



HARELINES



Volume 15 Number 1 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

Winter 2011

Living with Growly

By Rob Lovicz

I have a rabbit named Sigg (formerly Freud) who came to us through the Buckeye HRS about two years ago. Sigg was rescued from a severe overcrowding situation. He is a man-pretty Californian with the greatest little face. That, of course, is looking at him from a distance. When you get close to him he will growl at you if you invade his territory. His growls tend to sound like odd noises;

some sound like a wookie while others sound like an angry grunting pig. It is quite funny to me, but to people new to him they are quite taken aback.

Sig is very territorial and does demonstrate some aggressive behavior. His growling is an aggressive response he probably learned to help him stay alive when food was scarce in that overcrowded home he came from. He does not bite, which is a bit unusual. Usually the two aggressive behaviors go hand in hand.



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Here's a closer look at aggressive behavior:

- 1) Aggressive rabbits can be scary. Rabbits growl, bite hard, kick hard, and move fast, so it's not unusual for owners to get intimidated.
- 2) Rabbits aren't born mean. Ninety-nine percent of aggressive rabbits have a behavioral problem, not a genetic one. Behavior can be changed, so give your bunny a chance.
- 3) Your rabbit doesn't hate you. More likely, she's afraid you're going to hurt her.
- 4) You're the only one who can solve the problem and figure out what's wrong and initiate new ways of interacting.
- 5) You can't hit a rabbit. Some people try to "teach" their bunnies not to bite by swatting their noses or even hitting them

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Visit the House Rabbit Society at <http://www.rabbit.org> and the Buckeye House Rabbit Society at <http://www.ohare.org>

THE BUCKEYE HRS RESPECTS YOUR
PRIVACY

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:

Linda Gardner, for her generous donation in memory of **Wendall**.

Bonnie Hagerman, for her thoughtful tribute to **Chloe's** memory.

Denis Whitford, for sending a supply of timothy cubes and apple sticks for our foster rabbits.

Pam Loch's 5th grade students, who once again honored their teacher with generous holiday donations to the Buckeye HRS!

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

Ann Zimmerman, Holly Wirebaugh, Ginette Brumbaugh, Gary Savage, Christa Billerman, Natasha Miller, Jim and Laura Gills, Maureen O'Neil, Paula Otter, Jim and Laura Brown, Cathy Montiegel, Mark and Jann Kuntavanish, Janet Reed, Renée Falcone.

All of our wonderful Sanctuary Rabbit Sponsors! This program would not be possible without your compassion and generosity. These special rabbits, who must spend the rest of their lives in foster care due to serious medical conditions, have you to thank.

As always, the **Monks Copy Shop** of downtown Columbus, for their discount on printing our newsletter.



Holiday Raffle Results



And the winners are ... Debbie Nyhus ("Mother Hare Fortuna") and Kimberly Johnson ("The Harvest"). The three runners up, who each get to choose a Funny Bunny Warning Sign by Pey Lu, are: Carmella Coia, Stacie Hecht, Jann Kuntavanish. Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to all who supported the Buckeye HRS through the purchase of raffle tickets. Proceeds will allow us to make the future brighter for more homeless bunnies in Ohio.





Spring Raffle to Benefit Buckeye HRS Foster Rabbits!

Shake off those winter blues and leap straight into spring with this bright and cheery wall hanging! Imagine that velvety-soft bunny frolicking in a sunlit meadow of May flowers. Can't you just smell those blossoms? Wouldn't this scene look fabulous in your home?

Generously donated for our third annual Spring Raffle, this hand-made wall hanging is adapted from an original design by Letitia Hutchings called "Nature's Sweet Kiss." The artist, Ohio resident Christine Anielski, decreased the size of the design, added buttons as accents, and hand embroidered the entire piece instead of machine top stitching. The work is approximately 3 ft. wide x 2 ft. high. Since the rabbit in the wall hanging

appears to be making friends with a lady bug, Christine named her version "*Springtime Acquaintances*."

All proceeds will go directly to our foster program and will ensure that needy bunnies have a safe haven until they find the happiness of a permanent home. Tickets cost \$1 each and you may buy as many as you wish. All entries must be postmarked no later than April 9, 2011. 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 5767, Athens, OH 45701. The lucky winner will be notified before Easter.

This charming wall hanging is best viewed in color on our website at www.ohare.org/gifts-raffle.htm





Living with Growly Cont'd.

with newspapers. This will only aggravate the problem. You need to reassure your rabbit that his or her environment is safe.¹

When Sig gets aggressive and upset, he growls very loudly, assumes a bulldog stance, and presses his ears down to his body. It's an intimidating look to someone who is not familiar with him. The best way to deal with him is to talk very soothingly. I call him a big scary bunny in a very soothing tone and pet his head from above his nose to the tip of his ears to show him that I am the one in control. I am the alpha bunny. He will typically relax and settle down.

In cases where a rabbit bites you, do not over-react. Try saying NO in a very firm tone right after the offence and then push bunny's head down gently with your hand. When he attempts to nip, pet his head from above and talk

in soothing tones. This shows him that everything is safe, as well as that you are in control. That pushing down of the head is a sign to rabbits that they are the subservient partner in the relationship. In the wild, the dominant rabbits do similar things to their subordinate rabbits and

that conduct is ingrained in them. This discipline may need to be repeated till the nipping stops or decreases significantly -- and it will.

Growling and biting is a way that some rabbits express themselves. It is not a positive expression to you or me, but that is how the rabbit has learned to adapt and cope in life. It is up to us to curb negative behaviors and aggressions.

Sig is harmless. It is important that I let him express himself and only try to reduce his very worst bulldog-stance, aggressive responses. I will be honest; I really get a kick out of listening to him grumble when you go down to pet him, when you feed him, when you groom him, or when a toy doesn't do what he wants it to. The growling is part of his wonderfully rich personality.

¹ *National House Rabbit Society, FAQ: Aggression*



Three's a Crowd? I Beg to Disagree...

By Debbi Braunschweiger

In late summer '09 we were contacted by a woman named Sara who was looking for a bonded pair of young buns to possibly bond with her senior female, Spice. Sadly, Spice's bonded partner of five years had passed away a few months prior and Spice was not adjusting well. Sara was concerned that although Spice was six and still had a few good years ahead of her, she might start to go downhill without a friend or friends to keep her stimulated and engaged in life. Part of her thinking was that when the time came for Spice to pass, the two buns would still have each other.

When Sara contacted us, it just so happened that our shelter had a pair of four-month-old dwarf hotot bonded brothers, Gene and Ace, who might be up to the challenge. I was somewhat apprehensive at attempting to bond three rabbits, as I'd only participated in bonding two bunnies twice before, but I was also intrigued to see if it was even possible. So, we set up a "date" at the shelter and proceeded to use one of the bonding rooms (a 5' by 5' space with a bench) to begin our matchmaking process. To our amazement, Gene and Ace each circled Spice, and then

chasing and grooming ensued. It wasn't long before I was secretly wishing our room's windows were blacked out, as our little group quickly became R-rated. After about thirty minutes, all three were lying side by side and taking turns grooming. Unbelievable, if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes.

Let's fast forward to last month when I contacted Sara to find out how things were going with her little threesome. Her two sons had renamed the bunnies Boormerman and Joey. Here's an excerpt from Sara's email, (published with permission):

"Boormerman, Joey, and Spice did bond really well. I believe that because those two buns were

willing to love Spice, she lived longer than I expected. Joey, especially, was Spice's champion. He'd clean her face, cuddle, bun spoon with her, and just generally help her. You see, Spice was blind. The two boy buns would guide her around and help her if she needed it.

I couldn't have asked for two better friends to be with my girl, Spice. She passed away in her sleep in August 2010, just a few months shy of the boys' one-year adoption date. She spent the last few months of her life in our master bath with Boormerman and Joey getting daily visitation privileges. I believe it was the highlight of her day to have them with her. They wore her out with

their energy, though. So, just visitation rights in her last months.

Boormerman and Joey were a great choice and I'm thankful to have found them. Both boys are healthy and happy. The fact that they bonded with Spice so well and so quickly was an answered prayer for me. I needed Spice's last months to be filled with bunny love and they did that beautifully."

If you ever get the chance to bond three bunnies, accept the challenge. It may not go as smoothly as for Spice and her two buddies, but it might very well end up being the most heartwarming rabbit opportunity you'll ever encounter.



We're Growing!

The Buckeye HRS has four new volunteers! You met Jann Kuntavanish of Dayton in our previous edition of Harelines. Here's an opportunity to get to know our two other Dayton educators, Debbi Braunschweiger and Jen Parks, as well as our new Cleveland-area fosterer, Stephanie Lodge. We're very pleased to have them all aboard!



Debbi Braunschweiger

Hi, I'm one of the newest educators-in-training in the Dayton area. I'm really excited to be a part of the Buckeye House Rabbit Society and can't wait to start sharing experiences with all of you seasoned rabbit lovers.

I've been a rabbit lover ever since I was a young girl and brought home a bunny from a ranch I visited with my friend's family in Southern California. Needless to say, he wasn't received with the greatest of enthusiasm, but I was allowed to keep him and he lived a long, happy life.

Now I'm living in Kettering, Ohio with my husband, Craig, and three cats, two birds, and five rabbits - four of my own and one foster. My husband and I have been married for ten years and, no, he didn't have any animals before I met him; he knew going in that it was a "package deal". He quickly adapted and is quite attached to them all.

I'm fortunate to be in a position where I can work part time at a local Wild Birds Unlimited store near my home and also volunteer at the Humane Society of Greater Dayton where I kennel and foster the shelter rabbits and also mentor other volunteers wanting to learn about rabbits. It's been rewarding, heartbreaking, and frustrating at times, but definitely one of the things I enjoy most in life.

I look forward to working with Buckeye HRS to help spread the word on the joys of living with house rabbits.



Jen Parks

I'm a science teacher at West Carrollton High School in Dayton. I have been teaching for eight years and currently teach 9th grade integrated science, 10th grade integrated biology, and honors biology. I love what I do (although the freshmen can really try my patience at times!). I'm very much into exercise and the outdoors and lead a very healthy lifestyle (including being vegan). I live in Brookville with my husband, Chris, of over three years (he's a first grade teacher). We have two dogs - Boomer, a lab mix, and Molly, a yellow lab - Felix the cat, and, OF COURSE, two wonderful rabbits -- a mini rex named



Clyde and a mixed breed named Harrison. I'm also fostering Daphne, a huge Flemish Giant mix from the Humane Society.

Animals have always been a large part of my life, and in the last few years, I decided to devote some of my time to the Humane Society of Greater Dayton. I began working primarily with the cats, but then one day, Clyde came in as part of a cruelty investigation, and I fell completely in love with him! I would play with him each week as I came in to clean the cats, and eventually Clyde came up for adoption, and the rest is history! As I began to learn more about rabbits, I met Jann K. and Debbi B. and eventually transitioned to working solely with them and the rabbits.

I'm very excited to be an educator-in-training for the Buckeye HRS! I hope my current skills as a teacher will help me speak effectively to the general public about rabbits.



Stephanie Lodge

I live on the west side of Cleveland with my husband, Phil. We just got married in January in Cancun. I have been volunteering for the Cleveland Animal Protective League since May 2007, focusing primarily on the rabbits. I clip the nails of all the buns and guinea pigs that come into the APL. Shortly after I started volunteering there, we (my then-fiancé and I) adopted our first bun. She's a small Flemish Giant weighing in at only 15 lbs. Shortly after, we adopted Humphrey, a grumpy French Lop, and a few months later came Edison, also a French Lop but very happy. The boys didn't get along in the beginning, but after a lot of work and many months, they are best friends. We also have three guinea pigs and one fuzzy cat. We normally have a foster bunny or guinea pig. Maximus Rabbiticus is our current Buckeye HRS foster. He is such a lover, more so than many of the other buns I've met. Look for his write-up on page 9. I also pet sit and do home visit nail trimming in Cleveland and the surrounding area.

I am thrilled to be a part of the Buckeye House Rabbit Society. It's wonderful meeting people with similar interests who understand where I'm coming from.





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Somebunny Needs YOU!



Sylvester is quite a unique looking bunny with his stripes and two-toned face! He LOVES his free time and pellets. This handsome guy would make a great addition to your home. He has lots of love to give. Why not make an appointment to meet him? **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Tazwell is one of the bunnies who was rescued from the Elyria overcrowding situation. He's from one of the last litters to be born there (Jan – Apr 2006). Taz is a little shy, he will need time with you to warm up and develop trust. He's on the small side, weighing

roughly 4.0 lbs, his full-grown weight. He loves his bamboo paper plate holders for chewing and is perfect with his litter box. **Please contact Kristen Doherty (bhrs-kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.**



Dixie knows how to have a good time; whether it is tossing around her toys, chewing on her ball, or racing through her tunnel. When she is done, this adorable white bunny (with long white eye lashes), will sit for a

good petting and then stretch out in her box for a nice nap. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Have you ever wanted back into a time of innocence, when rabbits could be big and white and magic? This young lovely, born in spring '09, will take you there. Open your door to her, and come home to the land of **Honalee**. **Please contact Herta Rodina (bhrs-herta@ohare.org) 740-797-7616.**



This is **Pumpkin**! She is a very sweet young lady. Just look at her awesome blue/gray fur! What a beautiful bunny! Pumpkin enjoys playing with her toys and she especially loves to chomp on

hay. Wouldn't you love to make Pumpkin a member of your family? **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Coco Bean is a real snuggle bunny. She loves to be petted and is very friendly. With her velvet soft fur **Coco** is quite a beauty. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Every season will be a winning season with this Bengal striped bunny. **Henry** (named for the late Chris Henry) has excellent litter box habits and knows how to make the play. Make **Henry** a member of your team today. Whodey! **Please contact Michele Roth**

Kerley (bhrs-michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.



Chili and Chiqua came all the way to Ohio from a large rescue in New Mexico. **Chili** has dark chocolate-brown fur and a spicy personality. She also has one ear that lops down and the other that stands straight up. **Chiqua** is all black with velvety-soft fur and lots of curiosity. Make an appointment to meet them today! **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Alfonso, a little mini-rex, gets so excited for his meals that he runs round and round frantically until he is fed. If you pick him up, however, he melts in your arms and nuzzles his face under your chin. He weighs about 3.5 lbs, is perfect with his litterbox, and eats a ton of hay for such a little guy. He also loves cruising through his miniature tunnels and boxes. **Please contact Kristen Doherty (bhrrs-kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.**



Alma (Alma Sedges Tidy Beets), a beautiful blue-gray mini lop, and **Ellsworth**, a 4 lb. gray and white Dutch who acts as her chief protector and bodyguard, have a unique bond unlike anything we've seen. Most times you will find them snuggling and grooming each other sweetly, though

occasionally **Ellsworth** will give a loud grunt if he thinks you will harm Alma in any way. They are very funny to watch. They are roughly 4-5 years old, in very good health, and must be adopted as a pair. **Please contact Kristen Doherty (bhrrs-kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.**



sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.

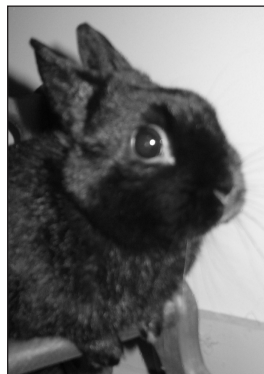
I can't find enough good things to say about **Frankie**. He stole our hearts the moment we met him. He is a super friendly and happy-go-lucky kind of guy. He wants to be where you are and he loves to be petted. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrs-**



Little **Tess** is an adorable young rabbit, about four months old, with a very sweet personality. **Tess** loves to be petted on her head and does well in a home with dogs and other animals. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Maximus the Rabbiticus is a gorgeous black male with a great appetite for food and for love. **Max** has an incredibly sweet disposition and adjusts easily to new situations. He doesn't mind being picked up and is quite content as a lap bunny. He is 7 years old and in great health, but does have arthritis in his hind legs. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



You'll have a whale of a good time with this dwarf bunny. Many tales will be told of **Moby's** sweet nature and great litter box habits. At two pounds he's the catch of the day and will make an excellent addition to your family. **Please contact Michele Roth Kerley (bhrrs-michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.**



Adopted!

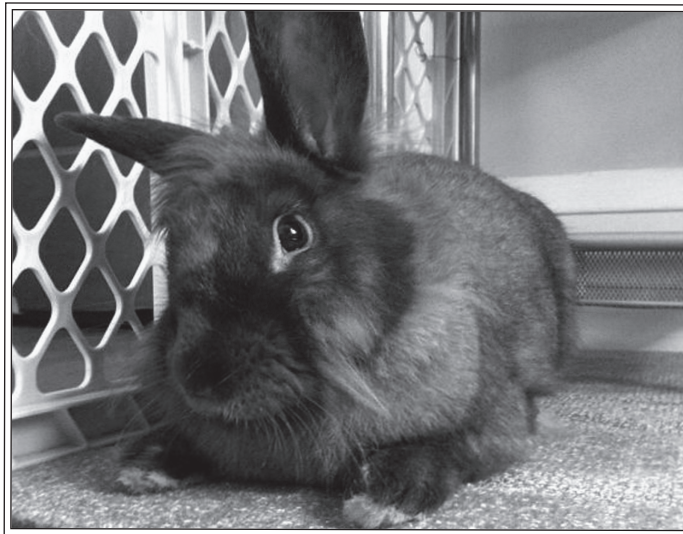
Huey has a new home with Judy Skelley and her family. ♥ **Speedy** now resides with Brandi Siwik of Lakewood.
♥ Kathleen Fliehman has brought **Dewey** into her heart and into her home.



Farewell to Brownie

My little b. There are so many things about you that I miss. When I first saw you I was so incredibly hopeful that the bad times were behind you and only good things were to come. It was a rough road for you, being bounced around from foster home to foster home, meanwhile the docs not knowing exactly what you needed to feel 100% again. Although you only spent 4 months living with Phil and me, you made such an impact on our lives. You were the first bun to get priority living space (thanks to Phil giving up half the room he keeps his clothes in). Because of you I learned so many things about head tilt, things that you can only learn firsthand. I have to admit having your head cocked to one side really made for an adorable picture. You always looked like you were posing.

Your silly hair sticking up around your ears, the one piece that always fell perfectly to one side and your ridiculous handlebar mustache always brought a smile to my face. Even though you were apprehensive about cuddling, you were



afraid of nothing at dinner time. When I was taking down the garden and harvesting the last of the basil, I thought "Brownie will feast tonight." Then I realized you had already crossed the bridge. It's still hard going into your old room; my immediate reaction is -- where are you? I know the beginning of your life was bumpy at best, but we gave you everything your little heart could want for those last few months. I think Humphrey

(lop bun) misses watching you through the play pen wall. When I took that wall down, Humphrey and his brother had to investigate immediately, I'm sure wondering "where did that cute little brown girl go?" It breaks my heart to write this, since I always expected that you were tough as nails and could rebound against the odds. You

can take comfort in knowing that your brother Snickers is doing amazingly well with his new family. He's even taken a shine to one of the cats, although I don't know how the cat feels about being followed 24/7. I miss you and hope you are frolicking (without tipping over) in bunny heaven.

Love, Stephanie (mom)



Farewell to Belle, our Sanctuary Rabbit

By Keith Zimmerman

Like every foster rabbit that comes to us, we had such high hopes when you came into our home. We'd get you spayed and healthy so that a loving family would give you a forever home, where you'd live the life of a house rabbit. But for one reason or another -- perhaps you were too shy or old, or easily frightened, or you used your teeth to express yourself when a growl would suffice - - no one came to adopt you.

So it was with Belle (aka Mrs. Bootski), a stray who was captured in Bellefontaine after evading her captors for three cold months in 2001. Throughout February, March, and April, neighbors had spotted her roaming the area before she was finally corralled and caught. Even though we were 100 miles away, we were the only foster home that had room for her, so we made the trip to pick her up.

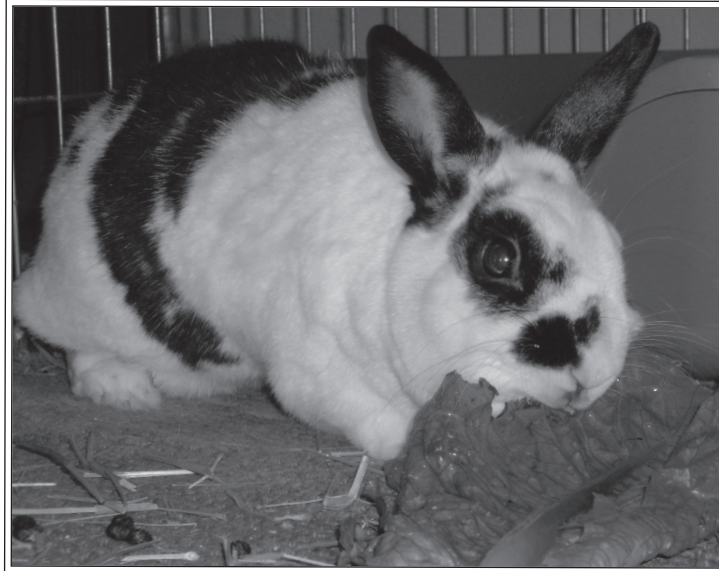
It was obvious that Belle was extremely shy and unaccustomed to human affection. Despite our best efforts to socialize her, she didn't warm to anything more than a nose rub at feeding time. She wasn't even interested in exploring during her free time. As the weeks turned to months, and the months turned to years, we knew it was going to be hard to place Belle into a new home. After three years of zero interest in her from potential adopters, we decided that even if Belle was adopted, it would be especially stressful for her to get re-settled; therefore she joined our sanctuary program. She moved into the living

room where she seemed to enjoy interacting with the dogs, cat, and (somewhat) with us. Still, she didn't come out of her pen when given the chance, and became stiff as a board when picked up for cuddling or grooming. Although she was constrained by the restricted liberties of being a foster, she finally settled into her routines and became comfortable with familiar surroundings and with the people who cared for her.

One night around bedtime, Sue noticed that Belle hadn't eaten her veggies or her pellets and she seemed to be uncomfortable. I picked her up

and held her while casually examining her. She was cold and lethargic, so I let her snuggle into a plush blanket on my lap and gently stroked her head and ears while she relaxed and her eyes started to close. Twenty minutes later she let out a deep sigh and she died. Despite all the euthanasias I'd tended to in the

past with rabbits and dogs, this was the first time an animal had ever died in my arms of natural causes. Thankfully, it was a quiet and peaceful passing, although it still left me feeling empty and helpless in the face of "The Black Rabbit."





MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your \$33.00 annual membership in the Buckeye HRS includes:

- National membership (\$18.00) 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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Bunnies' names and special dates _____

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Buy a bunny a little time...