

HAREL

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT

SOCIETY

Spring/Summer 2003

The Trouble With Tribble

by Joyce Weaver

From the first moment I saw her. I knew she was coming home with me. There was just something special about her. We knew we wanted a bonded pair of litter-sisters and

so Tribble and her sister Pooky were chosen. They were 9 weeks old, and the best of friends.

Right away we noticed something was different about Tribby. She would sit and "scan." She moved her head back and forth, like she was watching a ping-pong match. We had our vet check her eyes on her first visit. No abnormalities were visible, and we didn't see a reason for further testing.

Other than the "scanning" she seemed perfectly normal and healthy. She got into more than her share of mischief while growing up, never too scared to try anything.

The trouble really started after she turned 5 years old. Suddenly, she lost the sight in her left eye. It was quite a shock. We noticed her pupil



Above: Pooky and Tribble share a meal.

Left: A closeup of Tribby's eye.

was completely white! We rushed her to the emergency room and had her checked. She showed no signs of infection, but the pressure in her left eye was higher than normal and she had a cataract. We watched her carefully, and had our vet check her pressure regularly. After a few weeks, her pressure had returned to normal. We were very relieved; one of the concerns was that she may have to have her eye removed. I really didn't want to stress her more by having surgery.

Tribby bounced back pretty well after the loss of sight in one eye. She got around fine and had the cutest way of cocking her head to look at you with her "good" eye. She even started jumping onto the couch again as she adjusted to her limited sight. Everything settled

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down and we got used to our sightimpaired bunny, remembering to approach her from her good side, and to be careful about the toys we gave.

About six months after she lost the sight in her left eye, the right one followed. This was an entirely different situation for Tribby. She became extremely withdrawn. She just huddled in a corner, and was not very interested in food. Touching her sent her into a panic and resulted in her running around the room and bumping into things. This was not our usual Tribby! Of course we took her to the vet right away. The pressure was increased in both her eyes. He recommended a veterinary ophthalmologist. Our appointment with the ophthalmologist revealed that she had quite a bit of scar





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Chapter Manager ... Herta Rodina

herta@ohare.org

740-797-7616

Educators & Fosterers:

Canton Kristi Cole 330-484-8416

kristi@ohare.org

Cleveland East Kristen Doherty 440-543-4959

kristen@ohare.org

Fremont . . . Keith & Sue Zimmerman 419-355-8433

sue@ohare.org,

keith@ohare.org

Cincinnati..... Jennifer Wolfe 513-474-5840

jennifer@ohare.org

Michele Roth Kerley 859-261-0556

michele@ohare.org

Newsletter Editor... Herta Rodina Layout and Design . . . Ellen B. Eder

Contributing Writers:

Kristi Cole, Rob Lovicz, Joyce Weaver, Sue Zimmerman.

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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Special Thanks to:

Bob and Nancy Meyer, for their generous and touching donation in memory of their daughter, Sheila, who passed away on December 31, 2001 at 19 years of age. Sheila loved rabbits and her parents are caring for her dear bunny, Josh. They knew that a gift in Sheila's honor on her birthday, January 25, would have made her happy.

The Blaufelds and the estate of Phyllis Molans, for their most thoughtful contribution in memory of Phyllis and her beloved rabbit, Mr. Chips.

Mary Kalb, for her kind donations in tribute to Miriam Palevsky's Peter and Corinna Stephens's Hershey.

Karen Kratzer, for her thoughtful gift in memory of Thumper, Duffy, and Quince.

Natasha Miller, Anne and Wilma Jagodnik, Heather Evert, for generously contributing towards our Toledo rescue efforts. Heather Evert's gift is in honor of her beloved Cookies n' Cream, 1996-2002.

Jim and Lou Ann Dailey of Bowling Green, for their generous donation of towels, vinegar and several other useful supplies for the Toledo-area rescued rabbits.

Pipkin's Fruit & Vegetable Market in Blue Ash and Country Fresh Farm Market in Anderson, for providing Cincinnati foster rabbits with fresh, delicious lettuce.

Emilie Davis, for arranging the Channel 9 interview in Cincinnati. Jen Wolfe, with help from Maisy and Willow, provided viewers with tons of useful information about house rabbits.

Vicki and Tony Ricci of PIP Printing in Youngstown, for donating 3,000 trifolds.

Grainger, Inc., for their very generous 3-for-1 employee matching gift program.

The following members, whose generosity allows us to continue helping needy rabbits: Bob Piekarczyk, Deb Thomas, Joni Richards, Tina Smith, the Mastroguiseppes, Cheryl Jarvis-Lewis, Irma Laszlo, Loretta Henderson, Christine Berry, Bonnie Hagerman, Lori Bernhardt, Gary Savage.

Our many new and continuing Sanctuary Rabbit sponsors. You are incredibly kind and loyal and we wish we had the space to thank each one of you individually!

The Monks Copy Shop of downtown Columbus, for their discount on printing our newsletter.



Bunny Tips and Tricks

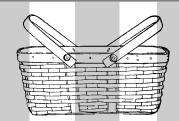
by Sue Zimmerman

Here are a few bunny tips and tricks that we recommend to make rabbit care a little easier and a bit more enjoyable.

pillowcases for extra freshness.)



- Keep your veggies fresh up to one week! Place the bunny's vegetables in a cotton pillowcase after washing them with cold water. Store the pillowcase in your refrigerator's crisper drawer after lining it with a clean dishtowel. (We recommend line-drying veggie towels and
- Instead of washing small bunches of veggies in the kitchen sink, buy a whole week's worth and put large quantities into a regular plastic laundry basket. Remove all rubber bands and twist ties and blast them with a garden hose (this is all done outside). It makes it much faster and easier to wash large quantities of greens. (This tip was submitted by Heidi Metzger.)
- If you give your rabbit empty toilet paper or paper towel rolls to play with, try stuffing them with hay for extra fun.
- Attach a large binder clip to your bunny's pen/cage. Clamp a handful of hay inside the binder clip. Your bunny will love tugging and pulling out the hay while he munches away.
- Make laundry time fun time! Dump out a basket of clean laundry on the floor and fold it while your bunny roams freely around you. Your rabbit companion will feel as if you have taken him to an amusement park with so many things to explore and discover. You are sure to enjoy bunny's company (as long as you don't mind a few pet "hares" getting on your clothes!)
- Bonding with bunny Try reading your newspaper and books out loud in a soothing voice in the presence of your rabbit. He will love hearing the sound of your voice. Singing to your rabbit also works exceptionally well, especially during times when bunny is feeling under the weather.



Summer is Picnic Time!

Come join the members of the Buckeye House Rabbit Society as we get together to share food, fun, and our love for rabbits. It's a great opportunity to meet and socialize with other rabbit people in your area. Foster rabbits (and the sanctuary rabbits in NE Ohio) will be available for you to meet, and books, shirts, totes and other goodies will be available to purchase. We also have fun and prizes with the photo contest and raffle.

Mark your calendars now so you don't miss out. Then watch our website and your mailbox for a flyer and a map about a month in advance of the picnic in your area.

June 28 is the date of the northeast Ohio picnic held in Aurora.

July 26 is the date of the southern Ohio picnic held in Cincinnati.

We're looking forward to seeing you!

Somebunny Needs YOU!



Meet **Gus...** the big bunny with the big heart. This 9lb. New Zealand is a gentle giant who shows he's happy by binkying with joyous abandon. Never having been litter box trained Gus has come a long way and is catching on quickly. This big lug will steal your heart! Please contact Michele Roth Kerley (michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.

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 (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.

Compact threepound Whitby is full of energy and affection. He's



smart and very inquisitive, but will also settle on your lap for a good cuddle. Whitby is one and a half years old. Please contact Herta Rodina (herta@ohare.org) 797-7616.



Maisy and Willow are a bonded

pair of females who do everything together. They munch their salad together (even eating from the same lettuce leaf!), eat their hay together, snuggle together, and even get their pets together! Maisy (6 lbs.) is spunky and full of beans, while her big buddy Willow (9 lbs.) is laid back and mellow. They are both very affectionate and have good litterbox habits. Together, they're a ton of bun fun! Please contact Jennifer Wolfe (jennifer@ohare.org) 513-474-5840.



Maya and her daughter **Verde** are a bonded pair who are always together.

They snuggle all day with each other and like to play together. They share everything — litterbox, dishes, water/salad bowls, toys, etc. Each weighs about 5 lbs. They both like to be petted. Please contact Kristen Doherty (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.



This sweet 5.8 lb allblack lop was rescued with the help

of the Wood County Humane Society. **Venus** loves to be petted, knows how to use her litterbox, and enjoys handfuls of fresh hav. **Please contact Kristen Doherty** (kristen@ohare.org) 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 (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.



Gizmo is a female fuzzy lop with brown markings that really highlight

her personality. She likes playing with her rabbit-shaped toy with a bell inside. Please contact Kristi Cole (kristi@ohare.org) 330-484-8416.



Blue, one of Maya's babies, is now a grown-up who is ready for a bunny friend

or lots of human attention. He is a friendly boy who likes to play with his toys, run around, and explore. Blue weighs about 5 lbs and likes to be petted. Please contact Kristen Doherty (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.



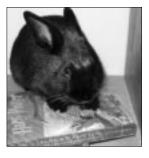
Yvonne and Palmer are a bonded

pair and must be adopted together. They are friendly with humans, enjoy being petted and also exploring the house. They are very well-behaved and had free run in an apartment prior to coming into foster care. Yvonne is a 2 year-old female minilop and Palmer is about a 1 year-old male English spot mix. Please contact Kristi Cole (kristi@ohare.org) 330-484-8416.



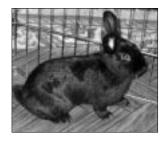
Wilma is a female cinnamoncolored mini lop.

She has good litter habits and does little jumps for joy when it's dinner time. She really enjoys being petted. Please contact Kristi Cole (kristi@ohare.org) 330-484-8416.



Meet Houdini! This mesmerizing rabbit will levitate to

the center of your heart! When not spinning a spell to make you give him a treat, this curious wizard will investigate every inch of his surroundings for a good nap spot. Then with a wave of his magic wand (OK, bunny ears) he'll trick you into hours of loving. This lil' quy just loves to be held and petted! Please contact Michele Roth Kerley (michele@ohare.org) 859-261-0556.



Lisa is an adorable dwarf-size female. Her beautiful black fur is peppered with white, giving her a radiant appearance. She has a calm temperament and enjoys being petted. Lisa weighs 3 lbs, 2 oz. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



If you are looking for a rabbit with a



sweet and gentle personality, then **Cody** is the one for you. Cody is a cute female dwarf who loves pets and attention. She is all black with a little white spot on her nose. She is sure to tug at your heart strings (and maybe your pant leg, too, if she wants to be petted!). Cody weighs 4 lbs, 3 oz and needs lots of exercise time to help her lose a little weight. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.





Marge was being kept in a tiny cage in Toledo before she was rescued. If she were to stretch out, her feet would have touched the ends of the cage. Marge now enjoys the freedom of her new exercise pen where she's doing binkies and running around. She has a good temperament and a pleasant personality. Marge is a beautiful female with shiny black fur. She weighs 4 lbs, 3 oz. Please contact Sue Zimmerman (sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



Adopted!

Bart happily resides with Julie Poe of Chelsea, MI. → **Homer** (now **Bruno**) is enjoying his new home with Danielle and Michael Laci of Avon, OH. → Lorrie and Len Plut welcomed **Eddie** into their home and are enjoying his company.

- After a long stay in foster care, Jax has found a wonderful home with Deborah Musso of Shaker Heights.
- **⇔ Benjamin** is happily settled into his room with the Savage family. **⇔ Camille** is living with Nathalie and Andy and is meeting new rabbit and pet rat pals. **⇔ Perry** is now living with Rachel and has a new female bunny pal.
- → Aggie (now Chloe) gets hours and hours of play and snuggle time with friend Wendall at the home of Linda and Mark in Aurora. → After spending over a year in foster care, Ivy's future is looking much brighter. She's settled into her new home with Chad and Betty in Cincinnati and is making friends with bunny buddy Feffer. → Puck is now living with Karla and finding lots of new things to explore. → Ramsey is feeling right at home with Audrey and Paige. → Sonny gets loads of attention, lots of run time, and a custom-made pen at the home of the Weiss family of Painsville. → Maurice enjoys afternoon naps and reading time with his new guardians, Heather and Charles of Bowling Green. → Trevor now has plenty of room to stretch his long legs and kick up his heels in his new home with Bonnie in Cleveland. → Mason has finally won the heart of Zoomer, much to the relief of Leslie and Justin of Chagrin Falls. → The Solomons of Beachwood have accepted Mitsu (now Tova) into their home as a companion for Chaim (formerly Hammett). → Bella (now Harley) and buddy Pic share a condo and also a large playroom at the home of Jodi and Mark in Parma. → Congratulations to David, Annie, and Buns. They have taken Sadie into their home, where she has become a much loved addition to the Schmidt family.

Spotlight On ... Snoopy



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

Snoopy was found dumped on the steps of a local ferret rescue organization. We believe that he was kept outside with very little human contact. He soon learned to trust humans and loves his new life as a house rabbit.

Snoopy is a very active young male minilop who loves attention, eating his hay, and getting pets on top of his head. He weighs approximately 5 lbs and is about 1.5 years old. He would do best with someone who has lots of time to spend with him and can give him plenty of room to play. Snoopy is not aggressive with other rabbits and therefore would do well in a bonding situation. He would also do just fine as a single bun who rules the roost. This bunny is loaded with personality and charm. Can you provide a permanent home for this handsome guy?

The Trouble with Tribble, Cont'd.

tissue inside both of her eyes. We could have surgery done to remove the cataracts, but she probably wouldn't be able to see anyway.

We were devastated. I quess I didn't want to believe that Tribby could be permanently blind at such a young age. We were worried that she would continue to be depressed and listless. Lucky for us we had the best medicine — Pooky! Pooky was the best sister; she would follow Tribby around and lay so that she was touching her. It made such a difference for Tribby to know that she wasn't alone. Gradually she began to move around and relearn her surroundings. Since our rabbits have free run, we had to make the choice of whether we should put them in an enclosure to limit Tribby's trauma. We decided that restricting them both would do more harm than good, and hoped for the best.

It took only a few months for Tribby to adjust. She never even lost track of where the litter box was! She wanders all over their area now, sometimes even at a jogging pace. She depends on listening to her sister for important signals, like dinner and snack time. They can most often be found snuggling together side by side.



Tribble gets some TLC from her devoted human.



Tribble and Pooky take a break from digging in their box.

I continue to be amazed at Tribby's adjustment. I think she handled the whole situation better than I did! She's back to her own spunky personality now. She doesn't get frightened when we touch her anymore. I think physical contact has become very important to her. She will sit and let us pet her as long as we like.

We've had to make adjustments to ensure Tribby's safety, like making sure there aren't any toys she can trip over or poke herself on. We're careful not to move too many things in her area. Of course, being a bunny she still enjoys investigating, so we do mix things up a bit from time to time. It's still heartbreaking to see her bumping into furniture as she moves around, but she doesn't let it bother her.

As much as we love and care for Tribby, it's Pooky who really made the difference for her. Pooky can always be there to give Tribby the physical contact and support she needs. I know that having a sister, who loves and cares for her, pulled Tribby out of her depression and gave her the courage to live a normal life.

Nipping: Otis's Expressive Behavior

by Robert Lovicz

Nipping is normally attributed to aggressive, territorial, fearful, and/ or lustful behavior in rabbits.

Aggressive rabbits can be scary, because they can bite hard, kick hard, and move fast. It is not unusual for owners to get intimidated by their aggressive rabbit.

Then there is the nonconforming rabbit, such as my rabbit, Otis. Otis nibbles and nips as a part of expressing himself in everyday life. To Otis, nipping is as natural as breathing for you or me.

My wife, Kim, and I adopted Otis from the Buckeye House Rabbit Society in July of 2001. What is most interesting about our first few weeks with the little guy was how bland his personality was. It was almost as if he was a clean slate that had to form a personality in a new environment. After about one month, Otis finally started feeling secure and happy in his environment and began to binky and leap for joy. At that time, his personality began to develop. He learned how to growl (well sort of, he sounds more like a wookie moaning) and that was worth a laugh. He was always a chewer, a fact my wife really "enjoys". He also learned how to show displeasure by shaking his head and nipping. Aggressive nipping started when Otis was being brushed. Otis dislikes brushing most



Otis would like to be Alpha Bunny.

of all in life and he lets everyone involved know it. He drew blood several times on both of us.

Obviously, any type of nipping was a concern. Originally, we planned to cure our little bun of his mostaggressive nipping and later work on the less-aggressive nipping. We consulted some different resources in the House Rabbit Society database. The fruits of our research included some detective work based on four principles:

1. Rabbits are not born mean:

99% of aggressive rabbits have a behavioral, NOT a genetic, problem. Behavior can be changed, so give the bunny a chance.

2. Your rabbit does not hate you: More likely she is afraid you are going to hurt her.

3. You, the owner, are the only one who can solve the problem: It is up to humans to figure out what's wrong and initiate new ways of interacting.

4. You can't hit a rabbit:

Some people try to "teach" their bunnies not to bite by swatting their noses or hitting them with newspapers. This will only aggravate the problem. You need to reassure your rabbit that her environment is safe.

We played the detective and found a few ways to cure the most aggressive nipping problems. This was mainly accomplished with saintly patience and perseverance. We tried two strategies:

- When Otis attempted to bite out of aggression or growled, we would call him a "tough little man" or a "scary bunny" in a light and pleasant voice. The soothing voice patterns appeared to calm him down significantly.
- When he succeeded in nipping hard, we would shriek in pain, say "NO!" and push his head down (gently). We had to prove to him that we were the head (alpha) bunnies in the house.

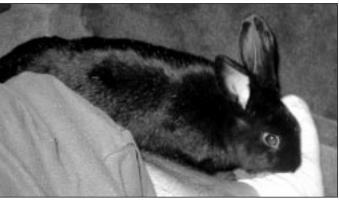
We proved to Otis that we weren't intimidated by his aggressive behavior and would not allow him to act in such a nonproductive manner. After a long while, we altered the majority of his most aggressive nipping behavior. He will still nip during brushing on a rare occasion, but the bites are much lighter and no longer draw blood.

Otis also started lesser nipping — pinching my wife's ankles and toes for no real reason while she was sitting in the family room — at about the same time his aggressive nipping began. There was no apparent malicious or aggressive intent; he would just nip for what we deemed to be a variety of reasons. These nips fall under four categories:



 Pay attention to me or pet me game: Otis will nip you if you don't pay attention to him or pet him to his satisfaction. This is by far the most entertaining type of nip because he will nip you, run to his petting corner, and will continue to play the game until you relent and pet him.

Slo-Motion nip: After you have petted him for long enough, Otis will tire of you and try to reach around and bite your petting hand. He doesn't really want to bite you, but he is hoping you get the picture and stop petting him. The motion is low and jerky with plenty of headshakes thrown in. You just cannot please this rabbit.



Above: "Out of my way, I've got places to go!"

Left: "Hey, get over here and pet me!"

- Get out of my way: If you are in his way, he will pinch to remind you he is going somewhere and you are in the way.
- Affection: This one is solely for the ladies. Otis will nip everyone from my wife to a strange woman he barely knows. The nip is typically on the ankles and is another one of Otis's games.
 Some people take real offence to this, but I just have to tell them that he loves them. At least that

is all I can think of. Maybe his real intent is to mark them as his territory!

Originally, my wife and I attempted to use the same strategies that were used to curb Otis's aggressive nipping, but nothing would really work long term. The "NO!" or pushing his head down would work initially, but he would come back and do it again. Nothing improved over the long term and we

just came to the realization that these little nips and games were just part of Otis's personality.

In conclusion, most cures for aggressive nipping are successful for most buns, but Otis appears to be the exception to the

rule. We cured his most aggressive nipping, but the non-aggressive nipping behavior remains. Don't be discouraged if your little bun does not conform to what you think is proper behavior. Remember that rabbits have their own personalities that usually don't follow typical psychological norms (just like humans). Don't give up on your rabbit. With patience, time, and understanding, you can work with your rabbit to form acceptable behaviors that accommodate both parties.

You Asked Us!

by Kristi Cole

Q: My rabbit makes a terrible mess when he dias in his litter pan. Do you have any tips to help with this?

A: Try using a cookie-cooling rack on top of the litter in the pan. First put down a layer of your normal litter in the pan as usual. Then put the cooling rack on top.

(See photo) This helps prevent litter and droppings from being scattered outside the pan when your rabbit decides he wants to have some fun digging, but it still allows the litter to do its job and absorb the moisture and odor. The Teflon-coated racks clean up very nicely, but the non-coated ones work well, too.

Q: My veterinarian has prescribed medication for my rabbit, but it is always a struggle to get him to take it. How can I minimize the stress for both my rabbit and me?

A: If the medication is in a pill form, try these options:

Disguise the pill in a more flavorful substance. Stuff it inside a raisin, blueberry or sliver of banana. Often the pill is hardly noticed by the rabbit as he enjoys the tasty treat

the pill is wrapped in. Another option is to put a small dab of one of the following substances on the tip of a spoon and then add the pill: strawberry

> jam, peanut butter, applesauce, carrot baby food.

If your rabbit is not enticed by disquising the pill in something tasty, you can ask your

veterinarian to have the pills compounded into a liquid. Banana and tutti frutti mixes are popular at my vet's office. You can also crush the pill with a mortar and pestle or in a pill crusher and mix the resulting powder in some Pedialyte, diluted applesauce or water and syringe it directly into the rabbit's mouth. You may want to first try mixing the crushed powder with baby food — bunny may lick it off a spoon, thereby avoiding the stress of syringing.

If you have a liquid medication to administer, it helps if the rabbit feels secure while you're medicating. This minimizes his resistance and completes the procedure as quickly as possible. One way to do this is to have another person hold the rabbit while you open the mouth and insert the syringe. Another way is to utilize the "bunny burrito," which involves wrapping the rabbit securely in a towel, so he cannot squirm and hurt himself while you're trying to medicate him. (See photo) You can also kneel on the floor and place the rabbit between your knees to secure him, freeing up your hands to give the medication orally. (See photo)



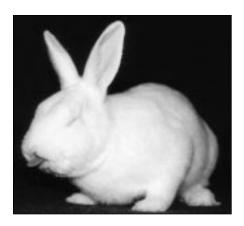
Above: Use your knees to help stabilize the rabbit. Left: The "Bunny Burrito."





Tuck the syringe in the space behind the front teeth.

When you give oral medications, it's best to place the syringe into the opening right behind the rabbit's front teeth. There's an open spot there where a syringe fits nicely, before the molars begin. Lift the lip and place the syringe in the side of the mouth at right angles to the front of the head, not facing back towards the throat (see photo). You don't want the rabbit to choke on the liquid; you want to squirt it into the center of the mouth and then let the rabbit swallow the liquid on his own.



"C'mon, do you really expect me to take that awful smelling stuff?"

~ Rabbit Wisdom ~ Rabbit Wisdom ~ Rabbit Wisdom ~



Seize the opportunity to carry the HRS message with you whenever you're out and about! One side of our serviceable totebag features original artwork by Cincinnati fosterer Jennifer Wolfe, accompanied by the saying "Rabbit Wisdom: Seize the Hay". The opposite side sports the logo and website for the national HRS and the Buckeye HRS. Totebags are constructed of sturdy, natural-colored canvas with forest-green straps and ink.

Dimensions are 5"W x 14.5"H x 3"D. Price: \$12, plus \$1.50 shipping and handling per tote. Print out and complete an order form at http://ohare.org/order.htm#top