



HARELINES



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

Spring/Summer 2006

A Breathtaking Mystery

By Carrie Goglin

Before coming to live with Bailey and me, George spent several years as a kindergarten class pet and was then passed around from family to family, with no one willing to keep him for more than a few months. I met him in his fourth home and when I saw him locked in a tiny cage and covered with urine-soaked pine shavings, I knew I had to help him. Without protest from anyone in his family, I packed him up, put him in my car and headed home, planning to call Buckeye HRS in the morning. That night, though, when George looked up at me with those big blue eyes, he stole my heart and I think he knew as well as I did that he had already found his forever home.

Once he was neutered and his hormones had settled, George was ready to meet Bailey. I introduced them in neutral territory and prayed that they would get along. Bailey is a big nine-pound girl and George weighed just over three pounds back then, but that didn't matter because it was love at first sight. George was inquisitive and Bailey was so overjoyed that she took one look at him, darted off



George, breathing easily once again.

and did three binkies in a row before returning and flopping down next to him to be groomed. It was the first time she had shown any sign of happiness since her beloved Wilbur passed away three years earlier, so it was a very emotional moment for me. George and Bailey were instantly best friends and they both benefited tremendously from the new relationship. Bailey had someone to fill the void left when we lost our sweet Wilbur, and George learned what being a house rabbit is all about. He followed Bailey around for weeks, studying her every move as she taught him how to explore, beg for treats, use a litter box, dig, shred paper, and make the most of his new found

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freedom. The bunnies had quiet times, too, lying perfectly still for hours, side by side or forehead to forehead. They were inseparable and shared a bond that I have yet to fully comprehend. I was blessed to be able to witness such love.

Then one Friday night last December, I sat up in bed with a strange feeling like something was very wrong. I had never experienced a sensation like that. I tried to go back to sleep, but something made me get up and walk downstairs. Bailey met me at the bottom of the stairs, but I didn't see George. I peeked around the corner, expecting him to be there, and panicked when he was not. I started frantically searching in all his favorite hiding places, but I could not find him. Then I heard

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**Visit the House Rabbit Society
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Buckeye House Rabbit Society at
<http://www.ohare.org>**

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Special Thanks to:

Kim Tutewiler, for her generous donation in memory of Bucky and in honor of Rascal.

Deborah Raddish, for her sanctuary gift in tribute to Bun-Bun, who passed away in January 2005.

Yvette Ogresovich, for her donation in memory of James Jackson's dearly-missed Big Bunny.

Sue Milewski, for her gift in Princess's name.

Mary and Kelly Bastian, for their contribution in honor of their beloved Hazel.

Linda Sigismondi, for her much-appreciated donation in tribute to Annabelle, who was adopted on October 31, 1999 and who died on March 22, 2006.

Mike and Rhonda Wadsworth, for their contribution in memory of Bailey and Boo.

The many kind and generous members who donated money and supplies to help the Lorain County bunnies, especially **Gary and Sue Embree, Ellen Eder, Debra Friend, Summer Boggess, Judy O'Neil, Melissa Rohrs, Doris and Adriana Mastroguiseppe, Natasha Miller, Shirley Wood, Laura and Jim Brown (all the way from Belgium!), Heather Evert, Peggy Jensen, Karen Salvagno, Cynthia Hatfield.**

The following members, whose monetary and in-kind donations allow us to meet our ongoing fostering and educational goals: **Joe and Carol Danko, Gary and Paula Savage, Janet Reed, Jann and Mark Kuntavanish, Tracy Soltesz and Harold Chittum, Dorothea Mayerchak, Matt White, Stevi Kovalik, Pam Loch, Carmella Coia, Jude May.**

Our new and continuing **Sanctuary Rabbit Sponsors!** This program would not be possible without your compassion and generosity. These special rabbits, who must spend the rest of their lives in foster care due to serious medical conditions, have you to thank. We wish we could list each of you individually!

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

The **volunteers** who have been fostering and observing rabbits overnight after their spay/neuter surgery.

The small group of **volunteers** who have been going on a regular basis to make sure the Lorain County bunnies are cleaned, fed, and watered. These individuals have spent countless hours helping to keep these rabbits alive and healthy. We could not have accomplished even a fraction of what we have already done without **you**.



Many thanks to all who saved their ACME grocery receipts to help the Buckeye HRS earn money in the Community Cash Back program. The program ran from September 2005 – March 2006 and this was our best year yet! Thanks so much and please watch for a new start-up in September 2006, so you can once again save your receipts.

Great Lakes Brewing Company Update



Great Lakes Brewing Company has removed rabbit from its menu. Kami Dolney, Marketing Coordinator, tells us that "we have kindly listened and responded ... and will not be serving rabbit any longer. ... We value our customer base and strive to provide our patrons with the best Customer Service as possible. All comments/suggestions to help us achieve this are always welcome ..." To those individuals who contacted GLBC about this issue—our companion bunnies thank you!



Save the Date!

The NE Ohio Buckeye HRS picnic will be Saturday, June 17th in Aurora. Northeast Ohio members, watch your mailbox for an invitation and map in mid-May. If anyone not living in NE Ohio wishes to attend, contact Kristi Cole — kristi@ohare.org — to request an invitation.

The Cincinnati-area picnic will be held in September this year to avoid the summer heat and humidity!

Stay tuned for details.

Adopted!

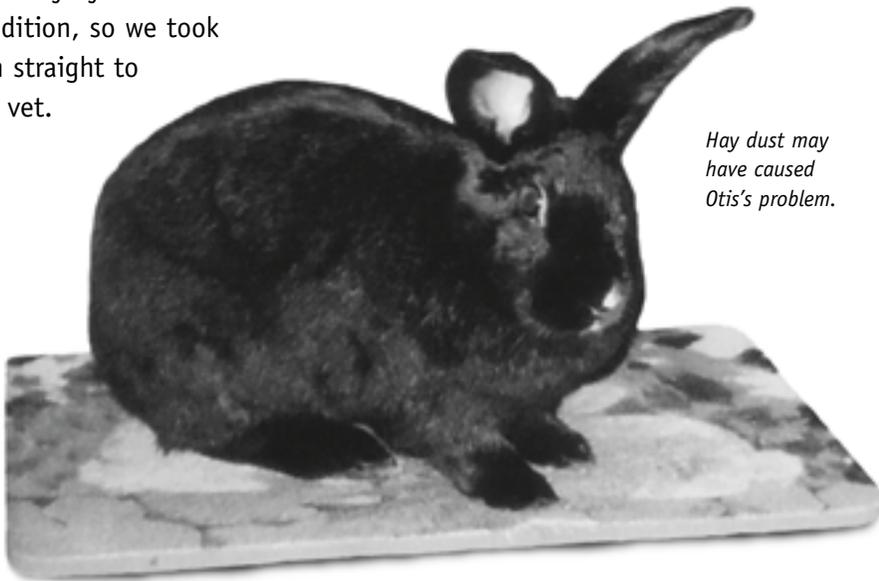
Nelson is now comfortably settled in his new home with the Hales family and enjoying the company of another former foster rabbit, Charlotte. ♡ **Moose** is making himself at home with Matt. ♡ **Banjo** has a wonderful home and is the new best friend of Clarabelle Becker. ♡ Kari Kiefer has welcomed **Willie** into her Toledo home. ♡ Charles & Donna and family of Parma recently welcomed **Hoagie** into their home. ♡ Both **Binky Boy** and **Caitlyn** were adopted by one of our very own volunteers, Sue Gapinski, who has given them much love and attention. ♡ **Coco** and **Julian** were re-adopted and now share a home with Katherine and family of Akron. ♡ **Snickers** now shares space with two other bunny pals at Tanya's in Sagamore Hills. ♡ **Sally** has a new bunny friend at her new home with Lori in Chagrin Falls.



Eye Have a Leak

By Rob Lovicz

I know everyone loved the story of Otis, my nippy bun. This is the second installment of his life story. This episode deals with Otis's runny eye. About two years ago, Otis's right eye started to run uncontrollably. It was a steady leak that made it appear as though he was crying out of one eye. He wasn't in pain and the condition did not appear to affect his quality of life. We really didn't know what to do. There is not a lot of information on runny eyes and what causes the condition, so we took him straight to the vet.



Hay dust may have caused Otis's problem.

The vet diagnosed the problem as Epiphora. Epiphora is not really a disease; rather it is a sign that the rabbit is not able to drain tears. Most Epiphora is seen when the tear drainage system is not working properly either by a blockage or a bacterial infection.

A rabbit's tears drain from the eye through a single duct in the lower eyelid called a punctum. There are two locations where the duct narrows or flattens: at the maxilla bone and over the roots of the upper incisor teeth. The duct ultimately deposits into the nasal cavity.

The doctor wanted to be sure to investigate and correctly diagnose the underlying cause of Otis's Epiphora. He wanted to be sure Otis did not have an infection. He also wanted to check Otis's molars for abscesses and misalignment, as well as flush the duct of all mucous and debris that had deposited there over time.

The biopsy revealed no infection. Infections can be very difficult to treat in rabbits. That was good news. Otis's molars were perfectly fine, so we could rule that out as a problem. (Just a note, it is amusing to see a picture of your bunny's molars, I had never seen them before.)



Otis's eye, looking much better.

The eye flush revealed a large blockage as well as some scar tissue from a previously unknown eye duct injury. We surmised where that injury came from. Otis eats more hay than three rabbits combined and he loves to dig in the pile of hay for the choicest bits. It is a good bet that over time the hay dust and small particles lodged in the eye duct and caused this condition. He is his own worst enemy.

Treatment for this condition is not always effective. The most drastic form of treatment is surgery. This surgery involves removing scar tissue and inserting a catheter in the eye duct to drain the tears. This treatment is not always 100% successful and we were not ready to go that route.

Otis's Treatment (Phase #1)

Initially, we were instructed to dry his face daily and spread a small amount of Vaseline under



the eye to alleviate tear scald. Every three days we put drops of antibacterial salve into his eye to eliminate any chance of future infection. This phase did not prove to be very effective. Otis's eye still leaked as much as it did when he was first diagnosed.

Otis's Treatment (Phase #2)

Three months ago we went back to the vet to try and correct this problem again. Otis got a reflush and some new medicine. The vet wanted to try a steroid for awhile to see if it would reduce the swelling in the eye duct. We washed his face, Vaseline'd, and put a steroidal eye drop in his eye daily. The treatment appears to be working. Otis does generate a small amount of tears, but far less than we were previously seeing. The fur around his eye even started to grow back (which was a miracle in itself).

Otis's Treatment (Future)

We are scaling back the steroidal eyedrops to every other day. I believe the vet wants to eventually take him off these drops completely due to residual side effects caused by steroids over a long period of time. We want to see if the tearing quantity remains constant while scaling back the dosage and hopefully it will. I do not want to take the surgery route unless it is absolutely necessary. This condition has not affected Otis's quality of life and he is as active as ever at 6 years old. 🐰

Health Tip!

By Kristi Cole

Here is a little trick if your veterinarian prescribes ear drops for your rabbit. This will not only make the drops easier to administer, but will likely make them more effective as they will reach deeper into the ear.

Take a syringe (without a needle attached) and pull the plunger out of it. Take the bottle of ear



medication and squirt several drops down into the syringe, then replace the plunger until the medication reaches the tip of the syringe.

Make sure you look down into the ear to find the proper area (the ear canal) where the medicine should go. At the base of the ear there is a "dead end" area and then the actual ear canal that goes deeper into the ear where the medicine is intended. If you can't distinguish the proper area, ask your veterinarian to show you.



Put the syringe into the rabbit's ear and insert the medicine down into the ear canal. For several minutes after the medicine is inserted, hold the rabbit still and massage the base of the ear to help ease the medicine down into the canal. This also postpones the rabbit's natural reaction to shake his head when something comes into his ear, so your medicine is not wasted. 🐰



Somebunny Needs YOU!



Meet **Pepper!** Pepper is a nice young guy with beautiful blue/gray fur. He enjoys playing with his cardboard box and re-arranging his bunny house.

Pepper would like a forever home with you! **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



This is **Pumpkin!** She is a very sweet young lady. Just look at her awesome blue/gray fur! What a beautiful bunny! Pumpkin enjoys playing with her toys and she especially loves to chomp on hay. Wouldn't you love to make Pumpkin a member of your family?

Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



Meet **Benji.** He's a domestic bun who looks a lot like a wild cottontail rabbit. Benji was part of a group of over 20 rabbits seized from a backyard breeder who was not feeding and caring

for them. Benji is an active young male. Since he was never kept as a "pet" bunny, he needs some socialization time with a family that will help him to learn to trust humans. He's not afraid of people, he just needs to bond with someone who will take the place of his former hutchnates! **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Sylvester is quite a unique looking bunny with his stripes and two-toned face! He LOVES his free time and pellets. This handsome guy would make for a great addition to your home. He has lots of love to give.

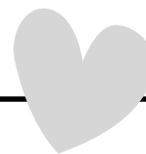
Why not make an appointment to meet him? **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Belle is a real cutie! She loves to be petted on her little nose. Belle also enjoys digging in her hay box and napping in her cardboard tunnel. She is a bit on the shy side but is really coming around. Can you welcome Belle into your home? **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Annie and Patty are a special pair of bonded "Senior Citizens". Annie is about eight years old and her daughter, Patty, is approximately seven. These two girls are very affectionate and must remain together. They have been in foster care for several years and will remain with us unless someone very special decides to give them a forever home. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Munchkin is an adorable little girl. Can you believe that she was actually fed to a snake? Lucky for her, the snake was not hungry that day and left her alone. Munch is very tiny and

needs to find a home that is just right for her. She is partially blind and would do best in a home without children or other pets (she may do well with another bunny). Munchkin loves her toys and is very neat with her litter box. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Sebastian is an adorable male Dutch rabbit who is a year and a half old. He likes to sit on top of a cardboard box and check out his surroundings when he's not busy standing on his tiptoes at the edge of his pen looking for affection. He is healthy

with excellent litterbox habits and enjoys his daily veggies. Wouldn't you like this cutie as part of your family? **Please contact Kristi Cole (kristi@ohare.org) 330-484-8416.**



Jack is a handsome boy who has a lot of love to give. A mellow guy, he loves people, enjoys pets on his head, and loves to stretch out and relax. Jack hopes to have a permanent

home with you! **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



You'll love Hershey's kisses! This beautiful chocolate brown Rex is so sweet. Not only is **Hershey** sweet but she's 5 lbs of bunny fun. If you are looking for an inquisitive rabbit who likes to cuddle and get lots of pets then this Hershey's kiss is for you!

Please contact Michele Roth Kerley (michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556 (Cincinnati area).



Kellene is a young female Dutch bunny, weighing about four pounds. She is very playful and loves her cardboard tunnel as well as playing in paper grocery bags. She is in great health and is very

well litter-trained. She really enjoys having her nose petted. Won't you welcome this playful girl into your family? **Please contact Kristi Cole (kristi@ohare.org) 330-484-8416.**



The name **Nadia** means hope, which is what I have for this beautiful rabbit. She is deserving of a home that will supply her with lots of attention and love. How could anyone look into the

beautiful eyes of this 7 lb bunny and not have "hope"? **Please contact Michele Roth Kerley (michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556 (Cincinnati area).**



Somebunny Needs YOU! Cont'd.



Lorain County Bunnies

Won't you consider letting one of these adorable and very friendly little bunnies into your home?

How about a matching pair?

Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.

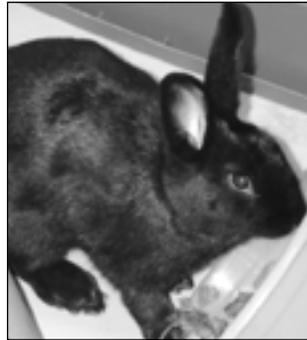


Squirrel is a tiny 3 lb ball of fire who was dumped at a local shelter. She was in need of medical care when we rescued her; her left eye was bulging and behind the eye was a large lump. Luckily the vet was able to remove the lump, which was an abscess behind the eye, but he was not able to save her eye. Squirrel is perfectly healthy,

however, and having only one eye doesn't stop her from running around at top speeds and jumping on top of boxes! Squirrel is perfect with her litterbox and would be a loyal companion to anyone willing to spend time with her. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



Bonnie is a curious and friendly 5.5 lb girl who gobbles all of her hay and comes running for pets. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



Verde is a 5.5 lb black Havanna who likes to sleep on top of her box. Verde was born in November 2002. She's very tidy with her litterbox and loves to run through her cardboard tunnel. She's an excellent hay eater, too! **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



Scarlet is one of Maya's daughters with sleek black fur and a pleasant demeanor. She is now full-grown. She likes to be petted and to lay stretched out in her litterbox. Scarlet weighs about 5 lbs. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



Alfonso, a little mini-rex, gets so excited for his meals that he runs round and round frantically until he is fed. If you pick him up however, he melts in your arms and nuzzles his face under your chin. He weighs about 3.5 lbs, is perfect with his litterbox, and eats a ton of hay for such a little guy. He also loves cruising through his miniature tunnels and boxes. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



Elsie is a sweet young girl, white with black spots, weighing roughly 4 lbs. She's happy and calm, and easy to please by giving her lots of nose pets. She doesn't mind being held; in fact, she loves to snuggle. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



Dolby enjoys a treat and some human and feline companionship.

Life with Dolby

*By Tracy Soltesz and Harold Chittum
Pikeville, Kentucky*

My name is Tracy Soltesz. My husband, Harold Chittum, and I decided last September that we would look into adopting a bunny. We found the Buckeye House Rabbit Society and there on the homepage was a picture of Dolby. He reminded me of a rabbit my family had years ago. What a cute little brown lop! After some discussion, we decided to get the ball rolling on the bunny adoption. Several weeks (and much money spent on bunny stuff) later, we brought Dolby home. I can't say that the entire family welcomed him with open arms or paws, as the case may be. His kitty sister Fran and brother Ed weren't exactly sure about this little brown thing. Ed was convinced that Dolby had fangs and glowing red eyes and

would probably eat him. Ed is afraid of everything. Fran made the first move. She has decided that Dolby is OK and will lie near his cage to keep him company. Dolby seems to appreciate this and will leave the upstairs part of his bunny condo and will lie on the bottom floor near Fran. He has been bad a few times with Fran. He seems to enjoy scaring her by lunging at her. This makes her hiss, which appears to be Dolby's cue to do it again! He has also chased her out of the room! Ed has finally decided to come in Dolby's room, but not too close to the bunny condo. He is still a coward!

We have learned some things since Dolby has moved in: Mustard greens are no good. Bananas are just OK. Apples are pretty good. You can never have enough carrots. Raisins ARE candy. The best way to start the day is with a big salad

with plenty of parsley. The most important thing we have learned is that he is such a joy! There is nothing like watching him run up and down and around his condo when he gets a baby carrot or watching him tear around the room doing wild binkies all the way. Oh, he can be a handful, especially when he kicks out all his litter from his litter box. But he knows he's cute, so he gets away with it. I'm not sure when he got the upper hand, but he has us wrapped around his little bunny foot. He may be a little bunny devil, but we wouldn't have it any other way. Dolby is our little bunny boy. 🐰





Tiny George fought hard for every breath.

A Breathtaking Mystery, Cont'd.

a loud wheezing sound coming from the laundry room. I turned on the light and realized he was inside their cardboard play box. Fearing the worst, I ran back upstairs and woke my husband. We opened the box and saw that George was sitting up very tall, almost on his hind legs, stretching his neck all the way out with his nose high in the air, and gasping for air. His entire body was heaving with each breath. It sounded like he was dying. I told my husband to warm the car, I ran and got the carrier, bundled George up and we drove through a snowstorm to the emergency clinic in Bedford.

At the clinic, the vet listened to George's lungs, told us he had a mild case of pneumonia, and sent us home with a prescription for Baytril, a rabbit-safe antibiotic.

I stayed up most of the night with George, only catching twenty minutes of sleep or so at a time. He never slept, lay down or even relaxed his posture. He struggled so hard for every breath that by morning, I was sure his little lungs were ready to give out. It broke my heart. But George was brave and kept on fighting. The vet at the clinic Friday night told me to watch him closely and to take him to my regular vet if he hadn't improved by Monday. Saturday afternoon, things were already looking really bad and my hope was starting to fade. My poor bunny had not consumed food or water, used the litter box, or slept in over 24 hours. I told my husband that George was so weak and tired that I was pretty sure he would not make it through the night. We made another late night decision, this time to take him to Metropolitan Veterinary Hospital

in Akron, where we knew he would have the best treatment and the best chance for survival.

When we arrived at the hospital after our three hour drive through another snowstorm, I kissed George on the forehead and reluctantly but hopefully handed him over to one of the vet techs. They placed him in an oxygen chamber and after an hour or so he was breathing easier and even resting a little. They contacted Dr. Stewart, the on-call rabbit specialist, and described George's condition. She gave instructions to hydrate with subcutaneous fluids, force feed to prevent stasis, and treat the infection far more aggressively. They started him that night on three different antibiotics—one oral, one injectable and one inhaled. After several days George began to improve and on the third day he was actually eating on his own. The cost of keeping him in the hospital was significant, so once he began to eat and drink on his own, my husband and I decided to bring him home and continue his treatments ourselves. We were able to take him off of the inhaled antibiotic, but every day for several weeks we had to give him two shots, four oral medications, and steam treatments to ease his breathing. He improved steadily for the first week and a half and then his progress stopped. He was not getting worse, but he was not getting better either. One night when I was giving him his medicine, I noticed a tiny speck



of green in one of his nostrils. My husband thought we should try to clean it off, and wiping didn't work, so I tried grabbing it with tweezers. I gave it a tug and it came out about an inch and there was more inside! I pulled it the rest of the way out and it wound up being over three and a half inches long, all in his nasal cavity! The poor little guy had apparently inhaled it several weeks earlier. A quick call to Dr. Stewart confirmed that the piece of hay was indeed the likely cause of all of George's problems. Apparently it was positioned in his airway so that it could not be seen on the x-rays they took at the hospital.

George had worked for two weeks to force the hay back out far enough that we could see it, and once I removed the rest of it, he began to breathe normally again. We finished out the antibiotics and he has been happy and healthy and following Bailey around ever since.

I credit Dr. Stewart and her team at Met Vet with saving George's life because without their help he would not have had the strength to make it through those first few days and fight off the infection that was taking over his tiny body. Dr. Stewart was amazing and I am eternally grateful for all she did for

my very sick rabbit. I am proud to say that it was ultimately George himself, though, who managed to find enough strength to work the hay out enough to show us what was wrong so we could help him. Those weeks of living with the hay inside his airway, causing him such distress and discomfort, must have been awful for him. He had already survived a lot of hard times in his life and this was just one more challenge that George fought through and amazed us all. I always knew he was a very special rabbit and since his recovery, I thank God for every day we have with him. 🐰

Update on the Lorain County Crisis

By Tina Smith and Kristen Doherty

Thanks to the help of Dr. Will Mandel, Chris Niton, Julia Mandel, Buckeye HRS volunteers (helpers and fosterers), adopters, and the many generous donations we've received, things are finally starting to look up. We are happy to report that we have not had a new litter born in over three months!

Back in October 2005, we were inundated with 100-plus unspayed/unneutered breeding rabbits living in the walls, under the floor and in the garage; today, we have a brighter picture. The rabbit population in the Lorain County house currently sits at 62 rabbits. Dr. Mandel and crew have managed an amazing spay/neuter of close to 65% of the current population. Buckeye HRS fosterers and adopters have succeeded in placing over 30 spayed/neutered rabbits. Many generous donors answered our plea for help, which has enabled us to buy food, hay and supplies for the bunnies to keep them alive and healthy.

Through repetition and example, we have managed to effect a marked improvement in the homeowner's (and her children's) caretaking regarding daily cleaning, feeding, and watering. We have educated the family on warning signs of rabbit illnesses and potential emergencies. There is also a noticeable decrease in the number of rabbits "mysteriously getting loose" and running free, which was a major problem in the beginning; not only did this cause pregnancies, it also resulted in injuries attributable to fighting among the rabbits.

Is the crisis over? Sadly, no. We still need foster and permanent homes for over 60 rabbits. While we have made amazing strides in educating the family, we still have 62 rabbits living in an essentially abandoned house still needing daily care and attention. We are still asking for volunteers to help clean cages, feed and water the bunnies. We also still welcome donations of large pens or dog crates, hay and pellets.

Thanks to all those who have given their time, supplies and/or monetary donations, and for your continued support throughout this crisis. Let's keep the momentum going! 🐰



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.



Buckeye House Rabbit Society

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Buy a bunny a little time...