I Dream of Jenni

by Patti Henningsen

with the light brown fur

Our least favorite neighbors were moving! As a final gesture of ill will, they left a large trash heap on their front lawn. They also left behind many animals. Before Animal Control confiscated them, my husband, Chris grabbed a cage from the trash heap. He called to me, “Come see what I’ve rescued!”

Beaming with pride at his good deed, he held up a small cage containing a large black rabbit. He pulled the rabbit out of the cage and cradled him in his arms, “Look how friendly he is!”

The big fellow shoved his head into the crook of Chris’ elbow as if to say, ‘Oh please, please help me!’ With that simple gesture, I melted into a blathering, bleeding-heart blob of compassion. We made plans to get him a more suitable, larger cage.

We named him Jar Jar Binks for his extraordinary binkying (dancing) abilities. His being out of the tiny cage that had been his prison for four years and eating fresh salad every day became our mutual happiness. Every night we all enjoyed ‘bunny time’ or cage-free time. Jar Jar loved to walk around on my back as I lay on my stomach on the floor. And he danced a lot.

We named him Jar Jar Binks for his extraordinary binkying (dancing) abilities. His being out of the tiny cage that had been his prison for four years and eating fresh salad every day became our mutual happiness. Every night we all enjoyed ‘bunny time’ or cage-free time. Jar Jar loved to walk around on my back as I lay on my stomach on the floor. And he danced a lot.

Do You Hear What I Hear?

Much to my surprise one evening, Jar Jar jumped on my lap. Sitting with his back to me, he slowly turned his head from side to side. I felt he was trying to tell me something and then I saw it. Both of his ears were totally encrusted from deep inside the ear mid-way to the ear tip. The next day I rushed him to the vet. It took three ear-cleaning sessions for Jar Jar to recover. His ears had been totally occluded, and for all practical purposes, he had been deaf.

We also learned he was neutered. The vet said, “So someone must have loved him once.”

Now able to enjoy all the stimulating sounds around him, Jar Jar loved to sit smack dab in front of our speakers while we watched, yes, Star Wars: The Phantom Menace, and thrill at the special effects sounds. With his health restored, a giant new cage, and a domain to freely roam, there was only one thing missing.

One morning, I lay in bed dreaming of lying in a meadow. Jar Jar appeared, jumped on my chest, and put his face right up to mine, waving his head to and fro. Just behind him I noticed a smaller light brown rabbit. When I awoke, I realized, ‘Jar Jar wants a mate.’

I picked out a light brown girl bunny from the HRS web site who most resembled the one from my dream and applied to adopt her. I was approved and Jar Jar, Chris, and I piled into the car to go to a ‘bunny match’ at the home of HRS Director of Fostering Susan Easton. Pens were set up all over...
her house and yard. Two bunnies at a time were placed in each pen to see if they would 1) fight, 2) show at least mild complacency with each other, in which case it was a possible match, or 3) fall in love at first sight.

**Enter the Shrew**

We watched and waited as many bunnies were happily matched up. I noticed one girl bunny, Jenni, was particularly aggressive with all the others and was quickly pulled from the pens after antagonizing every rabbit she met. Jenni was a beautiful Siamese sable with light brown fur. Hmm...

Jar Jar’s turn finally came. He flopped down showing no interest in anything or any bunny. Finally he humped a bun or two and flopped down again. Then, Susan put Jenni in with him. Jenni stalked over to start boxing with him. He stood up and sat on her head (see photo). For a while they stayed like that. We were all laughing and so, I think, was Jar Jar. Then Jenni emerged from underneath Jar Jar, her mouth open and eyes squinting in a ‘rabbit smile.’ I knew she was the one.

After a smooth bun-nyymoon at Susan Wong’s house, Jenni came home with us and she and Jar ruled supreme, but there were a few problems that became more extreme over time. She repeatedly antagonized my collie by digging at his tail and lunged at us should we have any thought of picking her up. She was being a shrew—not a rabbit!

**Jenni and Jar Jar’s Excellent Adventure**

We tried various schools of thought for adjusting her attitude with no success. So I decided to try something different. Jenni, Jar Jar, and I signed up for an animal communication workshop in New York with world-renowned animal communicator and author, Penelope Smith. I would just ask Jenni herself what her problem was instead of asking everyone else.

We stayed at a hotel that allowed pets. Room service seemed mystified at the quantity of salads I ordered. Jen and Jar danced around the hotel room with glee.

The workshop was held in three sessions, the last two to which participants could bring pets. Jen and Jar were the only rabbits there. About ten large dogs ran around barking in the back of the hall, so I set up Jen and Jar’s pen next to the stage far from the frolicking canines.

Jen and Jar stole the show, even from Penelope Smith herself, who didn’t mind at all. Jen and Jar danced around the frollicking canines.

Jen and Jar stole the show, even from Penelope Smith herself, who didn’t mind at all. I had set up their pen on top of a large tablecloth so they wouldn’t slip on the hardwood floor but I didn’t realize the tablecloth was covering a vent. When the heat came on, the tablecloth billowed like a flag in the wind but was held down by the edges of the pen. Jen and Jar danced and hopped on each billow of air as it plumped. Totally distracted, the audience politely stifled their laughter.

The last session was held on a lake shore. Jen and Jar once again took stage right and got to munch on some grass inside their pen. A llama attended as well, and when she spied the rabbits, trod up to the pen. Jenni watched closely, then sat up on her haunches at the pen’s edge to greet her fellow grazer. The llama stood nose to nose with her for several moments as all 75 of us watched in quiet fascination. Something, I don’t know what, transpired between them.

I noticed a dramatic change in Jenni that day. Jenni was soliciting attention from her admirers and enjoying it immensely! At the session’s conclusion, participants were asked to pick an animal present with whom to communicate. One lady who’d been enamored with Jenni shared with us, “I was staring at her ears and I saw a butterfly. That’s it, just a butterfly.”

**Butterflies are Free**

Many of the participants came up to me saying they also had rabbits and were members of HRS. Jen and Jar had been such gracious and outstanding rabbit ambassadors, many students told me they were going home to adopt a rabbit.

Then it hit me, the woman’s comment about seeing a butterfly on Jenni’s ears—butterflies are a symbol of transformation, and Jenni, my little shrewish rabbit, had emerged from her cocoon a new being. Whatever past trauma had marred her spirit were now healed, and she returned home a more tranquil and well-behaved, albeit strong-willed rabbit.
Our first rabbit, a lovely Dutch girl named Indigo, taught us about rabbits. We had naively entered the rabbit world to fulfill the four-legs-and-fur needs of our children. After her youth as a 4-H rabbit, Indigo’s life with us began in our backyard hutch on a balmy June day. We did not want her to be in a cage all the time, so my husband built a fenced area to protect her from dogs and foxes. She had room to hop, grass and dandelions to munch, and shade to lounge in. We always returned her to the hutch at night. 

Although timid with us, Indigo liked her rabbit run and liked to sun herself. As time went on, HRS led us to more and better information about rabbits, and Fall became Winter, we began to bring Indigo into the house. She easily litterbox trained herself, and we grew closer to her. We realized an inside rabbit was a pet; an outside rabbit was livestock. Nevertheless, it seemed that honoring the wild ancestors of domestic rabbits required they be allowed in the fresh air and breeze. Indigo still spent nice afternoons in her outdoor run.

One Saturday afternoon in early March, I took Indigo outside. Towards dusk, as usual, I went to the backyard to retrieve her and move her back inside. To my utmost horror, in an oh-my-gosh-is-this-really-happening-slow-motion-but-panicked kind of way, there inside the rabbit yard I saw a huge predatory bird, about three feet in height, with our eviscerated Indigo at its side. It looked at me, then raised and spread its wings. Recognizing threat posture, I ran inside the house and called my husband. Our three children, fortunately, were out for the afternoon. He went into the rabbit yard and, with his foot, forced the bird to back out of the gate into the backyard. He wrapped Indigo in her favorite blanket and we placed her in a pretty box.

Of course, we had to tell our children what happened. All of us were distraught and enormously sad. How could this happen to our sweet rabbit? Why didn’t we know we had to protect her? How could we have betrayed her? We thought she was safe inside the fence.

On Sunday, we had a funeral in the woods behind our house and buried our rabbit. I am haunted still by the moment I came upon her. I imagine her fear and hope it was fleeting.

A few weeks after Indigo’s demise, I spoke with the predatory birds docent at the Baltimore Zoo, who was not surprised by my story. She said the bird’s markings were those of an osprey (a sea eagle), and that the eagle population is increasing in this area. Eagles dive bomb their prey by tucking their wings in, and are so quick that even if we had been outside, we still could not have protected Indigo. We now share our house with two lops named Bam Bam and Bozo. They are 100% free-range house rabbits, and absolutely delightful. Much of their great good fortune they owe to Indigo.

---

Rabbits’ nails grow to be long and sharp unless trimmed regularly. Long nails get caught in carpeting and/or cage wires, resulting in breakage or nail tears—even broken toes. A nail broken close to the toe can bleed profusely and become infected. Keeping a rabbit’s nails trimmed is necessary for your rabbit’s well-being.

**Anatomy of the Nail**

Rabbits have four claws on their rear feet and five on their front feet. The fifth claw on the front, the dew-claw, is found on the inside of the front leg. A vein runs through the claws called the quick. In light-colored nails, the quick is a dark line within the nail. In dark nails, the quick can be seen under bright light. The end of the nail past the quick is the part that we clip. (See Figure A).

The quick doesn’t normally run all the way to the tip of the rabbit’s nails unless trimming has been irregular. In this case, the quick will be long and less nail can be trimmed. Trimming smaller amounts more often will train the quick to retreat into the nail bed.

Trimming monthly is sufficient. Active diggers and sprinters often wear down nails on their own.

---

HRS Maryland, Washington DC, Northern Virginia Chapter  
continued on page 4
Inactive or disabled rabbits need more frequent trims. If you hear toenails clicking on the floor, it’s time to trim!

Tools of the Trim
Clippers, Q-tips or cotton balls, Kwik-Stop (styptic powder) or flour, a towel, flashlight (for dark nails), an assistant (for the first few times), and treats for the bunny are needed.

There are several kinds of clippers: guillotine-style with replaceable blades, pruner-style, and small, scissors-style. Some people use human fingernail or toenail clippers. Whatever kind is used, clippers should be kept sharp to avoid crushing or shattering the nail or pulling rabbit’s fur. Consider the thickness of bunny’s nails and how comfortable the clippers are for you.

Getting Down to the Nitty Gritty
Bright lighting is best. Initially, you’ll need assistance. Decide who will hold the rabbit and who will trim, and be aware of their very delicate bones.

Be confident. Assume the alpha rabbit role. Rabbits will sense apprehension and struggle. They don’t like positions that hinder their defense and escape options.

Holding your rabbit will be your biggest challenge. Read the hold descriptions to decide which works best for you and your rabbit. They are listed in order from least restrictive for the rabbit to most restrictive.

All positions except the front hold can eventually be done by one person. Note the directions are written for a right-handed person—left-handers, simply reverse the hand positions.

Would You Like to Trance?
Rabbits held on their backs will sometimes trance (See Figure B) into a very relaxed, hypnotic state. To trance your rabbit—while sitting, hold him to your chest with his feet toward you. Bring your knees up toward the his back while moving your torso and knees closer together as you lean over. Place his back on your legs while keeping one hand on his chest. Position him just between your legs with his head towards your knees, making sure his head is lower than the rest of his body. You can open your legs a bit to have him be a little more securely wedged. Always keep one hand on the rabbit, as they can untrance very quickly and flip themselves over.

Keep in mind, the rear end of the rabbit should be higher than the head and the chin in line with the spine. Gently stroke the forehead with a front to back motion. When the rabbit is relaxed, gently tip the head back to increase the downward angle of the head. When the bottom is up and head is down and back, the rabbit is fully tranced.

The Hold Positions: This requires two people. Place your right hand underneath the rabbit around the front of his chest with your two first fingers between his front legs. Place your left hand on his rump and scoop upward, securely supporting the rump. Hold the rabbit to your chest with his feet out.

Reverse Football: This is only for trimming back nails and also requires two people. Pick up the rabbit as described in the Front continuing on page 11

Figure B
I acquired my first rabbit the way many of us did—I bought him on a whim in a pet store. At first, I did everything wrong. Then my sister gave me a copy of the *House Rabbit Handbook*, and slowly but surely life got better for that little bunny. I got him a friend, and I was on my way to a rabby love affair.

Back in December of 1995, I subscribed to an email list called Petbunny. Just a few days after I subscribed, I saw an email from Kathleen Wilsbach, the founding member and Chapter Manager of the local HRS chapter. It was a plea for fostering help—the Humane Society of Baltimore County was full to the top with lovely, adoptable rabbits, including some angoras. My own bunny Pookie is an angora, so it really touched my heart. I thought ‘I have room for one foster,’ so, not knowing what I was getting into, I emailed Kathleen with an offer of help with fostering one of the rabbits at the shelter. I met her in Baltimore, and brought home an adorable Jersey Woolly girl named Gabrielle. My husband was very skeptical—he was sure we would just be adding another animal to our household on a permanent basis. But Gabrielle was adopted within a month, and my husband became a believer.

We decided it would be easier to let them go if we fostered two rabbits at a time instead of one, and fosters number two and three arrived—an adorable gray and white Dutch rabbit, Rembrandt, and a former stray named Nigel. Eventually, the numbers grew until I was fostering four rabbits at once.

At that time, the chapter had no Web site, and all of our adoptions came from putting up flyers and advertising in local papers. I had no experience with Web pages—no formal computer training at all actually—but I discovered that by running a free piece of soft-ware, I could turn my work computer into a server for a Web page, and no one minded. So, I just gave it a try. Our first “Web site” was a single page with pictures of our rabbits for adoption. It became obvious very quickly that a Web presence was going to make all the difference. Even with that very simple start, we almost immediately started getting online rabbit adoption inquiries. I experimented with Web site formatting, and our site was on its way. Moral of the story? Just do it!

Eventually our chapter grew, as did the *House Rabbit Society* on a national level, and the time came to incorporate, requiring that we set up a Board of Directors. I agreed to become Director of Fostering, which meant I coordinated the fosterers, foster rabbits, and rescues. This assignment has been very intense but also very rewarding. I think I remember every rabbit that I agreed to rescue from all the shelters, or at least most of them. Each one is special to me. Thanks to our wonderful group of fosterers, it was possible to make a difference not only to the rabbits, but to the various shelters we work with. Our chapter volunteers have become a true team.

The time has come that I must move on—my husband has accepted a great job with the *Illinois Natural History Survey*, and he and I have moved to the Champaign-Urbana area of Illinois (home of the *University of Illinois*). We now live on a lovely 5 acre farmette, complete with all our animals, including my horses. I am looking forward to this change of pace from the Big City (#2 in the country for traffic jams!) to the country (no traffic in sight!).

I leave, with a rather heavy heart, all the good friends I have made here including all the people who have adopted rabbits from me in the last few years. They are all so wonderful, it made it easy to let my foster rabbits go to their new homes. People have been asking me ‘what will the chapter do without you?’ Although my absence might be felt for a while, I leave knowing that because of our excellent Chapter Manager Kathleen and the dedication of the fosterers and volunteers, the chapter will carry on just fine. Jodi Robertson has already taken over the Web site. Susan Easton is the new Director of Fostering, and this is the second issue of The Clover Leaf produced by Patti Henningsen. New foster homes are added on a regular basis, so the fostering gap will be filled soon.

Just remember—I’m only an email away! So for now good friends, it’s goodbye….
Dear HRS,

Here’s an update on the lovebirds! They are doing so well, we’re amazed! Ethan has become quite comfortable with everyone and loves to hop and explore around the house— with or without Quigley! Sometimes they seem content to stay in the cage and lounge, especially Quigley. We’re hoping that means that she really loves her new cage. She is still doing great with the litter box training. And she has finally discovered the upper level—and loves it!

We now have a gate separating the living room area from the kitchen and dining area, so the rabbits can roam around most of the time when we are home. Both the bunnies and the cats tease the dog from the other side of the gate! The cats both seem to like little Ethan, too. They never have known what to do with Quigley since she’s the same size as they are, and has no problem hopping right up to them. Ethan likes to play chase with our Persian, Chessy, who has never before liked or paid attention to ANYONE!!!! But she really likes him!!

Ethan is charming, and we’ve never seen Ms. Quigley happier!

Stacy & Adam Watts

---

Dear HRS,

Delta is still a very opinionated bunny who rules our house. She has the run of the den all day and night. We bring her a couple carrot nuggets first thing in the morning. She comes running to the gate when she hears our approach, gets her snack and then signifies she wants to go on the porch by standing up and sniffing the air.

Dear HRS,

Maggie and Scout are getting along fine and they spend a fair amount of time nuzzling and lying next to each other. The cutest thing, though, is when I start to pat either one, the other rushes over to snuggle up and stick his/her head under my hand as well.

Happy Adop ❤❤❤❤❤❤❤❤❤❤

Cindy Lipsitz

---

Dear HRS,

We want to thank you for all your expertise in adopting Babs and Bandit, now known as Butterscotch and Licorice. Our creative bunny-proofing seems to be working. Butterscotch definitely lets us know when it’s time for exercise—she shakes the pen lets us know when it’s time for exercise—she shakes the pen

Karl, Gail, Erik and Kyle Wolf

---

Happy Adop ❤❤❤❤❤❤❤❤❤❤

Agi Kiss
Dear HRS,

André is absolutely wonderful. Zach (my little boy) got back from his weekend away and the two of them hit it off instantly.

We have settled into a routine—every night we come home and let André out, Zach helps me fix the salad and get fresh hay (that’s his favorite part), and then it’s play time. Zach chases André and then André chases Zach—it’s quite amusing!

Tammi Poswiatowsky

Dear HRS,

The bunnies are doing fine together, snuggling and grooming. Abner is still exploring and rubbing his chin on everything, including me, to mark his territory. He’s doing his bunny dance: running about, jumping, changing directions mid-air and seeming happy! I think they’re doing really well together, and Bun Bun’s no longer lonely!

Sandy Curtin

Dear HRS,

Tex is doing great! He’s getting more and more relaxed with his exercise time. Last night he flew over the gate I had put up to keep him from going into the hallway! I was so surprised that he could jump that high. He’s so determined. He’s started to jump on my back while I’m on the floor, and I think I’ve witnessed some ‘dances,’ or more like some weird jumps & twists. He’s started to play with toys now, too. I bought him a little wire ball with a bell inside, and he’ll chase it when I throw it. I’m still working on having him bring it back to me. Not so sure how that will work.

I found out last night, too, that he loves fresh dill!

I love him dearly!

Barbi Cvek

Dear HRS,

Winston is such a delightfully social bun—he’ll defer eating food to get petted or to hang out. I have NEVER had a pet with those kinds of civilized priorities. I didn’t know how affectionate a rabbit could be.

Our first rabbit, Rorschach, was with us for eight years before she died. And while she was a dear friend, there was always a fair bit of skittishness. She would rarely sit still for anything other than brief petting. We always suspected she had been pretty traumatized before we rescued her.

I was told Winston had a pretty rough start in life himself—someone in DC had thrown him down a flight of stairs. I’m amazed, then, how trusting and friendly he is and what a neat laid back disposition he has. Bless HRS for saving this wonderful chum. What a waste it would be to keep him outside. I wouldn’t have missed this friendship for the world.

Gary Axelton

HRS Maryland, Washington DC, Northern Virginia Chapter
The year 2000 was a very good one for our chapter but it was also the end of an era (see A Farewell to Friends, page 3). Director of Fostering Kate McGinley packed up and left for a life in the country near Champaign/Urbana, Illinois.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RABBITS ADOPTED TO NEW HOMES DURING 2000 IS 113! For a look at some of these cutie-pies, check out our Adoption Hall of Fame on our web site www.rabbit.org/BaltWashDC. Of course, if your bunny needs a friend, see our Rabbits for Adoption on page 6-7 or visit our Web site and fill out an online application!

Director of Special Projects, Fosterer, and bunny-sitter, Susan Wong, held her bi-annual yard sale in September, which was once again a huge success, bringing in nearly $1,000 for the rabbits! The yard sale was held at her house in Olney and is one of our biggest fundraising events. Kudos Susan!

In September, the HRS presence was felt at the Super Pet Expo (the third one HRS hosted a table at this year), where we had a booth fully-stocked with rabbit care information, video presentations, rabbit care items (toys, hay, and such), and ambassador rabbits. HRS volunteers staffed the booth both days of the weekend, selling many House Rabbit Handbooks, as well as answering many rabbit care questions.

In October, HRS Volunteers Chris Brannon and Kay Bannon had a table at the Old Farm Veterinary Hospital’s Open House in Frederick where they were accompanied by two HRS foster buns and a shelter bun from the Frederick County Humane Society.

The rabbits attracted many visitors, and Kay and Chris talked with them about the rewards of having a rabbit as a companion.

As November skies loomed over us, we held our Fall Festival! This event was held at the lovely home of HRS Volunteer Barbara Storck. Delicious food and merry chatter on every imaginable bunny topic highlighted the afternoon. Guests also shopped The Bunny Boutique, a collection of bunny collectables, for the benefit of foster buns. Also at the Fall Festival, a new HRS T-shirt was unveiled (see page 8). The t-shirt was designed by HRS Member Lara Buyer and is available in all sizes and also as a sweatshirt. For more information about the t-shirt, see our Web site.

Also in November, HRS Director of Education Liz DiNorma held a Rabbit Care Class at the Shirlington Library in Arlington on behalf of the Animal Welfare League of Arlington. HRS Volunteers Rebecca Kingery and Nicky Roberts, who are also both regular shelter volunteers for the rabbits at AWLA, assisted Liz. About 15 attendees thoroughly quizzed Liz and left that evening with a deeper awareness of rabbit care. Thanks to the AWLA for letting us help with rabbit care education!

HRS Volunteers Deborah McLaughlin and Liz Sugermeyer were on hand on November 5 for National Geographic’s Passport Friday, graciously coordinated by National Geographic employee and adopter of two HRS rabbits, Nancy Boyd. Now you might ask, what is Passport Friday? Every Friday, National Geographic invites groups to set up booths in their Explorer’s Hall during lunchtime. HRS has been invited to do this several times now, and National Geographic has always made very generous donations each time. Thank you National Geographic!

WHERE CAN YOU BUY RABBIT SUPPLIES FROM A RABBIT-FRIENDLY SOURCE?

HRS SUPPLIERS:
- Kathleen Wilsbach
  Baltimore, Maryland
  kwilsbach@mindspring.com
  410/889-4104
- Susan Wong
  Olney, Maryland
  sbunny@erols.com
  301/570-9152
- Jodi Robertson
  Bel Air, Maryland
  lapinblanc@home.com
  410/838-3761
- Jamie Sargent
  Springfield, VA
  JAllisonJ@aol.com
  703/642-9350
- Oxbow Timothy pellets $1/lb
- Oxbow Hay $2/lb
- Harlan Hi Fiber pellets $.50/lb
- Local Hay by the flake ~$5
- CareFresh litter $12.50/bag
- X-pens
- Litter pans
- Water bottles
- Brushes
- Combs
- Nail clippers
- HRS handbooks

AVAILABLE SUPPLIES:

PLEASE MAKE A DONATION TO OUR CHAPTER TO HELP US RESCUE MORE RABBITS. USE THE COUPON ON PAGE 11 TO MAKE A DONATION AND/OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP. THANKS!
Many HRS members and adopters tell me they purchased a rabbit from a pet store or breeder before they knew about HRS or the many rabbits in shelters. There isn’t any shame in this. When I decided to get my first rabbit back in 1990, I, too, was looking at baby rabbits in pet stores. I didn’t know about the need for rescue. The only thing that stopped me from buying one was a neighbor telling me he was planning to euthanize his rabbit when he moved. Thus Clover entered my life.

What is more problematic is buying rabbits when you do “know better.” People may explain that these rabbits need homes too, they were bought out of pity, or even call this “rescuing” a rabbit.

Most of us have seen baby pet store rabbits whose days are numbered either because of illness, not being sold, or approaching puberty. Maybe the store owner reveals the awful destiny if not sold—being fed to snakes or shipped back to the breeder for slaughter. Rabbit lovers that we are, our first impulse is to “rescue” these unfortunate waifs.

The Economics of Rabbit Supply and Demand

Please consider the consequences when you “rescue” a suffering rabbit by buying him from a pet store or breeder. You are rewarding that establishment for causing suffering and condemning many more rabbits to the same fate!

Refusing to purchase rabbits from pet stores causes sellers loss. Thus they stock fewer rabbits thereby causing the breeder to produce less. If no one ever bought rabbits in pet stores, breeders would stop breeding. It may seem harsh to leave pet store or breeder rabbits to their fate, but you will help many more rabbits.

Boycott stores that sell rabbits. Let the owner or manager know why you’re doing it. Numerous pet stores have stopped selling puppies and kittens. Let’s make rabbits next.

Rabbits are sold locally in many stores and chains, including Petco (which is again selling rabbits in Virginia). Purchase supplies from venues that don’t sell rabbits. Our Web site lists local rabbit-friendly and mail order suppliers. HRS members can buy many supplies from HRS with 100% of the profits going to support our rescue efforts.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

The best way to help rabbits suffering from neglect in pet stores—no water, dirty water, dirty bedding, sick rabbits not receiving medical attention—is to report the problem to the person in charge of the rabbits. Done tactfully and non-judgmentally, the problem may be immediately corrected.

If the neglect persists, contact local Animal Control authorities. In most cases, you can report neglect to your local animal control office or humane organization. In Baltimore County, only Animal Control has authority to investigate cruelty and neglect complaints.

Most pet stores are governed by vague animal cruelty statutes. At http://www.animal-law.org/statutes it is stated that animals must be provided with “necessary sustenance, food, drink, and shelter” in northern Virginia and DC. Maryland is a little better, mentioning space and veterinary care.

Once charges are pressed, the Animal Control officer and the judge determine what is “adequate” or “necessary.” Your testimony is important. Collect information and observations over a period of time to strengthen the case. Photos can be used as evidence. Keep a journal with dates and times of visits and problems observed; note names of people you spoke with about the problem and their reactions. If your journal shows a pattern of poor care, action can be taken.

Some jurisdictions have better-defined laws and require pet stores to be licensed. The USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) regulates large animal facilities under the federal Animal Welfare Act, but most pet stores,
Tips From Our Members

To encourage your bunny to snuggle with you more, lay or sit on the couch in a comfortable position, shake papaya bottle saying “who wants a treat?” You may need to begin this on the floor if your bunnies don’t know what ‘treat’ means! Once they do, they will come running when they hear the bottle. Then, when they’re on your lap, give a papaya, then hide the bottle while they are chewing, and begin petting the bunny in his favorite way. At first, the bunny will barely stop chewing before bolting, but over time, petting will become as important as the treat! It has taken a year for our Samantha Jean, but she hangs around for a good 20 minutes now! The boys, Thomas and Edmund, took almost as long, and now when I come home and lay on the couch, they jump up and look for the treats, but still stay if none are offered and lay down for pets. We only do treats every few days to keep them guessing!

Barbara Fueschel

We put lawn and leaf bags in the bottom of litter pans. Then we buy large bales of peat moss and line all our trays with it. The acid moss neutralizes bunny urine. To clean the cages, we simply invert the bag so all the peat moss and bunny dung is captured in the bag. The bags then get emptied onto our compost heap with a shovel of leaves. We have the best compost on the planet!

We also find that the boy bunnies, even though neutered, will mark in front of each others cages. We have solved this problem by placing plastic mats underneath and along the “front doors” of each of the cages. A roll of paper towels and some vinegar is kept close at hand for “accidents.”

Nan Roche

I use Fellowes Neat Idea Cubes (bought from Reliable Office Supplies at www.reliable.com) linked together with cable ties around the edge of the bed to keep my rabbits from getting underneath and playing with the dust bunnies. I’ve tied a few places together with socks so I can open the barrier easily for storage or to clean.

Cara Griego

Jack & Lily adore wild raspberry leaves and stems, which are abundant in our region; the buns gobble them down thorns and all. Get someone to show you how to recognize the plant, and be sure the area is not sprayed for pesticides—then watch your bunnies enjoy!!

Victoria Clements

SEND IN YOUR TIPS! We love hearing great ideas from our members. We can’t publish them all, but we will be featuring a few in every issue of The Clover Leaf. Email your tips to ChiefofOwsla@aol.com
Hold. Now, use your right hand (holding his chest and front paws) to tuck his upper half under your left arm, still cradling his rump with your left hand. Hold his head and upper body snugly between your arm and side.

Half Burrito: This is only for front nails. Place your rabbit on a towel and snugly wrap it around his rear half. This leaves his front paws free. Place him on your lap in a trance.

Full Burrito: This is for the uncooperative rabbit. Place your rabbit on a towel and wrap it around his body, leaving only his head out. When you've got control, gently free one foot at a time to trim. Hold him in whatever position works best for you, either upside down on your lap in a trance, or right side up on a table.

Alas, The Manicure!
Now you're ready to trim! Expose the nail from the fur, locate the quick, and snip off the end of the nail. To locate the quick in dark nails, look at the nail from different angles in bright light or try back-lighting with a flashlight. If you still can't find the quick, trim a little off the end and repeat in a week. If you accidentally cut the quick, apply pressure to the end of the nail with a damp Q-tip and apply pressure. DON'T WORRY! It happens to everyone... even vets! Just stay calm and continue trimming.

Don't forget to reward your brave rabbit with a small, nutritious treat and tell her she's a good rabbit! Congratulations!

Some Creative Methods and Preventive Maintenance

Emery Board: Glue medium grit sandpaper to heavy cardboard with non-toxic glue. Put in cage near feeding dish. It is most effective on front nails but the back ones will also wear down.

Trim or Treat?: When putting your rabbit in her cage at night, give her raisins through the top of her cage. To reach it, she will 'climb' the side of her cage. As she does this, her nails will stick out. Then while she is trying to bite a piece of raisin, clip her nails.

Wag the Carrot: Set a carrot in front of your rabbit and let her munch while trim her nails. She may get so distracted in her carrot-eating frenzy, that you can lift her paws up just enough to get under the nails.

Many thanks to all who contributed: Jennifer Royce of the NY Chapter of HRS; Jean and Phil Seymour of B.U.N.S.; the San Diego Chapter of HRS; Leann Mensinger and Noelle from the Etherbun mailing list; and Kate McGinley from the Maryland/ DC/ NoVA Chapter of HRS.

Calling All Volunteers!
We always need volunteers for the following activities. If you would like to volunteer, check all that apply:

- Public events (staffing education tables)
- Fundraising events
- Driving rabbits between Maryland, Northern Virginia and DC
- Bunnysitting
- Fostering
- Hosting rabbit matches
- Design projects
- Mailing
- Counseling
- Working with shelters
- Newsletter
- Rabbit bondings
- Counseling
- Classes and seminars
- Distributing literature
- Host organizing social events
- Hosting and organizing social events
- Rabbitsitting
- Driving rabbits between Maryland, Northern Virginia and DC
- Hosting and organizing social events
- Rabbit bondings
- Classes and seminars
- Distributing literature
- Emery Board: Glue medium grit sandpaper to heavy cardboard with non-toxic glue. Put in cage near feeding dish. It is most effective on front nails but the back ones will also wear down.

Is Your Membership Current? Are You Moving?

Is there a “TIME TO RENEW” stamp on the opposite side of this page? If so, please renew your membership by filling in this form and mailing it to the address below. Is your address printed correctly on the opposite side of this page? If not, please take a moment to fill out the form below with your correct address and mail it to the address below.

- Local and National HRS membership ............$26
- National HRS membership ..........................$18
- Local HRS membership (includes The House Rabbit Journal) . $8
- Members receive issues of The House Rabbit Journal

Support our local rabbit rescue efforts and receive local newsletter twice yearly. Must also be a national member.

CLIP AND MAIL TO: HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 50311, BALTIMORE, MD 21211
Pet Store Rabbits, continued from page 9

excepting stores selling real exotics like hedgehogs and sugargliders, are exempt from APHIS regulation.

Fines range from $100 to $1000. In Maryland, Virginia, and DC, most acts of animal cruelty are misdemeanors. Thirty-one states now levy felony charges for certain animal cruelty violations. Maryland, Virginia, and DC are all currently weighing measures to make serious acts of animal cruelty felonies.

The DC City Council passed and the Mayor signed, the Freedom from Cruelty to Animals Protection Act of 2000. The U.S. Congress must now approve the bill. Similar Maryland legislation is Senate Bill 356 and House Bill 649 while similar Virginia legislation is Senate Bill 897. More information on this issue can be found at http://www.hsus.org/whatnew/cruel_law071200.html and http://lisaviolet.com/cathouse/cruelty.html.

Reporting to the authorities and litigation may seem arduous and indirect in helping rabbits suffering in pet stores, but in the long run it helps many more animals. And in our society where capitalism rules, put your money where your heart is and boycott those businesses perpetuating cruelty and contributing to pet overpopulation.

Have you received an unsolicited mailing from another rabbit organization recently?

We would like to restate that it is not the policy of the House Rabbit Society to share its mailing list with any other organizations or groups.

The Maryland/DC/Northern Virginia Chapter of the House Rabbit Society would like to apologize for any inconvenience and/or confusion, and to assure you that any use of its mailing list by other organizations is unauthorized. We will take steps to avoid any further such use of our members' addresses.

INSIDE:
Nail Clipping Guide ..........p.3
Where to Buy Rabbit Supplies That Help Rabbits ..........p.8
Maryland’s Felony Animal Cruelty Law Passes ..........p.10

BUY A BUNNY A LITTLE TIME

HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY
P.O. Box 50311
Baltimore, MD 21211

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Merrifield, VA
Permit No. 2338