you can. In return, we will devote ourselves to ensuring a wonderful life for the rabbits.

ALL DONATIONS, OF ANY SIZE, ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED!

-----  
Cut along dotted line and enclose with your check.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ NEW SPONSORSHIP I would like to sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ I need a receipt \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_ RENEWING DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_ VOLUNTEER IN \_\_\_\_\_ general office \_\_\_\_\_ grounds

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to Rabbit Sanctuary Inc. and mail to P. O. Box 80036 Simpsonville, SC 29680