In Sickness and In Health

By Susan Helgeson, Buckeye HRS Member

In 2009, a young bunny was turned in at an animal shelter in Houston. I already had a couple of fosters and six of my own, but I got busy and built a new condo for Mr. Charles Bingley. He was lively, a bit naughty, and very affectionate with me and the other bunnies. He was adopted quickly, but three years later, the adopter had an operation and couldn’t get down on the floor to take care of bunnies – and her husband was allergic. When Bingley came back to me in 2012, he was recovering from an operation of his own, for an infected tooth. And so begins a tale of caring through thick and thin.

After a few months, Bingley stopped eating his veggies and his hay. A CT scan showed, sure enough, more infection. Another surgery. And another. By mid-2016, my vet was not optimistic. At the very least, Bingley would need antibiotics for the rest of his life.

Then a friend suggested that a hyperbaric oxygen chamber might help. Such a chamber may be a viable treatment for tooth abscesses in rabbits – even a cure. A local medical referral practice for pets had that equipment, and though the vets there would not promise a cure, this seemed to be Bingley’s only chance.

In the summer of 2016, he completed ten sessions and then began a new antibiotic. Even that was complicated because chloramphenicol is harmful to a small percentage of humans and I was told not to touch the liquid.

Bingley improved. He ate small balls of soft foods sometimes so I didn’t have to syringe feed him always. When I moved to Ohio in December, Bingley went with me. Officially adopted, my foster bunny became my own. I vowed I wasn’t giving him up again!

Bingley has dealt with health issues during his life.

Continued on page 3
Special Thanks to:

Timothy Fernando, for his generous contribution in memory of Leah Stevens’s beloved Gracie.

Laura Tanner, for her thoughtful donation in honor of Theodore's little sister, who passed away in September 2018.

The following members, whose monetary and in-kind donations allow us to meet our ongoing fostering and educational goals:

Jude May, Diane Erdelyi, Cindy Slezak, Bob Piekarczyk, Sue Milewski, Mary Litrico, Renee Molzon, David Huffman, Elizabeth Hamak, Jerry King, Junko Rogers, Irma Laszlo, Heather and Noriel Cruz, Renee Argento, Bonnie Hagerman, June Gates, Judy O’Neil, Marjorie Aleva.

Our new and continuing Sanctuary Rabbit Sponsors! These special rabbits, who will spend the rest of their lives in foster care due to serious medical conditions, have you kind and generous people to thank!

As always, the Monks Copy Shop of downtown Columbus, for their discount on printing our newsletter.
Bingley continued to improve, running with his friends in the bunny room and eating soft food balls regularly. But in November of 2018, I began to wonder. I’d sometimes have to feed him with a syringe again. And he’d cry at times, just a soft noise you could barely hear. My local vet suspected infection but had no CT scanner, so I drove to Dr. Gary Riggs in Barberton. I feared he’d say Bingley was too old, but Dr. Riggs had no hesitation about operating on a ten-year-old rabbit and performed the procedure the day before Thanksgiving. So far, months later, Bingley is doing well. He eats his balls of soft food – with no teeth at all.

His life is better because I have loved him through the worst. In his forever home, he has enjoyed forever care. He plays with his rabbit friends. And unlike them, he is free to roam the whole house – because he can’t munch cords.
Chapter News

By Keith Zimmerman, for the Buckeye HRS Board of Directors

In 1988 the national House Rabbit Society was founded with the objectives of not only rescuing abandoned rabbits, but also reducing the number of homeless ones by educating the public about the care and needs of pet rabbits. The founding members were careful to structure the group with specific guidelines, rules, and policies so that all members were expressing a consistent message. HRS has grown into an international organization and is recognized as the leading source for pet rabbit information.

Nine years later in 1997, the Buckeye chapter of HRS was created by Herta Rodina, Kristi Cole, and Libby Armstrong. Herta has served as the Chapter Manager since 1997, ensuring that our group stayed true to the cause and providing steady leadership. Kristi Cole has been our Secretary/Treasurer through these years, maintaining our finances and ensuring all of our national reporting is submitted in an accurate and timely manner. These founding members have dedicated many years to building Buckeye HRS into the solid organization that it is today.

Now, after 22 years of service, Herta and Kristi are eager to gradually lessen their involvement and turn over some of their responsibilities to new leaders. The transitions will be gradual in order to ensure a smooth change-over, and both Herta and Kristi will remain on our Board of Directors for the time being. Their experience and advice will be invaluable to us as we move forward.

Long-time member Rob Lovicz is working with Kristi to become familiar with the tasks of the Treasurer position. Once established, Rob will assume Kristi’s seat on our Board of Directors. We are most thankful to Rob for stepping up to be part of the Buckeye management team. Keith Zimmerman will take over as our new Chapter Manager beginning in August. Keith has spent the last two years being groomed by Herta for this important role and is looking forward to working with all of our volunteers to increase both our rescue and education resources. Herta will continue to manage our newsletter, Harelines, and Shawnna Lemerise, Amy Marshall, and Sue Zimmerman will handle some of the other administrative responsibilities.

Lastly, two of our Chapter Educators are transitioning to Educators-at-Large, reporting directly to National. Debbi Braunschweiger and Diana Cron will still be representing HRS, but will not be associated exclusively with our chapter. Thank you both for lending your expertise to the Buckeye HRS!

Holiday Raffle to Benefit Buckeye HRS Foster Rabbits!

For our fourteenth annual holiday raffle, we proudly present a beautiful Rabbit Tealight Lantern from Pier One Imports.

- Dimensions: 7.48” W x 8.27” D x 14.17” H
- Made of resin, glass, and metal
- Tealight included
- No longer available at Pier One

For your rabbit, Oxbow has generously donated a variety of goodies!

All proceeds will go directly to our foster program and will ensure that needy bunnies have a safe and happy holiday season while they await the ultimate gift, a permanent home.

Tickets cost $1 each and you may buy as many as you wish. All entries must be postmarked no later than December 9, 2019. Please include your phone number and email (if available) with your check or money order and indicate it’s for the raffle.
Mail your request to: Buckeye HRS, P.O. Box 61, Vickery, OH 43464. If you prefer, you may pay by credit card through our website – www.ohare.org/wordpress/support/our-raffle – for ticket purchases of $5 or more.

The lucky winner will be notified mid-December and will receive the prize in time for holiday gift-giving.
Random Rabbit Tips and Tricks

By Stephanie Lodge

#1. If your bunny stops eating, you should always take him to the vet ASAP. But sometimes that might not be possible. Bunnies stop eating for a number of reasons and they can become dehydrated, making the problem worse. Knowing how to administer subcutaneous fluids could save your bunny's life until you get him professional veterinary care. Prescription-only Lactated Ringer’s Solution is what most people use for rabbits. Giving fluids can seem scary at first but I assure you, it is not. It generally takes about five minutes and it’s a lot less stressful than syringing water into his mouth. Ask your vet to show you how it’s done and how to decide when it’s needed. Do not give fluids without first consulting your vet and discussing your rabbit’s symptoms with him or her.

#2. Giving medicine to a sick rabbit can be stressful for everybun involved. One trick I learned is to use shredded wheat. Once your rabbit has tasted it, giving meds can be as easy as giving a treat. Shredded wheat (only one ingredient) is wonderful at absorbing liquid. As with any treat, give only in very small amounts and only occasionally.

#3. Don’t buy Metacam from your vet’s office. Instead, arrange with your vet ahead of time to shop online on sites like Valleyvet.com, chewy.com, allivet.com or any other pet meds website. You will need to place your order ahead of time, but buying online can save you money. Also realize that Metacam is a brand name; you can also get Meloxicam or Loxicom, which are the same thing but cheaper. When ordering online, the vendor will contact your vet for approval for the prescription, so make sure you talk to your vet first.

#4. After taking part in over fifty adoptions, I still find that many people do not know about wood stove pellets – small cylinders of compressed hardwood used in wood-burning stoves or for horse bedding. For litter-box purposes, you can use any brand. I always get whatever is cheapest, which usually means a 40 lb. bag for $5 - $6 at Tractor Supply or Lowe’s. Wood pellets can be composted and they are excellent for soaking up urine and neutralizing the smell. If you feel the wood pellets are too hard on your bunny’s tootsies, then you can always add a little water to the pellets to fluff them up. I like to empty two-thirds of a bag into a large container, add a bit of water, then let it dry out before using it in a litter box. Wood stove pellets are seasonal, so stock up when they go on sale in late winter.

#5. You dig? Since we are on the topic of litter boxes, does your bunny like to dig in the litter? If she does and it's driving you nuts, just place a non-stick baking cooling rack on top of the wood pellets. I tend to find the best prices on Amazon or at discount stores like Marc’s.

Meloxicam or Loxicom, which are the same thing but cheaper. When ordering online, the vendor will contact your vet for approval for the prescription, so make sure you talk to your vet first.
To Bond or Not to Bond

By Cathryn Farwell, Buckeye HRS Member

When Oliver lost his bonded mate, Java, to sudden GI stasis in March, I was not sure what to do. My vet recommended keeping a close watch on him for signs of mourning. When rabbits bond it is a beautiful thing. Watching them groom each other and play is its own adorable movie. We had just moved to a new apartment and Java and Ollie were all binkies as they explored their new turf. Only two days later did Java pass. I had taken her to the vet, but unfortunately she did not make it. I read that it can be harder for bunnies to lose their mate without actually seeing them so I was very concerned for Ollie’s well-being. Luckily, he kept eating and behaving as usual. I remembered how tedious a process it was to bond them so I was not sure if I wanted to go that route again, but I did not want Ollie to be lonely. I feel like I had really just gotten lucky with Oliver and Java bonding; I really had no experience and let them gradually come together over the course of a few months.

A few weeks later we decided to bring in little Storm. I did not want Ollie to feel too territorial and since we had just moved I thought the timing would be perfect. We loved that she was already about three years old, since Ollie was four. We didn’t want them to be too far apart in age in case there would be additional behavior issues we hadn’t accounted for. Storm had a very sweet disposition so I had a feeling they’d make a great pair, but I needed to introduce them slowly. Before I picked up Storm, I got an identical living space to place right next to Ollie’s so that they could safely be in each other’s company until they were ready to take the next step. We slowly let them each have alternating free rein time and then moved them in to a neutral room to have bunny dates. We did do one or two stress bonding sessions in a bathtub and carrier, but we wanted to keep those limited so they didn’t backfire. After a few short weeks of dating we let them have their main territory together free rein. There was an occasional chase, but they always included binkies so we just watched them carefully. After only a week or two we noticed they were sharing food, grooming each other, and always resting.
snuggled together. After that we were able to move them in together.

There is a lot of great information out there on bonding. I would say the only thing I tried instead of bunny dating prior to choosing Storm, was knowing Ollie’s personality and choosing a partner for him who was similar. Now they both go on little apartment adventures together and keep each other company when we are working. I definitely could not have found a better bunny than Storm for my little Ollie. I think that if you find yourself away from home for a good chunk of the day, bonding your rabbit is extremely rewarding for both you and the bunnies. It was hard for us to conceive of replacing Java so quickly because she was so special, but we felt in our situation it was really in Ollie’s best interest. Honestly, if you know your bun, then you will know if bonding is the right thing. Just remember to go slowly for the health and safety of all buns involved and your own. Making sure they always have comfortable and positive interactions really helps keep the bonding process moving in the right direction.

Photo Contest Winners

The winner is Ashton Rodriquez with Charlie in her cowgirl hat, 138 votes!

First runner up: Ashley Chesnut with Tux and Bow relaxing in the straw, 77 votes!

Tied for second runner up: Tracy Wiczer with husbun and wife Babbitty and Dexter, 75 votes!

Megan Metzger’s Emmy flopped on her side, 75 votes!

Many thanks to everyone who contributed and participated. All funds are helping our foster bunnies get one step closer to their forever home.
My wife and I have taken care of our rabbit friends for over twenty years now. Rodger, my current buddy, is our fifth rabbit. The first was Eddie, followed by Zoe, then Otis, then Siggy and now the Rod-man – every one with a unique personality. However, each required different medical monitoring and care. I am now a bit of a fanatic when it comes to keeping a sharp eye out for any changes in my rabbit’s behavior. I’ve learned too many hard lessons in the past by ignoring subtle changes in routine mannerisms that led to fatal consequences.

In comparison to most cats and dogs, rabbits display a remarkable ability to conceal when they are not feeling well; they go out of their way to hide illnesses or diseases. Being prey animals, it is inherent in their biology. They hide their illnesses because in the wild, predators identify sick animals first. Well, that makes a rabbit parent’s job all the more difficult. We have to be on the lookout for any changes, small and minute, not staring you in the face saying, “Here I am, take care of this issue now.” We must be actively searching for any changes, however insignificant they may seem. As rabbits age, this becomes a larger reality.

Without getting too graphic, I think it’s worthwhile to mention some of my errors as a new rabbit owner. Our first two rabbits, Eddie and Zoe, both died suddenly. It felt like one day our rabbit appeared healthy and full of life, and the next day he or she was visibly ill. Thinking back to when our rabbit seemed well, there were small, subtle signs of danger. However, we had never encountered anything like it to compare to, so we missed the warning. How was this possible? At first, we blamed ourselves, but as we did some reading and made a few calls, we tried to learn from our mistakes and do better in the future. Nowadays, we are much more vigilant and keep an eye on anything that seems out of the norm.

We found out, after the fact, that due to a hair blockage in his stomach, Eddie went into GI stasis – a potentially deadly condition where digestion slows or stops entirely and harmful bacteria build in the digestive tract causing bloating. Eddie came to us from a family who had kept him in a little cage locked in the garage. He never had hay or time to run around and play. When we gave him the correct diet and space, he blossomed like a flower and started to show us who he was. Unfortunately, it didn’t last long, and he stopped eating. We took him to a non-rabbit vet who did his best, but Eddie never recovered.

About this time, we found and joined the Buckeye House Rabbit Society. My wife and I started to read up on rabbit health and feeding; we thought we had it all figured out and were ready for another rabbit. We brought home our next bun-dle of joy – Zoe, a white-with-black-spots mini-lop. She had an un-reset, broken, crooked back paw before coming into foster care. Our vet said it wasn’t worth fixing, something I would have corrected if I had Zoe today. The unset back paw limited her ability to groom and hop and I wonder if in some way it contributed to her demise. Zoe was susceptible to GI stasis during her life, so we made sure she ate her food and used the litterbox.

We thought we had her routine down pat, but we unknowingly overlooked subtle signs of danger. The first warning sign: she lost her balance and fell from time to time. We incorrectly attributed it to pain from the back paw, but after some thought, I believe it was something else. The second sign: her eating slowed as she approached full GI stasis. We feed our rabbits three times a day, and she would eat one meal and pick at the rest, and we attributed it to her not being hungry or to eating a lot of hay during the day.

I was travelling for business when my wife, Kim, called me and said Zoe had stopped eating and seemed to be in considerable pain. She began to swell and ground her teeth loudly. I rushed home. Our vet at the time did her best, but rabbits were not her specialty. She tried to operate on Zoe,
thinking there was a blockage, but instead, she found many small abscesses in Zoe’s intestines, probably the cause of her death. Who could ever have seen that coming? Nobody; there is no way to imagine something happening with such speed. We should have whisked her away to the vet at the first sign of her balance issue and not dismiss it as just a part of her unset back paw. There is no guarantee we could have saved her, but I believe it would have given her a better chance with more time to locate a new doctor.

So, after Zoe, we learned a couple of things to help us be better rabbit detectives in the future. First, get a veterinarian who has experience working with rabbits. A rabbit vet knows what to look for with a sharper eye and better medical understanding of his/her patients. Second, at the first sign of a rabbit not eating or pooping, especially when they are usually voracious, do not wait more than a day. Take your rabbit to the vet and make sure something sinister isn’t going on even if s/he looks active, hopping around and not in a bunny ball of pain. Our little patients are good at deception. It is our job to see the changes in their behavior and determine if they are severe enough to act on immediately.

We successfully applied those two lessons to the three rabbits we’ve had since Zoe died, and both Otis and Siggy lived to old age. I determine the baseline behavior for each rabbit. That baseline is how he or she usually acts every day. It includes how they eat, poop, pee, sleep, and produce cecals. I am on guard for anything out of the ordinary, even the smallest (usually meaningless) deviation from the norm. Rabbits are creatures of habit, and their daily routine is usually a caregiver’s best baseline for normality. Every day I check to make sure the bun looks comfortable, has eaten his food, used his litterbox, and isn’t scratching any particular spot. Bi-weekly, he receives a more thorough going over when I groom him. I check for any new lumps, bumps, or oddities on his body that are irregular or weren’t there previously. Otis was prone to slow-growth tumors under his skin that needed to be removed as soon as possible. Diligence is key with bunnies. I perform the same monitoring routine on all my rabbits, no matter their age. Most of my young rabbits didn’t develop problems until later in their lives, but it is better to be overcautious.

Establishing a baseline behavior for Rodger, our seven-year-old black Havana, was difficult because the little guy found his voice at an early age. He groans, moans, and sounds like a deranged Wookie when he’s eating, grooming, lying down, receiving pets, whatever; he never shuts up. He’s always talking, and it freaked me out at first because rabbits are supposed to be silent. Every rabbit we had before Rodger never made a noise unless in pain. I have concluded that Rodger isn’t in pain. I do, however, fear the day when he is in pain and makes a noise, because I will struggle to distinguish it from the background noises he usually makes.

A few months back during one of his body checks, I found an odd lump in his dewlap, so off to the vet we went. Thankfully, the lump was nothing more than a benign fibroid tumor. Other than that, Rodger has been illness-free. I make it a point to massage his body from nose to tail at least twice a week when I am grooming him. I look for lumps and bumps, now that I know he is prone to develop benign fatty tumors and cysts. I want to have those taken care of at once.

In summary, if you notice something out of the ordinary in baseline behavior, keep your buddy under careful watch. Take note of bunny body language and look for lumps and bumps that don’t belong. Being a good rabbit parent is being part detective as well. Your little friend isn’t going to voluntarily tell you s/he is in pain or not feeling well. Find a veterinarian who specializes in rabbit care and read as much as you can from the fabulous articles available on the House Rabbit Society website, rabbit.org. The quicker you can act on a potential medical condition, the better the chance for a cure.
Somebunny Needs YOU!

Ruby is sweet, petite, and looking for her forever home. She can be shy at first, but will warm up nicely once she gets to know you. She enjoys petting and does not mind being held. She has excellent litter box habits and, for a little bunny, a good appetite. Once you meet her, Ruby will melt your heart. Please contact Amy Marshall (bhrs-amy@ohare.org).

Penelope looks just like her sister, Pixel. She is big, beautiful, and brown. She loves to explore and is looking forward to a forever home where she can run and show off her binky skills. Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.

Meet Jayme! Jayme was found as a stray on the streets. Just a few days after her arrival, she surprised us with a litter of three babies. Jayme is mom to Rosa, Iris, and Daffodil. She is only about one year old and would love to have a home to call her own. She is friendly and enjoys rearranging her things and playing with her cardboard box. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.

Born in foster care on March 21, 2019, Daffodil is a typical teenage bunny. She is silly, hungry, and always on the move. Her litterbox habits are spectacular. Rosa and Iris are her sisters, and their mom is Jayme. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.

Cherish Truelsch is a unique-looking Californian rabbit. Check out that dewlap! Found wandering the neighborhood in the scorching July heat, Cherish is a sweet girl who is looking for someone to snuggle with and show her that she is special. Cherish was named by David Truelsch in the Name Our Next Foster program (details on our website). Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.

SuzieQ is a shy girl whose first love is deconstructing her cardboard boxes. Give her a window and within the hour, she’ll give you French doors (she’s a fast worker). Q is great at using her hay box, and rearranges things just to her liking. She is a beautiful girl and when she stretches out, you’ll love seeing all her pretty markings. Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.

Pixel (Penelope’s sister) was one of four rabbits found in the woods in Cuyahoga Falls. She is still a little shy but with some patience, her personality will blossom. She is young, healthy, and beautiful. Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.
Franklin is a guy who can’t sit still but when he does, he’s a master of flops. He is a trusting bun despite living outside for an unknown length of time. Frankie was found with Mooselini, but like many brothers, they do not get along. Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.

Grady is a young and energetic fellow. Since he was just neutered, he needs a learning curve for the litter box, but we’re confident things will come together. This hungry and healthy fellow will need a tall pen and a lot of room to run because he can JUMP! Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.

Handsome “cow” brothers Kinsey and Dok (previously adopted, but recently returned due to no fault of their own) are ready for their forever family. These rex boys are inseparable and love each other dearly. They’re coming up on their sixth birthday and are perfectly happy and healthy. Please contact Maggie Reading (bhrs-maggie@ohare.org).

Kate is a charming Harlequin mix with beautiful gray stripes in her white fur. She is social and likes to run around and explore. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.

Mooselini was found running the streets of Cleveland with his brother Franklin. Although he is not as cuddly as some bunnies, we suspect that will change. He can be a bit shy at first, but will come out of his shell with time. His cuddle factor has already increased greatly. Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.

Adopted!

Jelly Bean Truelsch has found his forever family in the Holden homestead. Kids Ben, Emma, and Tucker are thrilled with their new little brother, and Jelly Bean is loving his stylish house with room to roam. ♥ Peaches, now Buttercup, has been adopted by the Matthews family. She is getting a lot of love and is happy to have a home of her own. ♥ Poptart has found her forever home. Not only does she have a fabulous new mom, but she also has a doting husbun in Gus (a BHRS alum). They hit it off immediately and we couldn’t be happier. ♥ Treasure and Sweet Dee (now Casey) have found their new family. Heather, Noriel, Noel, Naiia, and Lucia are completely in love with them! ♥ Sarah has found her happily-ever-after with her wonderful new dad, Cole. As a first-time rabbit parent, Cole loves to spoil Sarah – and she deserves it after being in foster care for two years! ♥ Mary has FINALLY found her forever home. Jess, Brandon, Brandon Jr., Devin, and Wyatt love their big bunny! Mary is still trying to woo her potential husbun, Cadbury, but with time we suspect they can work it out. ♥ Felix was supposed to be adopted by one couple until their mom, Elisabeth Thomas-Matej, fell head over heels for him and stole Felix away. This happy boy is ecstatic that he has a forever home. ♥ Winifred has been adopted by Tammy Means and has bonded with her husBUN, Peter. The happy couple reside in Rockford, Ohio. ♥ Nicky and Paris, now Lefty and Stephanie, have found their forever home with first-time bunny owner Steve Vivaronda. They are spoiled rotten already! Congratulations, Steve! ♥ Genevieve’s new parents, Maia and Joe, were ecstatic when Gwen and Lop got along pretty quickly after meeting. Their family is now complete! ♥ Gus won the bunny lottery when Renee Argento and Chris Glasser adopted him. He’s still a little shy with his future wife, Laney (a BHRS alum), but he is the man of the hour with mom and dad. They can’t give him enough cuddles.
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your $35.00 annual membership in the Buckeye HRS includes:

• Local membership ($15.00) and issues of Harelines

New Policy: National membership is now FREE with a local donation of $20 or more. You'll receive a code to sign up directly with national HRS.

☐ I would like to donate $___________ to help a foster rabbit (vet care, supplies)

☐ I would like to donate $______ in memory of ______________.
   The grieving family receives an acknowledgment of your gracious gesture.

I would like to volunteer to:

☐ Distribute information to vets  ☐ Assist with mailing

☐ Help at Buckeye HRS booth at Pet Expos and fairs  ☐ Other _______________________________

Name _________________________________________________________________________________________________

Address_______________________________________________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip _____________________________________ Phone _____________________________________________

E-mail address ________________________________________________________________________________________

Bunnies' names and special dates ________________________________________________________________

Please make checks payable to:

Buckeye House Rabbit Society
P.O. Box 61
Vickery, Ohio 43464

All donations are tax-deductible.