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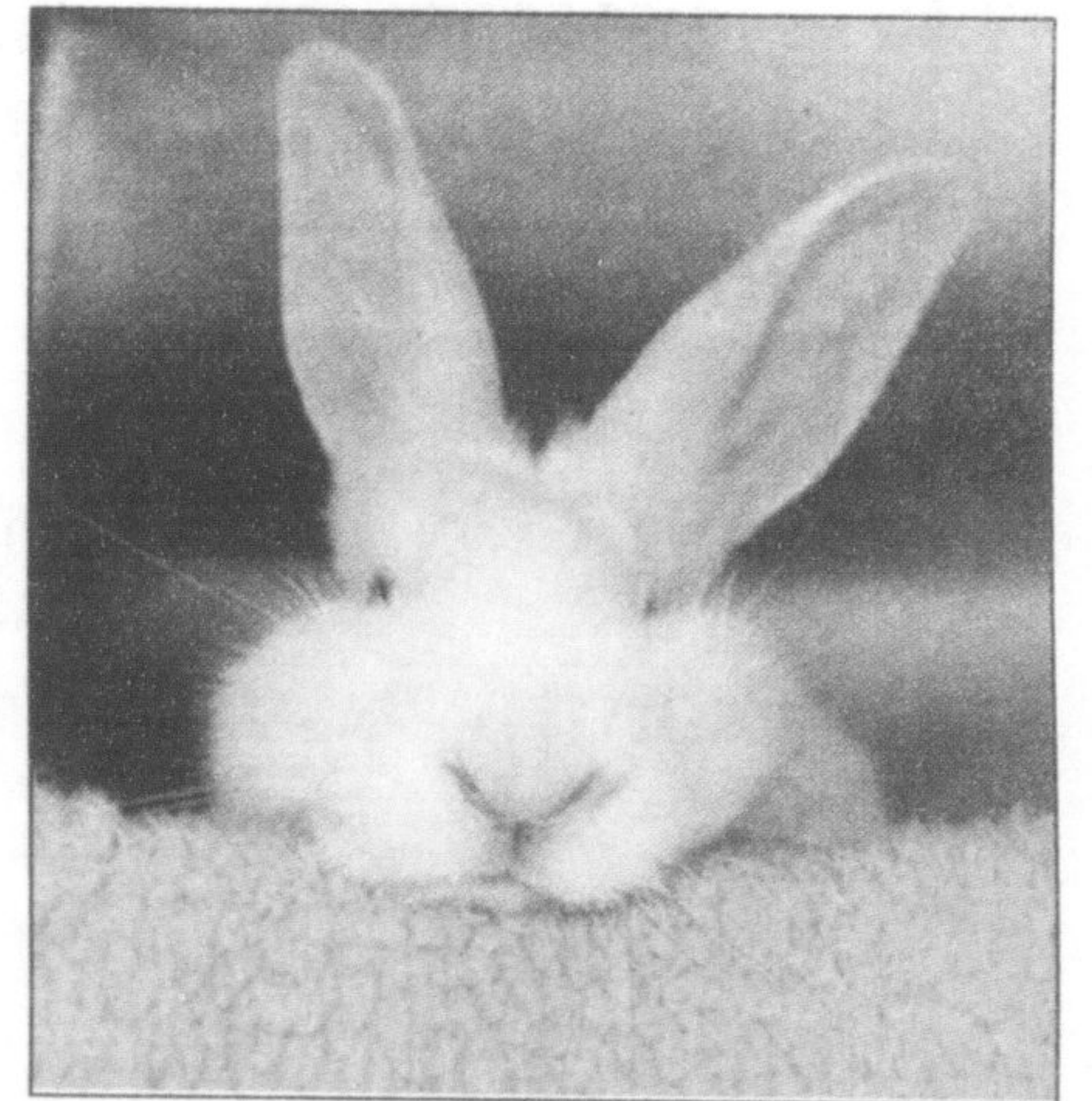
**IRISH EYES ARE SMILING:** Knox Presbyterian Church held its annual St. Patrick's Day Tea and Bazaar Saturday afternoon. Here six-year-old Kylie Martin enjoys a homemade sucker — one of the many baked goods for sale. At left, apparently missing two front teeth didn't deter her from savouring the treat.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

## Local group comes to rabbits' rescue

*Comes to aid of sick and injured bunnies*

By **Stephanie Hounsell**  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF



**ON THE MEND:** Sprout recovers at a foster family home after requiring mouth-to-nose resuscitation.

A local rabbit rescue organization is up to its ears trying to find vet care and homes for 80 bunnies it took in after several hundred of the critters — some of them suffering horribly — were surrendered last week.

Milton-based Rabbit Rescue Inc. was called last week to assist the Barrie branch of the Ontario SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) after the animals were removed from a location in Simcoe County.

Haviva Lush, executive director of the charity, said approximately 300 rabbits were being bred back-to-back for meat.

Many of them were sick, she said. "I've never seen anything quite like it, and I've dealt with a lot," Lush told the *Champion*.

Rabbit Rescue Inc. is the only organization in Ontario — and the largest in Canada — dedicated to finding new homes for domestic rabbits that have been abused or abandoned, Lush said.

In addition to the 80 bunnies the organization took in, it helped find spots with other groups for an additional 70.

Kristin Williams, spokesperson with the Ontario SPCA, said she couldn't comment specifically on the case because of the ongoing investigation, but did say the owners voluntarily surrendered the animals.

Charges are pending, she added. Lush hasn't gotten much sleep since last Tuesday night when she received a call saying help was needed.

The next day, she went to the shelter where the rabbits were taken, and

began to assess their medical needs.

Many of the rabbits have respiratory infections, Lush said, and there are also

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