

Easter Bunny Special

By *Jasmine Streeter, DVM*
Special to *The Skanner*
News

*Here comes Peter Cottontail
Hoppin' down the bunny trail
Hippity hoppity
Easter's on its way.*

This song was a childhood favorite of mine. Every April I'd dress my black and white Dutch rabbit, Milkshake, up and place him in an Easter basket surrounded by colorful



Dr. Jasmine says rabbits can make excellent pets for older children and adults

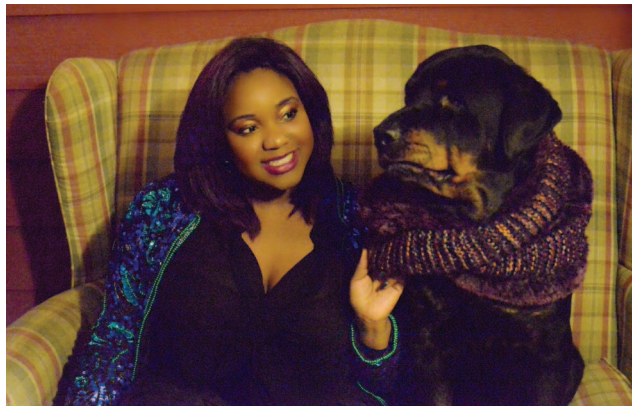
Looking back, that was not the best idea, and I don't believe he was too fond of the bow I tied around his neck either. That being said, I chose to focus this month's top-

ic on considerations before buying a rabbit for Easter.

How did the Easter bunny come to be exactly? According to Time magazine, "The Easter bunny first arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare." This custom spread throughout the U.S. along with chocolates, chicks, and peeps.

In addition to Easter egg hunts, many people decide to adopt bunnies.

Unfortunately, many bunnies end up in shelters once the excitement wanes as these cute little furballs grow into fully grown adult rabbits.



Dr. Jasmine Streeter, Veterinarian relaxes with her dog Sheba

It is difficult to identify how many rabbits end up in shelters each year. The most common reasons for surrendering rabbits are owners unable or unwilling to care for them, housing problems or overcrowding of animals.

Many first-time rabbit owners are unfamiliar with the amount of care

should be considered when acquiring a bunny or young rabbit. Neutering or spaying your rabbit is strongly encouraged as bunnies are the definition of "prolific breeders," and in only one month you can find yourself with a +7 added to the family.

Rabbits are naturally sensitive, subdued and

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that rabbits require. Although they may appear as "low maintenance" pets, they require just as much care as a dog or cat. Houses must be rabbit-proofed to prevent chewing of cords, clothing and furniture. They have a relatively long lifespan – between five and seven years – which

gentle. Television loves to show bunnies and children together cuddling. I can't blame them because children and rabbits do look amazing together. But considering animal welfare, small children and rabbits are not the most ideal pairing. Rabbits are extremely fragile, due to strong

back muscles and a weak lumbar spine. This disposition can lead to fracture of the lumbar spine if dropped or handled incorrectly. In addition, many rabbits feel frightened or uncomfortable when taken off the ground, which may be exacerbated when they hear a loud or excited voice.

When acquiring any pet, research should be done to make sure the pet

fits in with your lifestyle and cuddle demands. I believe rabbits make excellent pets for older children and adults, bringing great pleasure to their owners. If the time is not right when your child asks for a bunny, consider a chocolate rabbit or a petting zoo. Trust me, the rabbits will thank you!

Send your pet questions to drjasmine@theskanner.com.

Ecuador

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gry for change amid ongoing corruption allegations related to bribes that Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht paid to officials in Correa's government and a \$12 million contracting scandal at state-run PetroEcuador.

Yet in the final weeks of the race, Moreno inched ahead in polls amid an aggressive campaign led by Correa to cast Lasso as a wealthy, out-of-touch politician who profited from the country's 1999 banking crisis. Moreno also benefited from last-minute doubts that

the pro-business Lasso if elected would gut social programs that have endeared poor voters to Correa's "Citizens' Revolution."

Moreno, who has used a wheelchair since being shot in an attempted robbery two decades ago, cuts a softer image than the famously irritable Correa which was on display Sunday night as he addressed supporters.

"It's time for peace and union. Everyone will have a new opportunity and we will seek dialogue and harmony," said Moreno. "Our hand is outstretched."

Associated Press writer Joshua Goodman in Caracas, Venezuela, contributed to this report.



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