



HARELINES



Volume 24 Number 1 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

Winter 2020

The Million Dollar Rabbit

By Stephanie Lodge

Back in April 2018, I adopted out one of my favorite rabbits. This big, goofy guy was Emmy. Luckily, one of my favorite people, Megan Metzger with the Columbus HRS, adopted him. This is the story of how she saved his life.

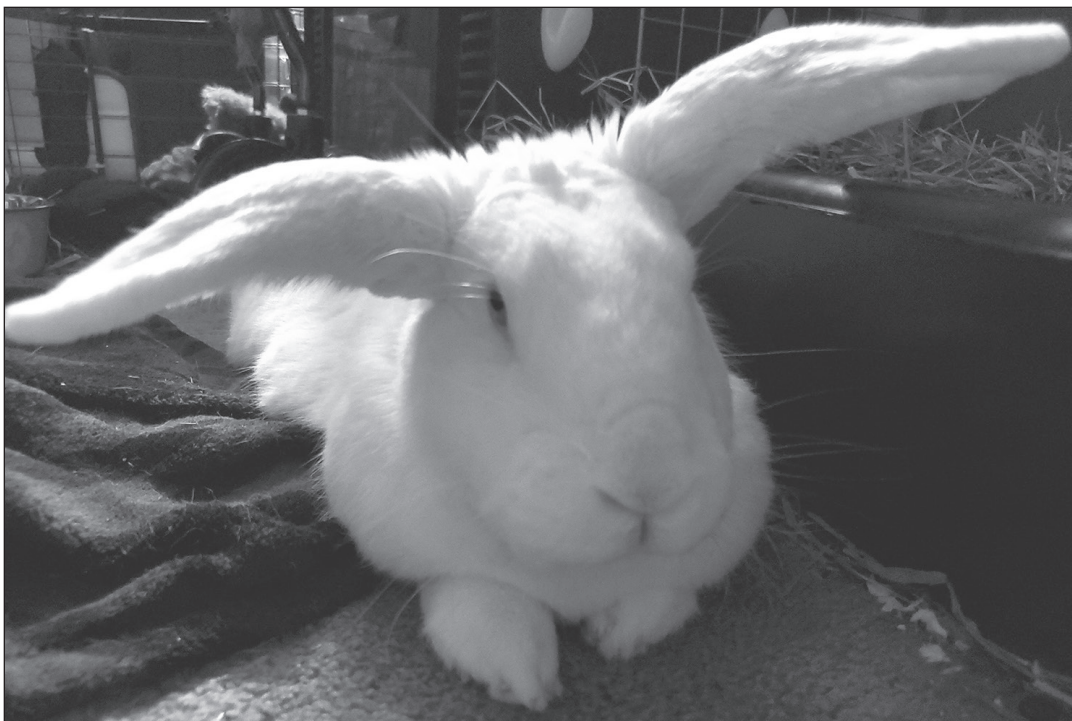
It started late one night in February 2019. Megan got home from work and was enjoying her dinner when she realized that Emmy had stopped eating (this was extraordinary in itself) and that his breathing had rapidly increased. She offered him his favorite treats and he refused – a second red flag. Emmy was acting like another bunny who had passed away from liver torsion, so Megan rushed him to the emergency vet.

After an overnight stay and thorough exam, Emmy was diagnosed with two large fat pucks, most likely full of pus. One was pressing on his heart and lungs. The other fat puck was on

his cecum and was pressing on it so much that the cecum was twisted. The only two options were surgery to remove the pucks or euthanasia. His prognosis was good at that point. The surgery went well, the only problem being Emmy's extremely inflamed intestines. While at MedVet, Emmy was on a cocktail of 14 different medications, including two 24-hour infusions of lidocaine and metoclopramide. Unfortunately, he was experiencing full blown stasis. Even though he wasn't eating on his own yet, the vet thought he might be stressed and would do better at home.

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He came home with several oral and injectable meds, subcutaneous fluids, and lots of Critical Care. On top of everything else, his ears looked horrible from the iv catheters. Unfortunately, he lost portions of his ears. Unfortunately, this was the least of our concerns at that point, as we were still fighting a daily battle for his life. For weeks he refused to eat on his own and was living off Critical Care feedings. He started to eat some hay a week after being home. He loved his mint and parsley, but refused everything else.

Emmy has had a tough road, but is living his best life now.

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Special Thanks to:

David Csehi, Robert Simo, and Pat Hartley, for their kind donations in memory of Jacqueline Csehi, longtime Buckeye HRS supporter and rabbit advocate, who passed away on May 5, 2019.

Lori Fair and Mark Kotzbauer, for their generous gift in memory of dear Pat.

Cristina Masters, for her thoughtful donation in tribute to Wicket.

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

Christa Billerman and Fayaz Bhanji, Nate and Liz Wenzel, Judy and Martin O'Neil, Irma Laszlo, Gay Marie Goden, Mary Zimmerman, Bob Piekarczyk, Jill Robinson, Rob Fleming, Susy Lora, Debbie Dowell, Mark and Robin Covert, Julia Karolle-Berg, Carrie Levicki, Anna Hamel, Julie Donath, Clay and Nancy Pasternack, Alan Stryeski and Cathy Montiegel, Norma Jean Mudry, Irene Levy, Mary Beth Litrico, Suzanne Boller, Rebecca Pullin, Barbara Galambos.

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.

Did You Know ... ?

... that Ohio named "shelter pets" the official state pet in 2019? We hope that this designation will increase public awareness of the plight of all rescue animals, including rabbits, as they patiently wait for their forever home.



Amy Marshall, 2019



Emmy on his road to recovery.

Finally, about a month and a half after surgery, and many, many hours of begging and pleading, he finally ate some pellets. He was actually a completely different rabbit at this point. He had more energy than ever and was flying around doing the bunny 500 and countless binkies. This was not the rabbit Megan had adopted. Emmy used to be a big, lazy lump of a bun who only got up to eat. Megan was thrilled with his progress, even if he kept tripping her. Things were finally looking up for him! Megan didn't even mind all the trouble he was getting into, nor did she care about all the stuff that he was destroying. She was just glad to have her Emmy back. Since his recovery, Emmy constantly acts like he is starving. Megan suspects he's even gotten a second meal on several occasions. Since his ordeal he has also become much more snuggly and constantly begs for pets as well as food. This whole situation definitely brought them closer together, helping to cement the bond. Megan is so glad she

adopted Emmy; he has helped to complete her life.



Emmy's ear was not a pretty sight at one time.

Awaiting Their Day in Court

By Keith Zimmerman

On August 21, a local humane officer contacted one of our fosterers to see if we could take in nine rabbits from a neglect case that also involved horses, sheep, and donkeys. The foster home was already caring for eleven buns, but we quickly relocated some to other foster homes. The new rabbits were dirty and many were urine stained from being kept in stacked cages with no catch trays to protect them from the rabbits housed above them. Fortunately, aside from being very dirty and thirsty, their physical condition was satisfactory.

The day after their arrival, one female gave birth to four stillborn kits. Two days later, another gave birth to four babies, but they survived for only two days. The deceased kits were all very large for newborns and we suspect that the male parent was much bigger than the female, or that the moms delayed birth until they felt they were in a safe place. One week later, another rabbit gave birth to nine healthy kits; a week after that, another produced eight more. We were now dealing with 26 rabbits plus the three fosters

we already had, two of which are unadoptable sanctuary rabbits.

The legal action that created this situation is still pending in court; the owner of the nine original rabbits is fighting the charges and the court has not fast-tracked this case. Consequently, those buns are still wards of the court and may not be spayed/neutered or adopted. The next court date is scheduled for mid-January. As many of our readers know, un-altered rabbits -- especially young ones -- do not have the best litter-box habits. Caring for everybun is a major undertaking and we are very grateful to our local volunteers for assistance in cleaning, feeding, and even providing temporary housing while we await court action. The nine adults are all quite friendly with a variety of colors and markings.

In early November, after the babies were weaned, two area animal shelters accepted some of them to relieve the burden at our foster homes. We are immensely thankful for help from the Cleveland APL, Friendship APL, and Lake Humane Society, and also from the folks at Small Pet Select who sent a great care package for the babies. All of our foster homes now have manageable populations, and while we await the court's decision we're working on socializing everybun in anticipation of placing them in loving, safe, forever homes. Finally, we are most grateful for our faithful and generous supporters without whom we could not have saved all of these rabbits. Our fosterers, volunteers, and members are the best!

Holiday Raffle Results

And the winner is ... Gary Savage of Alliance, OH!
Congratulations to Gary and many thanks to all who supported the Buckeye HRS through the purchase of raffle tickets. Proceeds are allowing us to make 2020 brighter for more homeless bunnies in Ohio.

Congrats!



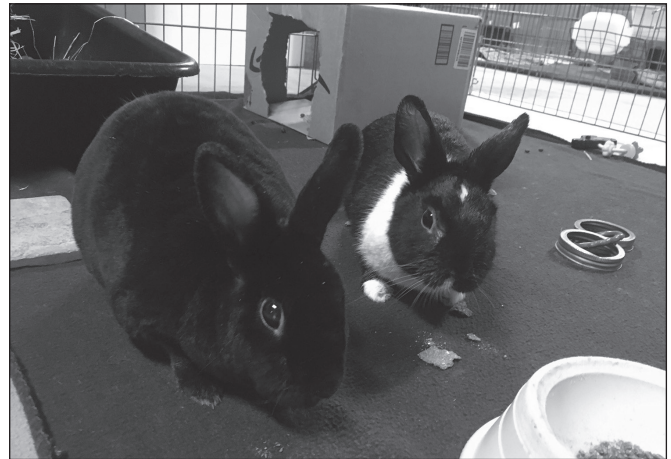
Dottie the Street Fighter

By Kristen Doherty

On October 10 2018, Stephanie Lodge received a Facebook message about some stray domestic rabbits in Cleveland. Luckily for her, the rabbits were close to her home, so she planned to go over that evening. By the time she arrived, Michelle (bunny catcher extraordinaire) had already captured seven rabbits. Two were eventually adopted through the Buckeye HRS and four others were re-homed. The seventh bunny was a small, sickly girl we named Dottie. Dottie looked rough when we first took her in. She was thin, had horrible-smelling, dirty fur and was constantly sneezing. It seemed that this poor little 3.5 lb. bunny had never seen a day of love in her life. She clearly had been on the streets for a while. It was also clear that she had some respiratory issues and needed some TLC. And no matter how many times we wiped her down with a warm wet cloth, the bad smell on her fur would not go away.

Since she came to us, Dottie has shown great improvement, but it has been an up-and-down ride. The bad fur smell is gone, but the respiratory issues have persisted. She settled right into the daily eye-and-nose cleaning and eye-drops routine. We added nebulization to the program and have tried two different medications. So far, the nebulization sessions have been very helpful. We also added an oral antibiotic. All of these treatments together finally cleared up her sneezing and her eye and nose mucous really well. However, if we let up on any part of the treatment, the sneezing and nose and eye secretions return.

At first Dottie loved the attention and looked forward to her daily spa treatments, until ...



Dottie (right) and bunny friend Raven.

Thinking she was lonely, I put Dottie into a large pen with my two bonded bunnies, Taffy and Raven. Since Dottie became a Sanctuary Rabbit and needed daily medical treatment, the possibility of her ever leaving permanently was almost nonexistent. Although the three bunnies got along right away (almost overnight), Dottie became possessive of her food and became aggressive at feeding times. She never hurt either of the other two rabbits, however she has bitten me a few times when I put her food down. Needless to say, I was stunned to witness this sweet, docile, sickly bunny turn into a petulant little street fighter! It was a complete shock. At the same time, her treatment sessions became stressful and she became aggressive

at treatment time. I have noticed, however, that the level of aggression is directly related to the degree of her respiratory issues. She just doesn't feel well sometimes and she gets crabby. When her eyes and nose are clear, the aggression seems to lessen.

Despite the erratic behavior, Dottie is very much a part of our bunny family. She snuggles with her two bunny buddies day and night and sometimes I'll catch Taffy licking her eyes. And despite having to poke and prod her for her daily treatments, she seems very content to be with us.



Dottie (standing bottom) gets along well with her bunny family.



Eat More Hay

By Amy Marshall

I'd like to share some tips and tricks to help your rabbit eat more hay. Some rabbits have quite an appetite and are not picky eaters at all. I have encountered many rabbits who ate every morsel of hay they were given and were not picky about what kind it was. On the other hand, some rabbits are quite finicky about the taste, texture, smell, and freshness of hay.

First and foremost, you must offer your rabbits fresh grass hay 24/7. Avoid legume hay such as alfalfa; it's too rich for them. Rabbits are grazers and enjoy munching on hay at all times of the day. They need hay to help with digestion and to maintain gut motility. Rabbits also need hay to help trim their constantly-growing teeth. Munching and grinding on coarse hay will help their teeth stay healthy, wearing down sharp edges.

I find that the more I replenish my rabbits' hay, the more they will eat. They love a fresh fluff of hay added to their litter box. I tend to do this two or three times a day and they immediately jump in to snack. Besides offering hay in the litterbox, I have also put a fresh pile of hay in different areas in their room. This has worked well, offering a variety of places to eat, as if they were in the wild. For a slightly tidier version, consider purchasing a hay rack. Some are self-standing that you can place in different areas of their room; others hook onto the side of their x-pen or cage. For the curious and playful rabbits, you can stuff some hay in a cardboard toilet paper insert – it's a toy and food at the same time. You can also sprinkle some rabbit-friendly herbs on their hay to spike interest.

Finding the right type of hay your rabbits enjoy and look forward to eating may take some time and patience. There are so many different brands and types of hay to experiment with. I have tried to save money by buying a bale of hay from a local farmer or feed store, but I always felt my rabbits wasted and rejected most of



Hay is important to a rabbit's health.

it. If you can find a quality fresh bale of local grass hay that your rabbits will eat, it will be a huge money saver.

Two of my favorite brands of hay available at pet supply stores and online are Oxbow and Small Pet Select. Both of these brands offer many different types of hay, with options to buy in bulk to save money. Oxbow sells western timothy hay, orchard grass, meadow hay, and oat hay to name a few. I have bought their small bags of oat and meadow hay to mix in with my rabbits' timothy hay and they enjoy the variety. The outside of their bags shows the texture and sweetness of each hay to give you an idea of what it tastes like to your rabbit. Oxbow also sells Harvest Stacks, a compressed timothy hay. I've put these in my rabbits' room and they've enjoyed munching on them for days, like a long-lasting treat.

Small Pet Select's online store also has a variety of hay. You can even buy a sampler hay box with four different types to see what your rabbit prefers



Putting hay in a toy is a great idea!

-- a great way for your rabbit to do a taste test. Small Pet Select has three different timothy hay cuts which vary in texture from first to third cut. The first cut is the most coarse with a lot of fiber; the second cut is a popular choice, offering all-around good taste and texture for digestion. The third cut is an excellent option for picky eaters, as I have not seen any rabbit refuse it. This cut is very fine-textured and green, almost like a sweet treat. Since the third cut is softer and lower in fiber, I recommend using it on occasion or as a special topper to the main timothy hay source. When I have a box of third-cut timothy hay on hand I use it as

a bedtime treat. When I replenish my rabbits' hay, I top it off with third-cut timothy and they come running with excitement.

Caring for a rabbit entails spending a lot of money on food and hay. With timothy hay being the main source of their diet, you want to make sure they are eating plenty of it daily. Next time you find your rabbits getting bored with their usual feeding routine, try mixing in a different type of hay, making a toy out of it, or placing hay in different areas for them to explore and graze on. You'll be helping them stay happy and healthy and that is priceless!

The Birds and the Buns: The Importance of Spay and Neuter

By Kristin Weis

When people bring home their first pet rabbit, they don't often think about the importance of spaying/neutering or the consequences of not doing so. In the rabbit community, spay/neuter has become more prevalent because of better education and outreach, but there are still many people ignorant of its importance, benefits, and even its availability. As rabbits continue to grow in popularity, however, it is important - even vital - that we as rabbit advocates recommend spay/neuter as standard care for bunnies.

The most obvious benefit is preventing unwanted litters. According to the House Rabbit Society, bunnies are the third most abandoned pet in the United States, and they are also the third most euthanized. Rabbits reproduce quickly and profusely. The typical gestation period is between 30 and 32 days, and the female can

get pregnant again immediately after she gives birth. Litters average around 6 kits, but can number up to 14 kits. Even one "oops" litter adds to the growing problem of homeless rabbits.

Another benefit is behavioral. Bunnies mature at around 3-6 months, and they can become territorial and aggressive. Most often, rabbits who end up in shelters are abandoned before they are even a year old; many of the problems that lead to surrender could be resolved simply by spay/neuter. Spayed/neutered bunnies have better litterbox habits, tend to get along better with other rabbits, and are calmer than intact bunnies.

Lastly, it's just healthier for the rabbit. Both male and female rabbits are at risk for developing reproductive cancers if left intact, but the risk is as high as 80 percent for unsplayed females over the age of three developing uterine cancer. Testicular cancer, while far less common, is also a risk for older, unneutered rabbits. Spaying/neutering eliminates these risks, thereby giving rabbits a better chance at a long life.

The House Rabbit Society advocates spaying and neutering rabbits and it's easy to see why. Not only does it prevent more unwanted bunnies ending up in shelters, but it also gives rabbits a better chance at living a long, happy, and healthy life. We as rabbit caretakers want to do right by our rabbits, and spaying/neutering them is a vital part of providing the best care possible.

If you are interested in learning more or in getting your rabbit spayed/neutered, reach out to your rabbit-savvy vet.

How to Gauge Your Rabbit's Level of Affection

By Rob Lovicz

I think the idea of rabbits being cuddly like a fluffy teddy bear is a myth, like a hydra or a dragon. I can say with complete confidence that those types of bunnies are as rare as unicorns. In my 23 years of rabbit ownership, I've never had the 'ideal' rabbit everyone talks about, one who leaps into your lap every night when you get home at night, snuggling up for a long petting session and giving small kisses. Of course, my metaphors are not entirely serious, but the reality is that most rabbits' affectionate nature rests on a broad spectrum from detached and aloof to clingy and affectionate. Most buns reside in the middle zone of the bell curve. Most view picking up, affectionate petting, and cuddling much like you or I considered overbearing relatives invading your house during the holidays, chasing you down, hugging and kissing you, and telling you how adorable you were. Yuck! Like kids, bunnies feel overwhelmed and want to escape.

With younger rabbits, there is potential to form a stronger connection between the Lord of the Manor (your bunny!) and the staff (you!). If you teach them at a young age that you're not going to hurt them while being affectionate and hugging them tight to you, they may become used to it over time and less fearful. Even though they are usually more comfortable with you and more trusting than an older rabbit who didn't start life

in your house, I always find that even these rabbits still prefer affection on their terms.

I've had rabbits who enjoy affection on all levels of the spectrum. Zoe was our most affectionate, showering me with kisses and begging and pushing her head under my hand for love. Our current rabbit, Roger, is a bit more midrange. He dictates when he doesn't want to be bothered with us or when he wants us to pay attention to him and his magnificence and to behold the honor of being allowed to pet his head.

Siggy was probably the least affectionate of the crew. He came to us late in his life and was the product of an overcrowding and hoarding situation in his youth. Siggy was never interested in affection, at least not more than 10 minutes at a time. Siggy's friendship was unique. He loved to sit behind the armchair in the family room and look out the big front window when he was let out daily from his pen to have the run of the house.

He loved to watch the squirrels, birds, and people walking by on the sidewalk. In some ways, watching him stare out the window was fascinating in itself because he reacted to what he saw, issuing grunts to offending wildlife who dared interrupt his view of the world.

On his way to the big window in the family room, Siggy would have to run by me and my wife sitting in the living room. As he did so, he would nudge both my feet and my wife's feet in acknowledgment of his love and gratitude for his life here with us. That was about it; he went straight for the window and he would sit for hours staring out until we had to bring him back to his pen amid growly protests. Sometimes, I would try to pet him by his window perch and he would accommodate me for about five minutes; then he would start to growl, shake his head and nudge my hand away. Usually, it was funny and cute, but I have to admit that sometimes his aloof reactions were frustrating. I knew he would never be the cuddle-bug most people wish for, but he was who he was, we knew why, and we accepted him for it.



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We had the luxury of knowing Siggy's past, but many adopted rabbits' histories are a vast unknown and sometimes filled with trauma. You, as their caregiver, have to accept that they won't always be what you want them to be. Rabbits are little sentient beings with their pasts, thoughts, and emotions, as well as their likes and dislikes. You have to realize that your little bunny friend loves you unconditionally and depends on you for everything, and you have to respect him for who he is.

Rabbits are prey animals, a fact I always underscore. They don't enjoy being smothered in love and affection, except on their terms, because of who they are, just as they don't like being picked up. Many rabbits are shy and don't take kindly to being overwhelmed all at once. Many of them prefer coming to you for affection in ways that make them feel comfortable. What I will often do is sit or lie on the floor and wait for my

bunnies to come to me, making them feel secure and petting them according to their comfort level. Head pets are always welcome as well as temple and eye rubbing, but moving back from there depends on the rabbit. I've had rabbits who love to have their back rubbed, but I've never found one loving belly or paw rubs.

Please do not become discouraged when you find that your new family member doesn't appreciate being picked up and smothered as a form of affection. With more extreme temperaments, do not lose heart with those rabbits who do not require a great deal of attention at all. It doesn't mean they don't love you or don't appreciate you; it has more to do with what makes them feel the safest. In my experience, allowing the rabbit to come to you and letting you know what he enjoys – with you responding accordingly – will make for a happy and long relationship.

Fun Times At BunFest 2019!



Amy Marshall and Sue Zimmerman greet visitors at our table.



Tanja Stich and Stephanie Lodge discuss all things rabbit.



Somebunny Needs YOU!



Meet **Jayme**! Jayme was found as a stray on the streets. Just a few days after her arrival, she surprised us with a litter of three babies. Jayme is mom to Rosa, Iris, and Daffodil. She is only about one year old and would love to have a home to call her own. She is friendly and enjoys rearranging her things and playing with her cardboard box. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Rosa (sister to Iris and daughter to Jayme) is adventurous when no one is looking. We are confident her fearless attitude will become more apparent once she finds her forever home. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



Iris (sister to Rosa and daughter to Jayme) is finally available for adoption. She had an issue with her right eye so we delayed the possibility of adoption until we knew she was healthy. Like her family, Iris is a super-friendly marshmallow. She is very snuggly and she loves Timothy hay. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**

Handsome "cow" brothers **Kinsey** and **Dok** (previously adopted, but recently returned due to no fault of their own) are ready for their forever family. These rex boys are inseparable and love each other dearly. They're coming up on their sixth birthday and are perfectly happy and healthy. **Please contact Maggie Reading (bhrs-maggie@ohare.org).**



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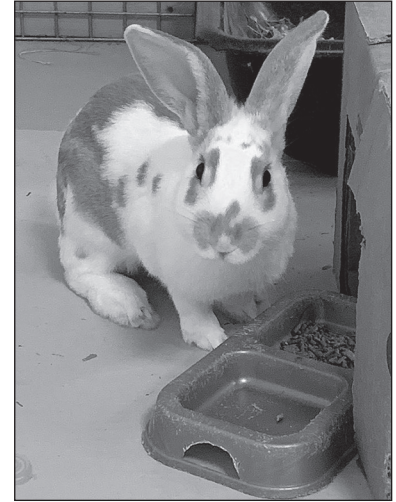


Penelope looks just like her sister, Pixel. She is big, beautiful, and brown. She loves to explore and is looking forward to a forever home where she can run and show off her binky skills.

Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.



Little **Neal** was born on September 2, 2019. He is an absolute sweetheart of a bunny. For a teenager, his litter box habits are quite good. He is still growing into his ears. So far his favorite things include eating and getting pets — pretty typical bunny behavior. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



Born on September 2, 2019 like his brother Neal, **Palmer** can be slightly more reserved, but is just as energetic. With the proper flooring and space, be prepared for some spectacular binkies. Plus, Palmer is very tidy!

Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.

Adopted!

After two years in foster care, **Bootsy** finally has a place to call his own. Now named Boo, he is getting accustomed to being spoiled rotten by his new mom and dad. Congrats, Cameo and Dan! ♥ **Ruby** has been adopted by the Blanock family and is loving her new home. Being the only pet, she gets all the attention and even scores her own special bedroom. ♥ **Grady** has found his happily-ever-after with Miranda in Maumee. His good looks and mild manners stole her heart from the moment they met. ♥ Sarah and Matt Jackson are delighted with their new girl, **Pixel**. They have always wanted a rabbit and now their dream has come true. It was love at first sight. ♥ **Archie** won the adoption lottery when he met his new mom, Lisa. It's safe to say that he has Lisa wrapped around his tiny paw. Archie has even learned to maximize his snackie intake by finding hidden treats. ♥ Robert, Taylor, and Zen (guinea pig brother) are extraordinarily excited to welcome **Daffodil**, AKA Daffy, to their home. Daffy's pen is larger than most living rooms! She is spoiled and happy as can be. ♥ **Mooselini** (aka Magic Moose, aka Moosey) is happy he has found his forever home with Jane Winik and Queen Bee (an adorable, opinionated lop). He is taking advantage of all of the amenities his new home has to offer – he loves to hide under fleece blankets, escape his pen, and learn all about the stairs. ♥ **SuzieQ** came to Sarah as a foster and quickly won her heart. Simply watching Q play is a joy itself. Q is very particular about her hay box. She'll grab clumps of hay to move them to just the right spot, push, shove, and jump around in circles until they're just right. A fast worker, Q also (de)constructs cardboard boxes. ♥ **Franklin**, like his brother Moose, has found a home that already has a self-assured bunny running the roost. His new lady friend, Galetea, and her parents, Madeliene and James, are tinkled pink with him. ♥ **Cherish Truelsch** has found a new home with Amanda Waibel and family of Litchfield. She even has a new bunny pal, Phineas, to hang out with.



Buckeye House Rabbit Society

P.O. Box 61

Vickery, Ohio 43464



Buy a bunny a little time...

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your \$35.00 annual membership in the Buckeye HRS includes:

- Local membership (\$15.00) and issues of Harelines

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