



House Rabbit Network

P.O. Box 2602

Woburn, MA 01888-1102



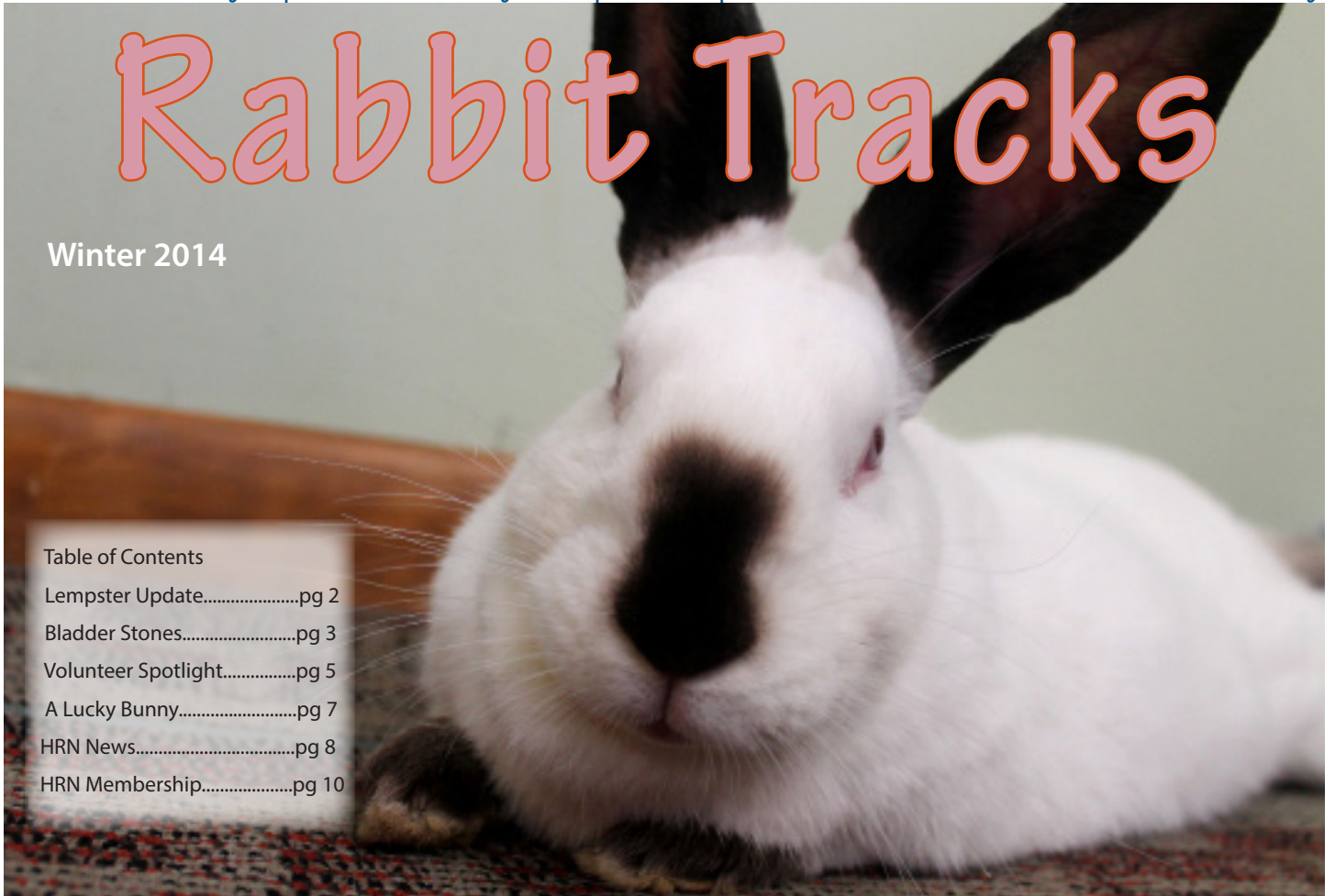
Dedicated to educating the public and to fostering and adoption of companion rabbits. 781-431-1211 or www.rabbitnetwork.org

Rabbit Tracks

Winter 2014

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Lempster Update

by A. A.

It has been two years since the Lempster rescue, in which 86 rabbits were removed from a hoarding situation in a barn in Lempster, New Hampshire. The owners thought they were doing a good deed by taking in “free” rabbits from Craigslist but they quickly became overwhelmed. The hutch was attacked by raccoons, which led to the rabbits being moved into the barn. The owners were unable to provide adequate food, water, or medical attention and as a result, the rabbits were breeding, fighting, and living in squalor.

Some had serious injuries, including broken limbs, abscessed wounds and loss of eyesight and many had behavioral issues and a distrust of humans because they lacked socialization with people.

HRN volunteer Janet Queen and local animal control officer, Cathy, began the rabbit removal process, which ultimately took 12 volunteers a total of about five days. The main rescue was completed in one day and involved removing the bunnies and cataloguing them. The first priority was to get the females spayed. After that, the males were removed, some of which had to spend six weeks

living in horse stalls until more permanent placement could be found. Prior to their rescue, Janet spent several days going to the barn and providing food and water for the rabbits. Getting the rabbits vet care — including emergency spays — and finding them homes was a huge undertaking that involved many volunteers and the cooperation of several animal rescue groups. Many rabbits were saved from dismal conditions and given the chance to have the kind of happy, carefree life that all bunnies deserve.

“...they are all shy and scared but with time and patience, they really start to trust you.”

In the time that has passed, almost all of

the Lempster bunnies have found permanent homes. Janet Queen and her husband, who have had more than 200 rescue rabbits at their home since 2007, adopted Maple, Birch, and Pita. “The Lempster rabbits,” said Janet, “aren’t any different than other rabbits we’ve had here. At first, they are all shy and scared but with time and patience, they really start to trust you.” As with all bunnies, Janet’s rescues have their own personalities. “Pita is very bold,” said Janet. She was often first in line to be fed at the barn prior to her rescue. Maple and Birch are on the shy



Rabbits in the Lempster barn. Photo courtesy of Janet Queen.

side but Maple still likes to be petted and Birch likes to get treats and “run around, just like all rabbits do.” Janet’s experience has been that all rabbits have the potential to become wonderful companions, regardless of health or behavioral problems caused from a bad start in life. “Rabbits are all individual in behavior. It doesn’t really matter where they came from.”

Lempster bunnies up for adoption:

Oscar and Annabelle: Oscar arrived with massive arthritis in his right leg, due to an untreated injury he suffered while living in the barn. He is doing well now and has bonded with a special lady bun, Annabelle. They are an “opposites attract” couple, with Oscar being bold and Annabelle being reserved.

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Lempster Bunnies Up for Adoption continued

Zips: She is one of the babies born to a rescued mother. Zips likes to chill out while being held and petted.

Laces: She is Zips' sister who, unlike Zips, would rather stand on her own four feet than be held. Even though Laces is a princess who likes things done her way, she follows simple commands and plays well with other animals.

Thumper and Bianco: They are both beautiful white bunnies who like being petted and held. Bianco is all ears.



Zips posing for the camera. Photo courtesy of Tess Moseley.

Interested in adopting any of these lovely bunnies?

Please call our hotline: 781-431-1211 or email us at: info@rabbitnetwork.org.

For additional information, including pictures and videos, please visit: www.rabbitnetwork.org.

Special thanks to Janet Queen for her contribution to this article.

What to Expect if Your Bunny Has Bladder Stones

by Dr. Linda J. Siperstein

VCA Wakefield Animal Hospital

What do you think when you hear that a person or a pet has stones? There are different kinds of stones. Gall stones. Kidney stones. Here we're talking about bladder stones.

The bladder is like a water balloon where the urine collects just before it is peed out. If the environment in the bladder is just right (or, actually, just wrong) small crystals can grow on each other like a snowball, getting larger and larger. Often these stones, because of how they grow from more and more added crystals, are

rough like sandpaper, so they are very irritating to the inside of the bladder.

As you can imagine, that irritation can be experienced as pain and can also lead to blood in the urine. In addition, a bunny with a bladder stone might have a urinary tract infection.

Veterinarians diagnose bladder stones with X-rays. Below is an X-ray of a rabbit with bladder stones. The rabbit's head is not shown in the picture, but is to the left. The stones in this rabbit appear as two large white ovals plus many small stones.

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Bladder Stones continued

What causes a bladder stone to form? We have our suspicions, but often we don't know for sure in all cases. Veterinarians do suspect that, since these stones are almost always made of a calcium compound, that high calcium diets might increase a rabbit's chance of forming bladder stones. So we will recommend not giving too many calcium-rich veggies like spinach, kale, collard greens and arugula, and avoiding them entirely if a rabbit already has had a problem with bladder stones in the past. That said, there are often other forces at play and despite our best efforts, we can't always prevent the formation of bladder stones in rabbits.

What do you do if your bunny already has stones?

Very small stones might pass out through the urinary tract in females, less commonly in males

(a male bunny's urethra, the part that empties out of the bladder, is much skinnier than a female's). But stones can definitely get stuck in males or in females and that situation can become a life-threatening medical emergency. Generally speaking, you should not assume that stones will pass on their own.

The only option when it comes to treating a bladder stone in rabbits is to remove them surgically. It is important to find a veterinarian who is very familiar with rabbits and is comfortable with this surgery. Your vet might also recommend additional tests to try to look for a urinary tract infection or infection of the bladder tissue itself. In many cases we will put rabbits on antibiotics either before or immediately after surgery.

Below is a photo of what the bladder stones can look like once removed from the rabbit.



While a lot of vets know how to remove a bladder stone from a cat or dog (and the principles of the surgery are all the same), rabbits can be different from dogs and cats when it comes to anesthesia and the hours of recovery after surgery. In addition, we have to be sure the rabbit is getting very good, bunny-appropriate pain management. It may come as a

surprise, but some medications for rabbits require a higher dose than a dog the same size.

As with "all things rabbit," we must have a happy GI tract (eating and pooping normally) as soon as possible after surgery. If a rabbit isn't eating and pooping pretty well by the next morning, perhaps due to slowing of the intestines caused by the anesthesia or because of post-operative discomfort, be sure to call your vet for further guidance or bring her back in for care. Your fuzzy little family member probably needs additional medi-

cal support to get her gut happy again.

While the idea of surgery to remove a bladder stone from your rabbit can seem scary, in the right hands most rabbits will do very well. Plus, getting those stones out will make him or her feel more comfortable and hopefully resolve

the problem entirely.

Dr. Siperstein ("Dr. Sip") is a staff veterinarian at the VCA Wakefield Animal Hospital in Wakefield, Massachusetts, where the medical team happily treats rabbits, guinea pigs, lots of other small furry things, hedgehogs, parrots, reptiles, and even dogs and cats.



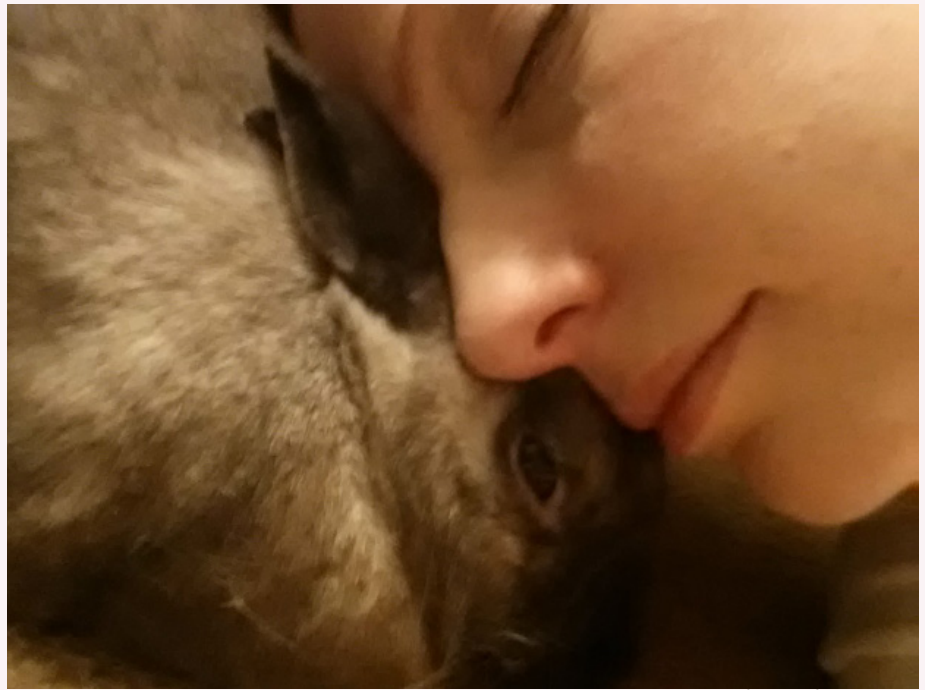
Volunteer Spotlight: Jennifer Mullen

by Sadie MacMillan

It might surprise some people to learn that the House Rabbit Network has offered rabbit sitting services for several years. Up until recently, HRN preferred not to advertise its rabbit sitting; for fear that demand for it would outpace the limited number of rabbit sitters available.

However, now that HRN has about 15 volunteers successfully providing temporary bunny care, the organization has begun advertising it on Facebook and elsewhere on the Internet. The team has been doing very well thanks in large part to the hard work of Jenny Mullen, the rabbit sitting coordinator.

Jenny joined HRN three years ago. Her brother adopted a rabbit from HRN, and although she didn't know anything about rabbits at the time, she saw how happy her brother was with his. She later rescued a rabbit of her own, an orphaned bun named Bumpa. Jenny was coping with medical trouble at the time, and Bumpa helped her through it by giving her a reason to get out of bed every morning. "We sort of rescued each other," she says. "And it just kind of landslided



Jenny and Eva in cuddle mode. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Mullen.

from there."

She reached out to HRN looking for a way to help. When asked if she'd be willing to try rabbit sitting, she agreed. She and her husband had an extra room in their house, so rabbit sitting was a good fit. It was around that time that the person who had been doing HRN's rabbit sitting no longer had the time to run the program, and Jenny took over.

Going through the HRN volunteer roster, Jenny slowly built up a corps of rabbit sitting volunteers. She is still a rabbit sitter herself, but now she coordinates a whole team of sitters throughout New England.

When someone calls the HRN hotline looking for rabbit sitting services, his or her contact information goes right to Jenny. Jenny sends a questionnaire asking where the client lives, what time period the bun(s) need to be cared for, how far he or she is willing to travel, how many bunnies need care, and what kind of health they're in. When connecting a client with a sitter, Jenny starts with sitters in or around the client's area, and goes from there. If the rabbit requires special care, like medication or subcutaneous fluids, Jenny has sitters who can handle those special situations. The client brings the rabbit to

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Volunteer Spotlight: Jennifer Mullen continued

the sitter's home, along with the cage and litter box, and any toys, pellets, greens, and medical supplies the bunny might need; the sitter provides the hay. HRN sitters will do their best to accommodate any specific requests the client may have for the bunny's care, like particular exercise and feeding times. And the client may rest assured that the bunny receives plenty of love and attention while a guest at an HRN bun sitting home.

The fee will depend on the time of year and the number of rabbits needing care. The standard rate is \$15 per day for a single bun, \$19 for a bonded pair, and \$22 for a bonded trio. During the peak seasons, which are June through August, Thanksgiving through New Year's Day, and the major holidays, the rates are \$17, \$22, and \$25 per day.

Two weeks' notice is usually enough to secure a sitter, but during the holiday season the team will realistically need at least three weeks to set something up. This past holiday season was particularly busy, and Jenny recalls spending five or six hours a day working on rabbit sitting arrangements. She fielded 15 requests just for Christmas alone, and happily she found situations for all but



Jenny and Clova sharing kisses in the kitchen. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Mullen.

one of the rabbits in question, and in that particular case she'd had only two days' notice.

Jenny has a good team of rabbit sitters now, but she will always welcome new volunteers.

"People who have dogs and cats like their animals to be cared for by people who have dogs and cats," Jenny says. "People who have bunnies are the same. They want their bunnies to be cared for by bun-savvy people, because bunnies are different from other animals."

If you are looking for a rabbit sitter, or if you are interested in volunteering as a rabbit sitter, please call HRN's hotline: 781-431-1211. We look forward to hearing from you!

A Lucky Bunny

by Suzanne Trayhan & Jenn Fernandes

We get heart-breaking calls about stray domestic rabbits all the time, many with serious health issues or severe injuries. Owners often think that these rabbits will survive if let go into the wild. This couldn't be further from the truth. Rabbits are fragile animals and have less of a chance of surviving their first few days exposed to outside conditions than a dog or cat. This is where our organization, House Rabbit Network (HRN), steps in. We try to rescue as many of these bunnies as possible.

We had a particularly dire case come to us last February. Our local

Animal Control Officer informed us that she had a bunny that was severely ill. We offered to take the bunny into HRN and care for him.

The boy bunny, later named Lucky, was in terrible shape. He had a temperature of 107 F, an abscess under his chin, eyes so infected he was possibly blind, he was dehydrated and anemic — the list went on. The vet let us know that things did not look good, and that we should consider euthanizing him, as she would

be surprised if he survived all of these ailments. But there was just something about Lucky. Even though he was in such fragile condition we sensed an innate will to live. So, after thoughtful consideration, we decided to proceed instead with medical treatment.

We agreed to try strong antibiotics and re-evaluate him in 24 hours. The first 24 hours felt agonizingly long, but little Lucky's fever started to drop! A small



Lucky when he was first rescued.



Lucky today.

amount of hope was starting to peek in.

But Lucky was not out of the woods yet. Our focus then shifted to addressing the abscess and infection under his chin. If the abscess had gotten down to bone level, he couldn't be saved. He fought through several surgeries to treat the abscess. In between each surgery, our volunteers lovingly helped with his delicate care. And then a small miracle hap-

pened. Lucky not only began to show signs that he was improving, but the abscess infection ceased and he began to regain his strength!

Once Lucky had fully healed, he was moved to our adoption shelter in hopes of finding his forever home. Months went by without a potential new family, but then one of our volunteers, Lisa, came in with her bunny Duster to find a

new friend. We tried a few different bunnies with Duster, and then we tried Lucky. Lucky jumped, flopped, and nuzzled with Duster. Both bunnies (and Lisa) were clearly smitten. Lucky had found his new home.

After being in his home for a few months, Lisa reports that Lucky is doing beautifully. Both bunnies are best friends and Lisa is in love with this bunny who "fills her home with joy." It seems Lucky truly lived up to his name.



HRN News

Giggles Fundraiser Sunday, April 13th

Come spend an evening in the company of fellow rabbit-lovers and the good folks from HRN! Join us on Sunday, April 13 at the Giggles Comedy Club in the Prince Pizzeria in Saugus, MA for a night of pizza, laughs, and fun — all in support of our buns!

Tickets are \$25 each until March 31, and \$30 after that. We'll be selling tickets at the door but the number of tickets is limited, so we encourage you to order ahead. The ticket price includes unlimited cheese pizza from 6:00-7:00 pm, and a 75-minute comedy show that begins at 7:00. (You can also purchase food and drinks from the pizzeria menu.) The comics billed for that evening are TBA.

We'll be having a prize auction, too, so be sure to check out the HRN website to see what the prizes will be. And of course, all proceeds of the evening go to support the House Rabbit Network!

There are two easy ways to buy tickets. First, go to the Giggles 2014 fundraiser page on the HRN website:

www.rabbitnetwork.org/giggles.php

If you'd like to buy your tickets online, you can make the purchase securely with Paypal from that page. Please make sure to double-check that you've



entered your email address correctly, because we'll be sending the ticket(s) to that address!

The fundraiser web page also has an order form that you can print and fill out, if you prefer to pay by check or money order. You can make your payment out to the House Rabbit Network, and send it by mail to HRN:

HRN
P.O. Box 2602
Woburn, MA 01888-1102
info@rabbitnetwork.org

Prince Pizzeria contact info:
517 Broadway (Rte 1 southbound)
Saugus, Mass.
(781) 233-9950
www.princepizzeria.com

What a fun and easy way to support HRN and the bunnies. We'll see you there!

Please note: The event tickets are non-refundable and the comics are subject to change. Please contact HRN if you have any questions.

Whole Foods 5% Day to Benefit HRN

On Wednesday, April 16 the Whole Foods in Woburn, MA will donate 5% of the store's net sales

that day to the House Rabbit Network. Whole Food offers several of these 5% Days throughout the year to benefit local nonprofit organizations, and we are de-

lighted to be among the recipients. Please stop by Whole Foods, 400 Cambridge Road in Woburn, on April 16 and let your grocery shopping benefit the HRN buns!

HRN News

Shelter Challenge – Help Us Win!

You can help the House Rabbit Network win money for our buns!

The Animal Rescue Site's yearly online challenge is in progress, with animal shelters of all kinds competing for national and state prizes. Help the House Rabbit Network win a grant by voting for us online!

Voting is easy and takes only a few seconds. And you can vote every day until the contest ends on March 30, 2014. Here's how:

1. Go to the Animal Rescue Site shelter challenge web page: www.shelterchallenge.com
2. Type "House Rabbit Network" in the Shelter Name search box, and set the country to "United States," and the state to "MA."

3. Click the search button. The page will reload and display the search results.

4. Where the House Rabbit Network is listed in the search results, click the vote button.

5. You will arrive at the "Confirm Your Vote!" page. Type the sequence of letters and/or numbers in the box, and click "confirm vote." That's all there is to it — you've voted for HRN!

6. Tell your friends, and remember that you get one vote every day until March 30!

We know our members can vote us into first place. A vote for HRN is a vote for bunnies, so please vote as often as you can!

Facebook Milestone

The House Rabbit Network Facebook page has reached 5,000 likes! That's a big achievement and we couldn't be prouder. A big thank-you to the volunteers who keep our Facebook page updated and interesting. The team has put together a video to say thank you to everybody who has liked our page:

<http://youtu.be/Eh4L4wnZdSI>



If you haven't already, check out our Facebook page at:
www.facebook.com/pages/House-Rabbit-Network/201518592185

Wish List

If you'd like to donate to HRN, check out the wish list we've posted on our website:

www.rabbitnetwork.org/wish.shtml

The list includes items that we will always need more of, like hay, wood stove pellets, and cleaning supplies.

We also have a wish list on Amazon.com: <http://amzn.com/w/1RF2AMA3DV6S1>

If you purchase from our Amazon list, the items will ship directly to us with no extra legwork on your part! A warm thank-you to all of our donors, past, and future!

HRN at Year's End

We're proud to announce that in 2013 we had a **total of 189 adoptions** network-wide! As always, we're grateful to the foster families and volunteers who care for our bunnies until their day comes.

So far 14 HRN rabbits have gone to forever homes in 2014. That's a great way to start the year! We wish them all the best with their new families.

Join HRN ... or ... Please Renew Your Membership

Through our network of dedicated volunteers and members, HRN is 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 website 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:

info@rabbitnetwork.org

781-431-1211

P.O. Box 2602

Woburn, MA 01888-1102



House Rabbit Network Membership and Ordering Form

Your membership donation is tax deductible and will be used for medical costs (spays/neuters, veterinary 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
P.O. Box 2602
Woburn, MA 01888-1102**

Choose your membership level:

- Dwarf \$ 15.00
- Mini Lop \$ 25.00
- New Zealand \$ 50.00
- Flemish Giant \$ 100.00
- Mix (other)..... \$ _____

Choose your newsletter delivery preference:

- PDF format via email
(significant savings for HRN)
- Hard copy via U.S. Mail

Please send me ____ copies of Rabbit Health in the 21st Century 2nd Edition, at \$20.00 each.. \$ _____

Membership \$ _____

Other Contribution \$ _____

Total..... \$ _____

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EMAIL _____