

Safe Haven Rabbit Rescue, Inc.

# Safe Haven Scoop

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## Questions about care?

Do you have questions about caring for your rabbit? Zoom call help available for nail trims, grooming, litter-box training, bonding, etc.

Please contact us via our [Contact form](#) if you have care question (*no medical questions, we are not vets*).

No charge.



Donate



*By Karen Augustynowicz, Director*

## Welcome, Spring.....

Safe Haven volunteers have been very busy since our last newsletter! Even though we could not do our normal public events due to the pandemic, we continued our outreach and education via email, zoom calls, and old fashioned phone calls. The increase in owner surrender requests and the number of rabbits being released continues its upward spiral. The past winter months have been challenging trying to help as many people as possible as they found themselves struggling to care for their rabbits due to challenging circumstances.

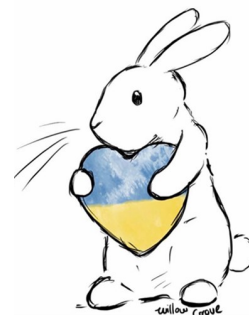
We have continued our quest to educate as many people as possible about RHDV2 and the importance of getting their rabbits vaccinated. Thankfully, Safe Haven was able to have all our foster/sanctuary rabbits vaccinated. Check out pages 6 & 7 for pictures! We also held our first webinar with one of Medgene's scientists to provide information directly from the vaccine manufacturer (page 9) to you.

The current devastating events in Ukraine weigh heavily on everyone's mind. The toll on human and animal life is beyond comprehension. Ukraine was ranked 4th in world with a rabbit population of 4.7 million. One shred of light was found in this video about the rescue of "Lucky". It is happy, I promise. Be sure to unmute the video.



Into Spring and Summer, we have two projects underway that we will share a little further down the road. For now we will just say "Stay Tuned". We will keep you posted via our website, Facebook, Instagram and email. We look forward to sharing the fun with you!

Stay Safe & Keep your bunnies safe,  
*With prayers for Peace,*  
 Karen Augustynowicz, Director



## *Chocolate and Baskets–Not Real Bunnies*

*By Gail Petersen, Safe Haven Officer & Foster Parent*



If you go into Walmart, Hobby Lobby or any food store right now you will find a plethora of rabbit nick-knacks, decorations, signs, chocolate eggs and bunnies, marshmallow chicks, and colored baskets of every shape and size. Peeps and chocolate in pink, green, yellow and purple. They all look amazing, fun and exciting for a basket treat for the kids or a loved one.

### Fond Memories of Easter Surprises

My mother always made baskets for my brother and I and put them outside our bedroom door on Easter morning. We were thrilled when we woke and opened the door to a pretty basket full of sugar eggs with panoramic windows and chocolate bunnies. Then we did the “hunt” in the yard and found eggs with cute bunny stickers on them, or a quarter wrapped in foil and ribbon.

A big lunch followed with family or neighbors who came for the holiday. Italian Easter pie was the favorite, served with asparagus, potatoes and pickled red cabbage. Rabbit shaped butter cookies and homemade ice cream were the kids’ favorites.

The day ended with sick stomachs from eating too many jelly beans. But everyone was smiling.

### Good Intentions Gone Wrong

In the years since my childhood, people have purchased real rabbits and chicks for their children to find on Easter morning. The intent is kind, but misguided.

The actuality is that rabbits and chicks aren’t presents, gifts or holiday cheer. Live animals are a 10-year plus commitment to feeding, cleaning, vet care, socializing, exercising and loving. You can’t put them in a cage and “add water” and food once a day.

Think of them as human beings, with a personality, feelings, emotions and muscles that need to move. Because they are. Every rabbit speaks to you if you take the time to listen and observe. Just because a rabbit can’t talk doesn’t mean you can’t communicate. People talk to human babies, talking to your rabbit allows them to know your voice and understand your role in their life. They communicate to you by licking you, jumping in the air, grunting, clicking, racing around your feet or snuggling on the couch. They can be a source of unending joy, laughter and love.

### A Life and Soul in Your Hands

If you are thinking of getting a rabbit, don’t do it at Easter. Breeders sell a lot of rabbits during Easter and it is detrimental to society to support the unnecessary breeding of domestic animals for profit. There are too many unwanted, adoptable rabbits in rescues that need a home. Most are already spayed or neutered and litter box trained. Many are highly social and as cute as any you will find in a pet store or from a breeder.



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## *Chocolate and Baskets–Not Real Bunnies*

*By Gail Petersen, Safe Haven Officer & Foster Parent* (continued from previous page)

Exactly like a cat or dog, rabbits should not be treated as a possession or a toy. They need nutritious food, proper handling and exercise. You wouldn't lock your cat in a small cage and leave it outside – so you shouldn't do that to rabbits. Bring them into your home, into your family and into your daily life. They will return your commitment and kindness ten times over.

Do your research before getting a bunny. Read about their needs, how much they will cost, how long they will live and what you need to do to “bunny-proof” your home. Talk to someone at a shelter or rescue about the rabbits that they have and which one might suit your family best. Young or old, big or small. If you are knowledgeable about all these factors you will be more successful in finding the right addition to your family.

## *Happy Easter Every Bun!*



Looking for a cute Easter Basket idea or something fun for your child's school or your work office, Paula from 'Frog Prince Paperie' has a free Easter Bunny Tails favor topper that you can print yourself.

Print the topper, buy 4" wide cello bags, and fill with either powdered sugar or coconut dipped donut holes, large marshmallows, tea cake cookies, or any other bite size circular confection or treat.

Open the below linked page, scroll down, and enter an email address where it says 'Enter Your Email to Download Your Free Bunny Tail Printable for Easter class favors!' then click the pink box that says 'GIMME MY FREE PRINTABLES!' A downloadable PDF file will automatically open.

<https://frogprincepaperie.com/free-easter-printable-bunny-tails-favor/2/>

ENJOY!

★ *Educational Corner* ★  
by Linda Torlay, Safe Haven Educator



It's indisputable that blueberries are a powerhouse of nutrition but what nutrition exactly do they have and how is that good for my rabbit?

Blueberries have a high water content (about 84%), are low in fat (about .3g per 100g), they are a good source of vitamin C (about 11g per 100g) supporting immunity, calcium (about 6mg per 100g) and phosphorus (about 11mg per 100g) supporting healthy bones, insoluble (about 2.2%) and soluble (about .6%) fiber supporting a healthy digestive tract, vitamin A (3 IU per 100g) supporting eye health, vitamin K (25mcg per 100g) supporting kidney and liver health, and manganese (about .3mg per 100g) supporting the activation of other enzymes which support overall health.



Blueberries also contain the family of B vitamins, choline, copper, iron, magnesium, selenium, and zinc. Blueberries are also an antioxidant which protect against cell damage. The greatest concentration is found in the outside blue skin of the fruit.

In addition to the fruit itself, it is safe for rabbits to enjoy the stems and fresh green leaves of the plant too.

There are two primary types of blueberry plants, lowbush (also known as wild blueberry) and highbush. The difference between the two is simple. Lowbush only gets about knee height and sprawl out as they mature. The berries are small and sweeter and the plant prefers colder regions. Highbush will grow tall if not kept trimmed down and can reach heights of up to ten feet. The berries are larger and the plant will shed its leaves in the winter. Highbush plants have two primary varieties, northern and southern, respectively named for the climate they prefer. Of the two types there are sub varieties of each and a cross between the two.

Blueberries can be grown in pots, planted as a beautiful hedge row and incorporated into landscaping designs, and of course cultivated for consumption.

In that a rabbit's digestive system is sensitive to sweets even blueberries need to be fed at a minimum. The general recommendation is not to exceed 1 teaspoon of fruit per 2 pounds of body weight daily and each rabbit's unique tolerance needs to be monitored.

## Did You Know...

By Linda Torlay, Safe Haven Educator

Who is Hunt Slonem? He is an American artist born July 18, 1951 and **Did You Know** he is best known for his Neo-Expressionistic and repetitive image paintings and artwork of rabbits, butterflies, and tropical birds.

Encouraged as a child by his grandfather to paint it wasn't until the mid 70's that his passion flourished when he received a painting grant. His career progressed and caught the attention of some very famous and prominent people in New York City who he befriended and was soon an established figure in the art scene and trendy hot spots.



During his youth the family lived in Hawaii (and other places, his father was a Navy officer) and it was there he became captivated with wildlife. It wasn't until the early 80's that Slonem began his rabbit paintings and sculptures. The idea was sparked when he learned that his birth year, 1951, was the year of the rabbit according to the Chinese zodiac calendar. Like other art he produced his rabbit series is of repetitive images. His thought process of repeating the same image over and over he equates to the spiritual meditation of mantras.

Hunt Slonem's art work is displayed in over 80 museums around the world, some being very prominent such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Guggenheim. Slonem's art is also popular amongst prominent private collectors and he too has a unique collection of his own.

Hunt Slonem still resides in New York City and also owns two historic plantations in Louisiana, one of which was owned by the famous La Fayette.



<https://www.huntslonem.com/news>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunt\\_Slonem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunt_Slonem)

## Recent Activities

*By Karen Augustynowicz, Rescue President / Foster parent*

In the last issue (Fall 2021), we mentioned that Medgene Labs of Brookings, SD had received emergency use authorization by the USDA for their RHDV2 vaccine. That was exciting news for all bunny parents! And, it wasn't long after that all the Safe Haven bunnies were first in line to get their shot.

Nov. 30th, we posted on facebook:

“We Got our Shot” 20 Safe Haven and SH volunteer’s rabbits all lined up to receive their first Medgene RHDV2 vaccine this morning. Thanks to Dr. Adelsohn and Community Animal Hospital everything went very smoothly. We got a few thumps from the buns, but other than that they were all well behaved. We urge all bunny owners to have their buns vaccinated against this deadly disease. Please protect your bunnies! “



All the bunnies did great. No reactions at all. The humans were exhausted, but happy. And we were scheduled to return for the second dose 21 days later on December 21st.

## *Recent Activities*

*By Karen Augustynowicz, Rescue President / Foster parent*

Dec. 21 - Exactly 21 days since their first RHDV2 vaccine, our crew was ready to do it again for the second dose. Thanks to Dr. Adelsohn's caring expertise and vet tech, Sean's expert assistance, the process of vaccinating 20 rabbits was smooth and easy. Recording the necessary documentation, weighing, temperature taking and exam to the actual shot only took a few minutes per rabbit.

Thank you to Astrid Hesse for getting great pictures! Special thanks to Community Animal Hospital for providing this service. Safe Haven urges all rabbit owners to protect your rabbits by having them vaccinated asap.



*Another successful day!*

Now that all our bunnies were safe. I knew I had to come up with other ways to help spread the word so others will see the necessity of getting their rabbits vaccinated.

## Recent Activities

By Karen Augustynowicz, Rescue President / Foster parent

### Spreading the Word About RHDV2

Excerpt From the Medgene Labs website: “Rabbit hemorrhagic disease is a highly contagious, fatal disease in rabbits and is currently classified as a reportable, foreign animal disease in the United States. Animal health officials detected rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus serotype 2 (RHDV2) for the third time in the United States in February 2020. It has since been spreading across the country. It is important to note that RHDV2 does not impact human health.

RHDV2, unlike other rabbit hemorrhagic disease viruses, affects both domestic and wild rabbits. Infected rabbits may develop a fever, be hesitant to eat, or show respiratory or nervous signs. However, many times, the only signs of the disease are sudden death.”

Safe Haven has been closely following the spread of this deadly virus. For those who use Facebook, two excellent sites for up-to-date information are: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease [News Network](#) or RHDV [Information Page](#) . Both sites provide information on the virus, postings of vets/clinics offering vaccinations and updates from Medgene Labs. You will also find articles on the Safe Haven website “Links” page.

Even though it has not yet reached NJ, you want to stay ahead of it  
and have your rabbits vaccinated *before* it gets here.

One of the easiest way to get people’s attention is with a great logo. Since that is not my expertise, I emailed Jacqui Crown who created all the logos for our Bike for the Buns events which everyone loved. And, as expected, she came up with the perfect logo to get the message across.

It was perfect! And, adorable! We used it everywhere. Incorporated it into several facebook covers and on the website slider. And, I am sure you will see it many more times going forward as well. Don’t you just love the band-aids?

Thanks again, Jacqui for sharing your talent to help the bunnies. We do appreciate your support!



## *Recent Activities*

*By Karen Augustynowicz, Rescue President / Foster parent*

### *Vaccine Education*

Once rabbit owners started finding out about the new Medgene Labs vaccine, Safe Haven began receiving emails with questions from concerned bunny parents. Should they have their rabbits vaccinated? Was it safe? Are there side-effect? Do indoor rabbits need to be vaccinated?

In mid-December 2021, I reached out to Medgene Labs, the vaccine manufacturer, to inquire if they would be willing to do a presentation about the development of the vaccine, USDA CVB Requirements, safety, testing, licensing timeline, etc. I was put in touch with Ms. Ashley Petersen (senior scientist on the vaccine) who was more than willing to share her expertise and answer any questions our attendees would have. I was thrilled! And, working with Ms. Petersen was a pleasure.

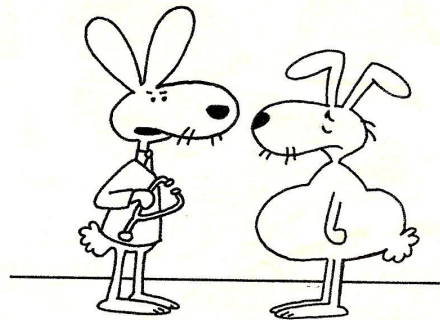
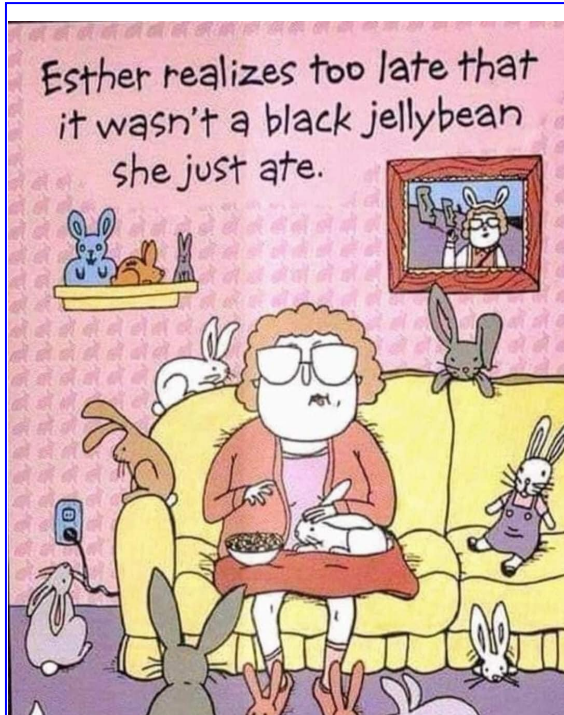
Also, luckily for us, Michelle Bover Manderski, who is a Safe Haven Officer & Volunteer just happens to also be a college professor! And, since the pandemic, was very familiar holding on-line classes. When Michelle volunteered to be the webinar host, I breathed a sigh of relief, knowing she would do a wonderful job.

My job was to get the notifications out and keep track of the registrations. We ended up with 140 registrations. While most were from NJ, NY and PA, we also had sign-ups from CA, CT, DE, FL, GA, IA, IN, MA, MD, MN, MS, MT, NC, NH, NV, OH, TX, VA, WA, WI, WI and a good group from Canada as well!!

The webinar was a huge success and once permission was granted to make the video available to the public, it has been shared multiple times on social media and we've lost track of the views due to url changes. But, if you missed it, you can find it on the Safe Haven YouTube channel. Click on picture below:



## *A little Easter Humor....*



"Be honest. How long has it been since you hopped down the bunny trail?"

*Need a bunny themed gift? Check out our [On-line Store!](#)*



Many of the items are handmade or created just to help the bunnies of Safe Haven. Just in time to help you find that unique present or buy a special gift for yourself.

*All proceeds go directly toward caring for our foster & sanctuary bunnies!*

*[Go to Store!](#)*

*Take care - We'll be in touch soon!!  
Enjoy the holidays*