



HARELINES



Volume 22 Number 2 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY Spring/Summer 2018



Hamsa receives affection from a new human friend!

Bringing Baby Home to Bunny

By Shawwna Lemerise

Although we strongly advise against adopting a rabbit for your child, some of us find ourselves in the opposite situation. What do we do as a rabbit parent welcoming a human baby into our family? As a first-time Mom still learning the balance between being an animal caretaker and mom, there are some important considerations I've learned about bringing baby home to bunny.

Depending on your current rabbit setup, you may need to make some changes to accommodate baby and provide safety to bunny. A rabbit with free access to your home may need a room or area sectioned off where she can be safe from baby. This may not be critical in the beginning, but making changes now will

allow bun some time to adjust to her territory, especially if there are areas she is no longer allowed to roam where she once had free range. Baby will not be able to get to the bunny until he starts crawling, but make sure bunny can be safe from him when baby decides to be on the move!

Just as you have sanctioned areas for bunny, you may need to gate rooms that are safe for only baby to play. They should not be left alone together under any circumstances. Bunny should also be supervised with baby toys, as destroying them can be dangerous not only for the rabbit, but the broken bits can become hazardous to baby as well.

As baby grows older, you will want to slowly introduce them to each other. A first introduction can be allowing them to see each other through a safe barrier, such as a baby gate or x-pen. This will keep a scared bunny safe from a curious grab from baby. Babies have a tendency to grab and pull and it will be a long time before he learns to pet "nice" with a flat open hand. You can practice petting nice by holding baby's hand open and petting stuffed toys and repeating the word "nice." In time, he will learn the word and eventually be ready to practice nice petting on a bunny. Always hold baby's hand while petting until you are sure he will not grab her fur!

Bunny's personality will also play a part in how introductions go. Rabbits generally are timid and fearful, so you must introduce her slowly so as not to break her trust. But an equally curious and outgoing bun may be just as interested in meeting baby as baby is to meet her! Just remember that while a rabbit's trust can be earned slowly over time, children lack the patience and understanding required to befriend a rabbit.

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We know our members value their privacy
and that's why we never, ever, sell our
mailing list or distribute it to any other
party. All of our members' information is
held in the strictest confidence.

Special Thanks to:

Maddie Good, who spearheaded our adoption day and donation drive at ValuPet in North Canton.

Small Pet Select, for donating a percentage of hay purchases to the Buckeye HRS.

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

June Gates, Liz Claytor, Renee Falcone, Scott Edwards, Judy and Martin O'Neil, Bob and Holly Piekarczyk, Kathy Kallay, Irma Laszlo, Jody Slain, Jacqueline Nolan, Jim and Laura Brown, Latishie Lyons, Lori Fair and Mark Kotzbauer, Michelle Platt, Christine Mohan, Bonnie Hagerman, Debbie Dowell.

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.

Adopted!

Jasper found his happily ever after! His new people love him and he is winning over his new bunny brother a little at a time. Yay Donna and Frank! ♥ **Bugs**, now Gorbachev, has made himself at home with his new forever family. They love doting on this old man as much as he loves the attention. Congratulations Ann-Marie, Mike, Lilly, and Pickles Fuzzy Pants! ♥ Gentle **Cora**, now Nala, has binkied her way into the hearts of the Rickett family. The center of attention, she's thriving in this lively household. ♥ High energy **Brooke Lynn** (FKA Brooklyn) has stolen her new poppa's heart with her antics. Brooke now has an entire house to explore and Larry is loving every moment. ♥ **Naomi**, now Lulu, has quite the Cinderella story. Earlier last year, she was found living outside while injured with a huge abscess. Today she is healthy, happy, with a wonderful family that adores her. Her humans, Elizabeth and Steven, are delighted that their bun Leo is now husbun to Lulu. ♥ **Oscar**, now Cosmos, has found his forever home. His new family (Ashley, Sarah, and Pam) love doting on him and he can't get enough attention! ♥ **Dorie** is loving all the room to explore in her new home – sooo many things to chin! Congrats to Gabrielle, Paul, Delaney, and Harper. ♥ James and Madelaine MacQueen have welcomed **Gabriella** into their home. They are excited about their very first house rabbit. ♥ **Ralphie** has been adopted by the Rakes Family. Congratulations! ♥ The Duquette family have adopted bonded pair, **Gus and Daisy**. One bun is nice; two are twice as nice. ♥ **Butterfly** was adopted by Melissa Barnhart of Toledo. We wish happy adventures for her!

It is important to make sure the rabbit is comfortable and not frightened by baby in order to avoid any chance that she may get scared and bite or scratch the little one. However you teach these boundaries to your child is up to you, but we use a strong "NO" and remove the baby or bunny. We have had to stop baby from rattling the x-pens to keep him from scaring the pellets out of the bunnies. The goal is to encourage the baby to be nice while also ensuring we do not sacrifice the rabbits' feeling safe.



Make sure your rabbit is comfortable and safe around children.

We are asking a lot of our bunnies whenever we bring another life into our homes.

While having a baby can be a joyous but stressful whirlwind, I try to remember the sacrifices I've asked my bunnies to make for baby. The bunnies are part of the family, so it wouldn't be fair not

to include them in our plans to grow the family. With that in mind, if you have only one bunny, it may be time to find her a mate of her own. I know that more bunnies is the last thing a new

parent needs, but rabbits are social animals, and she may not adjust well to less attention from you with nobunny else to turn to. Rabbits are always happier in pairs, so a new friend will help keep her content while your attention is focused on baby.



Reesee can eventually become good friends with a baby.

It will be a long time before the rabbits and baby can be good friends, but as our boy grows I hope that we can instill in him the same love and respect for the rabbits that we have. The rabbits have unwillingly had to compromise some of their space and human affection, but hopefully in time they can reclaim it as we all learn how to live together as one big family.

Unconventional Meets Unconditional

By Debbi Braunschweiger

By the time Snickerdoodle arrived at our shelter in February he'd already lived the equivalent of six of a cat's nine lives in his few months on this earth. He was born in a burrow on what became a dumpsite for unwanted rabbits in Las Vegas. Thanks to a massive rescue effort involving many groups nationwide, he and his siblings and many other rabbits were removed, given medical care, fostered, and ultimately transported to other rescues around the country.

It was clear from the scar on his nose that he'd been picked on by other rabbits as they struggled to find food. His extremely shy demeanor let us know that he would need a lot of socialization to help him begin to trust and come out of his shell. Each day we would see him sitting in the corner of his shelter cage and cowering at sounds of dogs barking or his door opening so we could take him out. He was scarred on the outside and traumatized on the inside. We worried he would be with us for a while due to his painfully shy personality.

As the saying goes "there's someone out there for everyone" and within weeks of his arrival I received an adoption application from a couple named Cass and Mike. I met Cass first to provide some Bunny 101 education, since she explained that she didn't have previous rabbit experience. However, she went on to tell me how she'd been reading everything she could about rabbit care in preparation for adopting. She also explained why adoption was so important to both her and Mike.

Cass is 71 and Mike is 80 and they describe themselves as life partners. Thirty-four years ago they chose not to have a conventional marriage but to live together and raise a family. As their kids moved out they decided empty nesters wasn't a title they wanted and went a different route filling that nest. As avid animal lovers they explored a



Life got better for Snickerdoodle when he was adopted by Mike and Cass.

local bird rescue. They adopted an African Grey named Taylor ten years ago. She was malnourished and had balance issues and lack of strength from being in a small cage for years. Their other bird Dee Dee, a Maximilian Pionus, was adopted in 2004 at eight months of age. She'd been so abused that it took months of work to get her secure enough to come out of her cage.

While Cass and Mike adore their birds, Cass still felt there was something missing and wanted a companion animal to cuddle with and enjoy in those wide-awake wee hours of the morning we all have, especially as we age. Since Mike is allergic to cats and dogs were too much work, Cass decided to explore adopting a bunny.

The day I met Cass she stole my heart with her concern for learning to care for a rabbit the right way and with all the notes she took. We don't often meet adopters who soak up like a sponge all we want to share with them. I was skeptical when



Mike and Snickers love their bonding time.

I brought Snickerdoodle in to spend time with her. He was the last bunny I'd describe as cuddly. Instead, it was like they both sensed what each had to offer the other and he happily let her stroke his nose and learn how to pick him up and hold him. Cass was smitten and hurried out to purchase all her supplies to make him the perfect forever home.

On adoption day, I got to meet Mike and discovered he was just as soft-spoken and compassionate as Cass. As they posed for their shelter adoption photo one of the staff even commented that she wished all adopters were like Cass and Mike.

Shortly after they got Snickerdoodle (now Snickers) Cass sent me photos of Snickers falling asleep in her arms and sliding down to be cradled like a baby. In Cass's words "We have made so many adaptations to the house to make it safe but fun for Snickers. If you want your house to look neat all the time then bunnies aren't for you. Ha!" Instead of a traditional cage or an exercise pen, they

converted a coat closet to be his "burrow" where he goes to sleep when he's not running or practicing his best couch potato imitation.

From humblest beginnings to living his best life, Snickers is one fortunate little bun.

For Cass and Mike, taking a chance on a small animal they knew nothing about has brought them an unconditional love that knows no bounds.



Snickers is now living the good life.



Louder Than Words

By Phyllis O'Beollain

Rabbits are largely silent, but they are masters of non-verbal communication. They use body language to communicate with each other and with us. If you spend time around a rabbit, you will notice certain postures that may provide some insight into what bunny is thinking.



It's a party of three, why are we still waiting?

At mealtime at my house you can usually see all of the following:

Meat loaf – your rabbit is lying on his tummy, head and ears up with all paws tucked under him. He looks like a meatloaf or a hen on a nest, relaxed, yet alert for the sound of the refrigerator door opening.

Sitting up – rather like a dog sits up and begs, except rabbits are far too dignified to beg. This pose usually means they think you have a treat; possibly they have heard the sound of a knife on the cutting board. This must mean you are chopping fresh produce for their salad (what else could you possibly be doing in there?).

Sphinx – rabbit is in meatloaf position, but with front legs stretched out. Still relaxing, but a bit more ready to jump up and snag those vegetables (why have you not handed them over yet?).

Standing up – your rabbit stands on hind legs, front paws in the air. Apparently you have finished chopping his produce. Standing up enables your rabbit to more easily grab the food out of your hands.

Boxing – rabbit sits back on her hind legs and whacks you repeatedly (hard!) with her front paws. You are probably trying to



I need to speak to the chef about the kale, please.



Not bad, but the waitstaff was slow.



Check please!

clean the litter box, re-arrange hutch furniture, or are not handing over the salad quickly enough.

Rubber chicken – sphinx position, but with back feet stretched out directly behind. Very contentedly relaxed. You must have finally ponied up those carrot sticks.

Flop – the vegetables were delicious even if the service was poor. Your bunny twists his head sideways, then flings the rest of his body over, lands with feet sticking out to the side and just lies there. The first time my rabbit did this I checked to see if she was still breathing.

Keep working at interpreting your bunny's signals. With some practice, you two will be better able to communicate. Just don't expect a tip.

From Our Archives

By Maggie Reading

Did you know that back issues of *Harelines* are on our website? Here's a small sampling of what's available:

"Home Alone" by Kristi Cole, Spring/Summer 1997, Volume 1 No. 1
Housing options for your rabbit while you're on vacation.

"Health Notes - GI Disorders in the House Rabbit" by Dr. Anne Gentry, DVM, Winter 1998, Volume 2 No. 1
Gastrointestinal disorders are the most common problems that a rabbit veterinarian encounters, and presumably are the most common problems the rabbit owner faces. This article summarizes these issues.

"Bon Appetit, Bunny!" by Herta Rodina, Winter 1999, Volume 3 No. 1
A thorough description of the house rabbit's ideal diet.

"Dental Disease in Rabbits" by Dr. Cathy Palomar, DVM, Spring/Summer 1999, Volume 3 No.2
An explanation of the causes of dental disease in rabbits and symptoms to look out for.

"Bunny-Safe Holidays" by Lori White, Fall 2000, Volume 4 No. 3
A list of reminders and notes to help keep your bunny safe over the winter holiday season.

"Problems of the Geriatric Rabbit" by Dr. Gary Riggs DVM, ABVP NorthCoast Bird & Exotic Specialties, Fall 2001, Volume 5 No. 3
Dr. Riggs describes the various conditions that may affect senior rabbits.

Look for more highlights from our archives in our Fall 2018 Harelines.



Somebunny Needs YOU!



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.**



Figaro is a tiny three-pound powerhouse full of energy and spunk. Don't let his small

appearance fool you; his nickname should be Napoleon. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



Elsa is a big bunny with a personality to match. She is over-the-top friendly and gets along well with dogs. Elsa is a young Flemish Giant and mother to fosters Winifred, Sarah, and Mary. If you are looking for an all-

round fun bun, Elsa is your girl. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Sir Hopsalot is a one-year-old high energy sweetie who needs a place to call his own and lots of room to run. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**

Looking for a beautiful mini-rex? Well look no further. **Cyndi** is a stunning young gal waiting for her forever home. She is very neat with excellent litter box habits. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Fifi (black) and **DC** (white) are best friends. Both take their cardio workouts seriously and love to chase each other playing the Bunny 500. While both are affectionate, Fifi will let you pet her non-stop.

Their appetite for food and life is amazing. They have had only one owner until he passed away recently. They must be adopted together. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**

Buddy is a sweet young bun who loves to binky although he is a little shy at first. With

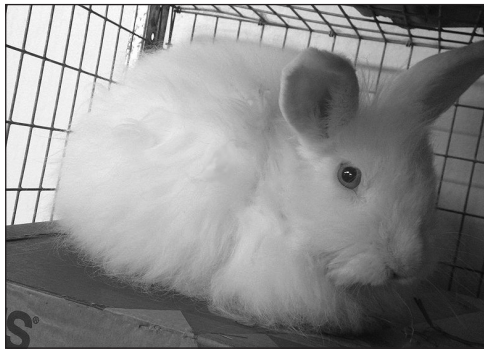


perfect litter box habits, he's sure to make a fine addition to any bunny-loving family. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



Potter is a healthy, handsome young fellow with a serious expression despite his silly fuzzy head. His favorite thing to do is sit on top of boxes - he may be little, but he likes to feel tall. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**

Bootsy, a male Angora, is a fluffy ball of cotton. He is very sweet and patient for his grooming sessions. Angora



rabbits require quite a lot of regular grooming to keep their coats smooth. He will make a great companion for the right person. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

There are sure to be many "hocus pocus" antics with these three sisters. **Winifred, Sarah, and Mary** have plenty of tricks for you. Each is available separately. Their mother, Elsa, would also love a home. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Winifred is very social and enjoys kisses on her forehead. She loves her hay, but her favorite activity is tossing her cardboard box around.



Sarah loves her free time and is very adventurous.



Mary is extremely outgoing and friendly. She is our resident goof-ball and is quite entertaining.



Keeping Cool

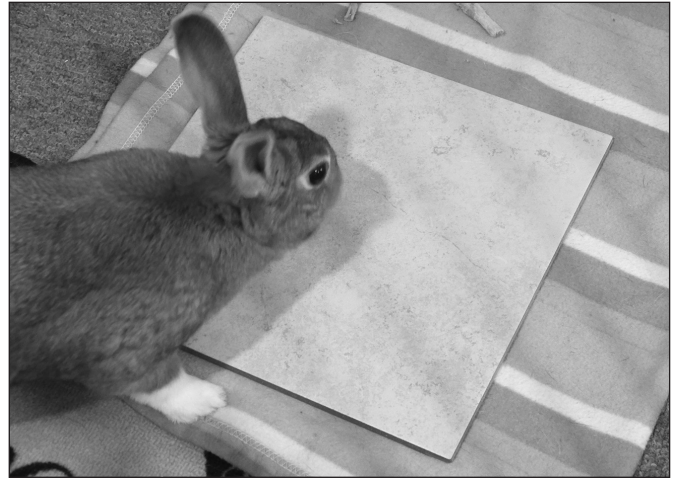
By Sue Zimmerman

With summer quickly approaching, it's time to think about keeping our house bunnies cool and comfortable during the warmer months.

A bunny can tolerate temperatures as high as 85 degrees. However, you do need to be cautious when temps in your bunny's living space rise above the 80 degree mark. As the mercury rises above 80, so does the risk of heat stroke. Heat stroke is extremely dangerous to rabbits and can be fatal if not treated immediately. The ideal room temperature for a domestic rabbit is between 55 and 70 degrees. I like to keep our rabbits between 60 and 80 degrees.

It is important to understand how a domestic rabbit regulates body temperature. Those ears are not just cute; they are actually quite functional. A rabbit's ears contain a complex network of blood vessels that expand in heat and contract in cold to control the animal's body temperature. In contrast, dogs and cats regulate their body temperature through the pads on the bottoms of their feet. A rabbit does not have pads on his feet nor does he have the ability to sweat to cool down. Instead, a rabbit uses his ears to control his internal thermostat. When it comes to keeping cool, a rabbit's ears act as mini air conditioners; blood going through the ears' many vessels releases heat, so when it circulates back through the rest of the body, it's cooler. Rabbits can also position their ears to pick up breezes and consequently cool down the blood going through their ears. But what happens if the temperature in the rabbit's habitat is too hot and the ears have trouble keep him cool? That's where you need to step in to help your bunny get more comfortable in the summer heat.

An air conditioned environment is best. Be sure that your bunny's living quarters are not



A large ceramic tile can provide a place to keep cool!

positioned in direct sunlight. An electric fan (with cords bunny-proofed, of course) is an easy way to provide a breeze; just don't point the blowing air directly at him. There are even some battery-operated fans that clip right on to the Xpen.

If you don't have A/C, fill a plastic bottle with water and freeze it. Give the frozen bottle wrapped in a light cloth to your bunny. You will find that he may lie right up against the cool surface. A frozen wet towel in your bunny's pen works like the frozen bottle. In addition, gently stroke his ears with a cool, damp towel; the evaporating water will help cool him. You can also provide a large ceramic tile for your rabbit to rest on and keep cool.

Be sure to keep your rabbit well hydrated in warm summer months. Check that his water bottle or bowl is always full. You may also try freezing some favorite herbs or small bits of veggies in ice cube trays filled with water – just like a popsicle. This is an excellent way to encourage your rabbit to drink more water and reward him with a treat for his effort. A comfortable, well-hydrated bunny is a happy, healthy bunny!



Fans & frozen water bottles can help keep your cutie cool!



Take Me Home

By Amy Marshall

I've been waiting for awhile, I can't figure out why.
I keep getting passed up, but what should I try?

The others look all pretty with their color and loppy ears.
I'm just a cute, plain brown bunny that will not show any fear.

I wish I could change the way I look, would someone like me more?
What if I was black and white, or had fluffy fur to the floor?

I feel like I did something wrong, why am I always last?
I hope someone will love me and understand my difficult past.

You will never know what I've been through or why I grunt and bite.
I watch everybody pass me by and leave me out of sight.

I count each day as they go by, for someone to take me home.
I don't want to live in this cage, forever all alone.

I feel I waited long enough, until a very special day.
I found out I was going home, I did not know what to say.

A nice lady brought me to her home, I felt this was my time.
She gave me lots of space and food and a new home to call all mine.

Although I waited for a long time, she said I was meant to be.
I know I'll always be loved and cared for, forever you and me.



**Helping Rabbits
Since 1997!!**



Buckeye House Rabbit Society

P.O. Box 61

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Buy a bunny a little time...

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your \$35.00 annual membership in the Buckeye HRS includes:

- National membership (\$20.00) and 3-4 issues of the House Rabbit Journal
- Local membership (\$15.00) and issues of Harelines

If you are already a national member, your local fee is \$15.00

☐ 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 _____

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