

HARVEY

Sometime during the summer of 1999 to 2000, I don't remember the exact year, an unimportant rabbit gave birth to several baby rabbits in her nest located on the edge of the Southern States' parking lot in Purcellville, VA. The mother rabbit was killed by a car on the parking lot and the employees didn't know what to do with the baby rabbits. Evelyn, my wife, chose that time to go shopping at Southern States. After Evelyn had finished her shopping and was paying her bill, the Southern States' Cashier told her about the homeless baby rabbits. As her nature is to help, my wife said she would take care of the baby rabbits. The Southern States' employees readily put the baby rabbits in a box and put the box in Evelyn's car. One of these unimportant baby rabbits was about to make a big difference in our lives

Evelyn brought the baby rabbits home and put them in a cage for which she kept baby chickens when they required special attention. A couple of days after she had brought the rabbits home to take care of, one of the rabbits got loose and ran between the furniture and the wall. The room the rabbit escaped into was my home office in which I had desks, a computer, file cabinets, bookcases, etc. It was impossible to catch the baby rabbit, who we named "Harvey," after the large rabbit in the James Stewart movie named "Harvey." After he had taken up residence in my office, we turned the other baby rabbits, who had not escaped



into my office, back into the wild.

Evelyn kept the rabbit cage in my office and kept the door to the cage open. In the cage, she put food and water for him and straw that he could use as

a potty. I might add that Harvey did use the straw for his potty and did so until we relocated him sometime during the following summer. Harvey loved to chew on electric wires, telephone cables and wires to the TV set. We had to fix all the wires in my office so that Harvey couldn't chew off the protective covering. If he had chewed through the covering to the electric wires, he would have received a big time shock.

In addition to the wires, Harvey loved to chew on the wood base board trim. I could not think of a way to stop him from chewing the trim. We kept our cats and dogs in the basement to protect Harvey. When the door to the dining room and living room was left open, Harvey moved into these rooms as well as my office. Harvey would not permit us to touch him as he grew into adulthood but he would come up to us and touch our outstretched hands with the tip of his nose.



The most interesting thing about Harvey, after we discovered that he was a she, was her desire to show off. No one will believe that a wild rabbit will show off just to get attention. We at that time had two sofas in the living room. One was placed in front of

the windows to the outside of the house and other one was placed next to the wall facing the window sofa. In the corner opposite the wall sofa, we had a large TV set, which we watched from the wall sofa.

One evening while we were watching TV, Harvey came into the living room and jumped onto the window sofa. She then began to show off, which she did frequently until we moved her out of the house. Harvey would leap up into the air and at the same time would do a 360 degree turn. She would do this several

times and then would lie down on the sofa to rest while we probably watched her rather than TV. When we moved off the wall sofa, Harvey would run from the living room back to my office.



Because Evelyn's mother who was dying of cancer was coming to live with us so that we could take care of her, we realized that we could not keep Harvey in the house and Evelyn's mother at the same time. For that reason, we decided to put Harvey back in the wild. The problem was how to put Harvey back in the woods with a good chance to survive. We chose a location near the creek that crosses our property. By the creek was a large brush pile we had stacked while clearing the area of brush.

We put Harvey in her cage with food and water and potty material and placed the cage inside the brush pile. We kept Harvey in this new environment to give her a chance to get acquainted with the smells and sounds. During this time, we placed a bale of hay inside the brush pile to give Harvey a protected food supply. The nearby creek would provide her with water. The brush pile would provide her with safety as she could, hopefully, run fast enough to get inside the brush pile to get away from foxes, etc. After Harvey spent a week in the brush pile, we opened the door to the cage which we had left in the brush pile for Harvey to go in and out of if she chose to do so.

We don't know for sure if Harvey survived but we do know for sure that we now have a lot of rabbits in the area and we didn't have them prior to the time we put Harvey back in the wild. At about the time that I started writing about this adventure, I stated that I didn't remember the time frame when it happened. I finally remembered the date when I recalled why we moved Harvey back to the wild. Evelyn's mother died of cancer on November 15, 2000. So we must have commenced our adventure with Harvey the summer of 2000.



When you are riding in the country and you see a wild rabbit, I would like for you to think of Harvey. In this way Harvey will in a sense live on regardless of whether or not she survived the transition from our home to the wild. I hope that you enjoy reading this little story as much as I did in writing about it.

H. Ervin Lowell