



HARELINES



Volume 13 Number 1 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

Winter 2009

How It All Started

By Kristi Cole

I can blame my fascination with rabbits on my parents. My first stuffed animal as an infant was a pink bunny. My first riding toy was a yellow plastic rabbit on wheels and the pink ears were the handle bars (sounds odd now, but I enjoyed it back then). I'm sure their intent was not to have me end up with a houseful of rabbits as an adult, but in hindsight, it looks like it was meant to be.

In second grade, I begged to bring the classroom rabbit home over Thanksgiving break and Mom finally gave in. Since we had a cat, we kept the visiting bunny, Timothy, in the bathroom during his stay. That was my first hands-on contact with a house rabbit and I was smitten. I spent many hours in that tiny bathroom with Timothy during that long weekend. I begged for a pet rabbit of my own, but due to the aforementioned cat (and also probably due to my inattention to keeping his litterpan clean), I was denied a pet rabbit time and again. I have certainly made up for it since then.

In college I snuck a rabbit into my dorm room (not a smart move) and it wasn't until the second semester before the authorities found out and made me find a new home for him.

Thankfully my future mother-in-law was an animal lover and took him to her house to live out his days. That was before we knew about bunny proofing and she lost several lamp cords during his stay. Thank goodness we know better now!

When we got married in 1988 Bill and I got our first pet, an agouti mini-lop rabbit named Bunjamin, who lived in our dining room. She was not spayed and did not have the proper diet. We just didn't know back then how important those factors were and she only lived about three years. I decided that I didn't want to go through the sadness of losing a pet every three years, so if that was the lifespan of rabbits, I was not going to get another one. A coworker, who knew how much I loved rabbits and that I had just lost one, told me her neighbor's

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rabbits had produced an accidental litter and wondered if I wanted one of the babies. They were so darn cute that I decided to give it one more try. So Bean came to live with us.

Back then, there was so little information available on rabbits as indoor pets. With access to the internet growing so fast at that time, information on pet



Kristi holding a former sanctuary rabbit, Harrison.

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

THE BUCKEYE HRS RESPECTS YOUR
PRIVACY

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:

Tony Hackenberg, for his generous gift in memory of Rob and Kim's beloved **Otis**.

Kristina Hubbell, for her kind donation in tribute to **Liz Claytor's Lily**.

Linda Gardner, for her wonderful contribution in memory of **Hugo and Chloe**.

Pam Loch's 5th grade students, who once again honored their teacher with generous holiday donations to the Buckeye HRS!

Annette Tait, for donating an exquisite art-accessory bag for our first ever Spring Raffle. See page 10 for details.

Jon and Linda Garramone, for their generous donation towards **Jongee's** neuter.

Union Central Life Insurance Company and the **anonymous employee** who initiated their matching gift.

Karalee Curry and all the volunteers at the Columbus HRS, for most generously helping with spay/neuter expenses for the **Willoughby** rescues.

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

Susan Pike, David Bass, Carrie Goglin and Mike Lipinski, Christopher Rouse, Lisa Catron, Anita Watson, Paula Otter, Patricia Wolanski, Donna Waldorf, Kathy Kallay, Clay and Nancy Pasternack, Bob and Holly Piekarczyk, Sue Milewski, the Savage family, Scott Hatfield, Deb Raddish, Christa Billerman and Fayaz Bhanji, Jim and Laura Gills, Mary Zimmerman, Cathy Montiegel, Joyce and David Weaver, June Gates, Doris and Adriana Mastroguiseppe, Janet Reed.

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.



Rabbit Syphilis

By Kristen West, DVM

Mandel Veterinary Hospital

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Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

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When a rabbit comes down with symptoms such as a crusty nose and congestion, an infection involving *Pasteurella* bacteria is often a first concern. It is not as common to link these symptoms to the venereal disease syphilis. Some may be surprised to find out that syphilis is indeed a common concern in rabbits and can cause the above symptoms and more.

Rabbit syphilis, or vent disease, is caused by a spirochete (worm-like, spiral-shaped) bacteria called *Treponema paraluis-cuniculi*. This infection is transmitted from rabbit to rabbit through direct contact, with genital-to-genital contact being the most common mode of transmission. Because it is often a sexually-transmitted disease, breeding rabbits must be closely monitored for this infection.

The most common findings with a *Treponema* infection are proliferative, scaly lesions and ulcers on and around the genitalia. These lesions may also be found on the nose, lips, chin, and eyelids (spread by rabbits cleaning themselves in these areas). The crust and scale

on and around the nose can be so bad that the rabbit can have trouble breathing. Lymph nodes may be enlarged. Breeding rabbits might also display signs of uterine infection (metritis), retained placentas, abortions, and neonatal deaths.

This disease is often more noticeable in female rabbits. Males are often carriers, but don't always show symptoms. Males may display a characteristic star-shaped scar on their scrotum as their only sign of syphilis. Rabbit syphilis, although not transmittable to people, is quite contagious from rabbit to rabbit.

At the first sign of disease, the rabbit should be examined by an experienced rabbit veterinarian. The veterinarian may perform tests to rule out other illnesses that can cause similar lesions, such as ringworm, bacterial infection, or sunburn. A skin biopsy can be taken to definitively diagnose syphilis, but skin scrapes can also be helpful by themselves. Often the way that the skin lesions are distributed can lead to a diagnosis of rabbit syphilis without a lot of invasive testing.

Treponema infection is very treatable, especially if caught early. It generally responds very well to antibiotics such as injectable penicillin (e.g. Pen G). Any exposed rabbits should be treated, since not all rabbits will display clinical signs. Affected rabbits can remain carriers of syphilis, so these rabbits should be spayed or neutered. As with any illness, early detection and appropriate treatment are key.

New ohare.org E-mail Addresses

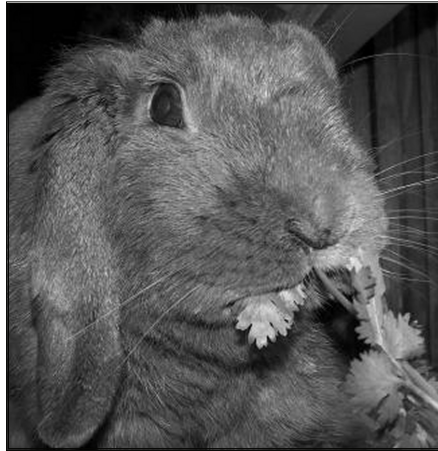
In order to reduce spam and ensure more dependable delivery of legitimate messages, all Buckeye HRS volunteers have new e-mail addresses. Each follows the same pattern, for instance, bhrs-herta@ohare.org. For a complete list, see the shaded box on page 2. Same folks, improved contactability!



*How It All Started
Cont'd.*

rabbits became more and more accessible. Once I got internet access, I could not get enough of the message boards with rabbit care information. I learned so much every day and began to implement my new knowledge in Bean's life. He had a veterinary exam, began a proper diet of greens and hay along with limited pellets, and was given more freedom in the house as I learned bunnyproofing techniques. I was thrilled to know that many people throughout the country had house rabbits as pets. Before my internet access, I did not know one single other person who had an indoor rabbit for a pet. Some of the message boards turned into e-mail lists in that first year I was online and I joined several of those lists. I was excited to learn more about rabbit care and "meet" more people online who had rabbits.

It was through one of those lists that I learned about the House Rabbit Society. It was in its first five years and was really growing quickly nationwide. Most of the chapters at that time were gearing up in the larger cities -- Chicago, Seattle, Baltimore/DC, San Diego, and so forth -- in addition to the National HRS in Oakland. I joined the national HRS and several chapters so I could learn and receive their newsletters. During these few years, I met several HRS volunteers from other chapters at various events and gatherings. I remember wishing that there was a chapter in Ohio. I didn't



Pebble, my first foster rabbit, whom we ended up adopting, lived to be nearly 12 years old.

really know anyone in Ohio yet who had house rabbits. I knew how my recently-acquired rabbit care knowledge had greatly benefited the lives of my rabbits and I wanted to help share that with other people. Then I met a few Ohioans online and we talked about starting a chapter. However, we were from different parts of the state and not located around one primary city. We talked to National HRS about having a different kind of chapter in Ohio that would cover more than one metropolitan area. It got approval and the Buckeye House Rabbit Society was formed in 1997 by the three chapter founders -- Libby Armstrong Moore from Cleveland, Herta Rodina, chapter manager, from Athens and myself from Akron/Canton. Shortly thereafter, Libby moved to sunny California and thankfully Kristen Doherty moved into the Cleveland area at about the same time. Kristen became

a vital part of the chapter's growth in northeast Ohio.

When the chapter formed, I became an educator and Bill and I opened our home to foster rabbits. We have had over 120 rabbits pass through our doors on their way to permanent homes. Of course, some have stayed here, too. Kristen, Herta and I all ended up adopting our first foster rabbit ourselves. Letting go is hard and it's a necessity we have all had to learn in order to keep making room for more rabbits in need. Recently, our home has been occupied by more sanctuary rabbits than foster rabbits. While foster rabbits leave when a good permanent home is found, the sanctuary rabbits are not adoptable for health or behavior reasons. They stay at an HRS home until their days are over.

Having so many rabbits come and go over the years has definitely been a learning experience. Some were here for only a short time and others like my own Cinnamon lived with us for 13.5 years (he passed in 2008). Though I have learned so much about veterinary care and rabbit behavior, they have also taught me about perseverance, trust and joy. For that I will be forever grateful.



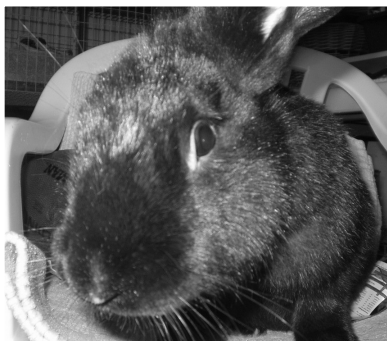
Bigger is Better!!

By Sue Zimmerman

Meet “**Big Ben**” (aka **Benny**). Benny was found wandering around someone’s backyard this past summer. When I made arrangements to pick him up I was expecting a nice normal-sized rabbit. What I saw was an adorable, but very extra-large, black bunny.

When **Benny** went to his first vet appointment he astonished the staff. He was the largest bunny that they had ever treated and he weighed in at 10.5 lbs! In order to accommodate **Benny’s** large stature we needed to make some adjustments to our “normal” setup for our foster buns.

We discovered that **Benny** needed a lid on his exercise pen to keep him from climbing out. Since **Benny** is a large bun, he easily scaled the walls of his pen. Standing on his back feet he used the pen’s grids just like rungs on a ladder. A few steps up and he was a free man.



A larger litter box was also needed. We used a cement mixing tray (available at home improvement stores) which is about double the size of an extra-large cat litter pan. The trays are a sturdy plastic and are easy to clean.

Benny needs everything on an “extra large” scale. Bowls, toys, and cardboard boxes are super-sized to fit his needs. Bigger things take up more room in his living quarters. We try to give him a little extra free time so he can really stretch out. He also eats way more hay than any of the other rabbits.

Benny also has a BIG personality. When he interacts with people he likes to follow you everywhere. He will completely flatten out for pets and will melt your heart. He is a total ham when there is food or veggies involved. He acts as though he is starving and makes a big production out of feeding time.

People tend to turn away from adopting large bunnies, but personally I love them. They are usually quite docile and have the best of personalities.

Larger bunnies are also a good match for families with younger children. Big bunnies have a larger, sturdier bone structure and are less likely to get hurt if picked up or held incorrectly. I have also found that the bigger buns are a lot more affectionate with their humans too. And if you want to see something very entertaining, try watching a 10.5 lb bunny do a binky!!

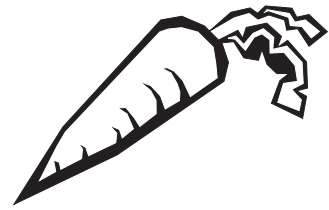
Benny is currently available for adoption. Come and meet this charming and handsome guy for yourself and you will discover that bigger is better!

E-mail Sue Zimmerman – bhrs-sue@ohare.org – or call 419-355-8433.

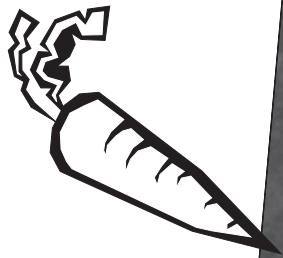




Photo Contest Winners

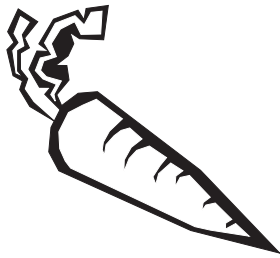


*Bunny Mischief
by Norm Henke
with Biscuit, Corvette, and Beau*



*Bunnies Relaxing
by Beth Smith
with Inky, Niblet, and Milo*

... from the northeast Ohio Buckeye HRS picnic



*Bunnies and Their People
by Norm Henke
with Clover*



*Snuggle Bunnies
by Christine Bhanji
with Jasper and Ella*



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 (bhhs-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 (bhhs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**

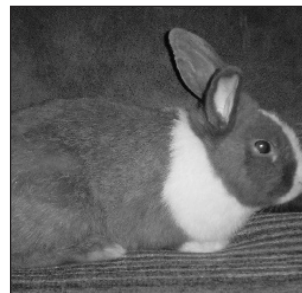


Freud has a beautiful white coat with light gray ears and a light gray nose and weighs roughly 6 lbs. He had been sitting at Wood County Humane Society for a few months when we decided to take him in and find him a new home. Freud is very friendly and loves to be petted. He also likes to play with his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



Petite and sweet -- that's **Kelby!** Weighing only about two pounds, this-softer-than-soft mini rex will cheer up the gloomiest day as she races through her cardboard tunnel or tosses her plastic keys. Affectionate and easy to pick up, she's always ready for a serious cuddle, even at meal times. **Kelby** has already dealt with a lot in her year or so of

life. Found in the woods in early September '08, **Kelby** gave birth to four babies within days of being rescued. She was a wonderful mother and all four bunnies survived. Once her babies were weaned, **Kelby** was spayed and is now waiting for that special someone to make her New Year bright. **Please contact Herta Rodina (bhhs-herta@ohare.org) 740-797-7616.**



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.**



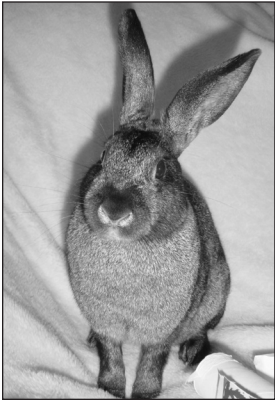
J.J. is a funny and confident bunny who loves to play with his toys and be around people. He weighs about five pounds, is perfect with his litter box, and is used to being around dogs. J.J. would be a good choice for a family with kids. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



Maggie-Pie (aka Maggie) is just about the friendliest bunny you will ever meet! She loves to play inside her Bunny's Magic Dream Cottage and loves to follow you all over the place. She also enjoys standing on her back feet and leaning forward at the front of her pen. This is so that you can give her her favorite thing: belly rubs! Make an appointment with us to meet Maggie soon! **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Meet **Benji**. He's a domestic bun who looks a lot like a wild cottontail. 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 who 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 hutchmates! **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



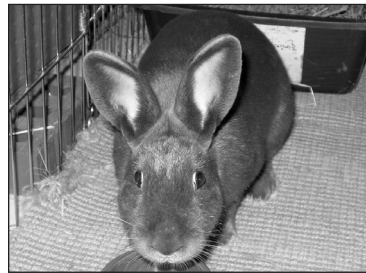
Esther is beautiful dark brown agouti girl with long ears that stand straight and tall. She is an independent spirit with a mind of her own, and she'll keep you amused for hours as she hops about and exerts her assertive personality. She weighs about 5 lbs and is perfect with her litterbox. **Please contact Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959.**



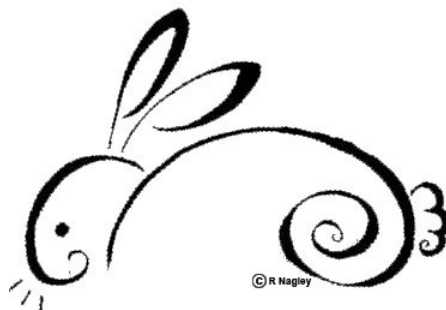
Sylvester is quite a unique looking bunny with his stripes and two-toned face! He LOVES his free time and pellets. This handsome guy would make a great addition to your home. He has lots of love to give. Why not make an appointment to meet him? **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**



Jongee is an adorable brown and white Dutch bunny with a calm and pleasant temperament. **Jongee** was found in someone's yard with a huge bite wound on his back. After months of healing, he is now ready to be adopted. We can't say enough good things about this bunny! **Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrs-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 (bhrrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.**





Adopted!



Butterball, now **Lucy**, is happy in her new home with Shawn Gurzynski and bunny pal **Max** of Perrysburg. ♥ **Big Red and Jenna**, two of the 19 bunnies rescued from the Willoughby situation, are now best friends and have both been adopted by Cynthia in Novelty, where they have lots and lots of space to run around. ♥ **Bruner**, another Willoughby bunny, is now the center of attention at his new home with the Schultz family of Leroy. ♥ **Byron** was welcomed with open arms into the home of the Mumme family in Massillon. ♥ **Cecil** (Willoughby bunny, now **Spaetzle**) shares space with a new bunny friend and his new human companion, Melinda in Mayfield Heights. ♥ **Winslow** (Willoughby bunny) is working on a friendship with his new bunny roommate at David's house in Copley. ♥ **Flo** (Willoughby bunny) has won the heart of our volunteer Katie and her husband James of North Olmsted. ♥ This **Booboo** will be getting lots of kisses. The Cartwrights have ripped off the bandaid and the pain of not having a home has healed. ♥ **Delta** has departed and now has a new home with the Redden family. I'm sure he and his new crew will have a wonderful life together.

Spring Raffle to Benefit Buckeye HRS Foster Rabbits!

Shake off those winter blues and hop straight into spring with this one-of-a-kind, art-accessory bag. Scottish artist Annette Tait is generously donating "Blue Star White Star" for our first ever Spring Raffle. Inspired by Annette's rescue rabbit, Arabella is wearing her favorite blue and white jumper. The stars are just like snowflakes and the material is of the softest cotton.

When going on a special outing why not take your art-accessory bag with you? Arabella loves going to movie premieres where she can glisten like the brightest star. When at home she loves to doze on a shelf while being admired by your house guests. She has delightful brown eyes and a sweet expression.

The bag is made of machine and hand-sewn parts. The straps are a strong black webbing. The sides are padded with fleece to give the body shape. The lining is a found soft cream cotton. A

small pocket, from the same star fabric, has been added for a cell phone.

The edges are hand and machine sewn together with finished seams out. The base and chest are black felt and have a fleece insert for support. The face is hand painted in waterproof Gutta on a found white felt base. The legs have been drawn in with black fabric pen and machine stitched over. The plastic safety eyes are secured from inside.

Length approximately 10 inches x height 8.5 inches x depth 2.5 inches. Handle height from ears is approximately 5.5 inches.

Due to the small bits here and there this bag is not recommended for children under 3.

Of her handiwork, Annette says: "This bag has been lovingly made and has a few 'my gosh!' and 'tut, tut' parts due to the hand sewing and



sometimes erratic machine sewing. I just love this Arabella bag in her stunning stars and I hope she will find a loving home and make you happy.”

All proceeds will go directly to our foster program and will ensure that needy bunnies have a safe haven until they find the happiness of a permanent home. Tickets cost \$1 each and you may buy as many as you wish. All entries must be postmarked no later than March 31, 2009. Please include your phone number and email (if available) with your check or money order and indicate it's for the raffle. Mail your request to: Buckeye HRS, P.O. Box 5767, Athens, OH 45701. The lucky winner will be notified in early April and will receive the Blue Star White Star bag



in time for Easter.

This exquisite bag is best viewed in color on our website at www.ohare.org/gifts.htm#raffle.

Artist's Statement

I live in Scotland and am a member of Etsy for Animals (etsyforanimals.com, 100% to the Animals). I am a proud rescue mum to two precious gentle rabbits. I also donate 20% from every pet portrait I do to the rescue of choice.

I look forward to bequeathing more funds your way in the future. When I read the story of Malcolm, I had tears in my eyes! He is so beautiful and looks like my little precious Zai, who is no longer with me. My little boy Wesley had a shocking start to life but slowly he is becoming trusting, less biting, less charging, and now he grinds his teeth for an ear rub. It has taken a few months, but normally I find that it takes about one year before the bad memories go away and they find that the house is danger-free and only filled with love, joy, and happiness. Wesley is coming along nicely!

Annette Tait

Contact information:

Annette Tait

www.dragonhouseofyuen.co.uk

Holiday Raffle Results

And the winner is ... Stacie Hecht of West Chester, OH. Congratulations to Stacie and many thanks to all who supported the Buckeye HRS through the purchase of raffle tickets. Proceeds will allow us to make the future brighter for more needy bunnies in Ohio.





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

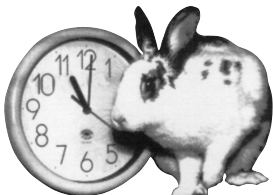
All donations are tax-deductible.



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Buy a bunny a little time...