



HARELINES



Volume 19 Number 2 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY Spring/Summer 2015

Introducing Rabbits to Furry Friends

By Shawna Lemerise, Stephanie Lodge and Stephanie Ash

Rabbits and cats and dogs, oh my! Far from being mortal enemies, rabbits and other animals can live together harmoniously when introduced properly. Introductions between rabbits and other pets may take time and lots of patience. Safety should always be the priority and supervision is always recommended whenever rabbits and others have free roam of the home.

Rabbits and Cats – By Shawna Lemerise

Introducing rabbits to cats must be taken with great caution due to cats' predatory nature. But like any interspecies friendship, cats and rabbits can become the best of friends. You must take into consideration:

- The cat's personality.
- Whether the cat is indoor or outdoor. Outdoor cats are more skilled in hunting and may be more in tune with their predator instincts, while indoor cats who are more social with humans may be better candidates.
- How the cat interacts with other animals. Observe how the cat interacts with other family pets or reacts to animals outside the window.
- A cat's teeth and nails, even while used in play, can be life-threatening. The key is to be aware that a cat may view the rabbit as prey, which could be fatal.

Once you have made your best judgment on compatibility, the next step is to introduce them slowly. Ensure that the rabbit's safety is not compromised and that the rabbit is not frightened. Have the rabbit in a play pen, with somewhere to hide if she gets scared. Let the cat inside the room and see how they react, but do not just leave them free together right off the bat. Take things slowly, and see how they react to each other. At some point, you may feel comfortable letting them in the same room together and seeing how they get along. Do not leave them alone together; their interactions should always be supervised.

After my rabbit and cat were introduced, my cat had

responded to the rabbit with aloofness. He simply was not interested. I let them in the same room together and soon my rabbit followed the cat around. The cat seemed annoyed by his new shadow,

but they did not fight. I only allowed them out while supervised, but was comfortable enough to feel that the cat would not attack the rabbit. One day, I was surprised to see the rabbit jump on the couch and lie down with the cat. My cat did not get up, but actually accepted the bunny and started to groom him! However, not every situation will end this way, and if the cat shows any interest in hunting the rabbit, they may need to be kept apart in order to ensure the rabbit's safety.

Rabbits and Dogs – By Stephanie Ash

Introducing a rabbit to a dog is a delicate process that requires homework before the dog (or rabbit) is ever brought into the home. Whether you have a resident dog or are adopting a new pup, it is important to gauge the personality of the dog before introducing him to a rabbit. Is the dog prey driven? Does the dog like to chase rabbits in the yard? Does the dog play rough with the cat? Although "yes" answers to these questions are not

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Sassy & Salsa

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We know our members value their privacy
and that's why we never, ever, sell our
mailing list or distribute it to any other
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held in the strictest confidence.

Special Thanks to:

Bob Willison, for his most generous gift in loving memory of **Georgia Willison**.

Jude May, for her thoughtful contribution in **Felix's** memory.

Bob Piekarczyk, for his wonderful donation in tribute to **Smudge**.

Laurie and Billy at Small Pet Select, for donating 10% of timothy hay purchases to the Buckeye HRS. See our website for details (under Rabbit Supplies) and remember to use the coupon code "Buckeye" to receive free shipping and to help us help more bunnies.

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

June Gates, Kathy Kallay, Liz and Steve Claytor, Jacob Larson, Janet Reed, Adriana and Doris Mastroguiseppe, Judy O'Neil, Bob Lovicz and Kim Johnson, Jim and Laura Gills, Shirley Wood, Gary Savage.

Our new and continuing Sanctuary Rabbit Sponsors! These special rabbits, who will spend the rest of their lives in foster care due to serious medical conditions, have you kind and generous people to thank!

As always, the **Monks Copy Shop** of downtown Columbus, for their discount on printing our newsletter.

Find the Buckeye House Rabbit Society on Facebook and Twitter!



***Search for:
Buckeye House Rabbit Society***



www.twitter.com/BuckeyeHRS

Artist Spotlight – Christy Monson Conner

By Stephanie Lodge

One of my favorite new artists and also dedicated animal lover is Christy Monson Conner, owner of Plaid Rabbit Designs. Many of you know Christy from her painted gourds at the annual Midwest BunFest in Columbus. I was re-introduced to her incredible talent through Facebook, where Christy posts her beautiful paintings. After seeing a spectacular garden flag of her bunny muse Pinki Larue, I realized I HAD to have a flag too. (See my Greensby flag below.) Luckily for me, Christy takes custom orders. In addition to garden flags, she likes creating art in other media, including watercolor, acrylic, and even stained glass mosaics. She also creates art from wood and carved gourds. Christy is truly jack(rabbit) of all trades!

Christy has had pet rabbits since 1997. She founded Plaid Rabbit Designs in 2003 when she was selling her art to local businesses and participating in craft shows. Since then she has expanded her business greatly though word of mouth, her webpage, and Facebook. When Christy isn't busy creating, she is a full-time bunny mama to her inspiration and assistant Pinki. A foster failure, Pinki was rescued by Christy when he

was living in a tiny cage in a carport, behind so many boxes you would never have known he was there. Taking him was the best decision she ever made! Christy also volunteers with the Bunderground Railroad and has invented a bunny treat call the Critical Crisp. This treat was designed specifically for a friend's bunny who was going through chemo and losing her appetite.

If you are interested in commissioning



Pinki with some Critical Crisps.

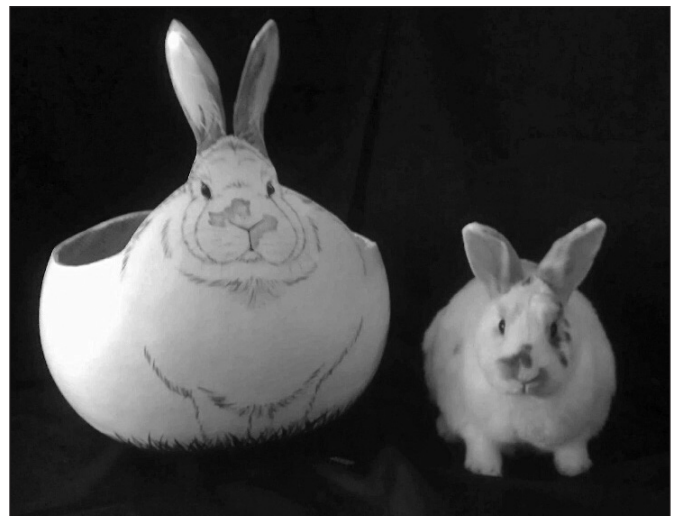
a portrait, have an idea for bunny-themed artwork, or need to order Critical Crisps, contact Christy at plaidrabbitdesigns@gmail.com or message her through Facebook (search Christy Monson Conner or Plaid Rabbit Designs Bunny Art).



Pinki with a portrait.



Pinki with a Greensby flag.



Pinki with a gourd.



necessarily an indication a dog/rabbit relationship will not work, it is a good indicator of how slowly the introduction must go and the safety precautions that must be used.

Another personality question to answer before introducing the dog to the rabbit is: how much energy does the dog have? If your pooch is playful and likes to run around the house, it may be a good idea to take Fido for a walk around the block before trying to introduce him to the rabbit. A rambunctious dog with a lot of pent-up energy may scare your rabbit and make for a bad first impression.

The first step in introducing a dog to a rabbit is to confine each pet to a safe location while each adjusts to the other being in the home. When I adopted my French Lop, Sassy, we let our dog, Salsa (a 70 lb. boxer/mix), keep free range of the home while we confined the rabbit to our office. After a couple of days, we pulled a "switcheroo" where we let Salsa into the office and Sassy roam the rest of the house. The two did not meet during this time, but they were able to sniff each other's belongings. I do not recommend that the dog meet the rabbit through the rabbit's cage or penned area. Some dogs can become barrier aggressive or frustrated when they cannot get to something they are interested in, which can manifest in growling, snarling, barking and charging the kennel while the rabbit is inside, even though this aggression may not occur without a barrier. This type of negative interaction can be difficult to overcome and can raise hurdles to a successful relationship.

After letting Sassy and Salsa become accustomed to each other's smell, my husband, Tom, and I sat in the living room with both pets. I would hold Sassy while watching TV and Salsa would be at the other end of the couch with Tom. We did not let them meet yet -- we wanted to give them time to adjust and also to associate good things with each other's presence. While on the couch, both pets would get lots of love and treats to positively reinforce being around each other.

Once Sassy and Salsa seemed to be comfortable in each other's presence (Sassy and Salsa would both fall asleep under their blankets) we decided to let them formally meet. Tom took control of the dog (I would recommend either a leash or grabbing hold of the collar) and I held Sassy, who was securely wrapped in a blanket. We were both prepared to separate them quickly if either should show any signs of stress or

aggression. To our relief, Sassy and Salsa sniffed at each other and Salsa began to groom Sassy! We did not let the interaction last too long the first time and ended it on a positive note.

As time passed, we allowed Sassy and Salsa to spend more time together, first on leash and in controlled environments and then, once we learned to trust the dog with the rabbit, off leash. Even though Sassy and Salsa are great friends now and both have free roam of the house (they like to snuggle up together in the office while Tom works from home), we still supervise them whenever they are together since it only takes a moment of exuberant play to put the rabbit in a compromising situation. Another thing we have done to lessen any tension and help foster a positive relationship between the dog and the rabbit is to give each pet their own space. Sassy rules the office and we have installed a dog gate with a special "rabbit door" that we keep open so Sassy can always make a safe retreat from the dog. Salsa rules the upstairs of the house and her crate downstairs so she also always has a place to retreat from the rabbit (Sassy likes to chase her around the house!).

Introductions between rabbits and dogs can take a long time and require patience. This process can last a few days or a few months depending on the personality of the pets involved. It is important to always remember that even with the most persistence and patience, some rabbits and dogs may never be able to roam freely together. Safety should always be your first priority.

Rabbits and Guinea Pigs – By Stephanie Lodge

There are both positives and negatives in pairing rabbits and guinea pigs. While the two have quite a bit in common, there are also some major differences.

- Both are herbivores.
- Both are avid hay eaters.
- Both are social creatures.
- Guinea pigs require extra vitamin C which is obtained from their specially-formulated pellets and veggies.
- Our pigs are not potty trained like the rabbits, so they end up making a mess.
- A rabbit's strong back legs could accidentally hurt a pig.
- They speak different languages.

With both rabbits and guinea pigs at home, I have found that some of my bunnies like the piggies, while

others couldn't care less. Our foster Mischa happens to really enjoy spending time with our pig, Bear. We give them time to socialize through a pen wall adjacent to Mischa's enclosure. They have great fun running about next to each other. A pig could be the answer for a lonely bunny who doesn't get along with other rabbits. On occasion we have let the two hang out together in the same pen. Not surprisingly Bear's first priority is eating the bunny's food.

Rabbits and Stuffed Friends – By Shawwna Lemerise

If you haven't been successful in bonding your bun with living animals, or if your rabbit is antisocial, a stuffed friend may be the best solution for keeping your bun company when you aren't around. Just like with live animal introductions, safety is important when introducing rabbits to stuffies. Toys should not have loose strings, little pieces the buns may eat, and they should not be filled with beads. It helps to pick a stuffed animal that is about the same size as the rabbit – not too big and not too small. I also like to use stuffed friends shaped like rabbits, but one of my buns is friends with a raccoon.

In order to help the rabbit bond with the toy, collect some of the rabbit's fur that has been shed and rub it on the stuffed animal. If bun lets you, you may even use the stuffed animal to pet your bunny. This not only helps the rabbit associate the stuffie with warm and fuzzy feelings, but it also helps

the toy smell like your bun. Bunnies often rub their scent on things that belong to them, so it will help them view the toy as their own. Some buns may chew apart the stuffed animal. In this case, remove it and perhaps try a different toy. If the rabbit licks or grooms his stuffie, then you have success! The rabbit has adopted the toy. Bun may practice grooming the stuffed animal, move it around the cage, and even snuggle up to it.

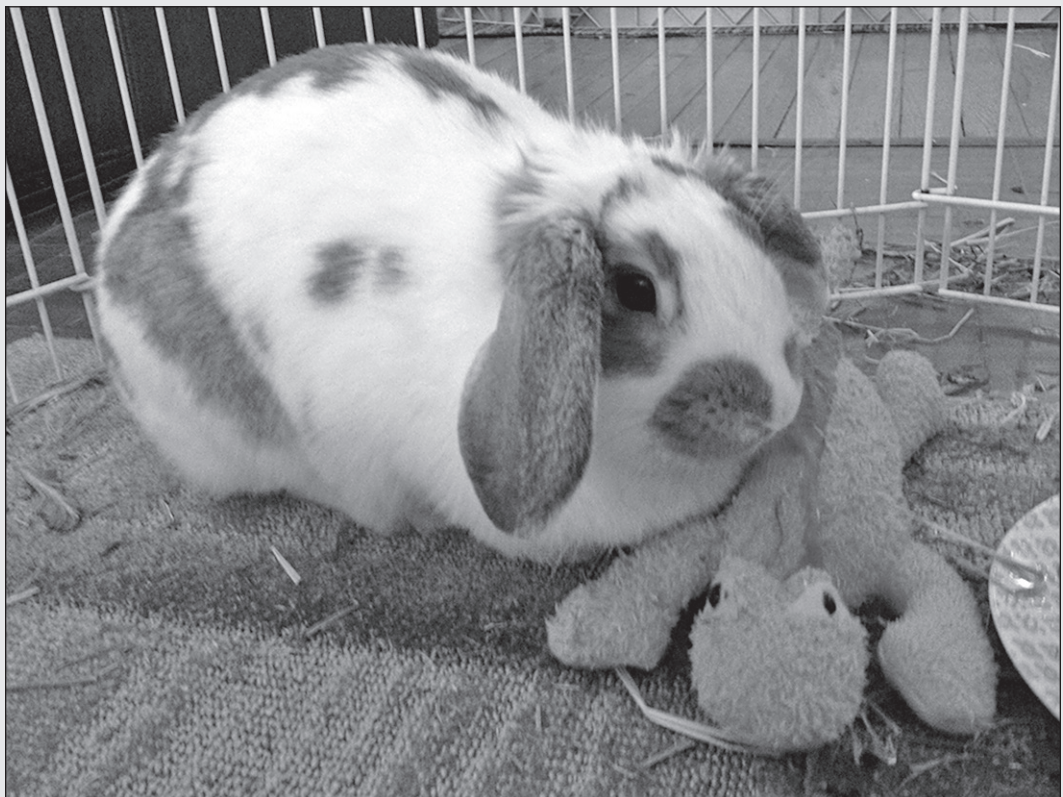
Closing

Rabbits can build wonderful loving relationships with cats, dogs, guinea pigs, and even stuffed animals; however, some pets may not get along despite your best efforts. Going

slowly and having lots of patience are key ingredients to a successful introduction and a "hoppily" ever after!



Mirabella & Casey



Ava with a stuffed friend.



Rabbit Poetry!

Introducing our occasional series with members' original bunny-themed poetry. Enjoy!

Zoom! Black and white flash,
Bunny Five-Hundred begins,
Do you feel the breeze?

(Sue Milewski)

There was a young rabbit named Stu
He was hip, he could hop
But his dream was a flop
And his mouth couldn't sing, only chew

(David Sharpe)

Fur flies all around,
Like swirling snow in the house -
Bunny is shedding.

(Sue Milewski)

a sun patch beckons
yawn, stretch, nose twitch, bright eyes dream
dandelion fields

(Herta Rodina)

More Rabbit Poetry Wanted

Does your rabbit make you sing,
Write with joy and run with rhymes?
Join us for a Harelines fling -
Send your lyrics or your lines.

We invite your original poems of any kind! We'll include a selection written by our rabbit-inspired readers in a future issue of *Harelines*. Please send them to bhrs-poetry@ohare.org



Somebunny Needs YOU!



Nikki is a Dutch/English Spot mix with unique black and white markings on her fur. The most adventurous of all the Indiana babies, she is friendly and will be your best friend (for the low, low price of one baby carrot). **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Addison is a young and playful little girl who is always busy. She enjoys head pets, giving kisses, hopping through tunnels, and running the "Bunny 500". Her adventurous personality makes a large pen a necessity. Addison is a perfect example that small bunnies can have BIG personalities. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



Bunny is a sweet girl with us since she was three weeks old. She enjoys hanging out in her pen until she gets her courage up to venture out for exploring and binkies. Note the unique marking on her nose. Depending how you look at it, you will either see the head/face of a rabbit or the back profile of a bunny (aka bunny-butt). Here's a bun who is two-for-one! **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Meet **Raven**, she is a big, beautiful and sweet rabbit with shiny black fur. Although shy at first, she is curious and playful. If Poe had met this Raven, he would have rewritten his poem for her ... Quoth the Raven, "my forever home". **Please contact Michele Roth (bhrs-michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.**

Adopted!

Sahara is the center of attention in her new home with Grace DeLong. When she's not exploring her spiffy condo, she's soaking up love and cuddles on a favorite lap. ♥ Lop-eared **Louise Bailor** is enjoying her new home with Hannah Rutledge and Derik Lochotzki. ♥ **Charcoal** (now **Oliver**) has a terrific forever home with Megan Kleinert and family. ♥ **Lindsay** (now **Easter**) has a "wonderful" new home with the Wunder family of Port Clinton. ♥ Lovely little **Mischa** has found her forever home with Lisa, Heath and their two children. Congratulations, Bowers family!



Be Somebunny's Hero

Consider adopting a "less adoptable" rabbit

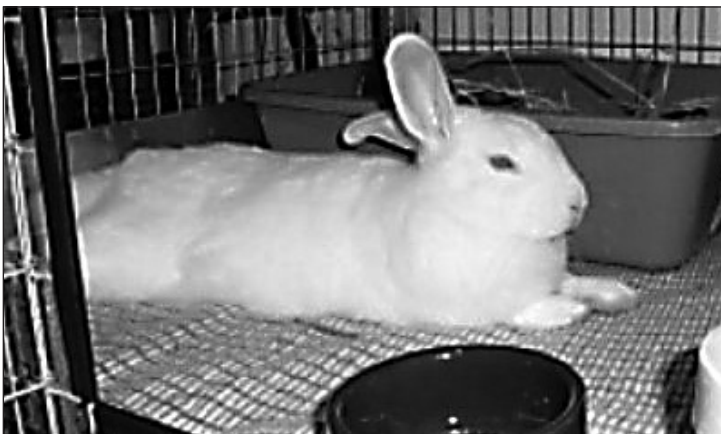
By Sue Zimmerman

Have you ever noticed in these newsletters and on the Ohare website that some of the same bunnies have been listed for years? Take a look. Read their stories. And ask yourself: "Do I have room in my heart for a bunny who is seeking a permanent home, but may never find one?" Although we love having these buns live their lives here with us, I can't help but feel sorry for them. They deserve a chance at a forever home and the special bond that comes with adoption.

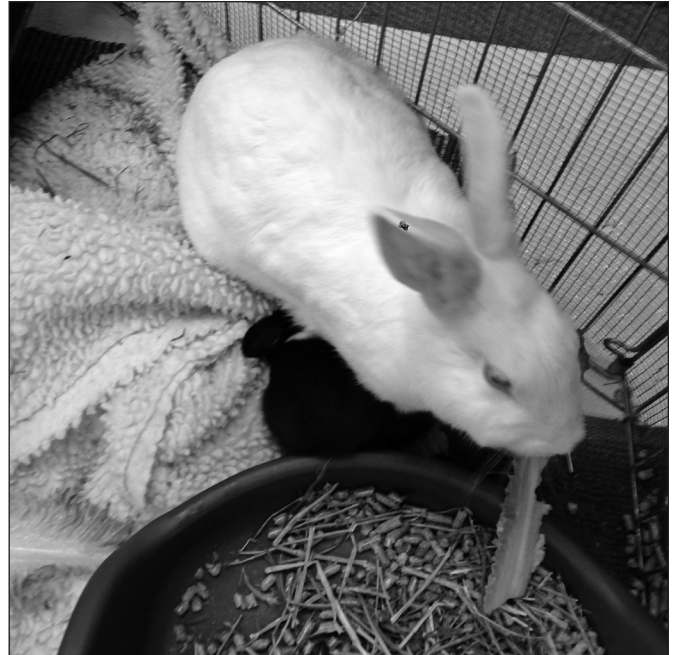
The Black Bunny Syndrome. More often than not, many great rabbits have been overlooked because people just don't seem to like pets that are plain black. I am not sure why that is but you will find this to be true in most shelters with dogs and cats as well. Perhaps folks want a bunny with fancier markings? I don't understand it. These great bunnies have been overlooked simply because of their color.

The white bunny syndrome. Just as with the black bunnies, people seem to have a big hang up about white bunnies with pink eyes. I have been told that their eyes are "creepy" or simply, "I don't like bunnies with pink eyes." Of all the bunnies that I have fostered through the years, I have found that white bunnies with pink eyes have the best personalities and are the most cuddly and social.

Leo: Leo arrived in our care in September 2012 and is quite simply "The Perfect Bunny". He is a snuggle bug who will let you hold him and



Leo loves to relax.



Lacey loves her greens.

pet him for hours. Leo is very active and social and loves to visit the other bunnies in the foster room. He is quite fond of doing binkies in front of the female buns. Why has this guy not been adopted yet? **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

Lacey: Lacey is a beautiful white bun who came to stay with us in May 2014 along with her litter of 7 babies. Lacey is a young adult who is very energetic and curious. She loves free time outside of her pen. Her personality will really flourish when she finds a permanent home. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

Bonded Pairs. People often want to have more than one bunny, but bonding two rabbits can be a lot of work. Why not consider adopting two bunnies who are already bonded? The Buckeye House Rabbit Society currently has two bonded pairs looking for their forever homes. These pairs have been together since they were babies and are best pals for life.



Kinsey (left) and Dok (right) have beautiful spots.

Kinsey & Dok: Stephanie Lodge writes --Two of my best fosters have also been one of my most challenging adoptions. In 2013, I took in a momma and her four babies seized from a large hoarding case in Indiana. I still have two of the babies. It's sad that these two darlings, whom we like to call the "cows" due to their black spots, still haven't found a forever home. While most people initially want to adopt one rabbit instead of two, many will at some point adopt a friend for their lonely bunny. Two bunnies are not twice as much work, especially if they are already bonded and live together. They are, however, twice as much fun! **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**

Barley & Hops: Barley and Hops were found as strays and have been in foster care since November 2011. We have had them since they were little babies. This brother and sister pair are an absolute joy to watch. They love to play and are very social. They have

been passed over because of their coloring (see "The white bunny syndrome" above") and because they are also larger bunnies. I love watching them interact with each other and also with us. There is nothing better than watching 12 pounds of lagomorph leaping through the air in mid binky. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

Large Bunnies. Large buns are also difficult to adopt because everyone thinks they want a small bunny. Did you know that bigger bunnies tend to be more docile and calmer than some of the little breeds? Larger bunnies are also a better choice for families with younger children because of their size and mellow personalities.

Please take a closer look at these often-overlooked bunnies. Can you offer a forever home to one of these beautiful creatures who so desperately would like to be adopted? Giving one of them a home also opens a spot for another needy foster rabbit. Can you be some bunny's hero?



Barley and Hops are ready for their closeup.



Farewell to Hoppington

By Matthew Hager

It was the best \$15 we ever spent.

That's all my wife, Lindsay, and I paid for Lord Hoppington, a rambunctious black rabbit who we said a tearful goodbye to in March. She – yes, she was technically a Lady, not a Lord – came into our lives at the perfect moment. We had just moved from Ohio to Wisconsin after college, and we were living in a place where we knew no one. Even worse, Lindsay and I had different work hours, which often meant we were alone in our apartment when we weren't on the clock.

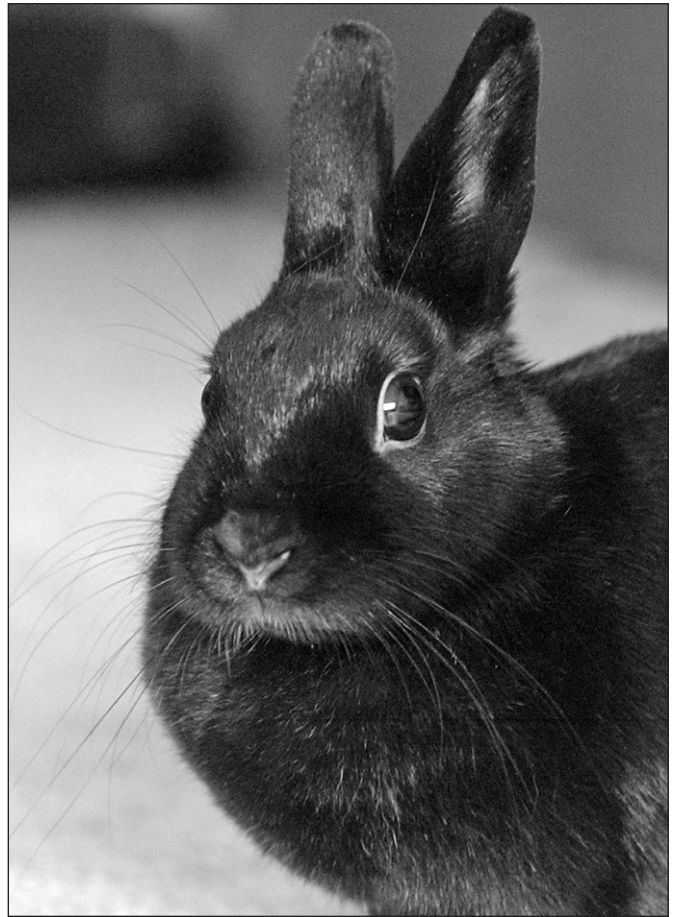
It was not long after we moved to Beloit, a town on the border of Wisconsin and Illinois, that we started spending some of our free time looking at pets. Lindsay grew up with a pet bird, me with my beloved dog, Spydel. We were pet people, and we knew that eventually we wanted to add a furry (or feathered) friend to our lives.

I wasn't ready when it happened, though. As a sportswriter, I work weird hours. Back in my Beloit days, I worked split shifts – early morning until noon, then early evening until often around midnight. One Friday, after covering a high school football game, I came home to find my wife on the floor unloading boxes purchased from the pet store. Nearby, a head popped out of one of the boxes.

"Who's this guy?" it seemed like the small rabbit was saying with her expression.

Lindsay just smiled; I remember it clear as day a decade later. She explained that she couldn't resist. Hoppington, as she would be soon named, was among a group of rabbits at the store – but she was the only one being playful. While the other buns were grouped up in a big, cuddly pile, Hoppington was burrowing by herself and accepting head pets. Lindsay fell in love immediately and made the call to buy her without me.

I wasn't upset. I had never owned a rabbit, and admittedly, we did not know much about taking



care of one before we brought Hoppington home. We learned as we went, did a lot of research and quickly bonded with our bun. She was the perfect companion for that time in our lives, and even though she cost us our deposit – Hoppington loved to rip at carpet, despite the fact that we bought her plenty of toys she could have chewed on instead – we loved her dearly.

After two years in Wisconsin, I got a job back home in Ohio. My wife's career improved as well. All the while, Hoppington was there for us. She was always happy to accept head pets, especially when I'd find that perfect spot on her jaw line that got her teeth grinding started. Hoppington loved cranberries – craisins, specifically – and baby carrots, but nothing made her more content than spending a weekend morning with us. I'd make breakfast for Lindsay and me, but I wouldn't forget Hoppington either – especially because she'd hover near the kitchen to make sure I saw her. I'd grab a paper plate and put plenty of leafy greens and a couple of carrots on it. When we ate, she'd eat. Then, if it was a nice day outside, Hoppington loved sitting in a sunbeam on the floor, what we liked to call "sun bun."



Unfortunately, the last few months were difficult. First, she started to have a leaky right tear duct. Medicine never really cured it, either, but we made it manageable and she never seemed that bothered by it. Then she got syphilis, which was more funny than anything because there were no other bunnies hanging around. Apparently, it was dormant for a long time – probably from her time in the pet store – and did not come out until her immune system was weakened. We did cure that, however, with weekly shots.

But in the end, there was little we could do about her most difficult health issue. During one vet appointment, when we were trying to cure the leaky tear duct issue, the vet noticed that Hoppington's breathing sounded off, for lack of a better term. Upon further investigation, the vet deduced that Hoppington likely had a tumor in her chest, which became more noticeable in certain situations.

I was heartbroken. We knew that it would eventually kill her. We could see that her breathing was becoming a little more labored day by day. When she exerted herself, she'd quickly get out of breath. It hurt to see sometimes. She still loved pets, loved attention, but eventually she stopped eating as much as she had.

Come March, we knew it would not be long. We

might have to make the call to put her down, something that neither of us were wanting, of course. In the end, Hoppington made the call herself. On a rainy Friday evening, shortly after my wife got home from work, Hoppington's breathing got shallow and slowed. Lindsay sat on the floor with her, held her in her arms and gave her comfort as she left us.

Hoppington waited for Lindsay to get home to say goodbye. It shattered me, I can't lie. I knew the end was coming, but I still wasn't ready when it happened. Nor was I ready when we took her back to the vet one final time to say goodbye the next morning. I miss her terribly.

But as the days have passed, things have gotten better. We had Hoppington cremated, and I have to admit – having her home now makes things better. I still miss talking to her, petting her and just having her hanging out nearby when I am at home. But she's home.

I don't write this to make anyone sad. I write it to tout Hoppington as a great companion for Lindsay and me. I did not know much about rabbits as pets before Hoppington entered our lives, but if I had it to do over again I'd do the same thing.

The Buckeye House Rabbit Society is having a photo contest!

Send us a photo of your bunny

The winning photograph will be featured on merchandise in our Cafe Press Store

<http://www.cafepress.com/buckeyehouserabbitsociety>

Entry fee is \$2.00 per photo or 3 photos for \$5.00

To enter the contest please email a digital photograph (high resolution preferred) to bhrs-sue@ohare.org along with your name, bunny's name, address, phone number, and e-mail. Payment may be made by PayPal or by check mailed to:

Buckeye House Rabbit Society

Sue Zimmerman

3031 St. Rt. 412

Fremont, Ohio 43420

Deadline is Sept. 1, 2015

A high-quality print photograph may also be sent to the above address, however no photos will be returned



Buckeye House Rabbit Society

P.O. Box 5767

Athens, OH 45701



Buy a bunny a little time...

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your \$33.00 annual membership in the Buckeye HRS includes:

- National membership (\$18.00) and 3-4 issues of the House Rabbit Journal
- Local membership (\$15.00) and issues of Harelines

If you are already a national member, your local fee is \$15.00

☐ I would like to donate \$_____ to help a foster rabbit (vet care, supplies)

☐ I would like to donate \$_____ in memory of _____.

The grieving family receives an acknowledgment of your gracious gesture.

I would like to volunteer to:

☐ Distribute information to vets

☐ Assist with mailing

☐ Help at Buckeye HRS booth at Pet Expos and fairs

☐ Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Bunnies' names and special dates _____

Please make checks
payable to:

Buckeye

House Rabbit Society

P.O. Box 5767

Athens, OH 45701

**All donations are
tax-deductible.**