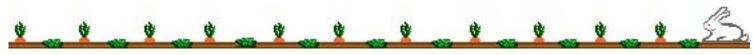
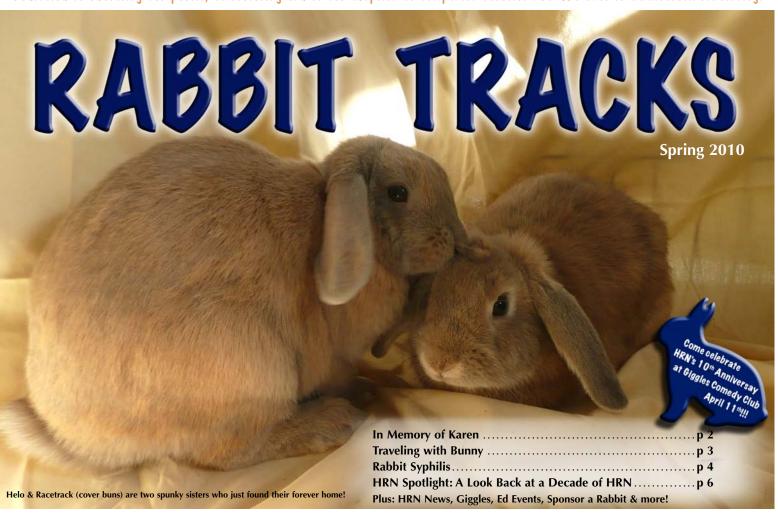


P.O. Box 2602 Woburn, MA 01888-1102



Dedicated to educating the public, to fostering and to the adoption of companion rabbits. 781-431-1211 or www.rabbitnetwork.org.



In Memory of Karen

On December 27, 2009, HRN lost a wonderful volunteer and bunny friend, Karen DeGroat. She did a lot of work on the HRN Hotline and every other way she could help, she did. She loved her bunnies, her dog and of course her husband John. This is an article Karen had written for our newsletter before she passed.

Living with Rabbits

by Karen DeGroat

The phrase "dumb bunnies" does not describe my bunnies at all. Sometimes their intelligence surprises me. They are playful, affectionate and can be downright stubborn. Their personalities are what make them so lovable. I have companion rabbits who live in the house with my very patient husband and me. They take up a good deal of my time and love.

The first rabbit I ever fell in love with is a female I named Midnight. In the spring of 2003, I discovered that I'm not allergic to rabbits (as I am to some dogs and all cats). I saw this one bunny available to a good home. She was, and still is, beautiful. I held her and it was love at first hug, so I did the only thing I could – I brought her home.

I set up Midnight's new cage in my house and she settled in slowly. The more I saw of her and the more time I spent with her the more fond of her I became. I was "obsessed" in my quest to give her a good home. I bought books about rabbits and spent hours on the Internet downloading information to read about rabbit care and diet.

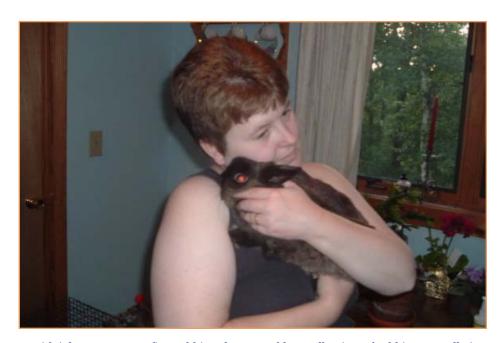
I learned that hay is an important part of a rabbit's diet, so I supply it to her daily, and she not only eats it but also seems to delight in fixing up her cage just so with it. Greens are an important part of a rabbit's diet too. Right away, she took to Swiss chard, different types of lettuce and spinach. She also eats rabbit pellets. Corn, seeds and nuts are all foods that are not good for a rabbit's digestive system.

Bonding with Midnight did take time, but she was worth it. Rabbits seem to choose whom they will trust and whom they won't. She bonded with both my husband and me. At the same time, she will let us know if she has had enough petting or handling by grunting at us. She is quite a moody rabbit, but I guess I shouldn't be surprised, considering she is a Dwarf. Dwarf rabbits have the reputation of being short-tempered. Since rabbits don't like a hand in front of their face, I approach her from the

top of her head when petting her or picking her up.

I also found that rabbits are quite clean. They only shed two or three times a year and they groom themselves just like a cat. They can learn very easily to use a litter box. Rabbits are almost odorless, especially if you keep the litter changed frequently.

Midnight learned some voice commands. I let her out of her cage as much as possible each day to run around the room so she can get exercise and so I can socialize with her. When I say "time to go back," she'll run back into her cage. She knows that playtime is over until the next time I let her out. She also most definitely knows what "no" means. Rabbits' teeth grow continuously, so I give her chew toys. Rabbits also like to dig, so she has piles of newspaper



Midnight was Karen's first rabbit, who started her collection of rabbits. Actually it was Karen's husband John that started it. Karen had a large collections of rocks and minerals and was attending a rock show. John had had about enough looking around at the rocks and noticed a rabbit show next door. He told her he was going over there to look around. Later she came over and it was then that she realized that the rabbits did not seem to bother her allergies. The rest is history!

for that also. I do have to tell her "no" when she wants to scratch or chew something inappropriate and I keep houseplants and electrical cords away from her.

I had her spayed because it decreases the chance of cancer. Now if I take her back to the vet who spayed her, something interesting happens. The minute I put her on the exam table to be looked over, she jumps up onto my shoulder. She must remember being afraid at the vet's office during the spay procedure, because it's as if she's saying, "Protect me!" It's one way I know she loves and trusts me.

Over the winter of 2003, I started to want a second rabbit for two reasons. One, I thought it would be good to get Midnight a playmate. Second, I was having such an enjoyable experience with Midnight that another rabbit seemed like a good idea.

Velvet, as we named the second rabbit, is a male. Rabbits are territorial. Males, in particular, do not hesitate to prove it by spraying their urine but Velvet was quick to litter train after he was neutered, which also stopped the spraying. He turned into a social and funny bunny. When I sit on the floor with him, he'll lick my hands for minutes at a time. When a bunny licks you, it's a sign of affection. We bonded and he is a joy.

There was some aggression from Midnight toward Velvet for a few weeks, so I had to separate them a few times to protect Velvet. Eventually, they became playmates. They each have their own cage but they have time together to play outside their cages. Velvet is larger than Midnight but Midnight is the more dominant, "bossy" rabbit. When the two rabbits play together, Velvet does most of the grooming of Midnight rather than the other way around.

Rabbits demand and deserve attention. If I'm in "their" room letting them have time outside their cages, I have to give them my full attention. Forget looking at mail or reading a newspaper article - they will get my attention if they feel I'm ignoring them. Rabbits like to play games. Velvet will come up to me and nudge me. When I reach out to pet him, he'll run away as if he's playing a game of "catch." Sometimes they like their space. Just like other animals and humans, rabbits have their quiet times and playful times. Velvet is both laidback and playful. He sometimes likes to race around the room, a sign that he's happy. Other times, he'll chew his toys. He also learned "time to go back" to his cage. Midnight and Velvet love to go into each other's cages and eat each other's food. They both recognize the sound of one of the bags of treats

I keep on hand for them (Craisins). They will come running over to me to get a treat when I shake the bag.

During the summer of 2004, a woman who knew I loved rabbits asked me if I would take her two rabbits. I took them in and there was a litter born shortly after, which did not surprise me at all. They are all grown up now, and all of the rabbits are spayed and neutered. I lost the mother of the litter during the winter of 2008.

It has been quite an experience living with the number of rabbits I have in my house. If my husband ever feels deprived of my attention, he never complains about it. He is a good sport about having a house full of rabbits.

I have decided that I will always have rabbits as part of my life. I love watching their antics and quite often wish I knew what they were thinking. I would suggest a bunny as a pet for anyone with a sense of humor, patience and extra love to give.

So I now have a total of seven rabbits. My rabbits have given me much joy, many laughs and have taught me a thing or two about the intelligence of animals. My rabbits have also taught me that I can be quite patient with animals.

Traveling with Bunny

by Robin Long

Bunny Boo, our Himalayan Netherland Dwarf, is not a pet. He is a family member. To call him a pet would be an insult! As a house rabbit with about 800 square feet of home to call his free-roam territory, this little two and a half pound furball made his way permanently into our family's heart five years ago.

So it's unthinkable that we would leave him behind on our family vacations! Yes, he joins us on our overnight visits to a 5-star hotel. Cashing in our hotel loyalty points, we love staying at the Wentworth by the Sea Resort in seacoast New Hampshire. Bunny Boo is a regular there. This gorgeous hotel, which hosted President Teddy Roosevelt at the turn of the century, allows pets, or rather "family members" of the

furry kind less than 30 pounds.

We would often see well-heeled matrons and stuffy looking gentlemen walking their little Yorkies and Shitzus down the marble hallways, so why not a Netherland Dwarf? The trip takes less than an hour by car, and Bunny Boo is well behaved in his carrier – no accidents. Hotel guests are curious when they see his carrier in the elevator and when they find out it contains a lagomorph, they joke that they will bring their guinea pig or hamster next time.

One time, a hotel employee in the grand lobby confronted us. We thought for sure we would get kicked out because Bunny Boo isn't a dog. She asked, "What's in your carrier?" My husband, daughter and I hesitated. So the staffer asked again, louder this time, "I say, what is in your carrier?" I was all set to say something like, "A hopping terrier!" figuring we could pass off Bunny Boo as a small dog. My daughter, who was seven years old at the time, took the honest route



Bunny Boo grooms himself and makes himself right at home in the hotel with his human, Francie.

and said it was a bunny. I was sweating bullets. Then the employee said, "Oh, wonderful! I have a rabbit! Do you want another one?" We were so relieved and went up to our room.

Once in the hotel room, we set up our daughter's old playpen. It's about four feet by three feet, plenty of room for Bunny Boo. All his comforts of home go in the playpen – his litter box, a cardboard box to hide in, food, water, and plenty of hay. He never roams the room, so there is no danger of him chewing cords or furniture. He is totally contained in the playpen, except when we let him out to hop on the fine bedsheets.

I believe Bunny Boo is happy we bring him along. The one time we left him at home for a weekend (thinking he'd be okay with extra food, water and litter) he was so upset he sprayed in the house and when we came home it smelled like a skunk family had moved in. He definitely missed us and taught us not to leave him alone for too long again.

If we didn't bring him along, I would worry and miss him the entire trip. So I'm grateful to the hotel for letting our Bunny Boo join us. After all, he is truly a family member!

Rabbit Syphillis

by Tal Saarony

The 2 most important facts about rabbit syphilis are:

- 1.That it is completely treatable and curable;
- 2. That it is not zoonotic and cannot be transmitted to humans.

Rabbit syphilis is a disease caused by the bacterium Treponema cuniculi. It can be transmitted sexually, but has also been seen in rabbits that were living singly, having had no contact with other rabbits, and in rabbits that were sharing space with unaffected rabbits. It is believed that the disease was transmitted to these rabbits at birth or via the mother's milk while nursing. In some rabbits the bacterium may remain dormant for long periods of time, even years, and the affected rabbit will show no clinical signs until a stressful event occurs, causing the infection to erupt.

The incidence of syphilis in house rabbits is not known, but it is likely



Feb. 9, 2007 - Discovered what appeared to be an injury in the corner of Gozal's eye, possibly from a bonding session. It resembled a crusty eye discharge.

more common than previously thought. It is, therefore, important to be aware of the clinical characteristics of the regular and atypical forms as well as of the easy availability of treatment.

Clinical signs

The typical form of syphilis affects the mucocutaneous junctions of the genitalia, the anus and/or the face, mainly around and on the eyelids and nose. Lesions develop slowly. The skin becomes crusty and ulcerated. The secretion of a pus-like exudate and bleeding can occur. Due to slow immune response to the bacterium, the infection can spread to the surrounding areas and other susceptible regions on the body (e.g., from the anus/genitalia to the face) when left untreated.

Over the last years, an atypical form of treponematosis has been observed in rabbits, in which clinical signs are seen only on the face and not on the genitals/anus. The affected area will exhibit lesions that will develop into crusts and, if left untreated, will spread. The lesions may become raw, inflamed, or may bleed or exude a discharge.



Apr. 18, 2007 - Wound was crusted over and then suddenly a crater appeared. Gozal was getting an antibiotic eye ointment which had no effect on his condition.

Treatment

Syphilis bacteria will only be killed with injected penicillin G (benzathine/procaine: 42.000 - 84.000 UI/kg), at



May 10, 2007 - Around this time Gozal's nose presented with crusts as well, though to a much lesser degree.

intervals of 5 to 7 days, continued 4 - 5 weeks. The importance of injected administration must be emphasized here: rabbits should NEVER be administered penicillin orally.



June 4, 2007 - Great improvement, after a vet friend (who had been following Gozal's condition via emails) suggested syphilis. Gozal's first penicilin shot was on June 1.

It is important to monitor the rabbit's eating. As the dying bacteria release toxins inside the rabbit's body, the appetite may be affected. Inappetence can last 2 - 3 days, but the rabbit usually begins eating again on its own. It is essential that the antibiotic is not stopped; the rabbit should be encouraged to eat, tempted with favorite foods, and given a lot of attention and love to motivate it to eat.

Case Study

On our website we have a complete case study of a rabbit, Gozal, and his syphilis. There are many pictures, documenting the entire progression and treatment of his illness. To view this case study, please go to our website at: http://www.rabbitnetwork.org/articles/syphilis.shtml

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Gozal, September, 19, 2009 - Completely healed and 100% healthy!

A Look Back at a Decade of HRN

This year HRN will

be celebrating our tenth anniversary, so now is a great time to look back at our organization and see how we have changed and how much we have accomplished. We started in February 2000, a small group of bunny-lovers who wanted to make a difference in the lives of rabbits. We had lots of ideas and plenty of drive. Initially we had a handful of foster homes and a few rabbits.

First thing we did was to

My have we grown since then. We have a top-rated website that shows up quickly in search engines. We have over eighty articles on rabbit behavior and care, and we have had over 1.5 million page hits! Our "Bun of the Month" has been with us from the very beginning, and since then we have added Sponsor a Rabbit, a Blog and Videos of adoptable buns.

get a website set up and start advertising our rabbits.

Our first year we were thrilled with 44 adoptions; the second year we had 67 rabbits and one guinea pig adopted. Lightning, the guinea pig, is the only non-rabbit ever adopted from HRN. From our inception until the end of last year, we have placed 1,265 rabbits into good, indoor homes. Our adoptions have steadily increased and in 2009 we were thrilled to have 193 adoptions, a new record for us. We hope to have 200 adoptions a year soon...

Does anyone remember our original logo? We wanted to show a pair of rabbits, so we had a picture of them in an abstract house. We connected the words of our name with rabbit

tracks, and that idea led to the rabbit tracks background on our web pages and the name of our newsletter. After a few years, we decided we needed a new logo. Working with pictures in a logo is difficult, and too many people thought our house was a doghouse. So we modified the house to make it look more real and went to drawn rabbits. The essence was still the same, but we think our new logo is quite nice!

House Rabbit Network

We have consistently published three newsletters each year. We named our newsletter Rabbit Tracks, and try to have a mixture of articles on rabbit health, behavior/care and a feel-good article. To help educate the public and reach out to the community, we continue to do many education events. We've become regulars at several large events each year, including the Tufts Open House, Pet Rock, and the Boston Vegetarian Festival. We've been at town fairs and even hung pictures of our adoptable buns at some local Starbucks.

Rabbit people love to get together and socialize. Before we were the House Rabbit Network, there were many bunny parties for local rabbit people. We continued that tradition – every summer we have a Bunny Bash, a potluck where HRN friends get together, trade bunny stories and have a fun day together. In 2006, we had our first Flatbread Benefit Night, which has turned into a wonderful dinner and prize night, usually attended by about 250 people. It raises over \$3,000 for HRN. Last year we did our first benefit at Giggles, and this year we are cele-

brating our tenth anniversary there!

We've always wanted rabbit people to communicate with each other, and we want to communicate with our fans. This is accomplished in many ways. We started with our phone line, answering questions, and also with email, responding to many questions each week. Later we added a Chat group where bunny people can post

about their rabbits and ask questions of each other. In order to get regular updates to our supporters we started an e-bulletin. For the e-bulletin, once a month we send a brief email to our list containing HRN

news and events. Recently we started a Facebook page and quickly had over 700 fans. It is nice to know we have so many supporters!

In the first few years we had to practically beg for any media exposure we could get our hands on. As our reputation has grown, HRN has received national exposure, appearing in Dear Abby and Life magazine. We've appeared in local television programs and were even on the Secret Lives of Animals last year. Stories of our rescues have appeared in many newspapers, including saving Joey from a vent in Wakefield and capturing strays in Plymouth. Most years we are able to do stories about rabbits near Easter. The media is starting to get to know us!

HRN has had a very successful first decade. We've come a long way! It is thanks to all our volunteers and supporters that we have accomplished so much. We wouldn't have been able to do it without you. Together, we are making a difference for the rabbits. Here's to the next decade. We are looking forward to the next ten years!

HRN News

Save the Date!

This winter, HRN turned 10 and we are celebrating Sunday, April 11th with laughter at

with laughter at the Giggles Comedy Club. Here's a chance to hang out with



friends, listen to some local comedians and raise money for HRN. Giggles Comedy is located at the Prince Pizzeria in Saugus, MA on Route 1S. Doors open at 6:30, and the laughter starts at 7:30! You can purchase dinner and drinks while you are there. We are going to have raffle prizes and a slide show of former HRN buns. If you adopted from HRN, please send us your photos:

HRNpictures@yahoo.com.
Please order your tickets here:
http://www.rabbitnetwork.org/gig-gles.shtml

Animal Rescue Site Challenge... Again!

Help the House Rabbit Network win again this year! Vote every day!

Simply click on this link:

http://www.theanimalrescuesite.com/clickToGive/shelterchallenge.faces?siteId=3, Enter "House Rabbit Network" for the organization and "MA" for the state, and vote for us!

The Animal Rescue Site is awarding \$100,000 in grants to eligible Petfinder.com member rescue organizations.

The grand prize is a \$20,000 grant and there are



many more prizes ranging from \$1,000 for weekly winners up to \$5,000 for the runner-up. There will be a winner in every state as well as other grants!

The Petfinder.com rescue organizations with the most votes will win. You can click to help animals at **www.theanimalrescuesite.com**, and then vote for your favorite participating Petfinder.com shelter. Clicking and voting are free, with no registration required. You can vote once every day during the Challenge.

Sign Up For Daily reminders! Click http://www.rabbitnetwork.org/vote. shtml and then scroll down to join our email list and each day we will send out a reminder to vote!

Wish List

The House Rabbit Network is always in need of supplies or other items for our organization. If you could donate any of these items, please contact us by phone at 781-431-1211 or by email: *info@rabbitnetwork.org*. It would really help us out if you could drop the items off for us. Our contact person should be able to find a convenient location for you.

- High quality pellets such as Purina Lab Diet or Oxbow's Bunny Basics
- Fresh hay
- Wood stove pellets
- Copying services
- Office supplies: stamps, paper, envelopes
- Large cages: at least 2'x3', rabbitats
- Exercise pens
- Grass mats, wicker baskets (unfinished)
- Everyday supplies: litter boxes, water bottles, crocks
- Fresh greens
- Cash to pay our vet bills

HRN is now on Facebook

If you're on Facebook, (and who isn't?) join us! We update the page daily on new adoptables, those who have found forever homes, HRN events, and everything else rabbit.

Click here to become a fan: http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home# /pages/House-Rabbit-Network/ 201518592185



Upcoming Ed Events

We hold education events at various locations in Eastern Massachusetts. All dates and locations are on our web site at *www.rabbitnetwork.org*. Please stop by to visit, and we would be happy to answer any questions you may have about rabbits and their care. Information about adoption, along with a listing of rabbits currently up for adoption, will also be available. We do not adopt out on-site.

The following education days are all at various Massachusetts Especially for Pets locations from 12 PM to 3 PM:

- April 10, Petco, Topsfield, 12-3
- April 24, Petsmart, Salem MA, 12-3

Memorials

Every time I lose a rabbit he takes a piece of my heart with him. And every new rabbit who comes into my life, gifts me with a piece of his heart. If I live long enough, all the components of my heart will be rabbit, and I will become as generous and loving as they are.

~Author Unknown

Danny & Kelly

Kelly and Danny came into our lives when we rescued them from an abandoned home where they were left behind in their cages. It took no time at all to settle into their new environments at our foster home. They were both happy to have been rescued from



such an awful environment. While Kelly was a little more reserved, Danny would see you come into the room and stand up on the x-pen walls to beg for food or head rubs. They were both a joy to be around and to care for.

Sadly, Danny passed away from unknown reasons late in the afternoon on October 14, 2009, just days after his neuter.

Kelly's time with us would last another month or so, before she was adopted into a loving home to bond with another bunny. After a few short weeks, Kelly developed an unknown illness, was seen by many vets, and eventually stopped eating and pooping. We took

Kelly back into our home and worked tirelessly to try to help save



her, but unfortunately she passed on January 2, 2010. We held her close as she made her transition and was free from the mysterious illness that had plagued her.

Kelly and Danny were great bunnies and it was a gift to have been able to care for them as long as we did however short it was. While the outcome of these two wonderful rabbits is heart-breaking, we have to look forward to the next time we get the opportunity to take an otherwise grim life and give them the best life possible. They are now together again and without any of the pain they may have felt in the final moments of their lives. Kelly and Danny, thank you for giving us your unconditional love and we all hope you rest in peace.

~Foster Dad Justin and Foster Mom Melissa

Heather

Heather was a sweet girl. She was my first rabbit and she taught me so much about rabbit behavior that



I never knew before. I first saw her at Petsmart and what I noticed about her was that she didn't mind being held - she was so sweet and gentle. Heather had a very good appetite so when she stopped eating, I knew something was very wrong. I think about her everyday and miss her so much.

~Missy

Skippy 2004-2009

Loved greatly by his family. He was more than a cute rabbit, he was part of the family. He was 5 years old, died of possible leukemia. Skippy, we will miss your constant begging for food, your



desire to be petted, and your snuggles. You will always be our little buddy. I am sure the great refrigera-

tor in the sky will be constantly stocked with parsley and will never close. We will always love you Skip! ~Don, Liz, Ethan

Lulu

My beautiful rabbit, Lulu, died of E.cuniculi and a torsed liver on July 10, 2009. She was eight and a half years old. Timid and withdrawn when I adopted her and her mate Bunny on January 1 2002, she soon became the belle of the house. She was a coquette with thick black eyelashes and a rosebud mouth. She would sashay around the living room, Bunny would watch her, and then suddenly race after her. They did this often, until it came to resemble a courtship ritual. They were one of the happiest couples I've known. She is badly missed.

~Gail



Sponsor A Rabbit!

The House Rabbit Network has many rabbits that require extra expenses. If you cannot foster, but would like to help, sponsoring a rabbit might be right for you! If you can assist with the veterinary and medical bills of our rabbits, you will directly assist in our mission to improve their quality of life. In some cases we are looking to raise a sum of money to pay their bills. Other rabbits require ongoing care with monthly costs. We realize that most people cannot afford a full sponsorship, so you can elect to partially sponsor a bunny. The dollar amounts listed are our financial goals lto which you may contribute all or part. All donations are tax-deductible.

Sponsors will have their names appear on our web site. Of course you can also choose to remain anonymous if you prefer. We recently PayPal enabled our sponsorship program. Please go here to view all of our "sponsor rabbits": http://www.rabbitnetwork.org/sponsor.shtml

Thank you to all those who have sponsored many of the HRN buns already!



Vespa had digestive problems and a growth on her nose. She seems to be recovering well! Her medical bills came to \$649.

> Angelo was being poorly taken care of at a "farm" and rescued where he is being treated for head tilt. He is in stable condition. His medical bills were \$382.





Daphne is a nice girl who got into a nasty fight with another bunny. She needed surgery to repair her wounds, which was \$141.



Fonzie is a sweet boy who had malocclusion and needed his incisors removed. His vet bill was \$136.



Tanya has kidney stones which have needed treatment to get them to pass. She still has stones and will probably have life long problems with them. To date her bills are \$1744. Can you help pay her bills?

Unfortunately, we were not able to save this sweet lady.



Please Renew Your Membership

House Rabbit Network is now in its 10th year – and we continue to grow.

Through our network of dedicated volunteers and members, we are making amazing strides to improve the welfare of house rabbits everywhere.

Your support can only further our goals, so become a member and get involved.

Visit our web site to find out how to help: www.rabbitnetwork.org.

If you are not already a member, please join HRN!

Your membership dollars will go toward rescue and rehabilitation, community outreach and education, and veterinary expenses.

Help make a difference in a rabbit's life. They're counting on you!

Contact House Rabbit Network at *info@rabbitnetwork.org* or (781) 431-1211.





House Rabbit Network Membership and Ordering Form

Your membership donation is tax-deductible and will be used for medical costs (spays/neuters, vet bills) and education expenses. All members will receive a copy of our newsletter, *Rabbit Tracks*, when it is published. Currently, we are publishing three issues per year.

Memberships run from April 1 to March 31 (donations received January–March will be credited for the following year). To join, fill out this page and mail it with your check (payable to *House Rabbit Network*) to:

House Rabbit Network P.O. Box 2602 Woburn, MA 01888-1102

Choose your membership level: Dwarf	Choose your newsletter delivery preference: PDF format via email	Please send mecop Rabbit Health in the 21st (2nd Edition	
Mini Lop\$ 25.00	(significant savings for HRN)	at \$20.00 each:	\$
New Zealand \$ 50.00	☐ Hard copy via U.S. Mail	Membership:	\$
Flemish Giant \$ 100.00		Other Contribution:	\$
Mix (other) \$			
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City	State Zip		
Phone	Email		