



# HARELINES



Volume 12 Number 2 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY Spring/Summer 2008

## A Talk with Kristen Doherty, Buckeye HRS Fosterer and Educator



*Kristen Doherty, a key member of the all-volunteer Buckeye House Rabbit Society's rescue and education team, talks about her beginnings in the world of rabbits and what keeps her going.*

### ***How did you get started with rabbits?***

I was living in Chicago when I got Scooter, my first rabbit, in 1991. For four years or so I didn't have very much information on how to care for him or where to find a veterinarian. I did just about everything wrong. It wasn't until 1995 when I started looking on the Internet that I found the House Rabbit Society.

### ***What was your first impression of the House Rabbit Society?***

It's the best source of rabbit care information out there. For me, the website was a wealth of information and it was there that I discovered the connection between pet stores and pet rabbit overpopulation. I had no idea it was such a huge problem. As I got more involved, it became apparent that HRS was made up of a very passionate, dedicated group of individuals across the U.S. who were more than willing to answer any questions I had

about rabbit diet, behavior, medical issues, or anything else related to rabbits.

### ***When were you introduced to the Buckeye House Rabbit Society?***

In 1996 Paul and I moved to Ohio. Before then, we would talk about how we could help with the homeless rabbit problem by fostering a few rabbits. The Buckeye House Rabbit Society was just getting started. I contacted Kristi Cole to find a good rabbit veterinarian in the Cleveland area and shortly thereafter, Paul and I took in our first foster rabbits, Monkey and Bitsy. Of course we fell in love with them and they became permanent Doherty family members, along with Scooter. Then we added a fourth, Vicky, my 5-year-old niece's rabbit, who came to live with us when my sister-in-law passed away suddenly.

### ***How many rabbits have you fostered?***

Since Monkey and Bitsy, Paul and I have fostered over 250 rabbits.

### ***How do the rabbits in your care come to you?***

They come through various sources – mostly animal shelters and good

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**Visit the House Rabbit Society**  
**at <http://www.rabbit.org> and the**  
**Buckeye House Rabbit Society at**  
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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 party. All of our members' information is held in the strictest confidence.

## Special Thanks to:

**Ray Vasvari and Ann Zimmerman**, for their donation in memory of Emma.

**Pam Loch**, for her generous gift in memory of her beloved **Rascal**.

**Adriana Mastroguiseppe**, for her much-appreciated contribution in honor of her dear lop, **Chili**, who crossed the Rainbow Bridge on April 29, 2008.

**The Charity Bookshelf at the Flaming Ice Cube**, for their fundraising efforts on our behalf.

**Katie Liepold and James Penzien**, for providing temporary care for two of the Willoughby bunnies on very short notice.

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

**Donald Freeland, Michele Glick, Jann and Mark Kuntavanish, Sue Milewski, Marjorie Aleva, Bonnie Hagerman, Amber Reckner, Tracy Soltesz and Harold Chittum, Liz Claytor, Ryan and Cindy Battelle, Sue Gapinski, Ginette Brumbaugh, Jim and Laura Brown, Jennifer Patronis and Brett Grenesko, Jude May, Dawn Lieser.**

**Our new and continuing Sanctuary Rabbit Sponsors!** This program would not be possible without your compassion and generosity. We wish we could acknowledge each of you individually!

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





## Nineteen Rabbits in Willoughby Need Your Help!

*By Kristen Doherty*

In early April a dog and cat rescue group called us about an elderly man who was having difficulty caring for 19 rabbits. He started with only 3 or 4 and was concerned that they would multiply quickly. They were living outdoors in an enclosed chicken wire pen that he built in his backyard and had set up as a playground for them. It had a children's slide, some wooden ramps, and a rusty old swing set to play on. In the middle of the playground was a low flat structure made of cinder blocks and a plywood roof. This was their shelter for the past 4-5 harsh Cleveland winters.

When I arrived on the scene, there they were -- 19 scruffy-looking bunnies -- digging, chasing, playing, eating, and sleeping on a floor of mud and feces. They seemed to be having a ball with all of this outdoor freedom, but the reality was that they were drinking dirty water from a rusty bucket, eating pellets off the ground, and had no hay. Several rabbits needed immediate medical attention. There were visible abscesses on some of their bodies due to fighting, as well as tattered ears, torn noses, and matted, dirty fur.

After assessing them all, I packed up 6 bunnies the first day, brought them to my house, and took them to get spayed and neutered. The goal was to get all of the females spayed as soon as possible to prevent them from reproducing. A few days later, Katie and I returned to retrieve another 4 and immediately transported them for surgery and treatment. Two days later, I retrieved the remaining 9 rabbits and took them to the vet as well. At the time this newsletter went to print, all are spayed and neutered, except one. During the spays, we learned that all of the females were in the early stages of pregnancy. By acting quickly, we were able to prevent an estimated 7 litters that could potentially have resulted in some 56 babies.

Thank you to Barberton Veterinary Clinic for scheduling and performing 19 spays and neuters so quickly. Barberton was able to treat all of the superficial wounds and some other minor issues. Thanks also to Katie Liepold who helped to trap, sex, and assess the bunnies on site. Katie is also caring for 2 of the females in her home.

Until they recover from their spay/neuter surgeries and until their wounds fully heal, they will remain in foster care. Many of them, unfortunately will have to be returned to the man's house until we free up space in our foster homes to take in one or two at a time.



### If you would like to help with donations, here's what we still need:

- ♦ money to cover spay/neuter and other medical costs (send to: Buckeye House Rabbit Society, P.O. Box 5767, Athens, OH 45701)
- ♦ Oxbow timothy hay and/or timothy pellets (contact Kristen)

**Please contact Kristen Doherty (440-543-4959) if you are interested in adopting one of these cute little bunnies or if you would like to donate Oxbow hay/pellets.**

**Thank you for your generosity. Adopting any bunny from the Buckeye HRS means that one of these outdoor bunnies can now come into a foster home and receive proper care.**



# Somebunny Needs YOU!



Big, beautiful **Diva** will want a star on her door while she enchants you with her gentle ways and loving nature. An excellent litterbox performer with a strong appetite, her fondness for tunneling through paper bags adds

to this eight-pound bunny's character. Her past is a mystery and her age unknown, but don't let that stop you from inviting Diva to play a leading role in your home. **Please contact Herta Rodina (herta@ohare.org) 740-797-7616.**



This is **Lucy**. She is a mini-rex with beautiful gray and white velvet fur, born in the spring of 2006 and weighing about three pounds. Look at her and you would never know that she had been very dehydrated and near death. Curious, she loves to see what is going on, and is also starting to enjoy attention. Lucy is good with

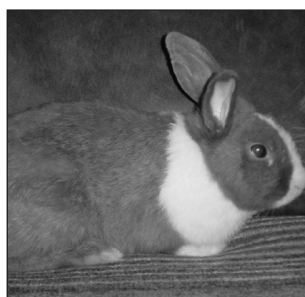
her litterbox habits and loves her food. She is ready for that special person to give her lots of love and attention. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



**Freud** has a beautiful white coat with light gray ears and a light gray nose and weighs roughly 6 lbs. He had been sitting at Wood County Humane Society for a few months when we decided to take him in and find him a new home. Freud is very friendly and loves to be petted. He also likes to play with his plastic slinky and the many other toys in his pen. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



**Cinderella** is a graceful young beauty. She doesn't need Prince Charming; all she needs is a loving home. Give her a happily ever after by calling today and making her part of your family. **Please contact Michele Roth Kerley (michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.**



**Tazwell** is one of the bunnies rescued from the Elyria overcrowding situation, from one of the last litters born there (Jan – Apr 2006). A little shy, Taz will need time with you to warm up and develop trust. He's on the small side, full-grown at about four pounds. He loves his bamboo paper

plate holders for chewing and is perfect with his litter box. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



**J.J.** is a funny and confident bunny who loves to play with his toys and be around people. He weighs about five pounds, is perfect with his litter box, and is used to being around dogs. J.J. would be a good choice for a family with kids. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



**Ramona** is another Dutch bunny from the Elyria overcrowding situation. Despite her background, Ramona enjoys being around people and receiving pets, especially nose pets. Ramona loves to explore her surroundings and play with her cardboard toys. She's a

five pound black and white little girl, a good hay eater, and a great litter box user! **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



## Adopted!



**Ariel** is swimming in happiness since her adoption by Susan Brawders.♥ Congratulations to Amanda Cullen for making **Mickey** the leader of their band -- or at least a member of their family.♥ Congratulations to the Glenns on the adoption of **Donald**. Now he has a family that gives a quack with lots of love.♥ Pretty **Sally** quickly found a loving home with Dawn Lieser.♥ **Tinkerbelle** made the Bishop family's wishes come true by adopting her as a companion for their bunny **Cartman**.♥ **Ember** has found her forever home with Linda in Gallipolis, where she's getting to know bunny buddy **Oliver**.♥ **Mitch** was adopted by Matt and family in Aurora and has a new pal, **Millie**. They both keep Matt company while he's working in his home office.♥ Diana and her family have found a new friend for **Egbert**; **Roz** now enjoys lots of attention and space to explore.♥ **Duke** was adopted by the Mikoda family in Akron, where he gets lots of attention from **Morgan**.♥ Paul and Eileen of Solon adopted a new little boy, **Linus**, who watches the Cleveland Indians games with Paul.♥ **Malcolm** was adopted by Katie and James in North Olmsted, where he enjoys lots of bunny company.



## Free Money – Check Your Employee Benefits



*Have you checked your Employee Benefits for this perk?*

As part of their employee benefits package, many companies offer a little-known benefit to their full-time employees that awards a cash grant to a qualifying not-for-profit charity. The company will donate a check for hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars to any non-profit charity of your choice, as long as the charity is a 501(c)(3).

It works like this: you donate a block of time -- typically 50-75 hours -- doing volunteer work for an organization that you choose. You then fill out a form (typically the form is accessed online via your company's employee website). On the form, you select the charity you want to be the recipient of the grant (if the *Buckeye House Rabbit Society* is not on the selection list, you can request that it be added.) After all the appropriate signatures and approvals are obtained, the company sends a check to the selected organization.

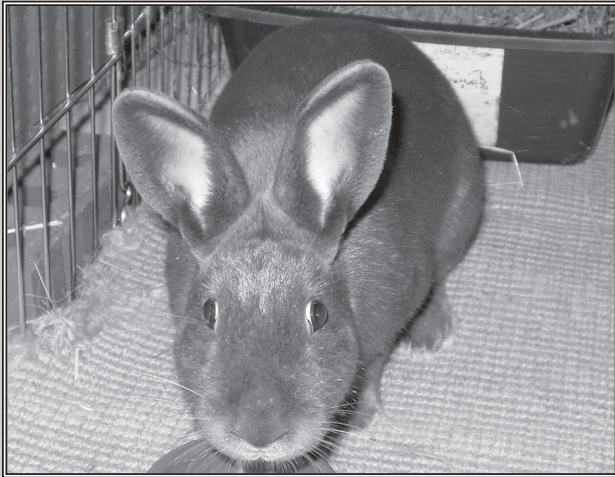
Typically the company limits this benefit to one organization per year per employee. Verizon and Walmart are examples of two companies who offer this benefit to their employees.

Check your company's employee website or contact your human resources representative for more information on how to take advantage of this benefit.



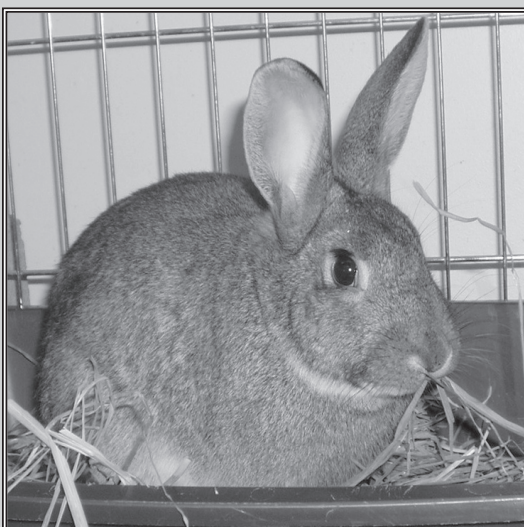
## Spotlight On ...

### Some Foster Rabbits who've been Waiting – and WAITING -- for a Forever Home



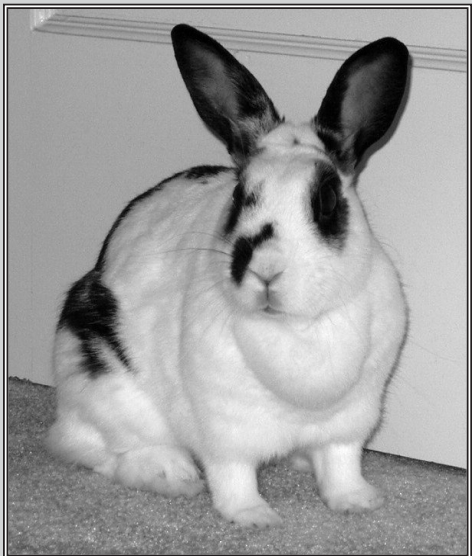
**P**umpkin was rescued with Benji in November 2005. She has never really overcome her shyness, although she will now come up to you at feeding time and may even allow you to pet her a bit. I believe that her personality will shine if she were to be bonded to another rabbit or in a home where she can have lots of free time. She really is a sweet girl and we want to find her the perfect home. She deserves it. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

**Sylvester** is quite the charming boy. He has been with us since July 2005. He came from a shelter that was going to euthanize him because he was "mean". (He was only trying to tell the shelter staff that he did not like hands poking at him!) Sylvester has learned to trust and has become a wonderful bunny with a really fun personality. He does great binkies and likes to follow you around. He especially loves to show off his charisma for the females (of the human species, that is). Why not make an appointment to meet him? **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



**B**enji was rescued from fate as a meat rabbit in November 2005. He is adorable and docile. He will warm up to you very quickly and doesn't mind a pet or two on his head. His favorite pastime is watching the world go by from the top of his large cardboard box. He will do best with someone who has lots of time to spend with him and will give him free run of the house. (This bunny loves his free time!) Because Benji hates to be picked up and will scream if you try, he needs a person who understands that fear and can work around it. He will make a fantastic pet for that special someone. **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**





**B**elle has been with us the longest. We have had her with us since June 2003. She has been passed up for adoption because of her shyness. However, after having known her for so long we think that she will flourish in just the right environment. She absolutely loves head pets and bunny massages and does not mind if you hold her for long periods of time. She will come up to you for head pets when she is feeling confident. I can't find enough good things to say about her; she is just a sweetheart. Can you welcome Belle into your home? **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

Meet **Kitty Kat**, a small dwarf-like bunny who's a little on the quiet side, but once she gets to know and trust you, she is very friendly. Kitty Kat was abandoned along with five other rabbits in a house whose tenants had been evicted. Instead of finding homes for their many animals before they moved out, or taking the animals with them, they simply abandoned them. Luckily, a kind neighbor knew there were rabbits inside the house and agreed to take them in until she could find a shelter or an organization to care for them.

**K**itty Kat likes to be petted and sometimes doesn't mind being picked up. She packs a lot of hay and salad into her tiny body, weighing roughly 3.0 lbs. She has rich chocolate brown fur with markings like a Siamese cat and one white paw. This little girl also wins a prize for being the best with her litterbox - she is tidy as well as tiny. **If you would like to consider adopting Kitty Kat into your family, please contact Kristen Doherty at 440-543-4959.**





*A Talk with Kristen Doherty, Buckeye  
HRS Fosterer and Educator Cont'd.*

Samaritans who either find a rabbit outdoors or know of a situation where a rabbit is being neglected or mistreated. When we take rabbits into foster care, our priority is to take rabbits who are at risk of being euthanized. Those who live outdoors in poor living conditions and are typically victims of neglect are also a priority. Every call I get is a different situation; I have to evaluate each carefully and often have to make some difficult choices.

***What is the hardest thing about being so involved in rabbit rescue and education?***

The hardest part is knowing that I can't help all of the rabbits I know need help. It's impossible to help every single one. Thinking about the sheer volume of unwanted rabbits can be overwhelming at times.

***What's the best part about helping the rabbits you do reach?***

The best part is seeing a bunny who's come from a hopeless situation -- maybe facing sickness, starvation, or euthanasia -- live a happy and healthy life once s/he's in foster care. It's a sort of Cinderella story. After they've received basic care, medical attention, and nutrition, these rabbits begin to have a high quality of life. Their story gets even better when they are chosen by a family who will care for them for the rest of their life. The day I take them to their new home is a very special day for the bunny, for the adoptive family, and for me. It's very rewarding to see the joy it brings to the families who adopt them.

***Is there any rabbit who has particularly touched your heart in the last 11 years?***

The Sanctuary bunnies. These are rabbits who have, for the most part, been given up on by their owners, by shelters, and in some cases by vets. They are rabbits whose health issues demand so much attention that most people don't want to deal with them. We care for several sanctuary bunnies in our foster home, but there are two in particular, Calvin and Lazlo -- Cazlo for short --

who make us laugh every single day. If we come home from a particularly stressful day at work, we just look at this pair and can't help but crack up. We've had Calvin for six years and Lazlo for five, and they immediately became best buddies as soon as we put them together. They both have severely tilted heads (tilted in opposite directions, like bookends) from severe ear infections each had when they first came to us, but they are now both perfectly healthy. Whenever we come around (or they hear the pellet jar), they get so excited that they start running in circles, in opposite directions, and usually crash into one another. They love to be petted and never fail to entertain us with their hilarious antics.

***The work you do is unending – how do you keep doing it?***

I couldn't do this without my husband, Paul. He is the unsung hero. He keeps me going and he always has creative ideas for our rabbit areas. He is just as devoted and cares just as much about these rabbits as I do. I can't not do this work. I know deep down that if I don't do this work, there will be that many more bunnies who won't have a chance. More bunnies would die and I couldn't go on knowing that. Having a sense of humor also helps, and that I get from the rabbits!

***What are your interests outside of the Buckeye HRS?***

I enjoy cardmaking (often with rabbits on them) and paper crafting.

***If people reading this article could do one thing to help, what would it be?***

Foster one bunny for a period of time, even if it's only a short period of time. The more people who foster even just one rabbit, the more bunnies' lives we are able to save. If fostering is not an option, consider sponsoring a sanctuary rabbit (by sending a monthly contribution) or making a one-time gift of any amount to the sanctuary





program. We are so appreciative of any amount people can give.

**Kristen and Paul work countless hours on behalf of rabbits in need. Not only do they care for the foster and sanctuary bunnies in their home, Kristen also meets with potential adopters, conducts educational outreach whenever possible, and returns hundreds of phone calls each year to people who no longer want their rabbits.**

**Many readers have most likely found the lagomorphic love of their life thanks to Kristen. Thank you, Kristen and Paul, for all you have done for rabbits in need.**



## Preparing for the Trip to the ER

*By Rebecca and Raymond Nagley*

Have you ever had an emergency that led you to conclude you were never prepared? Rabbit emergency readiness includes:

- 1) what you should have before an emergency occurs,
- 2) what you should know before you get to the veterinarian (provided you already have a veterinarian, alternate veterinarian or Emergency Room that can treat your rabbit), and
- 3) how you should act on the way to the veterinarian.

### What should you have before the emergency?

Having the items listed below on the “Rabbit Emergency/First Aid Kit Checklist” will help you prepare for most emergencies. The necessities include the travel carrier, towels, body temperature controlling materials, and basic dietary or medicinal needs for the trip. Most of the kit consists of first aid items that are



useful in many other situations and widely available for purchase. Please realize, however, that these are in no way replacements for professional expertise provided by a rabbit-savvy veterinarian.

### What should you know before you get to the veterinarian?

In order to assist the veterinarian, you should have the following information about your rabbit:

1. Does your bunny have a history of medical problems? If so, describe the details.
2. Does your bunny take any medication? If so, make a list of all his meds and bring it with you.
3. How much does your rabbit normally weigh? How much water and food does he consume? Have there been any changes in urination and defecation?
4. What is your bun's regular diet?

Previous medical documents and medications could also help tremendously if this visit is to a different office or veterinarian. If you suspect poisoning or an animal bite, try to bring the

*Continued on page 11*



## Opening Your Heart Again

*By Michele Roth Kerley*

When I lost Lily, my little girl bunny, on July 29th it was hard but I still had my little boy, Sweetpea to share my grief. It eased my pain knowing that I was comforting him with his loss.

A month later on the Saturday morning of Labor Day weekend, I lost my Sweetpea. I was devastated. I picked him up and lay with him for hours crying and petting him until my brother came down to comfort me and give him a proper burial next to Lily. The rest of the long weekend was spent crying on the sofa.

Constant reminders of my loss were all around me. I decided to put their toys away. I didn't want to throw them out because I hoped one day I could look at them fondly, even though at the time it hurt to see them.



The only thing that I could bring myself to do was visit a tattoo parlor that Monday afternoon. Although it's not a good idea to make rash decisions during a time of grief, it was the right choice for me. I always knew that I wanted to have a permanent memorial of Sweetpea; I just didn't know when I would do it. Even though body art isn't for everyone, it gave me relief for the first time in three days.

During the days and weeks that followed, several people shared their stories of grief and pain. The common concern seemed to be if and when they would

be ready to accept another animal as a part of their family.

I think the length of time and the decision varies from person to person. Since I foster rabbits, I've had several people contact me with this predicament and they all had different ideas as to when they would be ready to adopt another rabbit.

With several rabbits in foster care and limited space, I had one of the foster rabbits in an upstairs room for weeks before Lily's and Sweetpea's passing. He was quite the charmer and he started getting run of the front of the house. I still wasn't thinking of keeping him at this time. After their passing, the only one who knew when the time would be right for me ... was me.

It was a surprisingly smooth transition once I made the decision to adopt Wit, a handsome Rex who is white with brown spots. I think the fact that he looked totally different from Sweetpea and Lily was important because



it allowed me to accept Wit without comparing him to them. I could love and appreciate him knowing that he's not replacing them in my life story but he's his own joyful chapter.

There's no textbook answer to when and if the time is right for someone to get another companion animal after a loss. Just remember, it's alright to grieve and heal at your own pace. There are so many others who have shared this pain and got through it. When you're ready to open your heart again ... you will.



### Preparing for the Trip to the ER Cont'd.

suspicious object for proper identification by a trained professional.

### How should you act on the way to the veterinarian?

No one knows you better than the little (or big) fuzzy one. It is important to keep calm during the emergency so your pet remains calm also. Maintain a soothing voice while reassuring your bunny that everything is going to be alright. Your sense of relaxation will give your pet a sense of security throughout the trip.



RABBIT EMERGENCY/FIRST AID KIT CHECKLIST		
	ITEM	CHECK
1	Travel Carrier	
2	Baby food, apple sauce	
3	Feeding Syringes	
4	Heating pad to treat hypothermia	
5	Ice Pack to treat overheating	
6	Flushing syringes	
7	Towel	
8	Simethicone to treat gas	
9	Betadine and Novalsan to treat cuts	
10	Neosporin antibiotic ointment	
11	Gauze bandages	
12	Saline solution	
13	Pedialyte for hydration	
14	Probiotic for GI bacteria	
15	Flour/Syptic Powder to treat nail bleeding	
16	Digital thermometer	
17	Scissors	
18	Cotton Squares	
19	Bandage/Vet wrap	
20	Flea comb/brush	
21	Hydrogen Peroxide	
22	Q-tips	
23	Nail Clipper	
24	Tweezers	
25	Butterfly bandages	
26	Stethoscope	
27	Otoscope to check mouth/ears	





## 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**

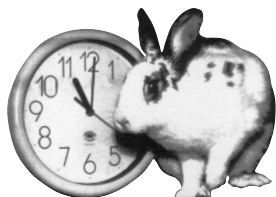
**All donations are  
tax-deductible.**



**Buckeye House Rabbit Society**

P.O. Box 5767

Athens, OH 45701



Buy a bunny a little time...