

A WARREN OF RABBITS

By Dennis Knight

If I hadn't drifted into their meeting in progress, and heard it with my own ears, I would have disregarded the gathering as insignificant. After all, they are everywhere in this neighborhood and, while a nuisance to our gardeners, most of us delight in them and their antics.

They could have been jackrabbits, which are actually hares, or else they were cottontails, which are actually rabbits. No, I didn't know there was a difference either. While both species are common to our part of the state, I am sure they were cottontails, on the scientifically sound reasoning that they were cuter.

Jackrabbits are crude critters that seem to speak in a Warner Brothers patter. There is even some evidence that Bugs Bunny himself was a hare, but it's questionable because hares aren't available in bunny models. Like geese associate in gaggles, fish in schools and frogs in armies, hares come in droves. Boy, do we know that.

Cottontails, on the other hand, are cuddly rabbits with a distinct Disney charm. You can't help but associate them with Bambi and his pal, Thumper, who was himself a cottontail. A group of rabbits, by the way, is called a warren. The analysis supports my conclusion. They were rabbits, it was a warren, and it was hopping.

The sun was creeping over the horizon. My radio was standing by, several precious minutes from going off. I sensed hushed utterances out my window, and my left eyelid lifted to a vision of floppy eared denizens amassed quietly around a cottonwood stump and a bespectacled bunny in a top hat. The rhetoric was hard to follow as I drifted in and out of slumber, and it wasn't in my native language, but I will try to report the event as I could make it out.

"My fellow lagomorphs, bucks, does and bunnies of all ages, lend me your ears. The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy... Sorry, wrong speech. We have come to bury this Caesar salad... Sorry again. Will one of you dumb bunnies get this crazy teleprompter fixed?"

I slumbered momentarily and returned to the speaker rising in eloquent emotion, "We must bring an end, lagomorphs, to this menace that would roust us from our bushes and pursue us across the continent. Oh she is a beguiling one, that beagle, what with those doe eyes and stubby legs a blur. But what will she do with us? Would she shake us silly or carry us back to Kansas? She comes out of nowhere and doesn't even give us the warning of a bark. She stalks and pounces. Pounces and stalks. Beware, fellow bunnies, beware."

Suddenly my clock radio was blasting the morning news, and that wasn't very good, either. I stretched and looked out the window. The warren was gone, but I could still hear thumping over on the trail and a diminishing strain of marching music that sounded a lot like the Bunny Hop.