

SUBURBAN LIFE

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THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1994



BEVERLY CORNELL

Bunnies are pets for keeps

Aren't they cute? Baby bunnies at Easter time. Stop! Don't buy a cute bunny on impulse. Read how to care for the rabbit. Give careful consideration to the time and patience it takes. This cute bunny at Easter time is NOT a disposable pet to be discarded.

You cannot believe how many phone calls I received this winter concerning loose domestic rabbits that were once someone's pet. It was very sad to see the poor, physical condition of these released domestic rabbits.

Domestic rabbits cannot live as wild rabbits. They have a very sensitive digestive track and if they eat what wild rabbits eat they will get severe diarrhea and die. That is if they don't get hit by a car or attacked and killed by a cat or dog first. This is a very cruel thing to do to any animal.

Domestic rabbits have been raised for meat, pelts and as pets since the 1600s. Fancy rabbit breeding is what we are most familiar with. These rabbits are bred for showing and improving the standard for each breed. It is these rabbits that are sold as pets. In rabbit talk, when bucks (males) and does (females) are under six months they are called juniors and when they are over six months they are called seniors. There are many different breeds.

The Mini Lop was first seen in 1972 at the German National Rabbit Show held in Essen, Germany when there were only 46 in that country and they came to the United States in 1974. When a Mini Lop is a senior rabbit it weighs under seven pounds.

The Holland Lop (Netherlands Dwarf Lop) came into the United States in 1975, and they are known for their floppy ears that are 11 to 12 inches long. A senior lop has a maximum weight of four pounds and their temperament, as with the Mini Lops, is sweet, mischievous, inquisitive, sometimes timid and silly.

The Netherlands Dwarf originated in the Netherlands in May 1940. These domestic rabbits are the smallest of your fancy breeds, weighing in as a senior at two pounds.

Our Netherlands Dwarf, Karmel, weighs one pound and eight ounces. My husband and I have a Mini Lop rabbit, a Holland Lop Frost Point and a Broken Color Netherlands Dwarf.

Two were someone's Easter bunnies that were no longer wanted. Karmel came to us at 10 days old after being rejected by his mother. I bottle fed him until he was about five weeks old. Karmel is sweet, litter trained and thinks he is a cat, probably because he plays with our three de-clawed, indoor cats.

The caging we provide for our outdoor neutered rabbits, Bugie and Frostie, is large with a walk-in run and two small insulated dog houses with hay inside for warmth. Attached to their enclosed run is a play area. Karmel's indoor cage is as large as the playground area the same size as his cage. Since Karmel is litter trained, he is allowed to be loose for about an hour a day in parts of the house that are safe for him. Karmel, the cats and our dog Bristol enjoy this time together.

Karmel has the clamp style of kitty litter, which is easy to keep clean and odor free. Rabbits enjoy playing with toys. For chewing they use small nylabones and small tree branches. Rabbits need hard objects to chew because their teeth continuously grow.

Feeding rabbits is quite easy and they are great little garbage disposals. Our rabbits get raw oatmeal, commercial rabbit pellets, and loose alfalfa hay. Fresh greens should be given in small amounts. I feed our three boys apples, carrots, red and green peppers, parsley, grapes, broccoli and oranges. The tops from the peppers with no seeds can be given to rabbits, too. Cut the throwaway broccoli stalks lengthwise in half and your rabbit will eat the inside of the stalk.

Also, when you let your rabbit out to your yard make sure there are no wires he could chew. It's hard to move wooden furniture out of the way to prevent it from being chewed. I use Bitter Apple to protect wooden furniture. There is also a Bitter Apple spray to put on plants to keep pets from chewing your plants.

Parents should be teaching their children to love and respect animals. This is a good lesson on responsibility and on how to treat their fellow man.

Go to your local library or pet store with your child and get a book on the care of domestic rabbits. It can be such a wonderful experience. Make sure before buying the cute Easter bunny that you have the ability and desire to care for a rabbit. Their life span is approximately five to seven years.

Domestic rabbits can be lovable and clean pets. With the proper living facilities, food and lots of LOVE, a rabbit becomes a wonderful house pet.

Beverly Cornell, a Farmington Hills resident, is a retired veterinary technician. In addition to her rabbits, Cornell owns one dog, three cats, one parakeet and one iguana. Her back yard is a habitat for rehabilitating orphaned wildlife, including ducks, squirrels, cottontails and different birds.

Writer cracks

MYSTERY



We asked Farmington area readers to finish the beginning of a mystery spoof, based in the Farmington area. The response was overwhelming. One - written by Mary Ann Wade of Farmington Hills - stood out from the rest.

The mystery is solved and all you page turners can finally see the results. We asked Farmington area readers to finish the beginning of a mystery spoof, based in the Farmington area. The response was overwhelming and included entries from seventh-graders at Warner Middle School. Every story had merit. However, one - written by Mary Ann Wade of Farmington Hills - stood out from the rest. We started the story with the first four paragraphs. The rest is from Wade's fertile imagination.

Farmington police Detective Imma Baffono scratched her scalp, took a drag on her cigarette and a gulp of coffee.

"Tell me, when did you see him last?" she asked the lanky woman standing in front of her.

"Well, it had to be about 3 p.m. Thursday," Jane Fink said, staring at the ground. "I just finished reading my Farmington Observer when the doorbell rang. He stopped by to pick up the last pages of the mystery novel we were writing together. He promised he'd call later that night."

"But the phone never rang," Fink continued.

"Tell me more about your friend," said Imma. "Well, he's from Germany, his name is Uli Litterit, he's blond and very good looking."

"Well, he came here about 3 p.m. to pick up the final pages of your novel. How did he get here?" asked Imma. "Taxi," replied Jane. "Then what did you do?" Imma asked. "I turned on the TV and watched Montel, my Porstin cat. Geo-Emm was curled in my lap. I remember the topic of the day was 'Men who eat crackers in bed and the women who marry these crumb.' Then I got this terrible craving for saltines, so I went over to IGA, I love their Fame brand crackers. I also picked up a pack of Trident gum."

"Before I went though, I remembered to remove my fringed lamp shades. My cat thinks that anything remotely string-like is his own personal play thing. I locked the door and left."

"Anyway, I got the crackers and gum and on the way home I stopped at the party store to talk to my friend Hadit Ludvit. He said that the Lotto business had been brisk that day, so I took a chance and bought a ticket. I used numbers from some of my favorite pages in our novel."

"I went north on Orchard Lake toward home. It was the day of that big snowstorm that none of the weathercasters predicted. I remember I was watching the news on my little TV. Van Earl Wright said something about 'he took it deep' and scared me half to death. I hit the brake and narrowly missed a Jag. I was extremely careful the rest of the way. I turned down my street, the one where many of the residents have invisible fences for their dogs. I had to blow my horn several times to get the dogs out of the street, for fear of sliding into them. I noticed my neighbor, Bendair Dundat, out shoveling snow. I stopped to chat with him for a minute. I went into the house, checked my answering machine, but it wasn't blinking so I knew I hadn't missed him. Then I busied myself while I waited for his call."

"I watched Phil Donahue. Boy! I don't know where they got some of their topics! That day it was 'Married with children and having a life of your own, too.' They had a woman on there who had grade school children and had never seen a soccer game! They had a family with two teenage boys. One week as the mom was making her grocery list, she discovered that they still had food in the refrigerator and she didn't have to go to the grocery store. She was so distraught, she started drinking."

"How can they put this stuff on television - kids who feed their own pets, houses with no dirty dishes in the sink, unbelievable?"

"So, then it was getting near dinner time. I decided to make some spaghetti, and Geo-Emm came to the kitchen to keep me company. Nosy as he is, he got into the pantry. He climbed to the shelf where all my flavorings were and before I could stop him, Geo-Emm was raising spices on all the bottles. He was going crazy, sniffing and tasting! I feared for my life. I thought I would get a salted. I picked him up by the scruff of the neck, just in thyme and removed him from the pantry soda can couldn't do anymore damage. You went to IGA for crackers and gum and by the time you got back, you had been there, had it, tried it, loved it and did that. Then GM raised the prices on all its models and there were packs of invisible dogs roaming the streets. Is that correct?"

"Yes," replied Jane. "Well, Miss Pink. You've given me some very good information. I feel confident that we can find your friend."

After Detective Baffono left, Jane heard this loud meowing coming from the other room. On further investigation, she found her kitten totally wrapped up in telephone cords, the telephone knocked to the floor and the wires ripped from the wall, both lines were dead. "Oh, no," Jane thought, "Now, Geo-Emm has shut down all lines of communication."

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See MYSTERY, 2C

ABOUT THE WRITER

BY DIANE GALE

STAFF WRITER

A hidden talent was discovered when Mary Ann Wade entered the Observer mystery writing contest.

Creative juices flowed one day while the Farmington Hills woman was at work at Americana Plaza in Southfield.

"I wrote in between calls and typing," she said. "Half of my brain thought about the story and the other half would be answering phone calls."

While she doesn't have a lot of experience, Wade said, she has always been interested in writing.

Her story about the mischievous Geo-Emm is the first time her work was published.

Wade is beginning to learn that a flair for writing runs in her family. Her oldest son, Steve, surprised friends and family 18 months ago when Wade's mother died.

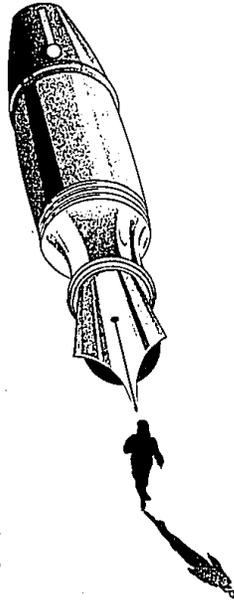
"He was real close with her, and he wanted to say something at the funeral," Wade said. "He wrote something and had the whole place in tears."

Meanwhile, his mother kept the panel of Observer judges in stitches. There were 20 some entries.

"Wade's work stood out with a creative and humorous edge," one Observer contest judge said.

Wade won a gift certificate to Cadillac Cafe in Farmington Hills and a copy of "Fronts," written by Birmingham mystery novelist, Elmore Leonard.

Wade hasn't decided, but since she and her husband, Don, have been married 25 years, they may celebrate at the Cadillac Cafe.



'I wrote in between calls and typing. Half of my brain thought about the story and the other half would be answering phone calls.'

Mary Ann Wade

Giver reaps 'psychic' bonus

BY DIANE GALE

STAFF WRITER

Josephine Jackson has deposited a bank full of what she calls her "psychic income."

That's how she refers to her rewards from extensive volunteer work.

"You get such satisfaction volunteering," Jackson said. "It isn't all altruism. It's what I call psychic income."

"Once you meet people outside your regular life it enlarges your world. I call it self-serving volunteering. I never would have met some of the wide range of people who volunteer."

She started giving her time at the Detroit Institute of Arts 17 years ago after retiring from the Federal Government's Social Administration as a field representative. She worked there for 34 years.

"I had been working mainly with adults and I wanted to work with children," she said.

The perfect job was the DIA's "Arts to the Schools" program. Jackson, and other decent, take the museum into fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms. Using slides of works in the DIA's collection, volunteers try to pique interest in art and inspire visits to the museum.

In early March, Jackson spoke about Native Americans at Gill Elementary School in Farmington Hills.

"We try to get them to use their eyes and imaginations," she said. "It's to show them what's in the museum and that art is fun. Kids love it."

Jackson, who lived in Southfield 25 years before moving to Farmington Hills, gives at least 20 of these presentations for the DIA annually. Her rewards are meeting the students and their teachers and to delve into new subjects she knew



Josephine Jackson

See DIA, 2C