



HARELINES



Volume 7 Number 3

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUCKEYE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY

Fall 2003

Not So Lucky

by Mary Bastian

Our story began at the Garfield Home Days on July 3, 2003. We were there with a large group of extended family to hear a family member's band play. I've never encouraged my children to play carnival games, so we mostly visited with relatives and listened to the music that evening.

At about 10:45 p.m., the park was about to close. We were getting ready to leave when our 8-year-old niece came running over, breathless and excited, with something clutched tightly in her hands. It was a baby bunny, and our sad journey had begun. She won the bunny as a prize at a Bates Amusements Company carnival game.

"Mary, what do we do with this?" asked my sister-in-law, Laura, who was smiling as my niece Rachel still held the little rabbit in a crush hold against her body. I must have let on that I was upset, because as I insisted on getting a look at the baby, my niece started to wail that I wouldn't give "Lucky" back. So true. Just then, the rangers started yelling at all of us to exit the park now, like we were teenagers at a make-out point. They were even tapping their night-sticks in their hands.



Little Lucky.

"Laura, let us have the bunny overnight and we'll check him out for you," I suggested, "We'll give him back, Rachel, I promise, but you'll have to do some reading and get ready for him." Laura decided that giving us the rabbit was probably easier than trying to deal with him for the night, so she gave Lucky to us. My daughter Kelly was about to learn some very painful life lessons.

At home, a quick exam revealed that Lucky had no injuries or fleas. His little eyes were bright and clear, he had no discharge from his nose, and his bottom was clean. We noticed that he had grass stains around his mouth and feet. I say "he" because sexing a bunny so young was a guess, at best, and I was hoping for a boy. I reasoned that it would be

In this issue

- Spotlight on Maisy & Willow . 3
- Somebunny Needs You! . . . 4
- Picnic Pics! 6
- Step Right Up!
The Fate of Rabbits Used
as Carnival Prizes 8



easier to talk Laura into neutering a male bunny since neutering a male costs less than spaying a female.

We set him up in an older guinea pig habitat with a box for hiding, some straw, timothy hay, pellets, water dish and bottle, scooting towel, and cardboard tube. He wouldn't eat the timothy or pellets for us, but chewed on the straw instead. Kelly introduced him to the water bottle and made sure he drank some water. He settled nicely into the little box.

Now 1:00 a.m., we began preparing materials for educating Rachel on proper bunny care. We decided against loaning her the *House Rabbit Handbook*, figuring she probably wouldn't read it anyway. Instead, we printed out the HRS coloring book for children. We also wrote out friendly little notes about feeding,

Continued on page 11



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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:

The following members, whose generous donations help us fulfill our ongoing fostering and educational goals:

Jon & Linda Garramone, Carol Costa, Deb Thomas, Jann & Mark Kuntavanish, Mary Bastian (in memory of Buster), **Michelle Johnson, Mike & Rhonda Wadsworth, Adrian Mastroguiseppe, Kathy Kallay, Laura Culver, John & Mary Jo Mayfield, Angela Windau, Mike & Andrea Markey, Linda Beam, Irma Laszlo, Melodye Traupel, Cloverleaf Animal Hospital** (in memory of Billy), **Barbara Wisniewski, Petsitters Pet Care Services, Jeannie Holt, Maureen Schulte, Lois & Eric Raphael, Oraline Jorgenson, Karen Salvagno, E. Ann Landon, Ken Kramer, Bob Piekarczyk.**

The following businesses that donated such wonderful prizes for our Cincinnati-area picnic:

Reach Publishing (Reds tickets), **Petsmart** (gift certificate), **Housetrends magazine** (Tropicana Restaurant gift certificate), **Rubberhedgehog.com** (bunny stamps), **Handcrafted Amish Furniture** (rabbit sculpture), **Newport Aquarium** (tickets), **Oxbow Hay** (timothy hay & pellets), **Annie's Homegrown** (shells and cheddar pasta).

Our many new and continuing Sanctuary Rabbit sponsors. You are wonderfully kind and generous 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.

~ Editor's Note ~

Dear Readers,

In this issue of *Harelines*, you will find both joy and sadness. The photos from our two picnics show the love and cheer our rabbit companions bring to our lives. We hope they make you smile. The articles about baby bunnies as carnival prizes are disturbing and difficult to read, but they underscore the responsibility we all have to educate our families, friends, and coworkers about unacceptable practices. We hope these pieces encourage you to take action to help prevent other rabbits from sharing Lucky's fate.



Announcing ...

... the 2004 bunny calendar! This gorgeous, all-color wall calendar is a fantastic alternative to the photo-studio rabbit calendars normally on the market, because it features rescued foster rabbits living in an HRS home.



Visit our Gift Shop www.ohare.org for more info. Plan to buy your 2004 calendar from the Buckeye HRS, rather than a local bookstore; you'll be helping our foster rabbits with every purchase. Only \$12 each! 🐰

Spotlight On ... Maisy & Willow



Please contact Jennifer Wolfe
(jennifer@ohare.org) 513-474-5840.

Meet Maisy and Willow. They're best friends. Abandoned at a local shelter, they came into foster care in March. These girls are very affectionate, both with each other and with people. They spend all day snuggling and grooming each other and munching hay together in their litterbox, but as soon as someone peeks his head around the corner, they come running for love and attention.

Maisy is a 6-pound Dutch who loves to be held and is very outgoing. Her pal, Willow, is an 8-pound New Zealand White whose personality is more subtle as she will sidle up next to you for a snuggle. Together, they're the perfect pair.

A common misconception is that a pair of rabbits is more work than a single rabbit. This is not the case at all. While Maisy and Willow do consume more food and litter than a single rabbit would, it's very comforting to know that they are keeping each other company when you're not at home. Another misconception is that bonded pairs show affection only to each other and not to their human friends. Definitely NOT the case with these girls. They can't wait for your lovin'! Won't you give it to them?

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.**



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.**



Sheba is a beautiful Californian mix who would make a wonderful

addition to your family. She is super-friendly and loves attention from you. Sheba loves playing with her toys and munching on hay. **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.**



Belle is a real cutie! She loves to be petted on her little nose. Belle

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

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.



Fiona is a young girl with a coat of beautiful agouti gray fur. She is very

friendly and sweet, is an excellent hay eater, and uses her litterbox reliably. **Please contact Kristen Doherty (kristen@ohare.org) 440-543-4959.**





Daniel is a mellow, friendly male chocolate Dutch rabbit. He came into

foster care with an eye injury and after surgery to repair the eyeball, it is healing well. He has very soft fur and enjoys being petted, especially in your lap.

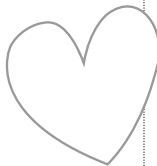
Please contact Kristi Cole
(kristi@ohare.org)
330-484-8416.



Sara is a quiet girl who keeps her area very tidy. She is a Dutch rabbit about a year

old, weighing 5 lbs. She would benefit from a home that has time to spend petting her and helping the more adventurous side of her personality come through.

Please contact Kristi Cole
(kristi@ohare.org)
330-484-8416.



This sweet 5.8 lb all-black 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 hay.

Please contact Kristen Doherty
(kristen@ohare.org)
440-543-4959.



Buddy is a sweet, friendly male mini lop. He loves attention and loves to be

petted. His favorite hobbies are eating hay and salads, and surveying the area from atop a cardboard box. Won't you welcome this lovable guy into your family?

Please contact Kristi Cole
(kristi@ohare.org)
330-484-8416.



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.



Maya is a sweet black Havanna, born in August 2002. She came to us with her babies — Sonny, Blue and Verde — who are now all grown. Maya weighs roughly 5.5 lbs, is great with her litterbox, and loves to eat her salads.

Please contact Kristen Doherty
(kristen@ohare.org)
440-543-4959.

Verde is a 5.5 lb black Havanna who likes to sleep on top of her



box. Verde was born in November 2002. She's very tidy with her litterbox and loves to run through her cardboard tunnel. She's an excellent hay eater, too!

Please contact Kristen Doherty
(kristen@ohare.org)
440-543-4959.



Thelma and Louise are a dwarf pair of girls who are best buddies, so they must be adopted together. Thelma (3 lbs) is a tiny chocolate brown dwarf and Louise (4.2 lbs) is a white hotot with black markings, a little bigger than Thelma. They are both "neatniks" — their litterbox habits are very tidy and reliable. They like to snuggle and play together and they both enjoy being petted by humans.

Please contact Kristen Doherty
(kristen@ohare.org)
440-543-4959.



Picnic Pics!

Photo
Contest
Winners:

Cincinnati Picnic



Cutest Face: Chloe (*Julie Gutierrez*)



Funniest Face: Tiny Buddy (*Corinna Stephens*)



Bunnies in Action: Scratch (*Tina Smith*)



Bunnies & Friends: a tie!
Woody and Adam (*Jann & Mark Kuntavanish*)



Bunnies & Friends: Tiny Buddy and Hershey
(*Corinna Stephens*)

Photo Contest Northeastern Winners: Ohio Picnic



Bunnies in Action: Buster *(Kathy & John Toler)*



Funniest Face: Smokey *(Carol & Mike Leffler)*



Cutest Face: Mushy *(Angela & Hal Weaver)*



Bunnies and Friends: Holly *(Christine & David Hales)*

We couldn't fit them all in, so for more picnic photos, visit www.ohare.org and click on "Events."



Step Right Up! The Fate of Rabbits Used as Carnival Prizes

by Kristen Doherty

I was relieved. It was the fourth of July and the morning rabbit chores in my foster home were completed. I had returned all of my phone calls. There were no current crises looming. I was going to spend a quiet weekend with my husband and my rabbits. Soon I realized this was too good to be true and besides, it was only 11:00 a.m. and the holiday weekend had just begun.

The phone rang. It was a Buckeye HRS member explaining to me that her niece just returned home with a baby rabbit she'd won at a carnival game. The carnival vendor at the Garfield Heights Home Days festival was giving away live baby rabbits as game prizes. The game goes something like this: the player tosses a ring or a ball, hoping for it to land on a target of some sort. If it does, the lucky winner gets to take home a live baby rabbit in a cardboard box. No food, no water, no cage, no "how-to" manual. The winner is handed a rabbit in a cardboard box – that's it. The caller then asked me "Can this be legal?" I answered that yes, sadly, I'm pretty sure it is legal in the state of Ohio. "Is there anything you can



Live rabbits being held for prizes at the festival booth.

do?" was her next question. I told her I'd see what I could do.

I took a deep breath, bid my husband farewell, and got into my car. Upon arriving at the festival, I went directly to the information tent and spoke with the Home Days Committee. I explained to the Committee that many of these rabbits would inevitably end up being turned loose outside to fend for themselves, that the carnival vendor was directly facilitating the abandonment of domestic rabbits, and that abandonment of a companion animal is an illegal and punishable offense in the state of Ohio. I described what life would be like for these rabbits, and urged the Committee to speak to the carnival vendor about discontinuing the practice.

The Committee listened to what I had to say, then promised to speak with the carnival vendor that evening, after a full day of rabbit giveaways had already occurred. We reached an agreement that I would return the next day to confirm that the vendor was no longer giving away rabbits as prizes.

I returned the next day with picket signs, leaflets, and a small group of willing volunteers – just in case. We scouted the ring/ball toss locations and to our surprise, we found no rabbits. When I questioned the carnival vendor as to the whereabouts and condition of the remaining rabbits, he replied: "We gave them all away last night, to anyone who would take them." My heart sank. Had I doomed 25 or so rabbits to a life of suffering and abandonment in order to save even more from a horrible fate? To make matters worse, he made it clear that he was extremely unhappy about no longer being able to use live rabbits as prizes. I had, in his words, "cut into his profits." Instead of getting his prizes for free (by breeding the rabbits), he would now have to replace them by buying prizes like stuffed animals.

Today as I sat down to write this article, the phone rang. A man from Garfield Heights called to find out if we could take in a bunny he found outside sitting in his driveway. This was the fifth call this month that I'd received from a Garfield Heights resident asking if I could take either a domestic rabbit they found wandering as a stray, or a rabbit their child won as a game prize at the Garfield Heights Home Days carnival. There is only one conclusion I can draw from this: the Garfield Heights Home Days carnival was the source of these abandoned and unwanted rabbits.

I agreed to meet the man in the parking lot of a local restaurant. When we arrived, he got out of his car with a cardboard box. He removed the lid of the soggy box in which the bunny had been kept all morning. A 3-month-old baby rex rabbit with a broken leg looked up at me with big brown eyes. He was filthy dirty and all skin and bones. His left leg was completely limp and protruding to the side.

He is now safe in my home. His belly is full and he will go to the vet tomorrow. He is one of the lucky few. But what about all of the others? I will never know their fate for sure, but I can guess that it won't be a happy or long life for most of them. 🐰



Dewey (found abandoned outdoors in Garfield Hts.), had a severely broken leg (top), which required extensive surgery and a cast (bottom). He is healing nicely now.

What You Can Do

If you encounter this situation and want to channel your anger/frustration, here is action you can take:

1. Write a respectful letter to the Committee organizing the event, then go speak with them in person to make your case. They are the decision-makers who have hired the carnival vendor, and they have the power to ask the carnival vendor to stop. The vendor is sure to comply with their request.
2. Write a respectful letter to the carnival vendor asking them to discontinue the practice. We are including a sample letter as an insert with this edition of *Harelines*. You may write your own or sign and send the one provided.
3. If the first 2 suggestions don't work, organize a protest, then contact the media.
4. Follow up by contacting APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) to:
 - Make your opposition to this practice heard and documented. APHIS' web site states that it is responsible for enforcing the Animal Welfare Act. It also states: "The public is encouraged to work with Federal, State, and local officials as well as local humane organizations to help eliminate inhumane treatment of animals."
 - Find out if the vendor has a license to be giving away live animals.

APHIS Contact Info

APHIS is the Federal Government Agency with oversight of using live animals as carnival prizes. APHIS is part of the USDA and is responsible for protecting and promoting U.S. agricultural health and administering the Animal Welfare Act.

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ace@aphis.usda.gov



Adopted!

Blue's new home is in Akron with Sara. He has lots of space to explore and run while Sara studies! 🐰 **Darby** is queen at her new home with Andrea in Pittsburgh. She will get lots of attention and snuggling there. 🐰 **Lisa**, now **Ebony**, happily lives with Cherrie and Ed Kompik of Westerville. 🐰 **Snoopy** is "top dog" in Millbury, OH where Vickie Pesina, husband Tim and son Dustin have welcomed him into their family. 🐰 Dan and Renee Molzon have welcomed **Buggs** into their home where he is enjoying the company of his new bunny pal, Sid. 🐰 After a long stay in foster care, bunny **Bobbi**, now **Lily**, has a new home with Jody Santos and family. 🐰 Andrea and Mike Markey tell us that **Joey** and **Buddy** are fully bonded! Buddy loves to clean Joey's ears, and they are so cute when they lie next to each other. 🐰 **Parker** has made himself at home with the Lefflers and is befriending Smokey, another pretty grey rex rabbit. 🐰 **Lindsay** is happily settled in her new home with Tina and new rabbit pal, Max. 🐰 **Fez** is now happily living with the Romero family. 🐰 **Roman** and his new pal Roxie now share domestic bliss with Maureen and her family near Strongsville. 🐰 **Palmer & Yvonne** (now called **Bonnie**) are happily settling into their new home with Steve and Ivy. 🐰 **Richie** has found a wonderful new home with Jann and Mark and new roommates Sammy, Woody, and Lily. 🐰 **Gizmo** has joined the Gilpin family and has already smitten the humans. She hopes to befriend the resident rabbits there, too. 🐰 **Freckles** is now settled in her new home with Jill and her other rabbits. 🐰 **Tank** now helps friend Whisper keep the cats in line at Rhonda and Steve's house in Warren. 🐰 **Pluto** now shares a home with Jennifer & family in Mayfield Heights, where he shares living space with several other pets. 🐰 **Carly** is happily settling in to her new home with the Urban family where she has plenty of room to explore. 🐰 **Roxie** and her new friend Roman, both Buckeye HRS foster rabbits, keep Maureen's family entertained at their home in Columbia Station. 🐰 **Milo** was adopted by Beth of Akron. He loves to play Hide n' Seek with his new girlfriend, Inky. 🐰 **Pinky** (now **Emma**) races her friend Sammy to the top of their country cottage to see who is first to get pets from Suzi and family in Follansbee, West Virginia. 🐰 **Cassidy** (now **Lily**) can stretch her legs and run around in her new home with the Stuursmas of Hudson. 🐰 **JJ** was adopted by the Sharkey family of North Olmsted. They are thoroughly enjoying his clownish antics! 🐰 It has been an exciting time for **Fawn** who now has a new name (**Rosie**) and a new family. She is now loved by her human Maria and her rabbit companion Sammy. 🐰 **Peaches** (now **Jasmine**) gets lots of pets and attention from the Graves family in Euclid. 🐰 **Mouse** (now **Ivy**) has a new home with Susan of Shaker Heights, who also adopted Wyatt last year. 🐰 **Maggie** now lives with another former Buckeye HRS foster bunny, Fidget, at the Gup's in Pepper Pike. 🐰 **Pogo** hangs out with Mason, another former Buckeye foster bun, at the home of Leslie and Justin of Chagrin Falls.

SOLD!

May 17th was the 2nd annual NE Ohio garage sale fundraiser to benefit the Buckeye HRS foster rabbits. It was held in Solon and we were fortunate to have such a beautiful day amidst the rainy spring weather. We had a great array of items donated including appliances, jewelry, housewares, toys, furniture, and exercise equipment. For those who missed out on attending this year, try to make it next year. There were some wonderful items available to purchase at great prices.

Special thanks to Dave and Christine Hales for hosting the garage sale at their home again this year. Also, thanks to Christine, Heidi, Jane, Kristen and Kristi for sorting, pricing, setting up and working to make the garage sale a success. Thanks to those who came and shopped, too. Last, but not least, thank you to all the people who donated their gently used items for us to sell. We couldn't have done it without you! 🐰



Save Your Receipts!

Many thanks to the people in the Akron/Canton area who shopped at ACME grocery stores, saved their receipts and sent them in to the Buckeye HRS so we could participate in ACME's Community Cash Back program. The program runs from September to May each year and the Buckeye HRS gets a percentage of all purchases on receipts sent in to us. This amount is then calculated and mailed to us as a donation from ACME at the end of the program year. This was our first year participating in the program and we received a check for over \$100.00 to help our rescued rabbits. We're pleased with this first year's amount but hope to increase it in the fall of 2003 and spring of 2004 as we spread the word even more. It's so easy and it costs you nothing but an occasional stamp to mail your receipts to Buckeye HRS. The program has started up again in September 2003 so save your receipts and mail them to 3664 Highview Ave SW, Canton, OH 44706.

If you know of any similar programs in your area that the Buckeye House Rabbit Society could benefit from, please let us know and we will look into them.

Not So Lucky, Cont'd.

treats, electrical wires, cecotropes, ice bottles, and neutering. We were both very concerned about Laura's family having this little rabbit around their beagle and a rambunctious 8-year-old child. Despite these feelings of concern, my husband made it clear that we were not to "cause something". I decided that educating Laura's family would be Lucky's best chance for receiving the care and attention he deserved. I took a few pictures and we went to bed.

Later that day we met up with Laura and her family at my in-laws' house for a 4th of July picnic. Rachel grabbed Lucky and began running around wildly with him clutched, wide-eyed, against her chest. We tried to talk to her and her mother about Lucky. We insisted that Rachel

put Lucky down, then we showed her the materials we printed for her. After a few minutes, my mother-in-law picked him up, crushing him against her chest and rubbing him roughly. These people needed a toy, not a rabbit. Still, my husband was adamant that we "mind our business". Kelly and I were in tears as we headed home.

Laura's family lives quite a distance from us, so we didn't hear much news about Lucky, except for how much Rachel loved him. Then on Tuesday, July 15th we received some news that rocked us to our core. Laura's family had gone away the previous weekend, leaving Lucky, their birds, and their guinea pig home alone. They had taken their dog with them. Their house has no air conditioning and is unbearably hot all summer long. When they

returned, they found Lucky dead in his home. He survived 11 days in their environment. Just 11 days.

"He died of a broken heart because he loved Rachel so much and missed her so much," was the official party line. Laura didn't have the nerve to tell me herself, so I called her. "Oh, Mary, it's just a rabbit. I'll buy her another one." For the first time ever, I lost my temper with a family member. The compromise was that Rachel would get a much sturdier pet, a guinea pig. We reasoned that since her older sister has a guinea pig and takes good care of him, this would be an agreeable solution.

Today, August 30, we will attend a family anniversary party. My daughter Kelly and I are very anxious about what we'll say or do when we see Laura's family. 🐰



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...