



Safe Haven Rabbit Rescue, Inc.

Safe Haven Scoop

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By Karen Augustynowicz, President

Finally! Spring has arrived!



After this long, rough winter, I'm sure everyone is as anxious as I am for the warmer weather! So, let's say **Welcome to Spring 2015** and to all the new and exciting opportunities it holds! I hope you will find this newsletter entertaining and educational. This issue has lots of stories written by our adopters and I want to thank everyone who contributed. For it is our

adopters, volunteers and friends who write with love about their bunnies, share their experiences and what they have learned who make this newsletter a fun, entertaining read. Be sure to check out our **Adoption Updates** Section—where adopters share their stories!

Safe Haven volunteers have gotten a jump on our spring fundraising activities. An early **Spring Bunny Spa** is set for April 11th—being held in Garwood, NJ! And, of course, our **Bike for the Buns** event is on **Saturday, June 20th!** We do hope to see you there! The BFTBs [website](#) is ready for your registrations. *More event details next page.*

Have a Happy Spring! *Karen A.*



[Facebook](#)



[Follow us on Twitter](#)

New Volunteers!!

Please help us Welcome Kathleen Carini and Yumi Nakayama to the Safe Haven Team. Yumi will be helping Michelle Manderski with our [Facebook](#) presence and Kathleen has put us on [Twitter](#)!

A BIG Welcome and Warm Thank You to both!

Spring Events!

Our Spring Bunny Spa! **Saturday, April 11, 2015** **12 noon - 4pm**

Cherrybrook Pet Supplies
704 North Ave., Garwood, NJ 07027

[...Read more](#)

Treat your bunny to a well-deserved, relaxing,
Spring Spa treatment!

[Register Today!](#)



Our 6th Annual ***"Bike For The Buns!"***



Saturday, June 20, 2015

The 'Bike for the Buns' event is a noncompetitive, fundraising bicycle ride along the scenic towpaths within Bull's Island State Park, Stockton, NJ

We are looking forward to seeing you again and hope you will bring more friends and family to join in!

You'll not want to miss the picnic either!

Even those who do not ride bikes can register as non-riders to come and enjoy the day.

Visit our [Bike For The Buns! Website](#)

and [Register today](#)



Will you help us promote our events? These pdf flyers are perfect to post up at work, gyms, grocery stores, and wherever postings are allowed. Thanks for helping us spread the word! (Social Media too - or link them to our events page)

[Spa Event](#)

[Bike Event](#)

Did You Know?

By Linda Torlay, Safe Haven Educator

Did You Know there are 48 acknowledged breeds of domestic rabbits according to the American Rabbit Breeders Association (ARBA) and **Did You Know** within many of these breeds there are numerous varieties (the British Rabbit Council (BRC) acknowledges over 50 domestic breeds and over 500 varieties). From the largest ... the Flemish Giant with recorded weights of up to 15+ pounds ... to one of the tiniest, the Netherland Dwarf weighing a maximum of 2.5 pounds ... to one of the fuzziest and oldest breeds, the Angora. Each recognized breed has a special feature it's known for whether it be size, fur, ears that flop, or distinctive markings, and we can all agree rabbits come in many sizes, shapes, and colors. And just like dogs and cats, rabbits are pedigree animals too.

While Safe Haven does not in any way promote, encourage or participate in breeding, sometimes it is fun to try and figure out the possible ancestry of our companion rabbits who most likely are a mixture of one, two or more breeds. Learning about each breed may help you toward that goal.

Breeders often sell offspring that do not meet "show quality standards" to pet stores so you just may have a purebred rabbit. However most of us are parents to unique, one of a kind rabbits of mixed breeds. Some of you may be able to identify or see a strong resemblance to a specific breed and others may not. Any one who has ever seen Jill, a beautiful and playful Safe Haven foster bun, might see a combination of a Florida White and an American or maybe a Dutch and Beveren combination. While it may be impossible to determine Jill's actual heritage it is certain to see she is adorable, loving, and full of endearing rabbit antics anyone would love as are all the fosters at Safe Haven.

So, for all you unique bunny lovers **Do You Know** how to catch a unique rabbit? Unique up on it!

Primary resources:

<https://www.arba.net/breeds.htm>

<http://www.thebrc.org/standards.htm>



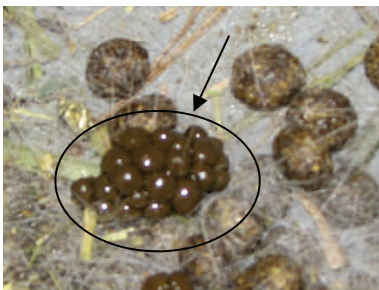
Educational Corner

by Linda Torlay, Safe Haven Educator

Cecotropes, Cecotrophs, Caecotrophs ... however you spell it, are small, soft, dark greenish/brown, sticky, grape-like clusters coated with a thin layer of mucus. They have a distinctive odor and present themselves from the anus of your rabbit. Most people often confuse them with rabbit feces which they are not. Cecotropes are produced in the cecum which is a unique organ that is part of a rabbit's digestive tract. They are rich in nutrients and beneficial bacteria that are necessary for your rabbit's health. Right about now I know you are thinking "YUK!" but I like to think of them as "self-made vitamins" and that's a good thing. Under normal health conditions you will not likely see them like you would fecal droppings in a litter box but you might see your rabbit bending forward reaching for her rectum while sitting. She'll usually do this early morning or late evening and what she is doing is re-ingesting Cecotropes as soon as they pass out her body.

As with all animal species the primary function of the digestive system is to breakdown food and absorb nutrients. In addition, waste is removed and passed out the body. Once food is chewed and swallowed it enters the stomach and begins breaking down, it passes to the small intestines continuing the breakdown process and then either proceeds to the large intestine or to the cecum. Material entering the large intestine is material that is no longer able to be used by the body. It continues on its journey and the end results are the round droppings you see in your rabbit's litter box. Material entering the cecum is material that can be broken down further and it is here that beneficial bacteria and microorganisms ferment that material into digestible nutrients which are both absorbed through the cecum itself and passed thru the large intestine in the form of Cecotropes to again go thru the digestive system after passing out the body and being ingested whole. The process is complex and unique with this being a simple explanation of it all.

Rabbits in good health will generally have normal Cecotropes and normal Cecotrope output. When something abnormal occurs, such as irregularities with the Cecotropes themselves (misshaped blobs or runny), overproduction, Cecotropes sticking the hind end, or the rabbit not ingesting those or some of those produced is usually an indication that something is wrong medically or your rabbit's diet is not optimal (too carbohydrate heavy) which is why it is very important to pay attention to Cecotropes that are not normal. Always consult with a rabbit savvy veterinarian when you notice something unusual with your rabbit's Cecotropes because a healthy functioning cecum is critical and abnormal Cecotropes are a warning something is not right.



Picture of a normal Cecotrope compared to fecal droppings noted in background. (www.threelittleladiesrabbitry.com/cecotropes.php)

*Primary resources: <http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/poop.html>,
<http://rabbit.org/disorders-of-the-cecum>,
http://www.medirabbit.com/EN/GI_diseases/drop/Drp_en.htm,
<http://www.extension.org/pages/61402/the-digestive-system-of-the-rabbit#.VPthSGd0yM8>*

Adoption Updates—Stories contributed by adopters

Champ

Adopted Sept. 3, 2014
by Andrew Cook & Family

Our little Champ

Back in the 80's and early 90's, my family had a much loved angora rabbit with a wonderful personality. He was litter trained and allowed to run all around the house.

Last summer, our two sons were finally at an age where they could be patient and respectful to a precious little creature, so we decided it was time to share our home with a rabbit. The search for adoptables began and ended when our oldest son found Champ's picture and bio on the Safe Haven website. We had a good feeling that he was the one and were so happy we were chosen to give Champ a home. There was a bit of a learning curve to get up to speed on all the developments in house rabbit care over the past 25+ years.

Champ arrived to us in September, just as everyone was settling into the "back-to-school" routine after the summer holidays. We set up a home-base pen in our family room and rabbit-proofed. It took only a few short weeks for Champ to relax in his new surroundings. His personality soon blossomed into an affectionate and alert little gentleman with a particular fondness for food. Champ has become a full member of the family and very much loved by all. He even won over my wife's affections. She had not been much of a pet person before she and Champ bonded.

Each morning when we open up his pen for the day, he is excited to see us! He runs a few circles around our feet, then a couple of binkies before heading back to his pen expecting breakfast. Feeding time is serious business to him. He pushes your hand out of the way with



his nose, eager to get the best access to whatever is in your hand or his bowl. It makes us wonder if he had to fight for food in a past nomadic life. He is little at just over 3 pounds, but would eat non-stop

if you let him.

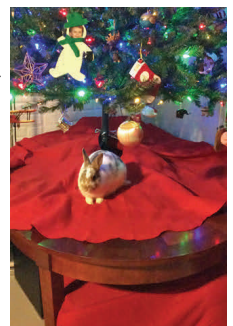
Champ's days are a mix of finding sunny spots for relaxing, nibbling hay or twigs, exploring the house, snoozing in a favorite cozy cave or climbing up as high as he can on our furniture. He seems especially stimulated by exploring new things or investigating small changes to his surroundings, like when our boys make him forts out of cushions or boxes.



The upstairs of our house has an office and spare bedroom with thick carpet on the stairs and floor. Champ LOVES climbing the steep carpeted stairs and beams with mischievous accomplishment when

he reaches the top. Once upstairs, he really enjoys exploring new hiding places and running back and forth at high speeds and up the full length of the house doing binkies on the carpet. He has zero skills or inclination to go back down the stairs to his pen, food, and litter box, so we generally keep the door to the upstairs closed when he is not supervised. If the door happens to be left open, we always know where Champ can be found!

This Christmas, we developed a plan to keep our tree, ornaments, and Champ safe. We decided to put the decorated tree up on our table. A couple days later we found Champ cozied up under the tree. The



Adoption Updates (Continued)

smart little guy figured a way to hop up onto the table. For the remainder of the season, that was his favorite spot to snooze.

In the evening after dinner, Champ joins the rest of the family for a little TV. He hops between us to see who is giving the best head scratches and pets. He likes to alternate between soaking up our affections and grooming us with his little kisses. On occasion, he even hops up on the back of the sofa to get better access to planting kisses on our necks and grooming our heads.

Champ comes running at the slightest sound of the papaya vitamin bottle rattling. His fear instincts are set aside as he leaps over and through any barriers that separate him and his orange evening treat. This is an exciting highlight of the day for both Champ and our giggling boys. Champ is the best at his bedtime routine. With very little direction, he hops right into his pen for a good night's rest.

We are thrilled to have Champ as a member of our family and look forward to lots of fun in the years to come.



The Cooks

Mallory (formerly "Dallas")

Adopted May 20, 2013

by Diane Romano

On April 8th 2013, I received an SOS from my friends Hillary and Barbara from the Baptist Camp and Conference Center in Lebanon, NJ. Hillary, who is the site manager at the camp, had managed to capture an injured rabbit that someone had apparently "dumped" there. Knowing I was an officer for Safe Haven, he called me for help.

She was a beautiful, gray mini-lop with a badly-injured eye. She was clean and well-fed so apparently Hillary found her soon after she was dumped. I took her home, set her up for an overnight stay and morning visit to the vet, and called Karen. I offered to foster her until she was well and could be placed up for adoption. We decided to call her Dallas because both Karen and I were watching "Dallas" on TV when I called her.

Keeping Dallas was the furthest thing from my mind as my critter count was already maxed out with two bunnies, 12 finches, one canary and one cockatiel!

We went to Dr. Marks the next morning and Dallas was declared in good shape with the exception of her right eye. Dr. Marks gave me topical and oral antibiotics for the infection, but could not guarantee sight in that eye. Dallas was such a good bunny, taking her medication without trouble. Fortunately, her eye did heal and she did not lose her sight. She is still periodically plagued with infection in her damaged eye and must suffer drops, which she does without complaint.

Needless to say, Dallas, who is now called Mallory, never left my home. All I had to do was remove the day bed in the critter room to make room for her and she moved right in! Mallory still remains a huge

Adoption Updates (Continued)

presence in my home and heart. For me, this was a match made in heaven.



Every bunny wants to be a Cadbury Bunny, except this one.....

Here she is, pitching them off the chair!



Darla

*Adopted February 1, 2014
by Tina Dykstra & Family*



I have always loved rabbits.

As far as home décor goes, it is “Easter” all year long in my home. Rabbits are just so cute. It’s their ears,

their tails, and their little noses, just everything!

Back in 2009, we adopted Claire and Sherman from Safe Haven. They are a bonded and loving pair, and they have been a precious part of our family ever since. Whenever we try to get away as a family for a vacation, we entrust Claire and Sherman to Karen and Safe Haven’s bunny sitting services. It was when we went to pick up Claire and Sherman from their bunny sitting stay on New Year’s Day 2014, that Darla first entered our

lives! It is so very difficult to resist any of the adorable bunnies that excitedly greet you as you visit Safe Haven. When we descended the staircase at Safe Haven this adorable and VERY spunky bunny bounded to the edge of her pen to greet us! I was already in love.

For the next few weeks, while waiting for clearance and approval of our adoption of Darla, Karen called us a couple of times and mentioned that Darla seemed to be perhaps part kangaroo or NBA basketball player, because she could jump! She was scaling fences that were 3 to 4 feet high! Between Karen and my husband, they constructed a “Darla-proof” setting in our home, and she became the newest member of our family on February 1, 2014.

Darla is such a happy rabbit. She is always ready to play. She loves to race around the house like an Indy car driver. Then, when she gets tired, she will stretch out and relax, only to work up enough energy to take a few more laps around the house before returning to her pen, on her own, to use her litter box or rest up some more. She is so full of energy and cuteness! She often follows us around and acts like our shadow. She is the epitome of happiness!

Needless to say, her shenanigans are often entertainment for Claire and Sherman. They look at Darla in seeming disbelief and I often wonder what they are thinking. “That crazy kid” or “What is she up to now?”



We love Darla and the joy she brings to our home.

Adoption Updates *(Continued)*

Taco

Adopted August 9, 2014

by Lisa Judge

Our Journey to Taco Land

The beginning: The pets that start out as a replacement for the loss of another loving, caring, animal friend leave a footprint in our hearts that lasts forever. After eleven years, Charlie our big white floppy eared died of a sudden heart attack one summer night under our couch. My husband and I were devastated. Freckles, our American Fuzzy Lop and Charlie's longtime girlfriend was also suffering with grief. Unlike Charlie, Freckles had not always been in a loving home. She had been rescued after being thrown from a moving car tossed like trash, after a Christmas 5 years ago and brought to our local humane society. Charlie had been her everything.

Loss: Freckles health began deteriorating. A dual eye infection took hold of her and she lay motionless hour after hour, chin on the floor in depression. Rabbits can die of heartbreak after the loss of a mate. Action was required and fast. We needed to add a new bunny member to our family; preferably a male around the same age. We wanted a French Lop like Charlie and a pet that was already neutered; we couldn't chance an enthusiastic hormonal teenager with Freckles. One thing we knew for sure was that we wanted a rescue.

The search: Our journey started in our own state of Vermont. I searched listings on Petfinder.com for a rabbit within 100 mile vicinity and found only one, and she was a female. I searched through newspaper classifieds, websites, and found nothing. I even started looking at sites in Canada, which had a lot of bunnies up for adoption, but we were hesitant at the idea of transporting a bunny across the border into the United States. Frankly I was surprised it would be so hard. But I was determined and decided I should open up the search radius on Petfinder.com to a wider zone. BAM! I immediately saw this white-

butterscotch, male Lop the same age as Freckles and best of all he was neutered! Taco was his name. He was really adorable relaxing on his Disney rug. It was love at first sight. The only problem was that Taco lived 400 miles away near Clinton, New Jersey!



I sent an email immediately to Karen at Safe Haven Rabbit Rescue, Inc. inquiring about him. Karen replied right back saying she normally did not adopt out of state, but had made exceptions in the past for good homes. We talked a long while on the phone and I gradually began to feel hope Taco might be the one. We closed our conversation with a decision that I would talk it over with my husband Andrew. Bracing myself, I discussed it with Andrew that night showing him Taco's friendly face and read to him an excerpt describing Taco and how he liked a slice of banana on his salad. Andrew listened, but was not convinced. Since Taco had already been returned by two other adopters because they didn't understand rabbits, Karen needed a commitment that even if he and Freckles did not bond, we would be willing to keep Taco. She did not want him to be rejected once again; he needed a permanent home. But then, we would have to find yet another rabbit for Freckles and we would be back to square one. So, it was a lot to think about.

That night Andrew looked in on Freckles. She looked miserable and she hadn't shaken her infection despite various long treatments of antibiotics and was showing very little interest in life. He agreed that we had to do something.

Karen said she was still open to the idea, even though we would be taking Taco far away. That day she sent me a formal questionnaire about who we were and how we cared for our rabbits. I was impressed by how thorough she was in making sure Taco was going to a good home. We emailed each other and talked a long time again on the phone. She made every effort to make sure we really were committed to doing this.

Adoption Updates (Continued)

The trip: We did question our sanity, but only just for a moment, as we embarked one beautiful summer day on an 800 mile round-trip to adopt a 5 pound rabbit we never met, or that we could be sure would bond with Freckles. My 80 year old Dad Fred, came along on the road trip, and sat in back seat with the pet carrier. We arranged to stay overnight with my brother and my niece in Ramsey, New Jersey, and we would continue on the in the morning to drive another hour and half to pick up Taco.

After a great visit with family, the next morning we set off again get Taco. When we arrived at Safe Haven, a pleasant suburban neighborhood we all went downstairs to meet Taco. It was a clean well maintained environment with pens of bunnies. Taco was by himself and came out of his box to take a look at us and then ran back inside. Let's just say he was not interested. I admit I was a little sad that he didn't share my enthusiasm.

Eventually all the humans went back upstairs and I spent time talking with Karen about Taco and signed the adoption paperwork.

We finally hit the road home back to Vermont. My Dad talked to Taco the whole long ride home. Taco was shy and showed no interest in eating or socializing. I worried like a new mother taking her baby home from the hospital. After 8 hours of driving, we finally made it home.

I couldn't wait to get Taco inside. Freckles, was asleep in a different room. We did not want to wake her. Instead, we set up a pen for Taco in the bunny room and put in his carpet, box, litter box, food and water so he would feel comfortable.

The First Encounter: Charlie was always sweet natured, and welcomed his new girlfriends happily. We hoped that Freckles would accept Taco just as easily. It played out pretty fast and not pretty. Taco came out interested in Freckles. Her response was to pee and poop around the edges of his pen as a welcoming gift and even took a few

swipes at him. Poor boy ran frightened back inside his box.

We had never seen her be aggressive, so this was a shock to us. As days went on Taco, would hide inside his box or brown bag and ignore her. We decided to set up a pen for Freckles, so that Taco could come out and stretch his legs. Payback was in order and he started taunting Freckles. It continued back and forth.

The Timeout: After a month of unsuccessful attempts at using the traditional bonding methods; such as putting them side by side and petting them together, I called a timeout. I was tired and frustrated and was heading into a month of rehearsals for two plays I was performing in. I was exhausted from work, commuting daily and caring for these two rabbits at war. The last straw was when I set the two of them side by side, Taco bit Freckles so hard, and he also got my finger in the process. She also had developed a urinary tract infection on top of the eye infection she still had. We all needed a break.

Over the next few months we let Taco out of his pen to roam freely around the house and when he went back to his pen, then Freckles would have her time to come out. Over the course of the next two months, I moved their pens closer and closer to each other, and I gave them very little affection. As much as it killed me, I needed them to have to seek affection exclusively from each other.

Slowly I noticed Taco's free time out was spending more time near Freckles pen sitting and relaxing. She seemed to tolerate him. One day, holding my breath, I decided to let them out together. Instead of any vicious attacks occurring; they stayed a safe distance apart and showed a willingness to tolerate each other.

On a gut instinct, I removed Taco's pen from the room completely. The poor boy was so confused. I don't think he ever lived outside the safe confines of a pen before. But I was determined he be pen free and learn to trust us. The new method went slowly, especially since Taco preferred to hide in a nearby closet most of the day.

Adoption Updates *(Continued)*

It was now November and Taco had been with us for over 3 months and we were planning to go away for a week at Christmas.

The 2nd Attempt: I decided it was time that they would either love or hate each other, and I removed Freckles pen permanently. It was free range time at the Judge household. I stayed in their room to see if there would be an attack. When nothing happened, I pulled myself away, but listened as I moved around the house for the tell-tale sounds of scrambling that could mean trouble. When I couldn't stand it anymore, I came in and they were snuggling...yes snuggling!

Taco and Freckles had united as one big ball of fur! Freckles, was the groomer in this case Taco was the recipient, and he had an oddly flattered look on his face.

Since coming back from Christmas, a lot has changed. Taco now let's us pet him without running away and even demands it at times. He sleeps by my husband's bedside on the floor while Freckles sleeps on mine. He has ventured out at night to explore the house and in the early morning he loves to do laps racing up and down the hall. Best of all he follows me around the house and is comfortable with me holding him.

Each day Taco shows us a new side to himself and



we enjoy watching him blossom. We feel so fortunate that we found him and grateful to Karen for taking a chance on a couple 400 miles away.

A note from Karen: A special thank you to Lisa and her husband, Andrew for their patience and perseverance with Taco. Coming from a large hoarder situation in Maryland, we did not receive any information about Taco or his previous background. All we knew was that he was a bunny in need and as it turned out, one who took a little longer than most to understand that people are ok and wanting to help him be happy. He had obviously not had much human contact, if any at all. Taco had been adopted twice and twice returned within 6 months prior to meeting Lisa. Thankfully, Lisa was not put off by his known issues. Lisa and Andrew were determined to work to overcome Taco's fears and to win his trust. They accomplished that; and I know it was not easy. And, let us not forget Freckles who was a big part of this success story as well.

Congratulations to all— Lisa, Andrew, Freckles & Taco! Well Done!



In Remembrance.....

Gracie

Nov. 19, 2006—Jan. 5, 2015

Loved by Diane Romano

Duffy chose Gracie to be his “bunny love” on June 16, 2008. It was truly love at first sight. They made the move with me to my new home in Hunterdon County and settled in nicely.

The next few years went along smoothly with Duffy and Gracie in blissful companionship until July 2013 when an ex-ray showed a mass in Gracie’s right lung. I didn’t know how long she would have but I was determined that she would enjoy a good life as long as possible.

Toward the end of Dec. 2014, Gracie stopped eating and required syringe feeding, which unfortunately coincided with a health crisis with my mother. I asked Karen to take both Duffy and Gracie and to provide Gracie with the specialized care she required. Karen took wonderful care of Gracie until it was apparent that Gracie was suffering and wouldn’t get passed this crisis. With a breaking heart, we bundled Gracie up and made her final trip to the vet. It seemed fitting that Karen be there at Gracie’s death as she was there as Gracie made her earthly debut nearly eight years before.

Duffy is coming along, although 12 years old and blind for about two years now. Mallory sometimes visits Duffy and sticks her nose through his pen for kisses. She receives but does not give kisses. Spoiled little girl. We miss Gracie terribly but are thankful for the seven-plus years she was with us. You were loved very much, Gracie Girl. Rest in peace.

(My favorite picture -“Gracie” (the gray) with her sisters.)



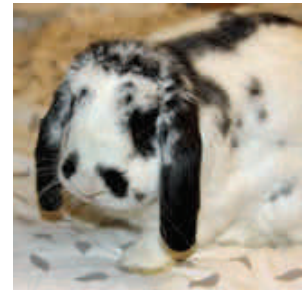
Recent Adoptions



Joey

Adopted Nov. 28, 2014

by Peggy Macaoay



TJ

Adopted January 4, 2015

by Astrid Hesse



Ellie

Adopted February 24, 2015

by Sandra Gensini

Congratulations All!

Happy Spring!!

