



**House Rabbit Network**

P.O. Box 2602

Woburn, MA 01888-1102



Dedicated to educating the public and to fostering and adoption of companion rabbits. 781-431-1211 or [www.rabbitnetwork.org](http://www.rabbitnetwork.org).

# RABBIT TRACKS

Fall 2007

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
Flatbread  
Fundraiser  
October 23, 2007  
4 pm - 9 pm

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# Case Study: Guinness' Nebulizer Treatments for Pneumonia

by Lorraine Howard

The first time I heard the noise I did not know what it was or from where it came. I then heard it again, and proceeded to follow the sound to a desk in the hallway. When I looked under the desk, I saw Guinness huddled by the wall and not moving. His breathing sounded like a percolator making coffee. I will never forget that crackling sound!

Several years ago, I adopted Guinness from the House Rabbit Network after my female rabbit, Blue, chose him as her new companion, it was love at first sight! He is a sweet, loving, beautiful rabbit who has this delightful habit when I stop petting him of gently picking up my fingers in his mouth to coax me back for more pets.

That morning before I left, Guinness was his usual self. He had begged for a raisin, eaten his parsley and beet greens, and was lying with Blue on the carpet in front of a sunny window in the dining room. There appeared to be no warning of what was to come later that day. In hindsight, I believe he was already having difficulty breathing yet he was able to hide it quite convincingly. This was my first lesson on how well bunnies, as vulnerable prey animals, can conceal their illnesses.

When I found Guinness that afternoon, both the noise he was making and the fact that he was under the desk surprised me. He had never gone under any piece of furniture before. I moved the desk and gently lifted him up. When I held him close, I became aware that he was having

considerable difficulty breathing and getting enough air. He did not try to stand up or move. Later, when he did try to stand up, he would immediately lie back down, as the exertion was too much for him with so little oxygen in his body.

After rushing him to the local veterinary hospital, Guinness was officially diagnosed as having pneumonia. The veterinarian who examined him prescribed oral baytril and gave him an injection of the same medication during the office visit. I took Guinness home but over the next couple of days, he showed little improvement. A different antibiotic was prescribed yet he continued to be very congested, with no discharge, and was still not getting enough oxygen to be able to stand for more than a few seconds. Guinness' veterinarian informed me that nothing more could be done.

In desperation, I called Suzanne at The House Rabbit Network for help.

She related to me that although she had never personally done a nebulizer treatment and did not know much about them, she had heard of rabbits with pneumonia recovering after receiving the treatments. Determined not to give up hope and help Guinness in any way that I could, I began an internet search for information where I learned that nebulizer treatments were recommended as a treatment for both upper and lower respiratory infections in rabbits.

I spoke with Guinness' veterinarian about nebulizer treatments and after some research, he concluded that we should try it. These treatments can be given along with systemic antibiotic therapy in the veterinarian's office, or at home. Since I did not want to stress Guinness with the twice-daily vet visits, I decided to try the treatments at home but first I needed to purchase a nebulizer. I knew the initial expense would be high, around \$200.00, but considering



*Guinness receiving his nebulizer treatment.*

the cost of continued veterinary appointments, I felt it would eventually pay for itself. In speaking with the local pharmacist, I was surprised to hear that any customer with a prescription for nebulizer medications could use the nebulizer machine for as long as needed free of charge, although this may not be true at all pharmacies.

The veterinarian prescribed saline and gentomycin for the nebulizer treatments, and the pharmacist showed me the nebulizer, how to use it, and recommended that I use a child's mask attached to the machine for Guinness. I paid only for the medications and a few dollars for the mask. The nebulizing machine consisted of an air compressor, a hose to transport the air and a compartment near the end of the hose where the mask is attached for the medication. The mist dispensed by the nebulizer is inhaled by the rabbit so that the medication is delivered more directly to the site of the infection in the sinuses, nose, lungs and bronchial passages. Treatments were twice a day and each one was about 15 to 20 minutes long, or enough time for the medication mixture to work through the compressor. The process was finished when the cup was empty and there was no more mist.

I returned home ready to begin. After filling the cup with the prescribed

amounts of saline and gentomycin, I attached the child's mask to the end of the hose. I sat on the sofa with Guinness in my lap and placed the child's mask over his face holding it there as I turned on the nebulizer. The machine was noisy, and initially he was startled but soon he settled down, closing his eyes and becoming relaxed and calm. Talking and singing to Guinness also appeared to help soothe him. A very light mist filled the chamber of the child's mask that was placed around his nose allowing most of the vapor to stay within the mask for him to breathe in. Since then I have learned that an enclosed chamber can also be utilized to nebulize bunnies, however I found that using a mask ensured that more of the medicine made its way into Guinness' airways. At the end of the treatment when the mask was removed, his nose and the surrounding fur was damp. I believe these treatments made him feel better thereby aiding in his willingness to tolerate them.

The gentomycin seemed to help him breathe more easily and receive additional oxygen, yet he still made that same crackling sound when breathing and he could only walk a few feet before collapsing on the floor. I called the veterinarian and he decided to add aminophylline and mucomyst to the gentomycin

and saline nebulizer treatment. The aminophylline is a bronchodilator that opens the airway and the mucomyst works synergistically with it by breaking up the mucous blocking the bunny's airway. I carefully followed the recipe to ensure that the right proportions of medications were used. Within the first twenty-four hours of medication change there was a dramatic improvement in Guinness' ability to breathe. The new combination of medications proved to be much more effective than gentomycin was alone.

Guinness steadily improved over the next several days, and within a week, he had recovered entirely from his pneumonia although his strength and energy returned slowly. Three weeks after the last nebulizer treatment, I was both relieved and very happy to see him acting completely normal again. What a delight it was to watch him playing with the cat, begging for treats, exploring and running around the house. On several occasions, I even found him on the window seat lying in the sun. It had been a long time since he had the energy to jump that high! I firmly believe that the nebulizer treatments were the deciding factor in saving Guinness' life. I hope that his experience can, in some way, help other bunnies with similar difficulties, breathe a little more easily.



**2007 AWARDS!**

Editor of the Year: Maysoon Hamdiyyah

Educator of the Year: Corinna Preuschoff

Volunteers of the Year: Melissa & Justin Lyons

Co-Rookies of the Year: Pam Brooks and Emily Slocombe

**To ALL of our volunteers:**

*Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication! Without you, we couldn't do what we strive to do each and every day. Your efforts are recognized and appreciated.*

# The Plymouth Rescue

by Emily Slocombe

In late April, a core group of HRN members began a large-scale rescue effort in a retirement community down in Plymouth, Massachusetts. We do not know how the situation came about for sure, but there is a general rumor that we believe to be true. Supposedly, it began two years ago when an elderly couple who were breeding rabbits, both passed away. Someone let the two breeding bunnies go free, and these un-neutered and un-spayed bunnies proceeded to do what bunnies do... This caused an overpopulation of stray rabbits!

Carol and I decide to team up in this rescue effort. She usually picked me up from Tufts in the early afternoon on Tuesdays to go to Plymouth. Liz and Matt were traveling there three and four nights a week early on. Derrick and Jeanine often met us a few hours after we had arrived, and HRN members Erica, Corinna, and Palestina helped as well as Derrick's girlfriend Adrean and some folks from the Bristol County Rabbit Rescue & Rehabilitation.

Initially in the rescue effort, we drove around the neighborhood hoping to catch a glimpse of a bunny. At that time, there were so many bunnies that this tactic actually worked! With each succeeding trip, we all became seasoned "bunny detectives". We would walk around the neighborhood and talk with the residents about any sightings they may have had. We became highly proficient in the art of spotting bunny poop,

and occasionally, bunny fur! We crawled on our bellies with our flashlights to look under sheds, a favorite hiding place, and designed "pokey sticks" (broom handles or something similar) to help flush out a hiding rabbit. We learned to always have our essential bunny catching tools handy: pokey sticks, x-pens and especially dried cranberries.

The weeks went by, it was now mid-June, and we were down to the most cunning and resourceful lagomorphs. For many weeks, we encountered a dry spell – often seeing no bunnies at all, or when we did, it would be fleeting glimpses several hours apart. Liz and Matt, besides being a bit burnt out, had a building permit deadline looming on their kitchen remodeling project, so they bowed out. Our efforts continued even though many nights we only came away with mosquito bites, poison ivy rashes, and ticks to show for it. Frequently, each excursion's end found us dirty, wet and really, really hungry, yet we knew that we would return once again. The thought of losing one of these poor rabbits to a predator, or that possibly another litter would spring up to perpetuate the problem, kept us motivated.

Finally, one evening I saw two rabbits! They were lounging under a shrub in a front yard. I quietly motioned to Carol to come quickly and quietly. We needed a new approach, since corralling the rabbits usually resulted in having them slip through our hands. It was decided that the best approach would be to employ the



*Boss & Sprite ~ Up for Adoption!*



*Mimi Pearl*

**ADOPTED!**



*Magic ~*  
**ADOPTED!**



*Bear ~ Up for Adoption!*



*Percy ~*  
**ADOPTED!**

methods used to 'win over a shy bunny'. Ignoring them, we sat about 30 feet from the two. We started to have a mock conversation to further our total disregard for their presence while slowly inching closer. After a long time, Carol got close enough to sit with an outstretched hand full of dried cranberries. We had done the impossible; she had one of the buns eating from her hand! We knew, in a matter of minutes, that we would be able to scoop the elusive bunnies up.

Unfortunately, just then, the woman who lived in the house came outside to see what we were up to, and proceeded to make quite a racket with her screen door. That did it! The bunnies were gone for the evening. UGH! We went home sad and discouraged.

The story of these two bunnies does have a happy ending though. Percy and Magic, as they were later named, were the last two rabbits rescued in Plymouth. Both have been adopted

from HRN foster care and are now residing happily in their "forever loving homes". The Plymouth rescue lasted 13 weeks, resulting in the placement of 18 bunnies into loving foster homes.

We do believe there was one other black bunny and (probably) one other white remaining; however, they disappeared and we never received word from the residents about their reappearance. That is, until this week! September 13th to be exact. There was another sighting of two small black bunnies, probably babies, and one large white one. The Plymouth saga continues.... Whenever I think of these last bunnies, I get very sad about their situation. This whole experience has only made me love and appreciate my bunnies so much more.

Of my own bunnies, Miso and Truffle were strays found in Quincy, and Rolo was born in foster care at Erica's. Even though this experience made



me realize how incredibly discouraging and sad it is to see the plight of abandoned and homeless rabbits, knowing that what HRN does as an organization in situations like these, gives me hope and lifts my spirits. I cannot imagine how scary life is "in the wild" for any abandoned bunny.

Bear, now residing happily in foster care, is the handsome mascot rabbit on the Plymouth rescue merchandise. Check out his image at the CafePress online store at

[www.cafepress.com/lagamorphica](http://www.cafepress.com/lagamorphica)



## Nail Trimming 101

An often overlooked, but very important, part of a rabbit's health is nail trimming.

Nails should be trimmed on a regular basis to prevent them from overgrowing, tearing off, and even possibly impacting the rabbit's ability to hop. Long nails are a hazard to your rabbit's health!

**How often?** One of the most common questions we receive is how often nails should be trimmed. Unfortunately, there is no clear-cut answer. Depending on the rabbit, the period between trimmings can be anywhere from one to six months. There are a number of factors involved. First, different rabbits grow nails at different speeds. Front and rear nails can grow at different rates and therefore may have to be trimmed at different intervals. Second, there is the environment. Is your rabbit hopping on hard cement or soft carpet? Last, consider your rabbit's behavior. Rabbits that like to dig

will wear down their nails and need them trimmed less frequently. It is important that you check your rabbits nails at least every month.

**Me or a professional?** Many people learn how to trim nails and can easily take care of their own rabbits. Others prefer not to do it themselves, and choose to take them to an experienced groomer or a local animal hospital. Most animal hospitals offer a less expensive appointment with a veterinary technician (rather than a costly vet visit) for a simple nail trim. Just be sure you request a tech when making the appointment.

**Tools of the Trade!** If you are going to trim the nails yourself, you need to have the correct tools. You will need a pair of nail clippers. Many like the cat claw clippers, while others prefer the guillotine style used for small dogs. The cat claw clippers work like scissors. The guillotine clippers have a circle in which you place the nail, and then you squeeze the handle as the blade cuts across the circle trimming the nail. You should also get styptic powder, available at most pet stores, which quickly stops the bleeding if you accidentally cut the quick, a vein in the nail. Just grab a pinch of the styptic powder and place it on the tip of the nail. In an emergency, you can also try baking soda.

**Where to trim the nail?** Before trimming any nails, you want to get a sense of what you need to do. Hold your rabbit in a position that is comfortable for you, and try to look at the nails. If you are lucky, your rabbit has white nails. In this case, you can easily see the red quick inside the nail. You must



*Cat claw clippers (left), guillotine style (right), bottle of styptic powder.*


be careful not to cut the quick, so trim the nail slightly above the quick. If your rabbit has dark or black nails, it can be difficult to see the quick, however sometimes the quick can be seen by shining a flashlight up from underneath the nail. Often, this can help you determine the length of the nail.

**The Techniques!** There are several different techniques for trimming your rabbit's nails. All work equally well, so try them out, and choose the one that feels best for you. Some people can trim nails by themselves, though for many it is a two-person job. One technique is to place a towel on a table and put your rabbit on the towel. Carefully lift a paw off the table and gently press up under the center

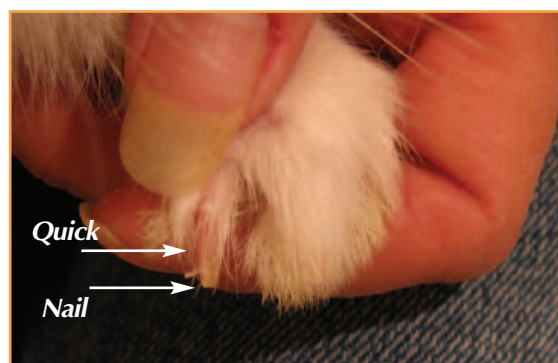
of the paw to get the toes to separate, making it easy to grab a toenail and clip. Place the clippers around the nail. Next, you can apply light pressure with the clippers to see how your rabbit reacts – if he/she flinches, you might be too close to the quick. Move slightly further out on the nail and try again, if the rabbit does not pull back, then snip! Another technique is the “Bunny Burrito” where you wrap your rabbit in a towel and then gently pull one leg at a time outside the towel to trim the nails. Many people find this technique helps to keep the rabbit still. A third and less popular position is to cradle your rabbit in your arms the way you hold a baby. You generally need to sit while doing this, and rest the rabbit's back on your legs. Then you can use one hand to position a paw and the other hand to clip. All the while, you are resting the rabbit's head in the crook of your elbow.

### **Do not forget the dewclaw!**

Rabbits have four nails on their rear feet. On their front paws, they have the four toenails, and then the dewclaw that is up a bit from the other toenails and on the inside of the paw.

*A happy bunny* 

*is a manicured bunny!*



*The quick is the darker pink on the nail. This nail was just clipped.*



## The BLOG: [blog.rabbitnetwork.org](http://blog.rabbitnetwork.org)

In case you may have missed it, House Rabbit Network now has its own Blog. What exactly is a blog? In our case, it's HRN's own place in cyberspace where members and friends can share ideas, pictures and information.

Check out the stories about some of HRN's adoptable buns like those seen on the right side of this page, post one of your own unique "bunny experiences" to share with the rest of the community or just surf through to check out some of the fun pictures!

Do not miss out. Go to the HRN website today, click through the Blog link, and see for yourself. One visit and you will be sure to put this site at the top of your "Favorites" list!

Sat 18  
Aug  
2007  
**Becca - Oh you have to love those ears!**  
Posted by Tricia & Tom under [Becca](#), [RachelsNotes](#)  
No Comments



"What ears???"

Becca is one of the Fitchburg bunnies. Since most of these bunnies were never properly socialized in their prior environment, they tend to be a little on the shy and reserved side. Becca is like that too. She may be skittish with you at first, but if you have patience and speak to her soothingly, she will relax and become more inquisitive.



"Those greens were whisker smacking good!"

When she relaxes, you will be treated to a view of those astounding, beautiful ears in "full bloom". Those wonderful ears, combined with her striking snowshoe hare fur, and long, dark eyelashes, will make a lasting impression for sure!



Becca is thinking of trying out for the Bunny Track Team as a hurdler. Check out her form!

We know that once she finds her forever loving home, hopefully with YOU, she'll bring a lasting, loving presence with her that will make that home a truly special place!

Wed 29  
Aug  
2007  
**Roscoe - Mr. Gruff Ain't So Tough!**  
Posted by Tricia & Tom under [Roscoe](#), [Gooblers](#)  
1 Comment



"Over or under, what's a bunny to do?"

Your first impression of Roscoe might be "Awww, look at this cute little rabbit!". Then, when you approach him to open his cage door to give him a friendly pet, that's when Mr. Gruff kicks in. Roscoe might grunt, snort or lunge at "trespassers" to his domain... this little guy is letting you know who he thinks is in charge here!



"Ah razzzzzzzzzberries!!!!"

But once you coax your way past his defenses to give him a scruffie, he's quite agreeable to let you take him out for some R&R time. Interestingly, the territorial tough guy suddenly mellows out and is as interactive and fun to watch as one could ever imagine. For a solid half hour, he is as good as it gets: chinning and poking all the toys or anything else that he crosses paths with, snorting and running about, even entertaining us with a few binkies! However, he did give one little grunt when picked up at the end of his playtime. I guess he was just "commenting" on the necessity of having to return to his nodule!



"Yo, you wanna piece a me? C'mon, bring it!"

Mr. Gruff is definitely not so tough. In fact, with a bit of TLC, this little boy will bring lots of joy to his "forever loving home"....Might that be YOU?

## HRN News

### 2nd Annual Flatbread "Benefit for the Bunnies"

Tuesday, October 23 from 4pm - 9pm

HRN is honored, for the 2nd year in a row, to be the chosen charity for October 23rd. Flatbread, located at 213 Burlington Rd, on the Bedford/Burlington line, is a unique restaurant that promotes organic farming and the community. Flatbread's menu is varied, including delicious flatbread pizzas (with vegetarian and vegan options) and zesty salads. A donation of \$3.50 from every large flatbread and \$1.75 from a small flatbread will be made to HRN. If your schedule is tight, you can also purchase a flatbread to go, and HRN will still benefit!

**flatbread**

Come join your friends for dinner that night! HRN members will be there the entire evening. Hang out, eat and chat with your fellow rabbit friends. We will have a Chinese Auction with prizes too! Check it out to see the prizes so far: <http://www.rabbitnetwork.org/flatbread.shtml>

Check out Flatbread's website for more information about this local and generous company: <http://flatbreadcompany.com/>

### Oct. Volunteers' Meeting

The next volunteers meeting will be held Sunday, October 28th at 1 pm Wilmington, MA. If you are interested in attending and/or volunteering, email us for more information at [info@rabbitnetwork.org](mailto:info@rabbitnetwork.org)

### 2008 HRN Calendar

The 2008 HRN Calendars are now ready at Lulu.com. Order it here: <http://www.lulu.com/content/1211626> Proceeds benefit all the bunnies in HRN foster care.



### Upcoming Ed Events

We hold education events at various locations in Eastern Massachusetts. All dates and locations are on our web site at [www.rabbitnetwork.org](http://www.rabbitnetwork.org). Please stop by and visit and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have about rabbits and rabbit care. Information about adoption, along with a listing of rabbits currently available for adoption will also be available. We do not adopt out on site.

- Oct 13 - Starbucks, Horn Plaza, Woburn, MA, 9 am - 12 pm
- Oct 20 - Boston Vegetarian Food Festival, Reggie Lewis Center, Boston, 10 am - 6 pm

### Now PetSmart....

PetSmart has now joined PetCo in the sale of baby rabbits in approximately 25 of their "test stores". This is quite a shock and disappointment, after both companies claim to support and work with animal rescues across the country. What's even more discouraging, is where many of these rabbits will end up...abandoned in shelters, rescues or "set free" in the wild.

Please help us in boycotting both of these stores to show your support for all the rabbits that sit and wait in shelters across the country and for those that will never find a home.

## Memorials

### Lexi Poopos 6/28/04 ~ 3/29/07

She was the best bunny anyone could ask for. Free to do laps & make us laugh whenever she pleased. She left us way too soon & her memory will forever be in our hearts as she touched our lives like a daughter. We will forever miss you Poopoo Bunny Wabbit, someday we'll be together again. We'll bring the treats.



*Love Always, Kathy, Mark  
(Mama & Daddy Poopos) & Cali Punkin'*

### Clara

Clara was a special bunny who sadly, never truly found her forever home. She eventually moved into sanctuary care and found comfort in the paws of her two friends, Louis & Abby, until they passed over the Bridge. In her last few months, Clara found friendship once again with another set of special friends, Ky & Shookie. Clara, you will be missed by those that knew you best.



*Bless  
your little  
bunny soul.*



# Meet our "WHITE-Hot" buns! Now they want to meet YOU!

Call our Hotline at 781.431.1211 to meet one or more of the "WHITE-Hot" buns. They've been waiting for you.



Willie



Isla



Diesel



Becca



Punky



Brady

**ADOPTION  
PENDING**



Sadie



Blake



Yoshi

**ADOPTED!**



April



Dominic

**ADOPTION  
PENDING**



Paige &  
Shiloh



Polly

**ADOPTION  
PENDING**



Felix



Floyd

# Join HRN...or...Please Renew Your Membership

House Rabbit Network is now in its 8th year—and we continue to grow. Through our network of dedicated volunteers and members, we are making amazing strides to improve the welfare of house rabbits everywhere.

Your support can only further our goals, so become a member and get involved.

*Visit our website to find out how to help: [www.rabbitnetwork.org](http://www.rabbitnetwork.org).*

*If you are not already a member, please join HRN!*

*Your membership dollars will go towards rescue and rehabilitation, community outreach and education, and veterinary expenses.*

*Help make a difference in a rabbit's life. They're counting on you!*

Contact House Rabbit Network at [info@rabbitnetwork.org](mailto:info@rabbitnetwork.org) or (781) 431-1211.



## House Rabbit Network Membership and Ordering Form

Your membership donation is tax deductible and will be used for medical costs (spays/neuters, vet bills) and education expenses. All members will receive a copy of our newsletter, *Rabbit Tracks*, when it is published. Currently, we are publishing three issues per year.

Memberships run from April 1 to March 31 (donations received in Jan.–March will be credited for the following year). To join, fill out this page and mail it with your check (payable to the House Rabbit Network) to:

**House Rabbit Network  
P.O. Box 2602  
Woburn, MA 01888-1102**

- Choose your membership level:
- Dwarf . . . . . \$ 15.00
  - Mini Lop . . . . . \$ 25.00
  - New Zealand . . . . . \$ 50.00
  - Flemish Giant . . . . . \$ 100.00
  - Mix (other) . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Choose your newsletter delivery preference:
- PDF format via email (significant savings for HRN)
  - Hard copy via U.S. Mail

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *Rabbit Health in the 21st Century* 2nd Edition at \$20.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_