

P.O. Box 26097
Westbank, BC
Canada V4T 2G3
Ph/Fax: 250-768-4803
tracs@shaw.ca
www.tracs-bc.ca

December 2010

aim
animal issues
magazine



Our Companion Animals

The Responsible Animal Care Society

TR  **CS**

Vice-President's Message

John Robbins and Living a Peaceful Life

The holidays are fast approaching once again. Why do they seem to come faster and faster each year? Now don't get me wrong, I love the holiday season and what it signifies for me. Mostly, it's about spending time with my family and focusing on what's really important in life. It's a time to be thankful for everything I have and a time to reflect on what I was able to contribute this past year; not only to my family, but what have I done to give back to the community and the environment. This year, I find myself spending more time with these thoughts. I think it stems from the John Robbins lecture in October. He spoke eloquently about growing up in a very rich home, being groomed to take over his father's Baskin-Robbins ice cream business. He could have been wealthy beyond what most of us could only imagine but he chose to walk away from it all. In a quote from his book *The New Good Life*, John says, "I wanted to use my life to help bring about a world of greater respect, understanding, and integrity." He knew that running a hugely successful ice cream business wasn't his purpose in life. Instead, John and his lovely wife, Deo, moved to British Columbia and built their own home, grew their own food and lived on \$500 a year. They did this for ten years during which time they had a son. They also did this living on a plant-based diet. They were living a truly peaceful existence. Not owning a vehicle and not consuming animals, they did not impact negatively on our environment. Actually, they had a positive effect on our environment by growing healthful organic food, feeding our soils with nutrients and not killing it with damaging chemicals and pesticides.

Listening to John speak about how precious our environment is, how our everyday actions can have an impact greater than we realize in our busy lives had a big impact on how I live my own life. So what does all this mean? I know for myself I want to do my best to ensure all living things, from my family and friends, the less fortunate we see on the street, to the animals that are not treated fairly, should be treated with great kindness. Every time you make the decision to have a plant-based meal, there will be one animal saved from unnecessary slaughter and our environment will be a healthier and more peaceful place for us all to live in. Each year between 250 and 300 million turkeys are raised for slaughter in the U.S. This is a number that needs to be reduced. By choosing to have a few meatless meals each week we can have a huge impact on our environment and on our health. I wish this same peacefulness for everyone.

-- Daneen Agecoutay,
Vice-President, TRACS



TRACS Directors

President: Sinikka Crosland

Vice-President: Daneen Agecoutay

Secretary-Treasurer: Stacey Agecoutay

Director of Nutrition & Food Animal Issues: Brenda Davis

Director of Publicity & Promotions: Anna Crosland

Director of Rabbit Programs: Bob Sherman

Directors-at-Large: Alexis Adrienne, Cyndy Mymka, Alexandria Grunbaum

[photo of "Sam" on front cover by Anna Crosland]

Rabbit Power!

There has been a lot going on in our continuing work to rescue and care for homeless bunnies. In spite of Kelowna's bylaw prohibiting the sale or giving away of un-spayed and un-neutered rabbits, irresponsible persons continue to abandon these defenseless domestic pets. This summary review will not mention any volunteer by name. I'm afraid I might miss someone. Suffice it to say that TRACS would not be able to carry on our rabbit rescue work without the selfless commitment of a few volunteers. Some volunteers even dedicate a part or all of every weekend to rabbit work, forgoing many leisure activities that most people enjoy. TRACS cannot thank our rabbit volunteers enough!

Sanctuary Planning

Late last year, a trial project involved installing a the new West Side Sanctuary. Experience with the plywood showed that it did not provide the level our rabbits need. The metal roof worked out well the standard for use in future construction. Cost is more, but once installed properly, the roofs are water-maintenance free. An important benefit is that valuable volunteer is saved, in that water problems from roofs do not exist. Based learning opportunities at the West side structure, our planning/ consultant was able to develop professionally drafted plans and material that make it practical to construct sound, well-built shelters, that are cost-



metal roof on heretofore-used of protection that and became only slightly tight and time upon design lists effective.

Sanctuaries

Two new buildings were erected in North Kelowna by volunteers. This would not have been possible without the willingness of a wonderful family to provide the land, and the daily care. As much as I would like to thank the family here by name, confidentiality requires that I do not. However, please be aware that you are very much appreciated! Much needed repair is being done to one of the buildings at the East Kelowna Sanctuary. This building had a plywood roof that was problematic. The other buildings at this site continue to be a problem due to flat plywood roofs and water leaks. High on next year's agenda would be starting to solve these problems. Ideally, and funds permitting, new buildings would replace the old.



Rabbit Rescue

Fortunately, fewer rabbits have been “dumped” than in prior years. Still, even one abandoned pet is too many. One of our volunteers coordinates rescue/live trap efforts. We now have an agreement with the Regional District of the Central Okanagan to rescue rabbits found abandoned in Mission Creek Park. This new agreement was needed since the land is not covered under the agreement with the City of Kelowna.

Fund-Raising

We are continually exploring fund raising opportunities. It is no secret that supporting our rabbits takes money. The only government subsidy received is for the spaying/neutering costs. We don't have a designated fund-raising coordinator, so volunteers have, on their own, undertaken projects such as an “Elvis Concert” (generously donated by “Kelowna Elvis”), garage sales, fund-raisers at stores, apple sales, calendar sales, a haunted house on Halloween, and new contribution envelopes that make it easy to donate. Every bit helps.

Adoptions

We have begun a formal program of rabbit adoptions. Required are a pre-adoption application, a home visit and counseling, and if approved an adoption agreement. Everything possible is done to ensure that the bunny or bunnies have an excellent “forever” home. Everything required for a rabbit home must be in place before a rabbit goes there. We have in fact turned some applicants down, as our primary concern is the welfare of our rabbits. That said, the several adoptions we have accomplished have been very successful. After the beginning of the new-year we will begin our partnership with the Kelowna PetSmart. We will have a regular presence at the store, providing adoption information, counseling, and help with bunny-meets for qualified “bunny-parents.”

Volunteers

All volunteers continue to provide time and effort far in excess of what they should be doing. The Rabbit Advocate Volunteers are a very dedicated group that doesn't give up. Still, we are always in search of more volunteers. Volunteers are greatly needed to assist with cleaning the rabbit sanctuaries; this needs to be done twice weekly. The work is somewhat physical. Any time that could be given on a regular basis would be greatly appreciated. Being around the bunnies can be a wonderful way to relieve stress and provide a very much needed community service. Please contact TRACS at 250-768-4803 if you would like to help.

Name Recognition

Please take the time to “Talk TRACS” with family, neighbours, and acquaintances. Continued success of our organization is dependent on support from the community. People must know who we are and what we are about!

What is TRACS Rabbit Advocates?

Very simply, TRACS Rabbit Advocates is an informal sub-group of TRACS. Any of the volunteers who would like to use this identification in fund raising, adoption, and promotion efforts can do so. The TRACS Rabbit Advocates logo was adapted, with permission, from the Portland Rabbit Advocates organization. The attractive logo will identify and help draw attention to our rabbit rescue and help initiate conversations that will further our many efforts to help the bunnies.

Today, a Rabbit's Life Was Saved

I am not writing this in search of praise. I know many volunteers in animal rescue have saved lives. My purpose is to share a meaningful experience, give credit to those who have taught us about rabbits, encourage all to trust their gut feelings, and provide some information on what goes on in our day-to-day care for our bunnies.



Marie and I recently constructed a new bunny sanctuary in Kelowna, B.C. We used experience gained from two other projects to refine the details of this one. It became the home for about 50 young rabbits, who had been fostered by "Grandpa & Granny," a wonderful couple in their 80's who love rabbits and care deeply about them.

This new building, along with another building housing an additional sixty rabbits, requires a great deal of weekly care. Thus we recently shifted our duties from another sanctuary to this one. Last Tuesday, I was cleaning in the new building, whilst Marie cleaned the original one. This consists of sweeping the rabbit pellets, changing the straw put in small shelters to help the bunnies keep warm, and cleaning the corners which rabbits have preferred for bathroom facilities. Of course, looking for any abnormalities amongst our charges is part of the day.

My normal practice is, as I clean and notice a bunny near my feet, I reach down and attempt to pet the rabbit. Usually the bunny runs away, but occasionally stays. This allows me to determine which rabbits are friendly and might be good adoption candidates. When I do manage to pick up a friendly bunny, the bunny always scampers away when I put him or her down. This is a normal reaction.

On Tuesday, I noted a small black bunny by my feet as I cleaned. I picked him up. After a bit of petting, I placed him down on the floor. He didn't run away. I continued to observe this bunny, and saw that he was unusually lethargic. Other rabbits would come near him, and even jump over him, without any reaction. This was very odd. Marie and I agreed that this bunny needed to go to the vet right away.

Our suspicions were confirmed. The bunny-knowledgeable vet, who helps TRACS Rabbit Advocates in many ways, did x-rays and a stool test. The outlook was grim as she diagnosed the bunny with a parasite known as coccidiosis, in an advanced stage. She said that, based on his blood count, she was surprised he was even alive. She prescribed a medicine (Teva Trimel) to be given orally, and a diet of hay and iron-rich greens, with no pellets. Based upon my Rabbit Advocate experience, I asked if we shouldn't be giving Oxbow Critical Care food. I knew this bunny had to start eating, and was unlikely to begin eating hay on his own. She said, sure, we could do that.

We brought Cole home and made him as comfortable as we could. He was lethargic and we knew he did not feel good. He couldn't even hold his head up. He sat scrunched up with his head between the support rails of the indoor hutch with his eyes half closed. He looked so sad. We began the regimen of medicine and Oxbow Critical Care. Within three hours his eyes seemed to brighten. We still had hope for him. Still on Wednesday we did not see any

new elimination pellets, although a good amount of urine was present. His eyes were brighter and he was moving around a bit. He started eating some hay and greens but still no pellets. Wednesday night, I said a prayer to St. Francis, the Patron Saint of Animals. (More on this by e-mailing rabbit4u@telus.net, if you are interested.)



As if by a miracle, on Thursday morning, we were overjoyed to find Cole had left us ten pellets! We knew his system was beginning to work. We kept him in fresh hay and spinach, to build his blood iron. His appetite improved by leaps and bounds. His bunny vet called to see how he was doing, and was amazed that he was still alive. She had been planning an autopsy to determine what his condition had been, in order to plan preventive care for the other rabbits at the sanctuary.

He will keep taking his meds for a two week period. He is lively and looking very, very good! We changed his name to "Lucky." We know he would not have lasted another day if we had not brought him home. He is the most beautiful black bunny, with big back feet and long ears. We think perhaps his immune system is a bit weak, so he won't go back to the sanctuary. He will stay with us and we will be on the lookout for a perfect "forever" home. He will have lots of love and be spoiled here until that day comes. Who knows, he might even become pals with our own "Sunshine Bunny"? Thank you to the "rabbit community," for the experience, training, and shared knowledge that allowed us to take timely action and save this life!

--Bob Sherman, Director of Rabbit Programs, TRACS

Another Life Saved

In mid-September another miracle occurred with a TRACS rabbit. A lovely couple walking in Mission Creek Park found a wee bunny (about 3 weeks old) clinging to a small mound of dirt in the irrigation canal. The man picked her up, and the wife tucked her under her sweater and dried her off. It was amazing that they happened to be in that area of the park, just in time to see little "Pumpkin" in desperate need of help.

On that very day, we'd had to say good bye to another dear bunny of ours who crossed the Rainbow Bridge. I couldn't help but think about the resounding message in all of this, that we must continue to press on, mourning the ones we lose and holding them dearly in our hearts, yet making sure to keep our hearts open for those who still need us.

--Cyndy Mymka, Director and Humane Trapper for TRACS

Caring For Their Future

Animals need long-lasting protection, and TRACS has a proven history of acting staunchly and valiantly on their behalf. Please consider making a bequest to The Responsible Animal Care Society in your will, and your compassion will help the animals for years to come....

The Amazing UVic Rabbit Rescue

It had to be one of the most amazing experiences in my life but at the same time – one of the most grueling. It seemed crazy to be traveling during one of the worst snowstorms to hit the United States in fifty years, but according to the permit obtained from the B.C. Ministry of Environment, it was absolutely necessary, so off we went. Laura-Leah Shaw has to be one of the most courageous and gutsy women I know. She doesn't know the word "impossible" and she just doesn't take "no" for an answer. Unfortunately, I don't drive (a fear that I've never conquered), so basically she had to be responsible for all of the driving. However, to go alone on a 46 hour drive in 4 days could be potentially dangerous, so I came along to keep her company, be the navigator and also help to care for the bunnies.

Stacking and placing 60 bunnies in carriers in a van is a precarious skill, which Ms. Shaw also has a talent for, so we managed to get all rabbits into carriers and placed accordingly with good ventilation and comfort. Normally a shorter route could be taken but given the weather conditions, a much longer route had to be planned to go down the west coast and then over to Texas via Arizona and New Mexico.



Although a day was needed to get the packing properly done, another delay came in the form of "Mother Nature." After the first day we made it to the end of Washington State and, at this point, there was only rainy weather, so it was fairly smooth going. However, the next day through Oregon, there were rumours of the snow-bound "Grant's Pass" near Northern California. Strangely enough, right up to Grant's Pass and a little bit beyond, there wasn't even a hint of snow. But after about 5:00 p.m. when the sun went down, suddenly steep graded hills and a blinding snowstorm forced us to stop early at a small town where we were informed the highway was now officially closed. It proved to be a good time to refresh the cages and to get a well-needed rest to forge ahead. Luckily the next day proved to be a contrast as the pass opened up and the sun came out. The rest of Northern California was sunny, mild and beautiful. Lush forested areas turned into soft reddish-coloured deserts with bright blue skies and this continued on to be a long but pleasant drive into the next state of Arizona. The last part of the journey was the most challenging as we had a 16 hour drive across deserts and then back into mountains that finally got us in late at night into the sparkling lit city of Albuquerque, where I unfortunately had to end my journey and fly back to Victoria.

The miraculous part of the whole journey seemed to be those hardy UVic rabbits who took all of this in stride. The rabbits at the back of the van came to the front of their carriers

with seeming curiosity, watching the changes in terrain and weather as we crisscrossed the country. A few of them got a little bit angry if they didn't get their treats on time and threw their dishes around but overall they were eating and drinking like horses and for the most part only looking a bit inquisitive about their surroundings. To me it was astonishing that these animals could adapt so readily and easily. These poor critters, when you think about it, were yanked out of a home they'd had for years, sent for surgery, given a bit of time for recovery and then were off to a new home thousands of miles away. Yet here they were, munching on lettuce leaves in their carriers, looking pretty complacent and happy. This alone made the entire experience worthwhile.

And then there were the Americans. Every motel had a pet friendly policy and seemed so receptive to our cause. Every passerby wanted to know the story and seemed fascinated by it. One man who had just rescued a dog from a shelter, honked his horn and yelled "God Bless" as he drove away. It was such a relief not to hear any nasty comments such as "why don't you feed them to the homeless?" One little girl asked us how she could volunteer and countless other people seemed interested in trying to help in any way they could. But what really saved the day for us was the House Bunny Society in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Iris, a volunteer who offered to replace me and also drive for the exhausted Laura-Leah for the remainder of the journey. As it turned out, she drove the lion's share of the last 13 hours – with Laura-Leah needing only to drive 3 hours. (I unfortunately had to return home due to work obligations and I also had contracted a wicked flu.) In addition, other people readily offered their homes to us to stay for the night and one man brought us much needed hay to replenish the carriers. This trip restored my faith in human kindness and made me feel that there were many others who also cared about these rabbits and their well being.



Wild Rose Rescue Ranch, Texas

So, in conclusion, it was an exhausting, challenging trip to travel such long hours through such terrible weather conditions – on average we were driving for 14 hours and then spent 4 hours feeding and providing water to the rabbits. If you asked me would I do it again I would say –"Yes" – in a heartbeat, and actually I will probably be doing it again in December. It is all a worthwhile experience when you can see a beautiful country, meet kind people and know that it is all too possible for the UVic rabbits to get the life they deserve in their new sanctuary paradise in Texas.

--Kathleen Terrio, volunteer

For more information on the University of Victoria rabbit rescue, please visit www.tracs-bc.ca/uvicbun.html.

Support Needed!

Two crucial bills, tabled by MP Alex Atamanenko, are in need of your support:

- Bill C-544 is an Act that would effectively shut down the slaughter of horses in Canada for human consumption. For more information, please visit: www.defendhorsescanada.org/BillC544tabledbypMPAlexAtamanenko.html.
- Bill C-474 would require that “an analysis of potential harm to export markets be conducted before the sale of any new genetically engineered seed is permitted.” This bill will be up for its second hour of debate at Third reading on March 02, 2011. Genetically modified food products have not been proven safe for consumption by humans or animals. To support Bill C-474, please visit the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network website: www.cban.ca/Take-Action/Support-Bill-C-474.

Our Companion Animals

Who do you pet and who do you eat? Many believe that there can be nothing more endearing than a fluffy, blue-eyed kitten or a bouncing bundle of canine energy who has rightfully earned the title of our “best friend”. The hearts of numerous have been totally captivated by the charming innocence of rabbits, while equine whisperers the world over celebrate unique relationships with horses. There are no words to describe how we feel about our non-human companions; truly, we love them for the wonderful beings they are. And we all seem to have our favourites.

But what about those who are routinely eaten? “It’s the circle of life,” claimed one woman who, while contemplating the fate of food animals, petted the dog at her side. “Humans are at the top of the food chain.” I asked her if she’d ever known a calf or a pig or a chicken. “No, but pigs are smart,” she said. “If I wanted to stop eating meat, I’d start with pigs.” Clearly, for certain people, animal intelligence has something to do with whether a being should be eaten or not.

Does personality play a part in this? I’ve heard of hunters who have laid down their guns after spending time getting to know individual “prey” animals. They came to realize that each “wild” animal had a unique personality. Suddenly these creatures were no longer food or prey—they were personable beings, on par with the animals society likes to call “pets”.

John Robbins, best-selling author of numerous books, including The Food Revolution, Diet for a New America, and The New Good Life: Living Better Than Ever in an Age of Less, spoke recently in Kelowna and Summerland. Born into the Baskin-Robbins ice cream empire, he rejected a lifestyle that many would have envied, and chose instead a very different road. Concerned about the cruelties inherent in factory farming, John wrote: “The pain we feel at what is being done to our fellow creatures is not ours alone. It arises from our kinship with life. We hurt because we are not separate from the animals, nor from the people who are the perpetrators of such suffering. We hurt because these animals are our fellow mortals, part of the greater Earth community, and because the people administering such cruelty are our fellow human beings. We hurt because we are all connected, because we all are part of the great web of life” (The Food Revolution; pg. 221).

Spoken from the heart, John’s words provide hope for change. His insights transcend the circle-of-life argument that is often used as an excuse for exploiting those living beings who don’t happen to be the companions of our choosing.

Perhaps in a future time we will choose to respect and revere all life.

--Sinikka Crosland

Shocking Fact

Leading cause of species in the United States
being threatened or eliminated:

Livestock Grazing.

(The Food Revolution by John Robbins)

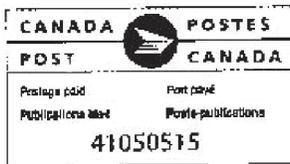
TRACS would like to thank our wonderful supporters and volunteers
for your amazing contributions toward the protection of animals.

May your holiday season abound with peace and joy.



Join TRACS....

Help us continue our crucial work for
the animals—become a member and
receive our quarterly newsletter.



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____

e-mail: _____

I am enclosing the following (please check):

_____ \$15 for Individual Membership

_____ \$20 for Family Membership

_____ Donation \$ _____

Return to: TRACS, P.O. Box 26097
Westbank, B.C. V4T 2G3 Canada

Thanks from the animals!