Brother From Another Mother

By Michele Roth Kerley



When I was six, I fell in love with a Pekingese puppy. My parents fell in love too and she became a new member of our family. We had several other Pekingese through the years, but Chin Chin always had a special place in my heart because of her intelligence and the love she gave me for the next sixteen years.

Another animal lover that I work with has the same appreciation for the breed and owns a male and a female. Unfortunately, they weren't spayed or neutered; nature took its course and a litter of puppies were born on June 26, 2008.

She shared pictures and even brought the litter to work. One of the puppies reminded me of my Chin Chin. I took to him right away and fell in love. Although I wasn't planning on getting a puppy, the constant photos and emails that continued to come my way made it hard for me to say no. On September 25th

I brought the tiny little fur ball home with the understanding that if it was too stressful on Wit (my beautiful, sweet Rex rabbit) that I would have to return the puppy.

I wanted Wit to have a companion and was considering another rabbit. My only hesitation, though selfish, was that it would change our relationship. When I bonded my previous bunnies, Sweetpea and Lily, a lot of his attention went to her. I admit it ... I was a little jealous. Would I be able to bond Wit to a new puppy?

I decided (with the help of my dad) to name the puppy Rocky. When I brought him home he was only three months old so he was still a lot smaller than Wit. I set up the pen in the living room so they could get to know each other. Wit was immediately curious and came over right away to investigate. Rocky didn't seem to notice that Wit was not another dog. Just in case, every time Wit approached Rocky, I

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would give the puppy a treat so he would associate Wit's presence with good things.

As the weeks went by, I continued training Rocky. I had forgotten how much work dogs are. He was a bright little guy and he learned sit, down, paw and even high five the first week I had him. I continued the bonding sessions and everything seemed to be going well.

The biggest obstacle was Rocky wanting to chase Wit. Although he was only being playful, I didn't want this to be a constant stress on Wit. Whenever Wit was chased, Rocky would be put in the kitchen. His room (the kitchen) is separated from the great room by a gate. This allows the two to still visit each other safely when I'm not around.

Once when Rocky was running around the room, I happened to get a different angle on the action. To my disbelief, I saw Wit jump in front of Rocky as he ran around the room. I know Wit has a mischievous side, but never would have guessed that he was the instigator, trying to get his younger brother in trouble.





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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

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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:



Toronto artist **Pey Lu**, for graciously donating a beautiful painting for our holiday raffle (see page 11 for details).

Jim and Nancy Reed, for their generous donation in memory of Shadow, Niblick, and Buttons.

Adriana and Doris Mastroguiseppe, for their gift in loving memory of their **Sweet Lou**, who passed away on May 29, 2009.

Ann Landon, for donating hay to the foster bunnies.

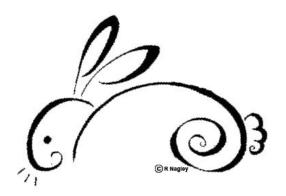
Gary and Paula Savage, for donating food to our foster rabbits.

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

Barbara Roberts, Jim and Laura Brown, Kathy Kallay, Mike and Rhonda Wadsworth, Pam Loch, Junko Rogers, Annette Tait, Carmella Coia, Carol and Joe Danko, Heather Brumbaugh, Judy O'Neil.

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.

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





Take a Good Look at Rabbit Eyes

By Diana Dornbusch Cron, DVM Glenway Animal Hospital Cincinnati, Ohio 45211 513-662-0224

The old Yiddish proverb says that the eves are the mirror to the soul. In medical fields, veterinary or otherwise, eyes can reflect the health or illness of many other body systems. Thus, it is imperative that any physical exam, wellness or sick, should involve examination of the eyes. I try to start all physical exams at the head of the rabbit, and therefore the eyes. During this exam we look for symmetry of size, shape, function, the external globe, conjunctiva and nasolacrimal ducts, and an indirect ophthalmoscopic technique to look through the lens (thereby noting its health) to the retina, or back of the eye.

Many things can be identified on this simple exam that may help your vet determine a diagnostic plan. Icterus (jaundice) is usually first seen in the sclera (the white part of the eye) before it shows up in other mucous membranes and can indicate liver and blood disorders. Eyes that are sunken can be due to dehydration, while bulging eves (exophthalmos) can be an indicator of vascular disease or, in rabbits, a thymoma. Asymmetrical abnormalities in the pupils or size or shape of the eye can indicate neurological damage or mass effects. The blood vessels of the retina

become tortuous (wavy and curvy) and distended if systemic hypertension is present. Even per ocular (around the eye) structures can tell tales about the state of the animal. Eye expression can indicate pain or discomfort, as well as excitement or surprise. A droopy eyelid or tearing eye can all tell tales about other body parts.

Rabbit eyes have a lateral placement on the face allowing a wider area for seeing predators. Consequently, rabbits have a blind spot in front, beneath their mouths. It isn't uncommon for someone offering a treat straight on to a rabbit to get nipped as the rabbit can't see things coming at his mouth until it's just about there.

Most of the conditions we see in rabbits are seen in people and other pets. Below is a description of some of the more common eye issues we see in small animal practice.

Dacrocystitis is inflammation of any part of the tear drainage system. It is common in rabbits, as their nasolacrimal ducts (which drain tears from the eye via the nose) are very narrow, bend acutely, and can easily be mechanically obstructed by overgrown premolars and incisors. Rabbits with this condition often present a watery eye (epiphora) or an eye that is draining a milky white exudate. Conjunctivitis (inflammation of the conjunctiva or the tissues lining the eyelids), skin infections around the eyes, and squinting are all features of this condition. Bacterial infections can both cause this condition and



Note the buildup of white discharge below and around the eye.

be secondary to mechanical obstruction. In these cases, we typically attempt to flush the nasolacrimal duct with an IV catheter and saline; if unsuccessful, skull films are needed to determine if tooth root overgrowth is the cause. A culture and sensitivity test will identify bacteria present and which antibiotic this bacteria is susceptible to. This condition is often treated with both oral and topical antibiotics along with frequent flushings of the nasolacrimal duct if possible.

Cataracts. Unfortunately this is a topic that I am very familiar with as my Lop developed mature bilateral cataracts this past winter, as did her mother a year prior. Cataracts, by definition, are opacities in the lens of the eye. If the lens is completely opaque, as is the case with mature cataracts, light cannot reach the retina, and the rabbit is blind. Partial cataracts allow partial vision. It is often difficult to determine the exact cause of cataracts,

Brother From Another Mother Cont'd.

I couldn't help but laugh at his ingenuity and I got confirmation that Wit was not stressed out by Rocky.

Rocky loves to take walks around the neighborhood. He has a little girlfriend who lives around the corner. The first time I saw him play with her, I realized that he held back when playing with Wit. Seeing him play so vigorously with his canine friend showed me how much restraint he uses while playing with Wit and I was proud of my boy.

Seeing them enjoy each other's company is my treat. They have two jars on my coffee table. One has dog treats and one has banana chips. When I announce that good boys get treats, they come flying, sit side by side, and enjoy their reward.

Wit's hay is in his house. After incorporating Rocky into our home, Wit started pulling his hay out and throwing it on the floor. At first I thought it was his way of acting out with the new intruder in his space. Then I realized that he wasn't acting out, he was sharing. Wit and Rocky



sit together all the time and eat hay together. Although the sight of this melts my heart, it usually turns into a belly laugh as my Pekingese walks around with a piece of hay sticking out of his mouth like a little country boy.

Since Wit prefers to stay in his room at night, Rocky goes to bed with me. About an hour before I go to bed every night, I put Rocky in the kitchen so that I can enjoy one-on-one time with Wit. During this time, Rocky is always compliant and respects Wit's and my time together as he entertains himself.

As you have probably guessed, it has all worked out. My unconventional family is happy and harmonious (for the most part). Wit now has a new companion and enjoys spending his time with Rocky and me.

Seeing Wit worry about Rocky and even check on him after he was neutered showed me that Wit really accepted Rocky as part of our family. As a matter of fact, Wit is even more social with guests since Rocky has been around. Now the two truly have become brothers although they had mothers of different species.

Worth mentioning: I would highly recommend doing research if you are considering getting a dog as a companion for a rabbit. Different breeds have different natural instincts, so you want to make sure the canine companion does not have a natural instinct that may endanger your rabbit.

During the entire bonding process, caution and safety for both animals was used at all times.

Another advantage I had was my knowledge and experience with the Pekingese breed. I also believe that bonding was easier since Rocky was a puppy with no preconceived notions about rabbits or any other animals. If you are considering an adult dog, more time and effort may be needed.

Poet Laureates!

Congratulations to Sue Milewski and bunny Robbie! They are among three winners of the 2009 Haiku poetry contest hosted by 24 Carrot Lane. Here's their entry:

Fur flies all around

Like swirling snow in the house —

Bunny is shedding.

The Miracle Cleaner that is White Vinegar

By Cathy Montiegel Reprinted with permission

Actually white vinegar is not a miracle; however, when you discover all the wonderful uses along with money and time savings, it will seem to be a miracle cleaner.

Have you ever despaired over the hard, calcified material that accumulates on the bottom, sides and corners of the bunny's litterbox? Sometimes it will get thick and hard enough that it can be broken and chiseled off. Other times you iust determine that a litterbox is not that expensive and replace the box. After my bunnies took a trip to Kerry Stewart's Bunny-Sleep-Away camp, their litterboxes came home sparkling clean. They looked like new! Kerry introduced me to the wonders of a little white vinegar. For sparkling litterboxes, simply pour in a little white vinegar and let sit for about 1-2 minutes. Some water can be added to cover all needed areas of the litterbox. Follow with a light scrub and good rinse in clear water to see the results.

Somewhere along the line of my white vinegar discoveries. someone provided the following explanation: Soap

is basic, alkaline (slippery, slimy, high pH) and breaks the surface tension of water, allowing it to penetrate better into fabric, and flush out dirt and most food stains. Bunny urine, however, is also basic, alkaline, high pH and therefore soap is ineffective to remove deposits. Vinegar is acidic, low pH, and therefore can counteract and break down alkaline deposits.

In addition to removing the litterbox calcification, white vinegar neutralizes/kills many bacteria. Use a white vinegar and water mixture to clean bunny food and water bowls and or bottles. Always make sure to rinse thoroughly.

But wait, there's more! Sounding like a cheap TV ad yet? When we remodeled our kitchen to put in stone countertops and a tile floor, I was advised against using any strong chemical cleaners that might harm the surfaces. And here I thought stone was an ultra strong, hard surface, hah! White vinegar to the rescue! The experts advised cleaning the tile floor and granite countertops with a solution of white vinegar and water. Use a half and half solution in a spray bottle for countertops and ½ cup white vinegar to ½ bucket of warm water for floors. I use the half and half spray bottle solution to treat the bunny room floor. Not only is it safe for the surfaces, it has the additional benefits of killing many food bacteria (there's that chemistry stuff, again).

I was looking for an alternative to chemical-laden, animal-tested laundry products and found, again, white vinegar and some water is an excellent fabric softener. I use about 1/2 cup per wash load. I also add it directly to the wash when washing bunny rugs and other peed-upon items.

When buying half a dozen bottles of white vinegar on a shopping trip, my husband was asked if his wife was Italian. Turns out old-school Italians, and probably many others, have known this for years. The store checker advised that the local Italian community made purchases by the case at Walmart or Costco.

There are a lot more uses for white vinegar that run the gamut from cleaning clothes, appliances and your house to home remedies and dietary aids. If I've made you curious, check out the following resources:

VIM & Vinegar "Hundreds of Ingenious Household Uses" by Melodie Moore, ISBN 0-06-095223-7.

www.coopamerica.org.





Somebunny Needs YOU!



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 (bhrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



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.



How about some Kahlua with your coffee? You will want this big guy to join you not only when you have your morning coffee, but any time of day. He is a sweet lop with excellent litterbox habits and he's waiting to intoxicate you with his charm. How about making Kahlua (Lou for short) a part of your family? Please contact Michele Roth Kerley (bhrs-michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.



Petite and sweet -- that's **Kelby!** Weighing only about two pounds, this-softer-thansoft 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 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 (bhrs-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). Taz is a little shy, he will need time with you to warm up and develop trust. He's on the small side, weighing roughly 4.0 lbs, his full-grown weight.

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



If you have a sweet tooth, you will love Anise. She is as black as licorice but she is way sweeter. This special little girl is waiting for a loving family to show off her excellent litterbox habits. Call today to make her a part of your home, but careful, she's so sweet she may cause cavities! Please contact Michele Roth Kerley (bhrs-michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.





Meet brother and sister, Zac and Nessie. These 2 adorable young buns are a joy to be around. Both are curious, active and friendly. They love following you around and being involved in whatever you are doing. Zac and Nessie will be ready for adoption after they are spayed and

neutered. They may be adopted separately or possibly together as a pair. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrssue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



Dixie knows how to have a good time; whether it is tossing around her toys, chewing on her ball, or racing through her tunnel. When she is done, this adorable white bunny (with long white eye lashes), will sit for a good petting and then stretch out in her box for a nice nap. Please contact

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





Esther is a 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.



Brady is an active young male. He loves to be a part of everything that you are doing. He likes to be near you and will nudge you gently with his nose for attention. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrssue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



Meet the New Mexico Three!! These 3 gals -- Chili, Chini, and Chiqa -- came all the way to Ohio from a large rescue in New Mexico. Chili has dark chocolate-brown fur and a spicy personality. She also has one ear that lops down and the other that stands straight up. Chiqa is all black with velvety-soft fur and lots of curiosity. Chini is a real beauty with a stunning gray coat like a chinchilla. This litter of babies will be separated, spayed and ready for adoption soon. Make an appointment to meet them today! Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrs-sue@ ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



Adopted!



Ashie is happy and hopping at the home of Beth Szule. ♥ Maggie Pie is now a permanent member of the Mark and Robin Covert family. ♥ Jelly Bean has a great new home with Michele Reber and lots of four-legged friends. ♥ Kallie -- now Snickers -- was adopted by Kelly McCarthy and family of North Ridgeville. ♥ Oscar has a new home with Kim in Brookpark. ♥ Felix has a new gal pal and a permanent home with Becky and Don in Mansfield. ♥ Congratulations to the Joseph family on their adoption of Izzy. "Izzy" he happy and loved with his new family? You better believe it! ♥ Jackie and family of Kent are lavishing much love and attention on Mark the bunny.

Farewell, Lazlo

It's with great sadness that we say goodbye to Lazlo, a Buckeye HRS Sanctuary rabbit in our care for over six years. Lazlo was our little Dutch head tilt bunny who had been living with Calvin, another head tilt Sanctuary bunny, for all of those six years. Here's Lazzie's story:

Back in May 2003 I received a call from a local animal shelter about a very sick bunny who would be euthanized if someone did not pick him up within 24 hours. When I went to retrieve him, there he was – all skinny and matted -- with runny eyes, a runny nose, and a slight head tilt. I scooped him up and brought him home, and although we treated him immediately with antibiotics and ear cleanings, his head tilt began to get worse, not better. By the time we found a more effective antibiotic, however, the infection had spread to his inner ear and his head tilt had worsened to a 45% angle. We continued with the antibiotic and the ear cleanings for several weeks and finally the infection was gone. His severe head tilt was permanent, but he remained healthy for several years.

We introduced him to Calvin right away and they bonded instantly. There was no aggression between them whatsoever. It seemed as if they both knew they had something in common



from the start and became best buddies for life. At mealtimes they would run circles around each other at top speeds, twirling in opposite directions, and would inevitably crash into each other -- or to avoid collision, one would jump over the other, landing on sure footing – a miraculous feat for a head tilt bunny who had learned to right himself after weeks of falling over sideways. Lazlo, with eartips pointing to his right, and Calvin, eartips pointing to his left, were inseparable. They jumped, ran, ate, played, and snuggled together every day of those six years. (Calvin, by the way, is doing well -- he's now best friends with Puff, another Sanctuary rabbit.)

You brought us hours and hours of entertainment, laughter and love for 6+ wonderful years. We will miss you terribly little Lazzie.

Kristen & Paul Doherty



Take A Good Look at Rabbit Eyes Cont'd.



Nadia Cron's eye. Note that this is a quiescent cataract - there is no irritation in the sclera (white) of the eye or surrounding tissues.

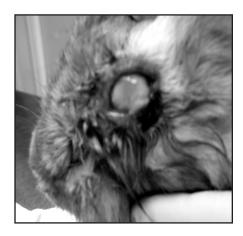
as they can be congenital, nutritional, toxic, diabetic, or inflammatory (changes caused by anterior uveitis, inflammation of the chamber of the eye in front of the lens, often due to bacterial infection or E. cuniculi). Quiescent cataracts (no inflammation or pain) can be left alone without any consequence to a rabbit other than annoyance and foot stomping when their space is cleaned or rearranged. Hyper mature or inflammatory cataracts need IMMEDIATE treatment, and can often lead to glaucoma, a painful condition where the intraocular pressures are increased. It is often necessary to enucleate (remove) an eye with glaucoma to relieve the pain associated with this condition.

Corneal abrasions and ulcerations are scratches to the surface of the eyeball. Being scratched by another pet or a

foreign object (such as hay) getting into the eye, as well as chemical irritation, are common causes. They can be caused by structural abnormalities in the eye such as extra, aberrantly-placed eyelashes that poke into the cornea (distichiasis), or a lower lid that rolls inward (entropion) or outward (ectropion), or a disruption in the tear film mechanism that allows part or all of the cornea to become dry (keratoconjunctivitis sicca). If you've ever had a scratch on your cornea (like I experienced last fall), you know that it is very painful, the eye tends to get very red, tear profusely. and your tendency is to hold the eye shut. The eyelids may spasm (blepharospasm) when you try to open them. Diagnosis of a corneal abnormality is made by instilling fluoroscein stain in the eye. The stain will adhere to broken corneal tissue. Treatment is directed at keeping a constant tear film on the eye (artificial tear drops or ointment), anti-inflammatory medications (such as meloxicam orally and flurbiprofen topically) and prevention of secondary infections -- which can be devastating -- with topical and possibly oral antibiotics.

Eye conditions, like other things in rabbits, can progress very rapidly, so the general rule is always to be safe rather than sorry. Know what is normal for your rabbit(s) and if you detect an abnormality, get it evaluated by your veterinarian. We are fortunate in Ohio to have several veterinary ophthalmologists located throughout the state, as well as Ohio State College

of Veterinary Medicine with their excellent Ophthalmology Department for more complicated cases.



Footnote: Here's a good reason to keep your rabbits indoors: This eye belongs to an unfortunate rabbit who had a warble inside her lower evelid. Warbles are the larval stages of a parasitic fly that lays eggs on living tissue. The larval worm creates an intense inflammatory response as it matures and moves around in the tissue, creating a nest and breathing hole (which is how we identified the problem with this eye and removed the offending warble). Because there was so much tissue destruction around the eye, enucleation of the eye wasn't possible initially, and we are treating with topical antibiotics and artificial tears until we can determine whether we can save the eye or remove it once there is enough healthy tissue around it to close an incision.

Have Bunnies, Will Travel

By Jeannie and Paul Eash

"Rustie, did you hear Jeannie and Paul talking about going on a trip in the motor home again? I hope it's not too long of a trip. But they do stop often so we can run around and use our litter box. Actually, since we've been on the road so much, we do travel better than we did at first. Since you always get in the bottom shelf of the bookcase first, I just sprawl out in the hallway or under the swivel chair. One nice thing about being on trips is that we're with our family more. But once we're parked and they leave, we get to investigate the whole place (well, almost every place). Now they put this folding screen around the driver's seat. There are probably some good tasting wires back there that we're not allowed to chew on."

"Rickie, do you remember the movie camera cord that you chewed off when the screen wasn't there? Paul wasn't too happy with us. Well, they must think we're still pretty special since our picture is on the back of their motor home."

It is fun to take our two rabbits on trips with us. They have made trips to Iowa, Florida, Arizona, Arkansas, and Missouri. We were one month in Florida and two months in Arizona. I'm always careful to take plenty of their timothy hay, wood pellets, food pellets, apple branches, greens, and of course their treats (which they expect right after I clean their litter boxes in the morning and





evening). Paul says it's like loading up for several children, but he enjoys our special boys. We have a sign on our door -- "Beware of Attack Rabbits" -which causes much concern among travelers and campers. Several times we've invited people in to see our four-footed companions. Most people are surprised at how good they are with a litter box and that they make such good house pets.



Holiday Raffle to Benefit Buckeye HRS Foster Rabbits!

Just in time for the gift-giving season, Toronto artist Pey Lu is generously donating an original watercolor of her resident rabbit/part-time security guard, Charlie, for our fifth annual holiday raffle. Titled *Charlie the First*, his portrait is 7" by 9" nestled in a 12" by 14" antique wood frame.

The more you know about Charlie, the more you will want to see *Charlie the First* every day. View his painting in color at http://ohare.org/gifts-raffle.htm and click on the links to Pey's site for a complete profile about this special rabbit.

All proceeds will go directly to our foster program and will ensure that needy bunnies have a safe and happy holiday season while they await the ultimate gift, a permanent home. Tickets cost \$1

must be

each and you may buy as many as you wish. All entries postmarked no later than December 1, 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. If you prefer, you may use PayPal for ticket purchases of \$10 or more. The lucky winner will be notified in early December and will receive the painting in time for holiday gift-giving.

About the Artist

Pey Lu, a rabbit/dog caretaker and painter, resides in an old house by Lake Ontario with her husband and her animals. See more of her work and her background at her website, www.peylu.com, or email her (or Charlie!) at flyingdutchhare@gmail.com.



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_____

Address

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Bunnies' names and special dates _____



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