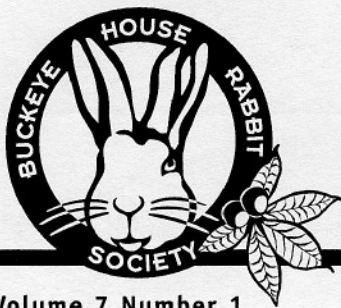




HARELINES



Volume 7 Number 1

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

Winter 2003

Lessons Learned

by Heidi Metzger

It's ironic that I will always have a sad and horrible remembrance of the day we celebrate as Memorial Day. That was the day that my lack of diligence almost caused the death of one of my bunnies, Travis.

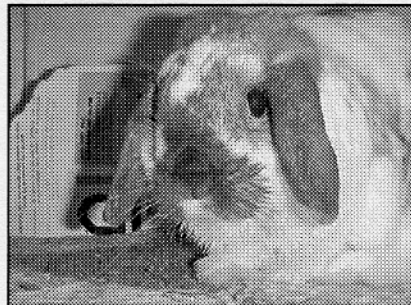
Had you told me that morning that this scenario would occur in my house, that this awful event would happen to me, I wouldn't have believed you. It is my sincere hope that as you read this cautionary tale, you fully accept that this can happen to you too – I beg of you to take it seriously.

Like most of you, I have baby gates separating just about every room in my house, and I've stepped over each of them at least a thousand times without thinking twice. Many times, my buns would be scurrying around near the gate as I lumbered over with arms full of salad bowls or the shop vac or bags of hay. Every time they would scramble away, out of the path of danger. I was so used to this behavior that I very much took it for granted they would always move out of my way – heck, they'd done it for three years, no problem! I've even tripped over the



"We sure were scared when Travis and Hektor were gone from home for so long...we thought mom had shipped

the two of them off to military school or something. Then, when Savvy Trav came home with braces, we were all kinda jealous that he got to have lagomorph orthodontia, but we sure are happy to have him back around!"



"My face got super messy cuz I squirmed a lot when mom tried to feed me with the syringe."

gates, fallen over the gates, and gotten snagged on the gates, and I swear I heard the bunnies laugh at my lack of grace as I picked myself up off the floor.

I was very, very wrong, and I have learned a valuable and painful and heartbreaking lesson because of my mistake. Accidents happen to EVERYONE, and that fateful holiday evening, it was my turn. I was

In this issue

First Aid for Bunny 3

Somebunny Needs You!6

Our Readers Write10

Spotlight on Maya and her babies11



cleaning the bunny room and emptying litter boxes, back and forth over the gate. It was rather late, and I was pretty tired and was looking forward to finishing up and going to bed. As usual, Travis was trying to make love to his girlfriend, the shop vac, which was right by the gate. He was to the left side of the gate, so I began to step over on the right side as I was reaching behind me for a garbage bag. I had transferred my weight to the front leg without having first planted my foot on the far side of the gate... there was a sickening crunch under my foot, as if I had stepped on a shell and it had crumbled under my weight. Travis had moved about ten inches to the right and I had stepped on him – his head was wedged between my shoe and the floor. How could I be so careless?

Continued on page 4



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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>**

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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:

Jodi McLaughlin and Rick Franco, for their contribution in memory of Milly.

Diana Jancura, for her donation in memory of Stu.

John and Heather Klaehn, for their generosity in memory of Ernie.

The Monks Copy Shop of downtown Columbus, for their discount on printing our newsletter.

The following members, both donors and Sanctuary Rabbit Sponsors, whose kindness and generosity is making such a huge difference for so many rabbits:

Carmella Coia, Linda and Mark Gardner, Anita Watson, Rob Lovicz and Kim Johnson, Doris Mastroguiseppe, Dennis and Shirley Wood, Mary Backherms, Anne and Wilma Jagodnik, Eric and Lois Raphael, Melodie Sommers, Paul Ward, Angela Windau, Lin Beam, Deb Raschke, Laura Loudon and Ken Kroah, Harry Cooper, Carol Costa, Debi Britton, June Gates, Pam Loch, the kind folks at RubberHedgehog Rubber Stamps, Kelly Zentz, Joyce Weaver, David and Cathy Zipf, Jane Winik, Natasha Miller.

And, last but definitely not least, a hearty, heartfelt thank you to all the **Buckeye HRS volunteers** for the countless number of hours you all put in during 2002. It's a privilege to know you!

Getting the Word Out

If you're reading this newsletter, you know the joy of sharing your home with a rabbit, but how do we let others in on the secret? Through events like Petpalooza!

The City of Twinsburg held its first annual Petpalooza on October 12, 2002. A wide range of animal interest groups were invited to inform the community about animal care and adoption opportunities. Heidi Metzger, Rob Lovicz, and Jane Winik represented the Buckeye House Rabbit Society, and Marty

(aka Martin) and Wendall represented the rabbit community. We set up two sample pens for Marty and Wendall, then spent the afternoon talking to people and providing information on care and feeding of rabbits. Marty got lots of pets from passers by, while Wendall got lots of attention playing in a box in his pen.

This was a great opportunity to provide information about the joys of having a house rabbit. If you hear about similar events, please contact one of our volunteers, so we can continue to get the word out! ➡

First Aid for Bunny

by Jennifer Wolfe

It's nail-trimming time – something that neither you nor your bunny probably enjoys. Bunny is wriggling and – snip – the trimmers have cut too close and here comes the blood... and the guilt.

You've been bonding two rabbits and it's been going fairly well. Then one morning you come down to find that during the night, one has escaped from his pen and the two have engaged in the Clash of the Titans all night long. There are piles of rabbit hair all around ... it's time to check for injuries.

A rabbit's nature is not conducive to making trips to the vet. Most rabbits find car rides and noisy vet clinics terrifying. The stress of a vet visit can be so severe in some cases, it can jeopardize the rabbit's health. For this reason, it is helpful to know some bunny first aid to treat minor injuries in the comfort of your rabbit's own home. Please note that the following first aid tips are meant to treat minor injuries only. If your rabbit has major injuries, such as severe bleeding or a broken bone, take your rabbit to the vet immediately; when in doubt, take your rabbit to the vet immediately.

The first step in good first aid is being prepared before an emergency occurs. Assemble a rabbit first-aid kit. See pages 13-14 in

Rabbit Health in the 21st Century for a complete list of recommended supplies. The essentials include: gauze bandages, Betadine, hydrogen peroxide (use diluted), styptic powder, thermometer, triple antibiotic ointment, syringes (for flushing wounds or giving oral medications), and scissors.

If you're like me, then your pets always get sick or injured on the weekends or holidays when your regular vet office is closed. Locate an after-hours emergency vet who treats rabbits BEFORE an emergency occurs. Drive by the location sometime — it's better to make a practice run in the daylight before you're racing there in a panic at night.

When your rabbit is feeling out-of-sorts, the first thing to do is to check vital signs. But what are your rabbit's vital signs? You should be familiar with your rabbit's normal heart rate, temperature, breathing rate, and gum color.

Heart rate: 175-210 beats/min
Temperature: 101°-103° F
Breathing rate: 50-75 breaths/min

Find your rabbit's pulse either by placing a hand gently around your rabbit's chest or by placing a finger in the groin area. Also, check your rabbit's gum color. The rabbit's gums should be a nice, healthy

Some essentials of a rabbit first aid kit.



pink. Identifying these vital signs while your rabbit is healthy (have your vet demonstrate) will give you a basis for comparison when your rabbit is feeling ill.

Now you're prepared to give your rabbit medical attention. What follows are some examples of the most common minor injuries for rabbits and how to treat them.

Bleeding toenail: Some of us are lucky to have rabbits with white toenails that allow us to see the quick, that pink, sensitive flesh inside the toenail, and thus avoid cutting it during a nail trim. For those of us whose rabbits have dark toenails, it can be a nervous guessing game; and nothing opens the floodgates of guilt quite like seeing the flow of blood after the click of the nail trimmers.

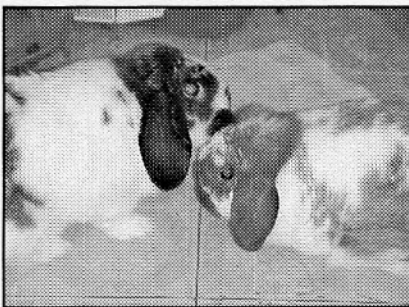
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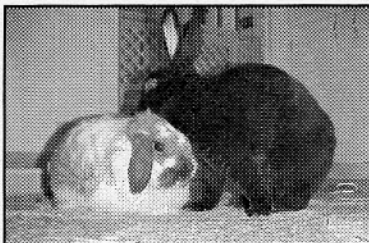
"Hektor went to the hospital with me so I wouldn't be scared and made sure they took good care of me."



"AAARRGH MY CHIN ITCHES"



"My buddy Hektor always makes sure my eyes are clean."



"Mackie was so happy to have me home, she just kept giving me kisses."

Lessons Learned, Cont'd.

Why didn't I check where he was before I stepped? Why hadn't I paid more attention? I prayed to God he would be ok – I was absolutely mortified. His back was to me and he started to hop away – I quickly grabbed him and swung him around to look at his face.

Blood poured out of his little mouth as if he had bit down on a movie vampire blood bag. I couldn't see where the blood was coming from, and his body was limp – at first I thought I had broken his neck or crushed his skull. Fighting an overwhelming wave of nausea, I rushed him into the bathroom and rinsed his face with water. There was blood all down the front of him and his little jaw was hanging slack. I wrapped him in a towel, grabbed my purse and ran out the door to summon my neighbor to take me to the emergency vet.

You need to be aware that most "Emergency Vets" will not touch rabbits, unless it is a hospital that specializes in "exotic" animals. I couldn't believe it. I got my bunny to the vet as quickly as possible, and they weren't going to help him. "DO SOMETHING!" I demanded as my neighbor dragged me, clutching a bloody Travis and crying so hard I thought I was going to vomit, out of the clinic.

That was possibly the longest night of my life – I held Travis and cried, telling him over and over how sorry I was for hurting him.

I was convinced he was going to die during the night and there was no one that could help him. This was the bunny I had rescued, the bunny who had almost starved to death and who rebounded and become the most active, affectionate, funny bunny you could ever imagine.

I had promised him that no harm would ever befall him once he was with me, and then I went and stepped on his head! I caused the pain he was suffering, I inflicted this mortal wound, and now he was going to die a slow, painful death – all because I was in a hurry and didn't take two measly seconds to make sure where I was stepping, all because I was too lazy.

First thing the next morning, I took Travis to my regular vet near my house. "Everything is going to be ok now" I thought to myself, "this vet is a bunny expert and he'll help Trav." Travis was sedated and x-rays were taken of his fragile little head.

"Well, see this here?" the vet said as he pointed to the mandible joint on the films. "You've crushed his jaw – and that bone is too fragile to pin or anything....there's really nothing I can do for him. If he can't eat, he can't live," he said, and then he stood there, suddenly mute, staring at me, and shrugged. My heart sank.

I was told if he can't eat, he can't live. This vet, a "bunny expert", basically told me I should put him



out of his misery. I personally can't stand to see animals in pain, and I almost made the very horrible decision to put him to sleep right then and there. Then I looked at Trav and I changed my mind.

THANK GOD I didn't go with my first gut reaction, and had enough presence of mind to call an HRS friend, who directed me to go immediately to an "exotic specialty" veterinary clinic 50 miles away.

Needless to say I was a basket case by that point, and I didn't dare drive an hour anywhere by myself. I called an HRS acquaintance (now a dear friend) and asked if she might be able to leave work early and drive me down there. She was at my house in about half an hour and we were off to the new vet.

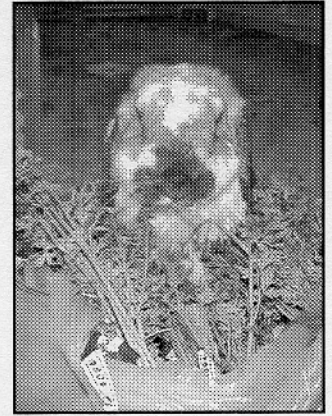
I brought Hektor, Travis's best buddy, along to keep him company, and hopefully keep him calm for what I was sure was going to be his euthanasia. I was convinced that Trav was done for, and that I had so grievously injured him that there was no reprieve – no hope for recovery. Needless to say, the prognosis I had received a few hours earlier had quite a negative effect on my thought processes, and I tried to steel myself for the inevitable.

I am so grateful that Jane was with me so she could translate the doctor's consultation and opinion to me. "He still has a lot of life left in him" sounded to me like "I think we're going to have to put him down". Through my copious tears

and body-shaking sobs, I cried "If you're going to kill him, I want to be here! I live in Cleveland! You're going to put him to sleep when I'm not here! You can't do that!"

"No, no, Heidi, he's gonna die – but I don't think it's going to be today. I think there are still some options," the doctor assured me – "I may be able to wire his jaw and we might have to put in a feeding tube, but that will come out eventually and...." may as well have been "WahWahBlahbloo-WahWahboogablah". (Now that Trav is better, Jane teases me mercilessly about my utter lack of coherence or interpretive ability during that heart-wrenching time, but I was really quite sure he was a goner.)

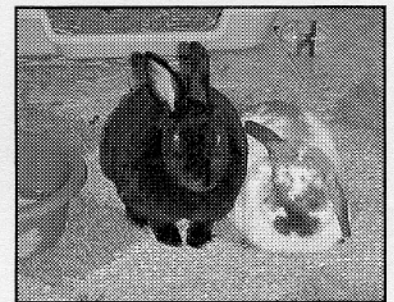
After surgery and four days in the hospital (his buddy Hektor by his side the whole time), Travis was given the all-clear to come home. He had a wire in his jaw holding the fractured mandible in place and wrapped around his bottom teeth – bunny braces! Over a period of six weeks, he received anti-inflammatory medication, antibiotics and probiotics. He received three hand feedings a day of delectable mush made of ground pellets, strawberry Ensure, various baby foods and pumpkin. He started eating leafy greens (with a little difficulty) about a week after arriving home. He was



"I was so excited when mom put the groceries on the floor - I couldn't wait to eat them!"



"Boy, some days I just felt flat."



"I like snuggling with my girl-friend Mackie"

Adopted!

Dawson is now living with Jessica and Dean and making some new friends with the dogs in the family. ♡ **Joelle** is enjoying the attention of Michael and Pam in her new home in Euclid. ♡ **Lily** has found a new home with Jann and fellow lops Spike, Woody, and Sammy. ♡ **Charlie** was adopted by Jerri. ♡ **Buttercup** was adopted by Cara and is enjoying her new home in Westlake. ♡ **Rascal** was adopted on December 23 to Kathy Weaver and daughter, Jodie, of Van Buren, OH. He is doing great with his new family and everything is going well.

♡ **Tina** (now **Emmy Lou**) and **Gina** (now **Peggy Sue**) have won Lee's heart and are making themselves at home in Athens. ♡ **Jet** is winning the hearts of the Grosser family in Cincinnati.

♡ **Simone** is settling into her new home with Dawn and Danielle, where she's being lavished with attention.

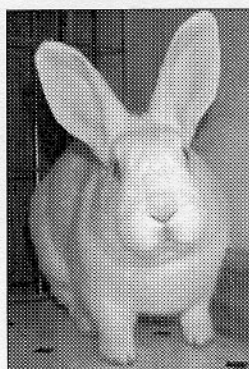
♡ **Brody** is able to race around the home of Patty McGivern in Pittsburgh, PA, at top speeds. ♡ **Martin** now lives with Jean, Ramin, Grace, and two new dog pals in Lakewood. ♡ **Hammett** (now **Chaim**, pronounced "Hyam") is bringing lots of joy to the Solomon family in Lyndhurst. ♡ **Lewis** and **Clark** now share a home in Copley with Hanna and James and many fish. They enjoy lots of free run time and are finding many new hiding places. ♡ **Wendall** will be able to explore his new home to his heart's content with Linda and Mark Gardner of Aurora. ♡ **Dottie** (now **Oreo**) joins in the family activities with the Franczeks of Broadview Heights.

Somebunny Needs YOU!



Freckles is a friendly female who is about 3 years old. She likes playing in her cardboard tunnel and tossing wicker baskets. She weighs about 6 lbs. and loves to be petted. She was abandoned at a local APL with her mom and siblings.

Please contact Kristi Cole
(kristi@ohare.org) 330-484-8416.



Camille is an energetic gal, who loves to dance around the room. She was found outdoors right before a snow-

storm and is approximately 9-12 months old. She has perfect litter habits and enjoys rearranging her toys to be "just so". She also really knows how to relax, sleeping soundly while lying nearly upside down.

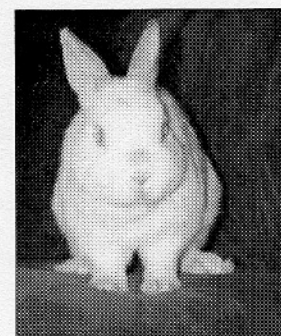
Please contact Kristi Cole
(kristi@ohare.org)
330-484-8416.



This sweet 5.8 lb all-black lop was rescued with the help of the Wood County Humane Society.

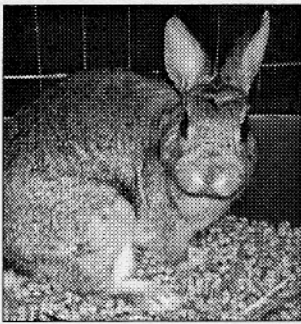
Venus loves to be petted, knows how to use her litterbox, and enjoys handfuls of fresh hay.

Please contact Kristen Doherty
(kristen@ohare.org)
440-543-4959.

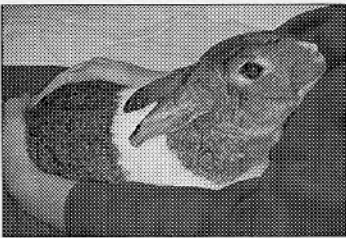


Kenji, all-white with light gray marking on his ears, nose, and tail, is a 2.6 lb dwarf who loves to snuggle and eat. He loves to be around people and has a calm demeanor.

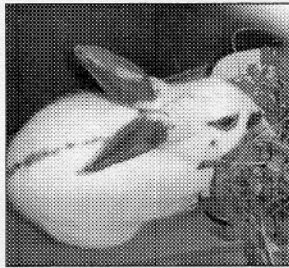
Please contact Kristen Doherty
(kristen@ohare.org)
440-543-4959.



Maurice is a tiny dwarf boy with gray agouti fur weighing in at 2.2 lbs. He is full-grown and very active with a funny personality. **Please contact Kristen Doherty (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.**

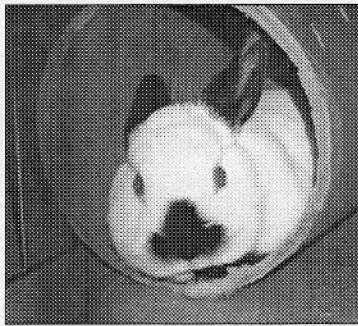


Shy **Ivy** arrived in foster care bonded with a more outgoing bunny, Holly. Sadly, Holly died suddenly, leaving Ivy on her own to interact with humans. She's gradually showing more trust, but Ivy is still a very timid, cautious bunny. She needs a quiet home with a patient, understanding family, and may possibly make friends with another rabbit. Ivy is about two years old and weighs about five pounds. Both her appetite and litter habits are excellent. **Please contact Herta Rodina (herta@ohare.org) 740-797-7616.**

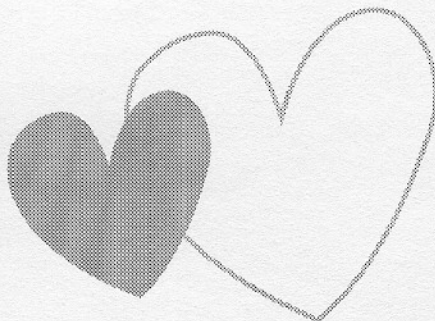


Trevor
(a.k.a
Slim) is

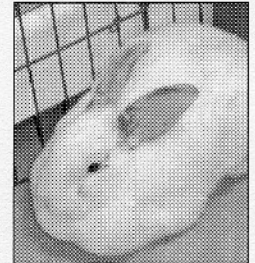
a young English Spot, roughly 5 months old. Trevor loves to be held and snuggled, and he also likes to run around at top speeds. **Please contact Kristen Doherty (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.**



PJ is a 2.5 lb Himalayan dwarf who is as friendly as she is cute. PJ has exemplary litterbox habits, and surprisingly, can pack a large quantity of hay into her tiny body. PJ loves to be stroked on the nose. She also likes to run through her miniature tube and cardboard box. **Please contact Kristen Doherty (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.**

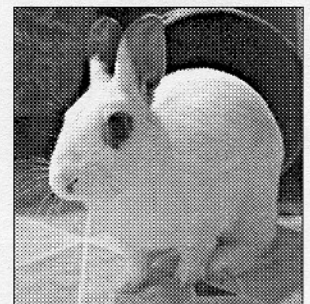


Mitsu is a friendly Himalayan girl, roughly 4.5 lbs, who loves to be petted and will even sit in your lap. She is also very tidy. **Please contact Kristen Doherty (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.**



Bonnie is a curious and friendly 5.5 lb girl who gobbles all of her hay and comes running for pets.

Please contact Kristen Doherty (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.



Compact three-pound **Whitby** is full of energy

and affection. He's smart and very inquisitive, but will also settle on your lap for a good cuddle. Whitby is 1.5 years old. **Please contact Herta Rodina (herta@ohare.org) 740-797-7616.**



Lessons Learned, Cont'd.

kept separate from the rest of the bunnies so I could make sure he was pooping, but I would put one friend in there with him for at least half of every day.

His wire was removed several weeks later, and almost immediately he started eating hay and pellets on his own. He has made what seems to be a full recovery. He still chases and nips at Dante, grooms Piglet, plays with Hektor and humps Mackie. He still runs up to me to get pets and scarfs down his salads and digs up his litter box.



"Could I be cuter?
I think not."

So the two extremely important lessons I'd like to share, so that you never have to experience them yourself, are:

1. TAKE YOUR TIME and make absolutely sure that "all's clear" before you step over a gate – it is too easy to misstep by just an inch or two during one second in time that you will always regret ... and
2. ALWAYS GET A SECOND OPINION (or in some cases, a third opinion), because some people, vets or others, are just plain wrong or they don't know an answer and are too proud to admit it.

I am so grateful to all the bunny people who gave me guidance and support during this awful ordeal, and I'd like to thank them:

- Kristen Doherty, for telling me what to do when I wasn't able to think straight for myself.
- Jane Winik, for schlepping my hysterical butt 100 miles and interpreting English for me.
- Kristi Cole for all the yummy mush recipes.

- Lois Raphael for coming to visit with Kristen to make sure I was OK ...
- And last but most certainly not least, Dr. Nathan and the staff at Barberton Veterinary Clinic for being so dedicated and kind to me and my bun-babies, for not giving up on Trav, for treating us with respect, and for understanding that our bunnies aren't "just pets" but loved and valued members of our families. 🐰

Cincinnati Help Wanted!

The Buckeye HRS is growing in the Cincinnati area and we need more volunteers! We are seeking a few reliable members to help, on an ongoing basis, with:

- *fostering (one bunny at a time)*
- *answering questions about house rabbits from new bunny owners*
- *serving as a model home for potential adopters*
- *assembling and distributing information packs*
- *helping to organize local adoption days and other educational events*
- *serving as a liaison with local shelters*

**Even if your time
is very limited, we can
still use your help!**

Please contact

**Herta Rodina
(herta@ohare.org)
or**

**Kristi Cole
(kristi@ohare.org)**

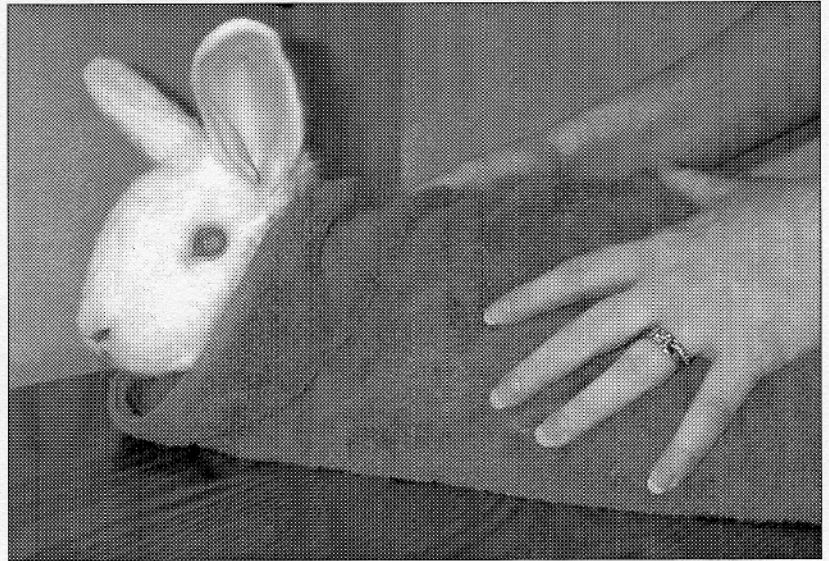
for more details.

First Aid for Bunny, Cont'd.

If your rabbit's toenail is bleeding, either from trimming or other injury, there are several methods to stop the bleeding: 1. Apply direct pressure to the nail with a clean piece of gauze for five minutes. 2. Apply a small amount of styptic powder (such as Kwik Stop,) to the end of the nail using a piece of gauze or cotton swab. Hold for 5-10 seconds. 3. If you do not have these items available, apply all-purpose flour to the area with firm pressure for five minutes. If these methods do not stop the bleeding, gently wrap the paw in gauze (not too tight), and transport your rabbit to the vet.

Bite wounds are often the result of a fight with another rabbit or an attack from a cat or dog. Bites from cats or dogs can leave deep puncture wounds, which easily become infected and can form an abscess. Bites from other rabbits tend to slice or tear skin, leaving open wounds. 1. Using antibacterial soap, flush the wound with warm, soapy water. (Take care not to get your rabbit too wet.) 2. Flush the wound with diluted hydrogen peroxide or betadine. 3. Rinse with warm water or saline solution. 4. Monitor the wound for signs of infection such as redness or discharge.

Wrapping your rabbit in a towel is a safe and easy way to restrain him.



Strains and Sprains: Sometimes our bunnies can be too athletic for their own good. Maybe they jumped down from a chair onto a slick floor. Maybe they took a spill down the stairs. Maybe you didn't see the accident, but now your bunny is limping.

A sprain is an injury involving a ligament (tissue connecting bones and muscles). A strain is an injury to a muscle. Signs may include: swelling, limping, and pain when the area is touched. Confine your rabbit to a small area to restrict activity. Keep the area free of items which may encourage jumping; the area should have a lid or be at least 36" high with no boxes, etc. If there is no improvement in 24 hours or the injury worsens, take your bunny to the vet. Never give aspirin or other over-the-counter pain relievers without a veterinary prescription. They can be toxic!

For more information on first aid and health care for rabbits, get yourself a copy of *Rabbit Health in the 21st Century*, available at www.ohare.org. For more information on general pet first aid, check out *Pet First Aid: Cats and Dogs* by Bobbie Mammato, DVM, MPH, produced by the American Red Cross and the Humane Society of the United States. 🐰

References:

- Bronwyn Dawson, DVM, "Dealing with Medical Emergencies" (HRS Article)
- Chris C. Pinney, DVM, *The Illustrated Veterinary Guide For Dogs, Cats, Birds, & Exotic Pets*
- Bobbie Mammato, DVM, MPH, *Pet First Aid: Cats and Dogs*
- Cincinnati Animal Referral & Emergency Center, Blue Ash, Ohio



Our Readers Write

Just want to let you know how Abby is getting along. She is the sweetest angel, not at all shy or frightened, but very affectionate, curious and outgoing. She loves to dig and play in the big box with shredded paper and take her rests up on the wicker chair cushion. She has been claiming (chinning) everything, including me, as her own, even the broom.

—Virginia Maxhimer

All is going great with Fidget. We have all fallen in love and he's a wonderful rabbit. I even tell stories about how, at a ripe old age, I fell in love with a bunny rabbit. All is well and we're all VERY happy to share our home with Fidget.

—Peggy Gup

Bisbee is doing great! He loves his food and waits in great anticipation for his pellets and salads. He loves being petted, especially across his nose, as you told us. His litter box habits are excellent. We're finally getting our new living room rug tomorrow, so Bisbee can get the full upstairs experience. He has been very friendly with everyone and we are just thrilled to have him. We want to thank you again for all you've done for us with Bisbee. He is truly a joy to have and we feel very comfortable with him. The information you gave us and having knowledgeable people

Buckeye HRS is Growing!

We are pleased to announce that we have a new foster home in Fremont, near Toledo, covering the northwest part of the state. It opened in the spring of 2002. Welcome to Keith and Sue Zimmerman who are doing a great job there. You can contact them at keith@ohare.org or sue@ohare.org.

We have also opened two new Buckeye HRS foster homes in Cincinnati. A hearty welcome to Jennifer Wolfe and Michele Roth Kerley! Michele hit the ground running when she rescued three bunnies from an abuse case last fall; Jennifer has been educating folks in her area for some time and is now fostering too. Cincinnati-area members can contact them at jennifer@ohare.org and michele@ohare.org.

Watch for further details in *Harelines* and on our website — www.ohare.org. If you'd like to be part of the Buckeye HRS team, contact Chapter Manager Herta Rodina, herta@ohare.org, for information on how you can help.

We are very excited about the continuing growth and expansion of the Buckeye HRS and the opportunity to help more rabbits in Ohio. As always, your donations keep our education and fostering programs running, and with your continued support we can continue to grow. Thank you to our faithful members and donors and welcome to the new ones!

just a phone call away has given us the peace of mind that will allow us a lot of fun with Bisbee in the future. In fact, a lot of our friends are realizing what great pets rabbits are and if anyone is interested, I will certainly refer them to you for adoption.

—Daniel Gould

You Asked Us!

by Sue Zimmerman

Q: How often should I trim my bunny's nails?

A: You should check your bunny's nails regularly and trim them about every 6-8 weeks. It is also a good idea while you are trimming nails to give the bunny a routine "home check-up".

**Q: What is a "home check-up"?**

A: A "home check-up" is simply a little routine examination that you can perform yourself to ensure that your rabbit is in good health.

Q: What should I check?

A: I usually start from the head down. If you have an otoscope you can check the insides of your bunny's ears to make sure that they are nice and pink inside (not red and inflamed). Also, make sure that the rabbit's ears are clean inside and not full of waxy build up. You should check for clean ears even if you do not have an otoscope. You may need to gently clean your rabbit's ears with a Q-Tip if you notice a build up inside. Make sure you consult your vet before ever

attempting this procedure on your own for the first time.

Look at the rabbit's eyes to make sure that they are clear and not runny. The same goes for bunny's nose. Move on down to bunny's teeth. Look inside the rabbit's mouth at the front teeth. Be certain that the teeth are not over grown and that they are wearing down properly.

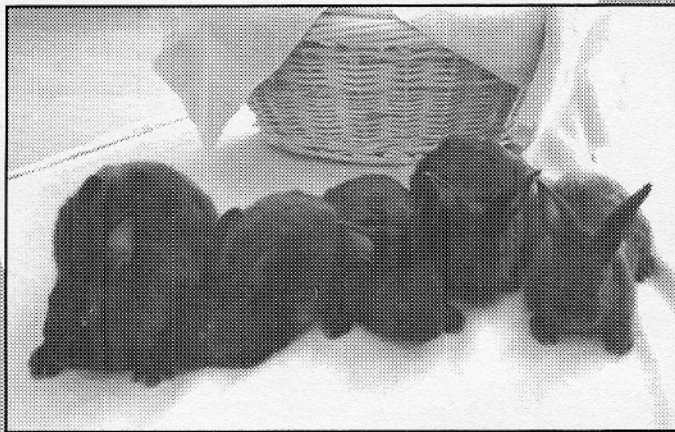
Starting with the chest area, use your fingertips to palpate the rabbit's entire body for any unusual lumps or sores. Check the bunny's bottom to see that it is clean and dry. A wet or messy bottom can indicate that the rabbit is not able to clean himself, which is a sign of a more serious problem.

Examine the bunny's back feet. Check for sores or calluses on the bottom of the feet, especially if your bunny has spent a lot of time on wire flooring. Cover wire flooring with a blanket, towel or carpet remnant to give your bunny a softer, safer alternative.

Q: What if I find that something is wrong?

A: As always, if you discover that something is not quite right, consult your veterinarian for the proper course of treatment. Performing these home check-ups on a routine basis can help you to discover small problems before they become bigger ones. But remember, home check-ups should never replace regular exams by an experienced rabbit vet. 🐰

Spotlight On ... Maya and her Babies



If you're interested in meeting Maya and her little ones, please contact Kristen Doherty (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.

Maya and her four babies are as sweet as they are cute! Someone found them in the back of his barn on a cold and snowy day, then brought them to a shelter. Each one is all black, and they all appear to be dwarf-sized. They munch their hay and salads like there is nothing better in the whole world! Of course, the babies don't want the sprigs of parsley or yummy dandelion leaves that are in the bowl – they want to taste the one that's already in their sibling's mouth. So it's not unusual to see two or even three of them nibbling on the same leaf at the same time. When they are done chasing each other, licking each other's faces, and playing in their cardboard box, they like to flop out together in a comfy pile and take bunny naps.