

# Neglected bunny dies despite aid

*It's a sad reminder that rabbits, often bought as Easter gifts, are not playthings but fragile creatures*

**By Mia Thomas**

BURNABY NOW REPORTER

Just a small white rabbit, Hope quickly won the hearts of those who met her in the last week of her life — which makes the treatment she suffered earlier even harder to understand.

Hope had a brief moment of fame with her photo appearing in the Burnaby NOW on Wednesday, two days after she died.

Lisa Hutcheon, foster co-ordinator for the Burnaby SPCA, was given Hope by another SPCA foster parent, whose boss had taken the small rabbit away from the family that owned her.

Hope was flea-ridden, malnourished and had infected teeth and a lump under her chin that was interfering with her eating.

Hutcheon took her in to Dr. Hugh Upjohn, a vet with the Eagle Ridge Animal Hospital, who did an x-ray before performing surgery.

He discovered that Hope's infection was so bad, it had dissolved her eye sockets.

"She must have been in excruciating pain," Hutcheon said. "It's so sad, because I don't know how

long she suffered."

Hope had eye drops to relieve the pressure in her sockets, but she was in such bad shape, Upjohn contacted Hutcheon on Monday and they agreed to put her down.

Hutcheon, who noted the SPCA has 40 rabbits currently available for adoption, said people are too ready to buy the animals from pet stores.

"It just encourages the breeders to breed more, and a lot of these rabbits have teeth problems because they're inbred."

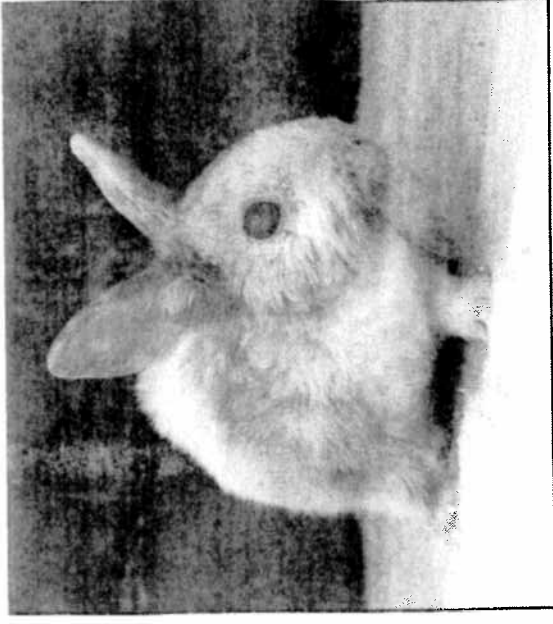
"She was the best animal," Hutcheon said. "She just loved to be held.

"It's too bad we couldn't have got her earlier so we could have given her a better quality of life sooner."

"She was just the best little thing."

For more information on becoming an animal foster parent, e-mail Hutcheon at [lhutch@pacificcoast.net](mailto:lhutch@pacificcoast.net) or call the SPCA at 604-709-6700.

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**SAD LIFE:** Hope, a neglected rabbit, was rescued from a bad home but did not survive.