At Home with Jasmine

By Kristi Cole

On the Friday night of the first hard freeze in October 2007, my husband went out to the garage to empty some trash and was out there an unusually long time. When I went out to check on him, I saw him sitting on the step with a scrawny little kitten rubbing around his legs and purring up a storm. Bill has a tender heart towards all animals so I knew by the look on his face that the kitten was coming in the house even though he is allergic to cats. I figured she could stay through the weekend; I’d get her checked out at the veterinarian on Monday and then start trying to find her a home. Little did I know she had already found a home …

At that time we had five rabbits of our own plus some sanctuary and foster rabbits. I was concerned about fleas and also what might be lurking in a fecal sample, so we kept the kitten quarantined in the spare bedroom where no rabbits were permitted. The vet checked her out and treated her for fleas and distemper, confirmed that she was indeed a “she” and said she could be spayed in three months. We didn’t really want to adopt out a cat without spaying her first, so we thought we’d just play it by ear and see if she could live in the spare bedroom until it was spay time, provided she didn’t affect Bill’s allergies too badly.

When she was confirmed a female, we named her Jasmine, since we thought her markings made her look like an exotic tigress. All was going well with her living in the spare room and she was litter trained in a day. Since we already had litter pans, litter and food dishes for the rabbits, all we needed to buy was cat food. We both spent time with her every day (Bill couldn’t stay away) and we concluded after about a month that Bill did not seem to be allergic to Jasmine. We don’t know for sure why, but perhaps it was her coarse, short-haired coat, as Bill was still affected by some of the rabbits in the house with that fine silky fur.

With that discovery, Jasmine would be welcomed into our home permanently if she could pass the last test – living in peace with the rabbits. We were now ready to take the next step with rabbit introductions. We read everything we could about introducing cats and rabbits; we consulted a friend who does cat rescue and also has pet rabbits. We put Jasmine in a carrier

Clyde & Jasmine take in a view of the backyard

Continued on page 4
Special Thanks to:

Toronto artist **Pey Lu** and Scottish artist **Annette Tait**, for once again making our annual holiday raffle possible. Pey is donating a stunning clay painting and Annette is contributing an amazing soft sculpture. Buy your tickets today! See page 10 for details.

**Jude May**, for her generous donation in memory of **Felix**.

**Carmella Coia**, for her thoughtful and generous gift in memory of **Babette and Linus**.

**Jim and Nancy Reed**, for their wonderful contribution in honor of **Buttons, Niblick, and Shadow**.

**Sue Milewski**, for her gift in tribute to her late **Princess**.

**Linda Sigismondi**, for generously donating in memory of **Oliver**.

**Kimberly Fitch**, for her contribution in memory of **Belle Fields-Fitch**.

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

- **Mary Zimmerman, Junko Rogers, Eileen Seeholzer, Mike and Rhonda Wadsworth, Janet Reed, Barbara Roberts, Becca and Blaine Pullin, Annette Tait, Debbi Braunschweiger, Ron Steger, Doris and Adriana Mastroguiseppe.**

**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.
The “A” Word: Abscesses in Rabbits

By Dr. Gary Riggs DVM, ABVP
NorthCoast Bird & Exotic Specialties

Rabbit abscesses can strike fear into the hearts of rabbit owners and their veterinarians ... and for good reason. Abscesses can range anywhere from simple isolated wounds to a systemic, expanding, lethal disease. In nearly all cases, successful treatment depends on early diagnosis along with aggressive, and often extended, care.

What are abscesses? On the surface this may seem like an easy question, but abscesses in rabbits can be a different beast altogether. Abscesses, in general, are walled-off infections with an accumulation of liquid blood cells and discharge that result from a failed attempt to rid the body of an infection. Rabbits differ in that their abscesses result more frequently from simple infections or even bacteria that has been dormant for long periods. Additionally, due to a lack of specific enzymes in their blood cells, the rabbit abscess becomes very thick and persistent. These abscesses are not well contained by the rabbit’s immune system, will not re-absorb or drain easily, and often seed into adjacent healthy tissue.

The reason a rabbit’s immune system handles infection in this way is unclear. It is perhaps an evolutionary tool for prey species survival. In nature, the lifespan of prey species (such as rabbits) is often very short and their body is better served by quickly walling off infections, rather than spending the immune energy to fight an infection. Wild prey animals are living more for the moment, not the long haul. This unfortunately causes problems with our longer-lived pet rabbits who have to deal with a poorly contained, spreading infection.

Abscesses can present in many ways. Isolated masses in or under the skin are common to fight wounds or other trauma. These abscesses have the best prognosis and can usually be removed in their entirety and resolved with a successful course of antibiotics. Abscesses involving the legs or abdominal (urinary/reproductive) areas can be more of a problem since it is often impossible to remove enough tissue to completely remove the infection without compromising the surrounding areas. These cases will sometimes need to be left partially open to be treated as an open wound and let the area slowly heal closed as the infection is treated medically.

Abscesses around the head and face are the most common and present the most problems. We usually see abscesses around or behind the eyes, below and invading into the ears, within the sinuses and invading the upper and lower jaws. Abscesses around the face very often have a dental origin and clearing the infection will require dealing
in one of the bunny rooms for short periods of time over a few days, so that they all could get used to the scents of another species. Then the big moment arrived for the face-to-face meeting. We were prepared to intervene immediately, as we were used to rabbit-to-rabbit bonding introductions which can cause quite a ruckus. We were poised, on alert and hovering closely, ready to snatch anyone up who was getting into trouble. I was responsible for watching and handling the rabbits in that particular room, while Bill was responsible for Jasmine.

All that nervousness ended up being for nothing. Of course we were glad we were cautious, but the rabbits just kind of looked at her, sniffed her, and then went about their business. Jasmine is very curious and she just explored around the room, played with some hay strands, and sniffed the rabbits. Since she was still a kitten, all the rabbits were much larger than she was. She never showed any signs of aggression and neither did the rabbits. After a few supervised visits, we decided to let her roam free. It was humorous when she tried to play with the rabbits and they just ignored her. She would bat at the lops’ ears like they were playthings, but she never bit. Or she would run and playfully pounce on someone and they’d just sit there and look at her. I imagine them thinking, “relax and chill out, youngster,” and her wondering why nobody would play with her.

Creating a multi-species household went smoother than I’d thought. I hadn’t had a cat for twenty years, so I had to refresh myself on their habits. Jasmine seems to think she is a rabbit, because she has been surrounded by them since she was a kitten. They use separate litter pans in the same room, as if they naturally know whose is whose. Jasmine will occasionally eat a piece of hay, but she stays away from the salads and pellets. The funny part is that one of our rabbits likes the dry cat food, so we do have to feed them in separate rooms. Who knew that a French lop would have a taste for chicken, fish, and beef?

Jasmine is now older and spends much time lounging around; she hangs out regularly with the rabbits, near where they are resting, under their willow tent, or watching them like a sentry from atop the dryer. We are thankful it all worked out so well and we like our blended family.
Good Gifts for Bunny

By Rebecca Nagley

With the holiday season slowly approaching, many of us are starting to think about what we should give family and friends as gifts. This little overview features some of the most popular gifts a long-eared friend or family member might enjoy this season, while offering every bun parent ease of mind in choosing an appropriate bunny gift. Here’s a list of a few favorite things, all field tested by our own spoiled rabbits as well as those of friends, clients, and coworkers.

Cottontail Cottage:
This product seems to be every bunny’s all-time favorite. It qualifies for chewers, climbers, hiders, and even small or arthritic buns thanks to accessories such as the easy-walk ramp. Even replacement floors are available. For our bunnies, a Cottontail Cottage guarantees we get the gift right ($17.99 at www.catsandrabbisandmore.com, but there are varieties available from other online suppliers).

The only disadvantage is that this cottage is too small for very large rabbits who can’t really fit onto the small floors and second-floor openings.

There are other great hideout varieties available, such as the Maze Haven (www.binkybunny.com) or the lavish Better Rabbit House (www.rabbithouses.net). These, too, are best for small or medium-sized rabbits. In addition, stores such as Ikea and Walmart carry cozy nylon kennels for under $30.00 that suit a snuggly Flemish Giant perfectly.

Gift Baskets:
These baskets are great for every bunny -- some have more fling toys for the flingers, others have more wood chews for the carpenter buns; yet other baskets feature an assortment of toys or contain a variety of herbs for those gourmet bunnies. A variety of baskets is available for $5.00 to $20.00 at online retailers such as BunnyBunchBoutique.com, BunnyBytes.com, BusyBunny.com, catsandrabbisandmore.com.

Tunnels:
A lot of rabbits enjoy play tunnels to hide in, shred up, or race through. Ours love the tie-together cat tunnels from Ikea (about $4). They can be made longer and are also Flemish Giant-friendly.

Another possibility is the all-edible Ton O’ Fun Bun Run Tunnel. It delights chewers and can even be slip-proofed for older or handicapped rabbits ($10.95 online).

A sure-to-please, inexpensive option is one of those sturdy cardboard tubes for pouring concrete pillars, available at your local home improvement store.

Assorted Chew Toys:
You can also visit your nearby pet supply store to pick up some little goodies. Many larger retailers are now carrying more rabbit-appropriate baskets, straw mats, willow sticks, treat hays, and pinecones for the dedicated chewers. What you select depends on your rabbit’s preference.

How to make a gift basket:
Since the current economic situation is forcing most of us to count our pennies, here is a way to make a nifty, yet relatively inexpensive, rabbit gift basket.

Supplies needed:
• 1 small to medium-sized untreated wicker or willow basket (available at craft stores for
The “A” Word: Abscesses in Rabbits

Cont’d.

Abscesses in rabbits are a surgical disease in nearly all cases. Your rabbit’s chances for a successful recovery are greatly improved if the abscesses can be surgically removed or at least reduced. Medical treatment is best used as an adjunct to surgery, not as the primary treatment. It is also important to know the extent of the disease (to the best of our ability) prior to planning the surgical approach. To do this, we can use multi-view x-rays to look for bone involvement, tooth involvement, and sinus involvement. In particularly challenging cases (especially involving eye, middle ear, and deep bone and skull abscesses), we can use CT scans to direct our surgical approach and to better predict a prognosis for treatment.

Abscesses around the ear often penetrate into the ear canal and even extend through the eardrum and into the bulla, the boney ear chamber in the skull. Surgical correction involves permanently opening up the ear canal and in some cases opening up the bulla as well to allow external treatment. These procedures can be very effective, allow better treatment at home, and are not cosmetically noticeable once the fur returns.

Abscesses will often involve the rabbit’s eyes. These infections can originate from the teeth or sinuses and can either put pressure on the eye or actually invade into the globe of the eye itself. It is important to determine if the eye is involved/infected or if the globe and vision can be saved. Radiographs can help with this determination, as can CT scans. We will also commonly utilize ultrasound as a less involved diagnostic tool to evaluate the eye. Ultrasonic examination of the eye can show us if infection is within the eye; by looking through the eye, we can identify the position and size of abscesses behind the eye. If these abscesses don’t involve the eye itself, they can be removed by a surgical approach next to the globe then by gently moving the eye to reach the space behind it.

Dental and jaw abscesses are usually the most extensive and involved form of external rabbit abscesses. Boney cysts containing abscess material often extend out from the upper or lower jaw as part of the infection. These will need to be removed to gain access to the source of the infection. Infected teeth are removed, as are the infected

x-rays can reveal the extent of the disease

A CT scan can help determine the best surgical approach
areas of the jaw. In some severe instances we will have to remove up to an entire side of lower jaw to control the infection. Although this may seem to be a radical approach, most rabbits handle it well, and are able to get back to normal eating with very little visible defect.

Surgical treatment of any abscessed area includes removal of the abnormal tissue, culturing from the deep infected tissue, and treating the infection post-operatively. We will usually pack the abscess surgical site with an antimicrobial gel before closing the incision and immediately start on pain medication, anti-inflammatories, and antibiotics (which may change once culture results are returned). Aggressive post-op care is required. As with any infection, success relies on the ability of the animal’s immune system to eventually contain the organism and prevent re-infection. Appropriate antibiotics will be continued often for weeks to try to prevent reoccurrence of the infection. In cases where a full closure of the area is not possible, we will “marsupialize” the lesion. This involves sewing the tissue next to the abscess directly to the skin to create an open pocket where the abscess was located that can then be treated topically along with its systemic antibiotics. The use of pain medication, supplemental feedings and probiotics is important in the early postoperative stages to get the bunny feeling back to normal as quickly as possible and to prevent secondary problems due to the medication.

Abscesses are a terrible rabbit disease. They can be caused by many different organisms and come in many different levels of severity. Not all rabbit abscesses will have a successful outcome; in some cases they are either too extensive or the rabbit’s immune system is simply not capable of mounting an appropriate response. The diagnosis of an abscess does NOT, however, need to be a death sentence in all cases. Early diagnosis and aggressive, prolonged treatment of responsive abscesses can result in a successful outcome and future happy infection-free times for you and your pet.
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.**

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.**

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**

**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. Whodoy! 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 Michele Roth Kerley (bhrs-michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.

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 (bhrs-kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.

Hi everybody, I am Huey! I was rescued from a high-kill shelter along with my two brothers, Dewey and Louie. I like to be around people and being a part of the fun. I am young, playful and very active. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.

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 (bhrs-kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.

Brownie was found in January 2010 roaming around in a Parma neighborhood, then she bounced from home to home until she came into foster care with Buckeye HRS. She is sweet, but a little cautious of her footing due to a very slight tilt. She loves human interaction and will bring a smile to your face when you see her handle-bar mustache and bangs that fall to one side of her little lionhead face. Brownie is excellent with her litterbox. She’s about three years old and in very good health, although she does wobble very slightly due to the mild tilt. Due to her very mild balance issues, a home with carpeting or rugs would be best to help her get some traction. Please contact Kristen Doherty (bhrs-kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.

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 (bhrs-michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.
Holiday Raffle to Benefit Buckeye HRS Foster Rabbits!

We are especially fortunate this year to have TWO spectacular items for our sixth annual holiday raffle! You have TWICE the chance of winning, so don’t delay, buy your tickets today!

Toronto artist Pey Lu is generously donating *The Harvest*, a recreation of an original piece from her "Animal Wisdom" series. As Pey describes it, *The Harvest* is a musing in naïve art -- there is no message other than to portray a simple manifestation of joy and entertaining amusement. *The Harvest* measures 10" by 12". As with any original art work, avoid exposure to direct sunlight or an open heat source.

Pey is also offering 3 Funny Bunny Warning signs from her Etsy shop (http://www.etsy.com/shop/peylu?section_id=5476634) to the runners up.

Of her artwork, Pey says: "I work in clay pictures, which I create by sculpting on a thin layer of clay on canvas or board and then gently layer with different paint media to achieve the finish and patina which typify my style and themes. The clay adds texture, crackle and a well worn look to a wide range of subject matter, mostly folk art based, but with an occasional urban twist."

Scottish artist Annette Tait is generously contributing *Mother Hare Fortuna*, a textile ornament of a real-size mother hare to display fondly in your home. This soft sculpture is made from an upcycled printed cotton and has a polyfill stuffing. *Mother Hare Fortuna* measures 10.5" high by 18" long and she comes with a small tag telling her story.

Of her craft, Annette says: "Fortuna is a very beautiful and good mother hare and she looks after her babies well. Fortuna has been made with great care, machine and hand-sewn by me, and she will have many unique (imperfect, handmade) bits. Fortuna is looking forward to resting cozily on your arm chair and would appreciate an open door to your garden."

View *The Harvest* and *Mother Hare Fortuna* in color at http://ohare.org/gifts-raffle.htm
All proceeds will go directly to our foster program and will ensure that needy bunnies have a safe and happy holiday season while they await the ultimate gift, a permanent home. Tickets cost $1 each and you may buy as many as you wish. You may specify how many tickets you want entered for each prize or simply let us split them equally between the two items. All entries must be postmarked no later than December 1, 2010. 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. If you prefer, you may use PayPal for ticket purchases of $10 or more. The lucky winners will be notified in early December and will receive their prize in time for holiday gift-giving.

About the Artists

Pey Lu, a rabbit/dog caretaker and painter, resides in an old house by Lake Ontario with her husband and her animals, including her house bunny Charlie. See more of her work and her background at her website, www.peylu.com

Annette Tait lives in Scotland and is a proud rescue mum to two precious, gentle rabbits. She also donates 20% from every pet portrait she does to the rescue of choice. See more of her work at www.dragonhouseofyuen.co.uk and read her blog at dragonhouseofyuen.blogspot.com

Gifts for Bunny Cont’d.

• Hay or treat hay (such as Oxbow Botanical Hay with Flower Petals, $4.00)
• 1 pack of pinecones (about $3.00 at pet supply stores)
• 1 pack of wood sticks (about $3.00)
• 1 pack of wood chews ($2.00-$4.00)
• 1 cardboard insert from a toilet paper roll
• Plastic keys, fling toys or rattle balls (sold for cats)
• Untreated packing paper

First, remove all price tags, then fill the basket with the kind of hay your rabbit prefers (important!). Next, stuff the toilet paper insert with hay, chew sticks, or other treats. Place the stuffed roll onto the hay-filled basket and arrange the leftover chew sticks, toss toys, and pine cones inside the basket. Finally, place the basket onto a sheet of packing paper and wrap it up as a present, twisting the loose paper ends shut. Finished!
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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City, State, Zip ____________________________ Phone __________________________

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Bunnies’ names and special dates __________________________________________

Please make checks payable to:

Buckeye House Rabbit Society
P.O. Box 5767
Athens, OH 45701

All donations are tax-deductible.

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P.O. Box 5767
Athens, OH 45701

Buy a bunny a little time…