

Sunday Source

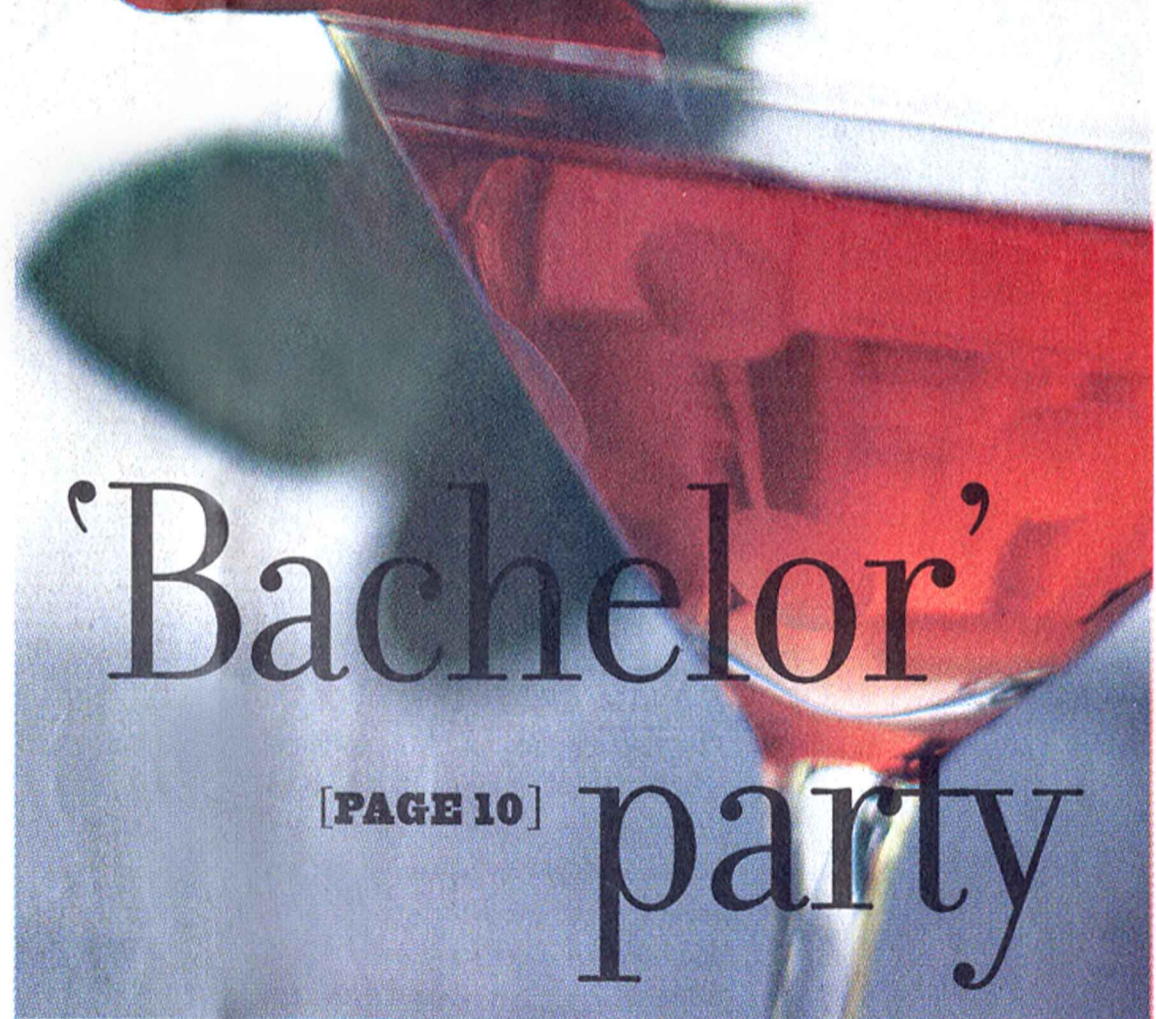
LIFE + LEISURE

SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 2004

bunny **[PAGE 7]**
best bets



'Bachelor'
[PAGE 10] party



Entertainment
Listings
Area-wide and
in your neighborhood
PAGE 4

The Experts



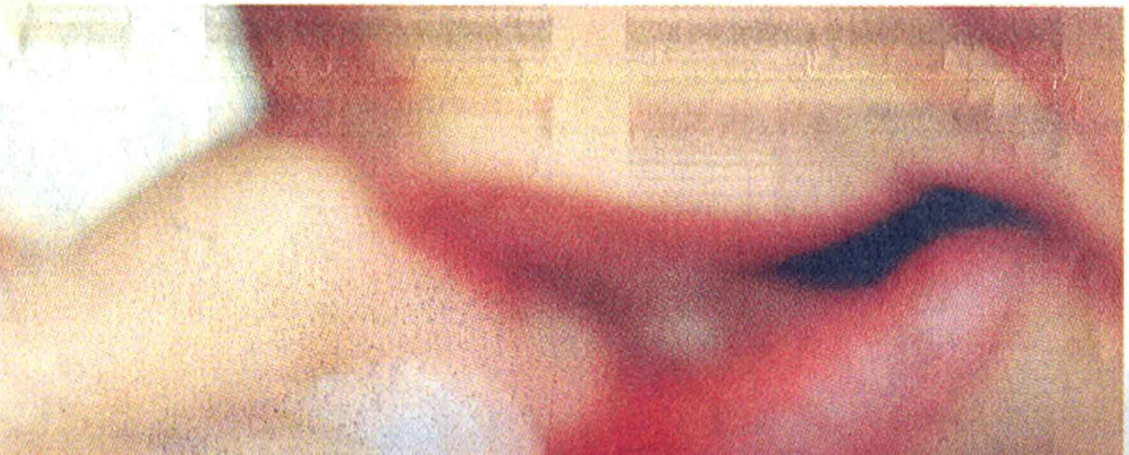
WALLACE BOYER
Knitting v
PAGE 3

3

Dress up your
windows
disco style
15 MIN.

7

New releases
EA's Fight
Night; X-F
on PS2; P





COURTESY OF CHRONICLE BOOKS

Ginger, a mini lop, is just one of the “Funny Bunnies” (Chronicle Books, \$15).

At Easter time, especially for families with kids, thoughts of bunnies abound. Taking one on is a big commitment: Rabbits live for eight to 12 years—some even reach their teens. They also require special food, bedding and lots of care. But for the dedicated few, we’ve canvassed rabbit owners, vets, and advocacy groups for resources in the D.C. metro area.

1 Study up
Several rabbit groups in the area host classes on care. Upcoming, for example, are “Rabbitology,” hosted by the advocacy group RabbitWise (www.rabbitwise.org) at Leland Community Center (4301 Willow Lane, Chevy Chase. 301-652-2249) on April 17 and “The Buzz on Bunnies,” a workshop offered by rabbit specialist Laura Lathan at South Arundel Veterinary Hospital in Edgewater (85 W. Central Ave. 410-956-2932) on May 5. If you want to do some solo study, two highly recommended books are “The House Rabbit Handbook: How to Live With an Urban Rabbit,” by Marinell Harriman

(Drollery Press, \$9) and “Rabbit Health in the 21st Century,” by Kathryn R. Smith (iUniverse Inc., \$19). You can also join the electronic EtherBun mailing list (fig.cox.miami.edu/Faculty/Dana/ether.html), which includes vets, nutritionists and long-time rabbit owners.

2 Hop and shop
Rabbits are a pricey proposition: On average, after an initial outlay of about \$400 for a large indoor cage, initial vet fees and supplies, owners should expect to spend about \$1,000 a year on food, litter and vet care. Where’s the discriminating lagonorph-lover to go to make these purchases? For a fun, everything-bunny online experience, visit BusyBunny.com, a site approved by the international nonprofit House Rabbit Society (HRS). Or, locally, try the Pet Barn in Burtonsville (15759 Columbia Pike. 301-421-0005) or the Animal Exchange in Rockville (765A Rockville Pike. 301-424-7387). Wheaton Animal Hospital (2929 University Blvd. 301-949-1520) in

Kensington carries OxBow Bunny Basics brand food, which can be hard to find.

3 What’s up, Doc?
Not every vet knows enough about rabbits to give the best care. The HRS has a list of approved vets on their local chapter’s Web site, www.rabbitsinthehouse.org/vets.html. Owners we talked to recommended Lathan, who teaches one of the classes cited above, and Scott Stahl, whose clinic, Stahl Exotic Animal Veterinary Services (111-A Center St., Vienna. 703-281-3750), sees only rabbits and other exotics—no cats or dogs!

4 Bunny buddies
And yours is no exception. Hours of out-of-cage hopping and hanging out is a rabbit’s idea of heaven, and they’re at their best with a bonded buddy. “They have distinct friendship preferences,” enthuses Nancy Bocksoor, board member of Friends of Rabbits in Arlington, which is why her group and other rescue groups sponsor “socialization days,” where neutered or spayed rabbits are invited to come meet a playmate or a lifelong pal. To learn about upcoming events, check with local rabbit groups.

5 Rabbit rescue
Whether you’re thinking of getting your first rabbit or want a partner for the one you already have, your best bet for finding your dream bunny is to contact a rescue group. You can choose his size, looks and personality—and feel good about saving a life, too. Check out these sites: Friends of Rabbits (friendsofrabbits.org), Bunny Magic Rabbit Rescue and Wildlife Rehabilitation of Southern Maryland (www.bunnymagic.org), and Bunny Lu Adoptions (www.bunnylu.org). — Susan Lennon

Need some pet info? Drop a line to pets@washpost.com. Include your name, city and phone number.