Our Little Tough Guy

By Ann-Marie Polansky

In March 2018 we began to look for a friend for our six-month-old bunny, Pickles, to play with and cuddle with while the humans were at work or otherwise engaged in humany things. Pickles dated several eligible bunnies but seemed to be most accepting of a tenyear-old mini rex called Moose by his foster mom. We were worried about taking in a senior bunny to be friends with Pickles, but after three months of bunny dates and gentle coaxing on our part, a solid and unbreakable bond was made and Moose was renamed Gorbachev. Our daughter, an AP history student, named him for a spot he has on his head.



Medical issues have not ruined Gorby's zest for life.

Gorby has had many medical adventures. He has a heart murmur and nerve damage in his face, which makes eating hay unappealing to him. He is a chronic snuffler, perhaps

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complicated by seasonal allergies. He also has a Timothy hay allergy. We switched Pickles to orchard grass and that helped tons as did the air purifier we got for the bunny area. The poor guy suffers from sore hocks and arthritis. We suspected that he has E. cuniculi when he started falling over on his side. Because of his age and the arthritis in his back, Gorby is unable to get up by himself.

I would come home from work to find a bunny on his side covered in his own urine and poop. We are talking cecotropes, my friends! Not the inoffensive little round balls that bunny parents pick up with bare hands! He would be ravenous and cranky because he was unable to get to his food or water. Gorby guickly got to the point where he was unable to stand or walk at all. We were facing the possibility that he was going to be a down bunny; our formerly free-roam rabbit was now confined to a small area set up to try and make it easier for him to eat and drink while we were away. We took the advice of the HRS and lined his area with baby crib bumpers to keep him from getting hurt and give him something to lean up against. We bought him bunny cuddle beds on Etsy to help keep him in a more upright position.

It wasn't long before Gorby got depressed and stopped eating and taking water, even when we assisted him. He lost weight and in September 2019 his vet told us that we needed to do what's best for him and that we should prepare ourselves for inevitably having Gorby euthanized. He suggested sooner rather than later because he really did not expect him to be around at Christmas. We were told he would likely never walk





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http://www.ohare.org

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Mary Litrico, in tribute to Stephanie Lodge's Lopez and Mary's Willie.

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

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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.

Holiday Raffle Results

And the winner is ... Linda Gardner of Cleveland! Congratulations to Linda and many thanks to all who supported the Buckeye HRS through the purchase of raffle tickets. Proceeds are allowing us to make 2021 brighter for more homeless bunnies in Ohio.



Fun with Food and **Treats**

By Amy Marshall

If your rabbit is food and treat motivated, try playing some fun games to help keep him/her hungry and engaged. Some rabbits are known to eat their food very fast, while others may slowly graze on theirs throughout the day. For rabbits who are very eager to eat quickly, you can scatter their pellets throughout their cage or room. Place little piles of pellets in different spots that your rabbit can easily find while he's working to sniff out where the next pieces are. You would still measure out

the same amount of food you usually feed, but it certainly keeps him from eating too fast.

You can also use a treat ball to put your bunny's pellets in. Treat balls, often in the dog or cat section, are made of hard plastic, so a rabbit can't chew them. Once you fill it with pellets, watch your rabbit have fun chasing the ball and eating while getting a little exercise.

For treat time, you can play an adventurous "find it" game. I introduced this to my rabbits after learning about this great idea from a family who adopted a bunny from me. They cut up little pieces of apple for their rabbit and hide them in different places for her to find. This is mentally stimulating for rabbits, since they get very excited for treats and will sniff them out until they get their reward. Throughout the week for bedtime treats I cut up pieces of apple, carrot, or homemade treats and place them in different places for my rabbits to discover. They have guickly gotten into the habit of expecting this game and wait for their bedtime rewards with excitement.

When you play "find it" with your rabbits, make sure to not feed them too many treats since calories can add up. In moderation, it can be an enjoyable game to incorporate into their routine, while adding exercise and stimulation. Surprise your rabbit by placing treats on a box, in her tunnel, or even bury them in a blanket for her to dig out. This is a game where you will both be rewarded and I promise you your rabbits will look forward to it.



Nutmeg's treat ball provides both mental and physical stimulation.



or stand again and he would only decline further. The vet also estimated Gorby's age closer to twelve. (How can they tell that, anyway??) I felt we were the only ones seeing that this little guy still had the desire to get around, to be alive! Our Gorby still wanted affection and gave affection. He was not ready to go. I was sure of it. I can't explain it, I just knew. I felt it. We are with Gorby every day and know him. As much as we love his vet, he doesn't know Gorby like we do. I was not going to let him languish and suffer, but I was not ready to give up either. I do have to say, Gorby's vet was patient with me and agreed to try different things including laser therapy and was gracious about returning my three calls a week.

I thought the first step to making his days happier, even if they might be leading up to his last ones, was to give him something interesting to look at. Every day I would move his bed around to change his scenery. When I was home I would move him in front of the window or hold him. We would leave music on for him. Contrary to what my husband says, I do not believe he prefers Nickleback. I played jazz and stuff you would hear in an elevator. I could see the undisputable improvement in Gorby's mood. It is hard to explain, but he seemed less depressed and more engaged. This went on for a while. I knew that if he could only get some mobility back, he would be an even less glum bun. My husband, the big bunny loving marshmallow, and I were committed to trying anything and everything to help him. The marathon research sessions increased. Buckeye HRS fosterer and educator, Stephanie Lodge, got more phone calls and emails than I'm sure were necessary, but I wanted to know everything I could. I even learned how to give sub-q fluids with a bag of saline and a needle thanks to herl

We made Gorby a "chow box" that he went in a few times a day. Basically a plastic storage bin with a cuddle bed so he could eat and hydrate. We got different water bowls to avoid any worry about him drowning. We give him oats once a day to keep weight on him and to give him his morning Metcam dose. We just mix it in and he loves it.

I started using a scarf under his belly to help him stand and eventually take a couple wobbly steps. Gorby would get annoyed with the scarf. He would kick poop at me in protest, I am convinced of it!



Gorby in his "bumper bed."

For a little bunny who couldn't stand, he was a gold cup caliber poop kicker! I wondered if balance bars would help. They use them in human physical therapy. Why wouldn't it work for a mini rex? My husband put two 2x4x8s on their sides, attached feet to keep them stable and covered them with fleece for comfort. We placed them just far enough apart to allow Gorby to move, but close enough to hold him up. We started with just once down the length of the boards, eventually working up to ten minutes back and forth twice a day. We did this for three months. The hope was that the exercises would help at least his front legs be strong enough for a bunny wheelchair. He so desperately wanted to follow his brother around again!

We bought a fancy cart from an online company. Well, as amazing as they were to work with and as nice as the cart was, it was too big and too heavy for what we realized is a mini mini-rex. Gorby is smaller than other mini-rexes and even the smallest cart offered was too big.

I was heartbroken and disappointed. My husband was determined. Michael made a cart for Gorby that was a sling style. It was perfect! Gorby was afraid of it at first and had to be coaxed with raspberries into moving it. Eventually we would no more than





Gorby's dad built a protective "bumper" that keeps Gorby safe and helps him get around.

get him in his sling and he would be taking off in it! He was moving as fast as his little old bun body would let him and in his mind I am sure he felt like a gazelle.

It was obvious that Gorby was stronger, had a better appetite, was brighter, and just plain happier. Michael wanted to see what would happen if he stood him up and let him go on his own with no cart assistance. Being an overprotective mom (human and bunny alike) I was horrified, terrified! What if he fell over? What if he got scared? What if he got hurt and all we worked to achieve was destroyed? What if Gorby got angry with us and never nuzzled against my cheek again??? OMG! I could not even stand the thought of it!

As I was spinning out of control protesting and wringing my hands with worry, Michael gave me his standard "uh-huh" and disregarded me all together saying he would be fine. He wasn't fine. He was better than fine!!! That little bunny took off down the hall on his own, leaning against the wall. We watched as that crooked little fluffy butt walked... WALKED... away from us. I was in tears and don't tell my husband I told you this, but Mr. Macho "I don't want any stinking pets in this house" was too!

As long as he has something to lean on, Gorby is able to get around. We have a chair that he loves to just

walk around most of the day. My husband built a "bumper" that goes around the whole area where he lives in case he ventures away from the chair... and he does! It is high enough to keep Gorby safe and supported, but low enough to allow Pickles to come and go as he chooses. It takes up the whole side of the room, but who cares! It is his world and we wanted to make it as big and nice as possible for him.

Gorby is still on Metcam twice a day and has saline nebulizer treatments when his upper respiratory system gives him trouble. He has Tramadol twice a day and Myristol supplement to help with joint support. We also give him nose drops to keep his nose clear and Stephanie, a trusted and much appreciated bunny mentor and friend (also his former foster mom!), helps us so much with advice and cleaning his ears. Stephanie, you are amazing, and Michael, Pickles, Gorby, and I are infinitely grateful.

As improved as our little Gorby is, he still falls over a lot and needs help back up. Luckily I am working from home now. He still ends up covered in poop and urine and requires his chow box on bad days. I don't see those as negatives. I see them as facts of life with an elderly family member who still has a zest for life! We still can't leave him alone for long, but we can now take a couple hours to bike or kayak. We never want to stay away long anyway. We are always anxious to get back to our little tough guy.



Combatting the Winter **Bunny Blues: Some Ideas** for Rabbit **Enrichment**

By Kristin Weis

If you've been feeling cooped up and bored from staying home due to the pandemic and the cold weather setting in, chances are that your rabbit may feel similarly. Rabbits are very intelligent and complex creatures, capable of memorization, problem solving, and reacting to cues. This intelligence can be both a blessing and a curse, as rabbit caretakers may not always realize that just letting their rabbits run around outside their pen doesn't always provide enough mental stimulation. Luckily, there are many things that you can do to provide a more enriched playtime for your bunnies. Here are just a few ideas.

Agility Courses

When you think of agility, you probably think of a border collie weaving through poles or flying over a jump, but did you know that you can also do agility with your rabbit? Given that they are so fast and are excellent jumpers, both of which help them to escape predators in the wild, rabbits are well-suited to agility. It just takes time, patience, and a little ingenuity to get them started.

The best part is that there are plenty of ways



Hegel does a periscope.

you can construct courses at home with things you might have sitting around your house. For example, cardboard boxes can become tunnels to run through, platforms to have your bunny jump on to, or bases for jumps. Broom handles can become the poles over which your bunny soars, or you can use a hula hoop as a jump. If you have any PVC pipe laying around, you could use that to construct weave poles or jumps as well. The possibilities are endless, and there are many DIY videos online on how to construct agility courses for dogs that could easily be adapted to fit your bunny's needs and abilities.

Dig Boxes

Have you ever wondered why your rabbit goes into his litter box and makes a huge mess, digging out all the litter onto the floor? Rabbits are natural burrowers and diggers. In the wild, they create a warren, a network of burrows and tunnels in which



Rosie in her tunnel.

they live. Your house rabbit has similar instincts, and unless we provide our rabbits with a dig box, the closest they get to a

is their litter box.

Dig boxes are fairly simple to make. You'll need some sort of box with high sides to contain the mess and an entrance and some digging material. The box can be a cardboard box, storage tote, cat litter box, or a wood box. While the obvious choice for digging material may be sand or dirt, that can get very messy,

suitable outlet for that behavior

and thus may not be the best choice for you. Alternatively, you can provide shredded paper or paper-based packaging. Hay can also be a good

filling, and it encourages more hay consumption. Avoid newspaper, glossy paper or magazines, packing peanuts, Styrofoam, or other plastic packaging as ingestion can be harmful or even deadly to your bunny.

Training

Given that rabbits are very smart and often food motivated, it can be fairly easy to teach them to do a variety of different tricks. Training a rabbit to do a trick is similar to how you would train a dog. While each rabbit is different, patience, repetition, lots of praise (and treats!), and consistency are all keys to success. Some bunnies may do well with clicker training, but it may not be as effective with other bunnies. Importantly, you will have to spend time learning what your rabbit responds to and adjust your training plan accordingly.

Some possible tricks to teach your bunny include to come when called, give

kisses, spin (or follow the hand), high five, and even fetch. It should be noted that the easiest tricks to teach are the ones that your rabbit already does naturally. So, if your rabbit naturally loves to give kisses and groom you, teaching them to give kisses on command may be a good trick to start with. However, if you're like me and don't have

a rabbit that grooms you, teaching them to do that will be more difficult, if not impossible. When training your rabbit, it is vital that you use only positive re-enforcement and never vell at or scare them in any

way since they are prey animals.



Tatiana's Eye

By Evona Gaughan

Let me introduce myself and my husband – we are the crazy bunny people, Kris and Evona. We have seven house rabbits and not a single one of them is spoiled rotten. How we acquired seven bunnies is a story of its own. This story is about our baby Tatiana, a holland lop, born in May 2019.

It begins on September 17, 2019. We have all our girls on the couch in the evening for bonding time. While continually working on integrating Tatiana with the other six bunnies, one cantankerous bunny bit Tatiana in the face. The following morning Tatiana's left eye was covered in puss. Thank goodness for my vet, Dr. Cathy Palomar at the Animal & Avian Medical Center in Brunswick, OH. We went straight to the clinic and Dr. Palomar fluoresced her eye and found no injury to the eye itself. Tatiana was put on Metacam, SMZ TMP antibiotic and Terramycin antibiotic eye ointment for ten days.

On December 23, 2019 I noticed Tatiana's eye was cloudy. Dr. Palomar was off that day. Dr. Melissa Rohrs put Tatiana on Metacam, Baytril antibiotic and Ofloxacin antibiotic eye drops for ten days. At our recheck appointment with Dr. Palomar we decided we needed an eye specialist. I spent my time following every lead in search of a specialist. Though not successful, a few people mentioned a doctor who specializes in exotic animals. When I called the clinic, they did not give me the doctor I requested; instead I was given a resident. In order not to disparage the clinic or doctor, we will refer to the vet as Dr. B.

Dr. B continued the Metacam and Baytril and put Tatiana on Flurbiprofen, NSAID anti-inflammatory eye drops. Dr. B decided that he should aspirate Tatiana's eye to see if there was an infection. Since both vets were baffled as to the cause of the cloudy eye, I decided to get another opinion. I put Tatiana's story and picture on Facebook to see if there was



A cloudy eye was one of the first signs of trouble.

anyone with a similar experience. The consensus was E.-cuniculi. I called Dr. Palomar and asked if she would prescribe Panacur (Fenbendazole). We added Panacur to the drug regimen. When discussing the impending eye aspiration with Dr. B, he wanted to know why Tatiana was on Panacur. My reply, "Well, if we are throwing spit balls at the wall to see what sticks, why not try Panacur to see if it works."

Prior to the eye aspiration, all medications were to be stopped four days beforehand. The 30-day regimen of Panacur was interrupted. On January 29, 2020 Dr. B did the eye aspiration surgery. He said that he could not get much fluid out. When Tatiana returned home, her eye was all bloody at the injection site. When the pool of blood cleared, she had a visible abscess on her eye that she did not have prior to the procedure. The lab results showed Tatiana had Aspergillus mold in her eye. Dr. B prescribed Voriconazole eye drops. There is no documented case of using Voriconazole eye drops on a bunny.

The Voriconazole had to be refrigerated and was applied every eight hours. Any unused portion in the bottle had to be thrown out after two weeks. The second bottle had to be stored in the freezer. After two weeks, I noticed the abscess was getting worse. I took Tatiana back to Dr. B on February 27, 2020 for a re-check and he recommended her



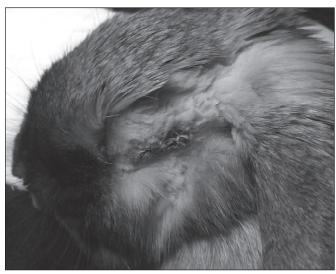
eye be removed. I had Dr. Palomar run blood work and do x-rays prior to the surgery to see if the aspergillus had spread systemically. The blood work was clear. On March 9, 2020 Dr. Palomar removed Tatiana's eye. The biopsy showed that the eye membrane was ruptured.

To help maintain Tatiana's health, we gave her probiotics every day. We continued the probiotics after all her medication was completed. She was on antibiotics and pain medication for three months straight. Tatiana took all the pain and suffering like a champ. She loved to eat the Metacam and probiotics.

In retrospect I have my own questions and theories. I suspect the aspergillus in the eye came from the saliva of the bunny that bit Tatiana in September. Was the eye cloudy because of the aspergillus infection? I do not believe there was an abscess on the eye prior to the aspiration surgery. If the blood work had been done first to show that she did not have an aspergillus infection systemically, could she have lived with her eye being cloudy? Tatiana could see something out of her left eye prior to the aspiration. After the procedure, I could tell she had lost all sight in that eye. I believe that the eye aspiration surgery was not necessary and caused her eye to rupture and created an abscess.

My heart is forever broken for Tatiana. I feel that

I have failed to protect her from all the harm that was brought upon her. We had successfully integrated her with the other bunnies. Due to her handicap, I separated her from the group for her safety. I am sure she will be the least spoiled bunny in our house from this day forward. I wish that no other bunny parent has to go through the mental and emotional trauma that we went through deciding what the best course of action was with such dismal choices. My hope is that this information can be useful to other bunny parents, so their beloved rabbit does not go through three months of medications, pain, and suffering.



Tatiana has recovered after having an eye removed.

Chapter Manager's Corner

By Keith Zimmerman

Hello All! I'd like to take a moment to bring our members up to speed on chapter activities. Adoptions have become more difficult due to Covid. While potential adopters have been wary of visiting foster homes, that hasn't stopped us from finding great new forever families for our bunnies. The flow of incoming rabbits never ceases though. As of November 25th, we have 14 rabbits in foster care, 6 in our sanctuary program for unadoptable buns, and 6 still tied up in a court case from 2019. Yet, the calls keep coming. In November alone, our northwest Ohio foster

home was called out for 5 stray domestic rabbits. Busy, busy, busy!

We also have some great volunteer news: Stephanie Ash is on her way to becoming a full HRS Educator; Kyra Kester is working on her Educator-In-Training term; Rob Lovicz is not only our new treasurer, but also a new member of the Board of Directors; Maggie Reading is working with David Sharpe on updating our website; Kristin Weis and Renee Argento are ready to advance to Educator-in-Training also. We have a very energized and exceptional volunteer corps and we'll be ready for public appearances as soon as it's safe to do so!

As always, I am personally grateful for everything our volunteers do. I'm also thankful for the generous contributions of our supporters. Your donations allow us to keep saving rabbits and helping new rabbit owners. THANK YOU!



Somebunny Needs YOU!



Meet Flash! The last of the 17 court case babies to remain in our foster home, he is a young and curious boy who likes to explore and hang out in his cardboard box. Flash would love to have a home of his very own. Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrsstephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.



Little **Major** was found outdoors in a cardboard box with a badly broken leg. Unfortunately, his back leg needed to be amputated. However, Major has not skipped a beat after surgery and is as sassy and feisty as ever. He has earned the nickname Zippy from the way he zips around his pen. Please contact **Sue Zimmerman** (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



Pookie Zimmerman, named by Ann-Marie Polansky in the "Name Our Next Foster Rabbit" program, is a sweet little girl. She loves rearranging her things just the way SHE likes them and has great litter box habits. Pookie loves attention, especially being petted on her head. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



Briley is a loving young lop who just adores people and attention. She especially enjoys kisses and pets on top of her head. Briley is very active and curious as she explores her toys and cardboard boxes. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrssue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.







Hudson, a former stray, has become guite comfortable with indoor life. He is an inquisitive bunny who loves head pets. Hudson can be a tiny bit shy in the beginning, but at the end of the day he loves attention. Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.



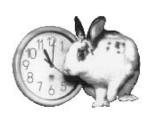
This spunky and opinionated young fellow is looking for a home to call his own. Jack (aka The Black Panther) has an endless amount of personality to share with an experienced bunny owner. Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrsstephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.

Adopted!

Belle has joined the Olesen family and is getting pampered like a princess. She is enjoying the love and attention and is happy to have a lot of space to run and play. **Tater Tot** has found his happy-ever-after with the Comi family in Stow. This lucky guy is currently being showered with attention and love. P Big Boomer found his forever home rather quickly with Buckeye HRS's own Maggie Reading. ♥ It was Opie's lucky day when he met previous adopter Roz Matthews and her bunny, Buttercup. The two buns are still working on being friends, but regardless, Roz and her family have fallen for Opie. Tucker has found the loves of his life in Devon (human mom) and Lulu (bunny wife). It didn't take long for the two buns to fall madly in love and we couldn't be happier. **P Hailey** has been adopted by the Gates family and was given the most special welcoming gift her foster mom has ever seen. Hailey has her own room to play in and is getting spoiled with the attention and love she deserves. Petunia has been living with a family working on bonding her with Theo. While the bonding isn't 100%, her human mom, Emilee, has decided she can't live without Petunia. How special to go from being part of a hoarding case to having a family who loves and adores you! **Peaches** didn't have to go far to find her forever home. Danielle Carter lives only a few minutes from Peaches' foster home and it was love at first sight! **F Kasey**, now Kaycie, has found her home-sweet-home with human mom Cathy and new husbun Rory. The bunnies are still working on their relationship, but Cathy is already smitten. P Lucky Pancake went from living on the streets to the lap of luxury with her new mom Thalia and bun friend Frieda. Although Pancake and Frieda are not completely bonded, they do love each other and groom each other through the pen walls. Best of all, Pancake's yellow fur is all grown out – she has beautiful white fur again! ♥ Snoopy has found his forever home with Sierra and Rexy (new bun wife). Rexy took some time to let her guard down, but she has started to accept Snoopy. The two make a stunning couple! **Maddie and Liv** were adopted by the most wonderful bunny-friendly family! Shantae and her fiancé Seth are delighted with the new addition to their family. A home isn't a home without a rabbit or two. Starsky and Hutch (now Apollo and T'Challa) found their dream family only a ten-minute drive from their foster home. Heather Englander and her kids were excited to welcome the boys and their high energy lifestyle.



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



Buy a bunny a little time...

Your \$35.00 annual membership in the Buckeye HRS includes:			Please make checks payable to:
 Local membership (\$15.00) and issues of Harelines New Policy: National membership is now FREE with a local donation of \$20 more. You'll receive a code to sign up directly with national HRS. 			Buckeye House Rabbit Society
☐ I would like to donate \$ to help a foster rabbit (vet care, supplies)			P.O. Box 61
☐ I would like to donate \$ in memory of The grieving family receives an acknowledgment of your gracious gesture.			Vickery, Ohio 43464 All donations are
I would like to volunteer to:			tax-deductible.
☐ Distribute information to vets		Assist with mailing	
☐ Help at Buckeye HRS booth at Pet Expos and fairs		Other	
Name			
A 1.1			

City, State, Zip ______ Phone _____

E-mail address

Bunnies' names and special dates _____

——— MEMBERSHIP FORM ———