

The Rat, Mouse and Hamster Fanciers History
as told by Kendra K Davis

The Rat, Mouse and Hamster Fanciers was started one warm day in September, September 23, 1984, by four people; Alice Walker, Cheryl Greeno, Allan Pessier and myself, Kendra Davis. I have to admit that I brought the four together. I had been a member of the Mouse & Rat Breeders Association based in Southern California and I had shown my rats and won at their shows. I realized that there was a need to form a group of small rodent fanciers in Northern California.

At the time I had Rats and Hamsters, I had bred Mice, in my childhood and as an adult. I also realized that the group that I had heard of, and was a member of didn't include Hamsters, although, they were sometimes shown with Rats and Mice. I am also a Licensed ARBA Cavy Judge and I had read the history of the American Rabbit Breeders Association. I realized that the ARBA originally included all small fur bearing rodents. Rats, Mice, Hamsters, Gerbils, Ferrets and Chinchillas have been dropped over the years and the ARBA only covers Rabbits and Cavies at this date. Chinchillas have their own local and national groups so they didn't need us. Ferrets and Gerbils are illegal in California so it was illogical to include them. (Although I really believe that these species should be "fancied" along with Dwarf Hamsters, Spiny Mice, etc., it simply cannot be done in California because of the Laws.)

I knew our first President, Cheryl Greeno, through Cavies. We were both Cavy Breeders but she also had Rats and was breeding Hamsters. Cheryl and I had made a 36 hour non-sleep visit to Southern California to pick up breeding stock together. It was a good trip. We brought up English Pearl Rats, English Chocolate Rats, English Siamese Rats, Hairless Mice, Blue Satin Mice, Gold Satin Mice, Variegated Mice, Lilac Rats, and Satin Hamsters! Cheryl agreed to be president and we had our first meeting in her home.

I had met Alice Walker at the Rabbit shows held in Turlock, CA. Once a year the Rabbit Club there includes Cavies. Alice was Secretary for the Cavy Show. I had mentioned to her that I had other small rodents (Rats and Mice) and I wanted to get rid of some of my Mice, I called the mice salmon aqouti but, we now know the color as English Gold/Argente. Alice wanted my unwanted mice and we met at that Rabbit/Cavy show. Alice mentioned that she had 30 pairs of breeding Mice, she was breeding for different colors but, she didn't know where to go with her animals. All of her animals that were excess were being sold to pet stores. Nobody saw her animals or the work she was doing in color development. I mentioned to her that there were Clubs in Southern California that were showing their animals with Rabbit and Cavy Clubs and "Why shouldn't we try to do the same?" We did. Alice was our first Mouse Representative.

Allan Pessier was a gentle, well mannered, intelligent young man who worked in the local Half Moon Bay Pet store, "Animal Patch". Allan was a Mouse and Rat breeder. His business name was "Allan's Rodent Ranch". He took care of and bred the small rodents for the pet store. He also

helped to care for any sick or injured animals that came to the store. Allan became our resident medication expert and our first Youth Representative. He was 14 years old at the time of the club's inception. Allan's expertise, and competence made us realize that we need to have at least one youth member on the Board of Directors. We realized that the youth members are our future, because, most people become interested in small rodents as children. The position of Youth Representative is reserved for a child under the age of 18 but, from the beginning there has never been an age limitation for any Board position.

When we first began I was Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Standards Chairperson and printer, activities and show coordinator, Booth Designer and creator, By-laws committee, Membership chairperson, Show Secretary and Clerk, Newsletter Editor and printer, and Only Judge. Thank Goodness I don't have all of these jobs today!

From this inauspicious beginning we have become a full fledged Club of small rodent fanciers with five life members, members in 5 states, international correspondents, visitors from 2 foreign countries, Shows, meetings, and Standards. I am proud of all the work that has been done by our membership to improve and expand the Fancy. You the membership have done all of this in less than five years. Keep up the good work!

By the way.....

I hope you all like the name of our club.....I named it!

EDITORIAL COMMENT - - -

We are all deeply indebted to Kendra Davis and Alice Walker for starting our club and helping it to grow. The above is interesting news for all of us newer members. I was not aware that at one time The American Rabbit Breeders Association was involved in all the small livestock that Kendra mentioned. Cavies have always been included. At one time the name was changed from American Rabbit and Cavy Breeders Association to eliminate the word Cavy. We have received good support from rabbit breeders especially from Tri Valley Rabbit Breeders who have included us in their fall show for several years. It is interesting to know that at one time the smaller rodents were included before ARBA decided that rabbits are not rodents.