

THE HAMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS APRIL 2013

Saturdays at the Shelter With Erin and Erick: Multitasking in a Room Full of Playful Buns

By Natalie L. Reeves

You must be a special person to volunteer at the Animal Care & Control of NYC shelter. The pace can be hectic, but the volunteers who care for the shelter's rabbit population are dedicated to their work.

Saturdays at the shelter are particularly challenging, and volunteers Erin McElhinney and Erick Rodriguez are the friendly, hard-working people who regularly volunteer on those days. While they often plan to be at the shelter for a 2 – 7 p.m. shift, they frequently stay much later.

On a recent Saturday I was at the shelter to photograph the bunnies, and I couldn't help marveling at Erin's and Erick's commitment to the animals. The shelter's rabbits are housed in a room on the second floor of the shelter, in between rooms full of dogs. Approximately 25 bunnies are in residence at a time, each of whom is fed, groomed and petted by the volunteers.

While Erin and Erick clean the cages, the rabbit whose cage is being cleaned gets to play in a puppy pen. Since the bunnies only get out once a day for a

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How We Rescued Wild Bunny Caught In a Chain-Link Fence

Photo: Christopher Lupo



Wild bunny wedged in fence.

By Marylee Maturro

Rich and I were having a dinner party in mid-February when we got the call.

My young cousin had been walking his little dog in his backyard when he heard an animal screaming. The source of the screams was a wild rabbit stuck in one link of a chain-link fence. My cousin took a quick cell-phone photo and texted it to his mom. She texted me, and then called Rich and me to ask for help, and we immediately responded.

We had no idea how long the bunny had been stuck in the fence when we got there. We wanted to cut the fence to free

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Photo: Natalie Reeves



Erin and Erick with Harmony and Melody, a bonded pair.

A special rabbit adoption event will take place on Saturday, April 27, from noon to 4 p.m. at the Petco on Union Square (17th Street and Broadway), lower level. About 15-20 wonderful rabbits will be waiting to meet you.

Our masthead bunnies, Billy, Nutmeg and Princess Nisar, were bonded as a trio by Long Island Rabbit Rescue's Nancy Schreiber. Nutmeg (an NYC HRS bunny) and Princess (a former lab bunny) lost their longtime partner, Dusty, last year. LIRR-rescued Billy is eager to fill Dusty's shoes. Photo: Mary Ann Maier.

Saturdays at the Shelter

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fairly short time, they use the opportunity to run and play. On the day I visited, about eight of the rabbits had been spayed or neutered the day before, so Erin and Erick had to give each of those bunnies their pain medication and check their incision sites.

To clean, play with, medicate and groom 25 bunnies would easily take hours alone, but the room is also full of visitors who want to see the bunnies and ask questions about adoption. On that day, there were four adoptions, which made it a very successful day, except that there were three bunnies relinquished as well.

Erin spent a great deal of time with each prospective adopter and patiently answered all of their questions. She demonstrated how to take the rabbits' temperatures and how to clip their nails, and she gave each adopter a tutorial on stasis and the importance of having a rabbit-savvy vet. Since adopters had to spend hours in line to adopt their bunnies, Erin also checked on their progress.

We all celebrated when bunnies Kissena, Rosie, Cadbury and CC were adopted by wonderful families. Patti Reid and her two daughters drove in from Monmouth County, New Jersey, to adopt a bonded pair. They sat with two bonded pairs and ended up adopting black-and-white bunnies Kissena and Rosie. Kissena and Rosie had been rescued from Kissena Park in January 2013 by volunteer Vivian

Photos: Natalie Reeves



Kylie and Casey Reid with bunnies (Kissena and Rosie) they adopted.



Adebukola Adeniyi and her son Jeremiah with their bunny CC.

Barna, so we were particularly excited that this dynamic duo found a home after having been abandoned in a park and then living in the shelter for two months. The Reid family strongly supports animal rescue and will give these two bunnies lots of love.

Cadbury was adopted by Melanie Nanez, who was thrilled with her new bunny and already thinking about arranging a speed-date so that Cadbury could have a partner.

Adebukola Adeniyi and her young son, Jeremiah, were incredibly excited to be adopting the beautiful CC. Even after their exhausting wait in line to adopt CC, little Jeremiah still wanted to return to the bunny room so that I could take his picture for Thump with his family's new bunny.

NYC Metro Rabbits is always looking for new volunteers, and AC&C desperately needs more people like Erin and Erick to care for the shelter bunnies. Erin works crazy hours at her job, cares for her own bunnies and epileptic dog at home, and regularly fosters special-needs animals. On the day I was at the shelter, Erin had spent the morning caring for a foster bunny who had just had an eye removed. Erick had spent the first half of his Saturday volunteering for the Wild Bird Fund. Erin and Erick demonstrate that even the busiest New Yorkers can fit in volunteer time with a fair amount of juggling and unending commitment. If you would like more information about volunteering, please email nycmetrorabbits@gmail.com.

WILD RABBITS

Rescuing a Wild Bunny

(Continued from page 1)

the rabbit, but the property owners would not let us. The bunny's hind legs were stuck on an adjoining side fence, so I untangled them. Then Rich went behind the bunny and gently pulled her hindquarters out while I cupped her

Photo: Rick Chimble



paws, head and ears, and eased her forequarters out.

She was so limp that I was afraid there was spinal damage. Rich thought we should try to warm her up. I asked my cousin for some towels, wrapped the bunny up, and held her close to me.

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Bunny mom Marylee Matturro used her rabbit knowledge and skills to save the life of a wild bunny caught in a chain-link fence.

Rescuing a Wild Bunny

(Continued from page 2)

I stroked her head while wearing my gloves, and softly talked to her. When we got home, I put her in a carrier (she was still wrapped in the towel), and put a small heater near her.

I offered her parsley with water on it, but she was so traumatized that she didn't touch it. I left her for about two hours to calm down, and then removed her from the carrier and took her outside.

When I unwrapped her and she took off, I was so thrilled I actually clapped! I feel fortunate to have actually been able to hold a wild bunny.

(I have been seeing a young bunny in my yard at night recently...I wonder if this is the same bunny we rescued.)

Marylee Matturro and Rich Gallo live in Port Chester, N.Y., and are the proud parents of two rescued bunnies – Spanky, a 10-year-old American fuzzy lop, and Edison, a 7-year-old English spot – and Sweet Pea, a 15-year-old cockatiel.

Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Ivy, Odin, Gabriele, Wendall, Chester, Chocolate, Morris, Eva, Valentina, Inga, Patience, Fawn, Houdini, Bessie, Misty, Rowan, Jett and Dylan, Kissena and Rosie, Cadbury, CC, Lottie, Laurel, Bon Bon, Alex, Rizzo, Butter, Ash, Harmony and Melody, Justin, Buffy, Marisol, Snoopy, Grant, Andy, Sadie, Mel, Joy, Angie, Izzy, Alberta, Alex, Bibi, Bob, Patrick, Sarai, Sophie

Tips for Rescuing Wild Rabbits

By Joy Gioia

Editor's note: Joy Gioia spent several years with Missouri Wildlife Rescue and helped to create the Wildlife Rehab Clinic in Fenton, Mo. Although she gave up her wildlife duties when she became chapter manager of House Rabbit Society of Missouri in St. Louis, she still heals an occasional injured cottontail or raises orphaned babies brought to her. Contact info: Call 636-349-0606 or e-mail TomJoyGioia@sbcglobal.net

Cottontail Babies

– Don't assume the mother has deserted the nest. She does not stay with her babies like predator mothers because she doesn't want predators to find her nest. She visits briefly around dawn and dusk to check on her babies and feed them. She'll scrape away the dried grass and debris, hover over the nest and allow the babies to nurse from within the nest underneath her. Then she covers over the nest before she nonchalantly moves away a little at a time, as though she's just eating grass and moving along to a new spot. Also, the best chance for a baby cottontail to survive is to stay with the mom. They are quite difficult to raise in captivity.

– If you think something has happened to the mother, place a few strings over the nest in a tic-tac-toe pattern or an "X" prior to dusk or dawn and check later to see if the strings were disturbed. If bunched or messed up, the mom's been there. Mom will not be put off by your scent.

– If you are unsure that mom has visited the babies, carefully pick one up and check the baby's belly. If it is round, then mom has recently fed them. (Note: Babies with full tummies are usually sleepy, although they will jerk their bodies if picked up.) If the baby is very lethargic or frantic and the belly is shriveled and wrinkled, then something has happened to mom. Place the babies in a box with warm towels around them

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Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Tips for Rescuing Wild Rabbits *(Continued from page 3)*

(not scalding hot) and take the babies to a wildlife rehab clinic.

– If the nest has been destroyed by another creature (many are dug up by dogs) yet the babies are okay, reconstruct the nest with mom’s fur at the bottom. Don’t move the nest or mom won’t find it.

– If a nest is in your yard, do not touch it. If there is concern about your own pets getting to the nest, then the pets should be kept out of the yard or controlled on a leash for the short time it takes the babies to leave. They are out of the nest at just four weeks old.

– A nest can be protected by a couple of very easy methods. A wheelbarrow can be placed upside down over the nest to prevent the dog from getting into it. A cheap, plastic laundry basket can be placed upside down over it and secured with a rock on top. Be sure to first cut a hole about four inches in diameter on all four sides of the basket where the hole will be at ground level. One hole is a trap as far as mom is concerned and she (and the babies later as they start to move around) will need quick access to enter from all four sides. Secure the basket in place with a heavy object so the basket does not blow away and pets or other small predators can’t easily knock it over. This is also a good way to protect the nest when you are mowing the lawn.

– If a nest is run over by the lawn mower, check the babies for injury. If there is blood in the nest, any surviving babies should be taken to a wildlife rehab place. The blood will attract insects and predators and mom will not return.

– If a nest is flooded or invaded by insects, remove the babies, keep them warm and as quiet as possible, and get them to a wildlife rehab facility.

– If the babies have crawled out of the nest and their eyes are still closed, something has happened to mom. Get them to a wildlife rehab place.

– Do not feed a baby cottontail cow’s milk.

– Do not attempt to syringe-feed a baby cottontail without proper instructions from a wildlife rehabber, as it is much too easy to aspirate them and cause the baby to die.

Babies old enough to be out of the nest are about the size of a tennis ball, fully furred, and have ears about one inch long. (The white dot on the forehead doesn’t mean anything. I have seen newborns that did not have one and juveniles over 8 weeks old, who should be long out of the nest, that did have one.) You shouldn’t try to rescue a juvenile bunny found out of the nest unless he is sick or injured. Sick or injured cottontails should be taken to a wildlife rehab facility.

If you find yourself in a situation where you must care for an orphaned cottontail on your own, contact us for a handout on how to do it (call 636-349-0606 or e-mail TomJoyGioia@sbcglobal.net), but keep in mind that babies kept longer than eight weeks are extremely susceptible to death from captive stress. They are not meant to be pets.

Do Not Allow Children To Play With A Baby Bunny Or Even Make Loud Noises In The Same Room. Stress is a major killer of captive baby cottontails, so all children and other pets should be kept away from them.

Adult Cottontails

Most injured cottontails do not survive. Stress, infection and parasites can quickly kill them. However, if you do find one alive, line a box (or pet carrier) with a warmed, thick towel and cover the rabbit with another warmed towel. An injured, adult cottontail that can be picked up likely is in shock, meaning his body is in a hypothermic state and he needs to be warmed to help bring the body temperature back to normal. Be sure the towels aren’t too hot. A comfortably warm temperature for your skin is also good for them.

Transport any injured adult cottontail rabbit to a wildlife rehab place as quickly as possible.

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Sophie Loses an Eye, and Bounces Back

By Erin McElhinney

Sophie is what I call one of the adorable “dime-a-dozen buns,” bought on an impulse. You know the type: 6 months old, little baby face, hormonal, feisty and absolutely precious. She was pretty clean for a shelter dump, an absolutely perfect little Dutch girl. In fact, the only sign that someone bit off more than they could chew with her was a strange, cloudy orb-like red spot in the center of one eye. Not being familiar with Encephalitozoon cuniculi, I was informed she had the classic EC eye. She entered the shelter

system in mid-November and despite having sworn off fosters for a bit, I had to take her in.

Once with me, she had a regimen of daily Panacur and eye drops. I sat on the floor with her at night as she danced and binkied all over the living room, attracting the attention of my dog. They would stare at each other through the bars of the puppy pen that separated them and then Sophie would charge her head through, as if demanding grooming from a 65-pound beast. The dog would sniff her head uncertainly before

Photo: Jillian Nelson



Sophie at Petco.

retreating into another room. Sophie has no fear!

After a couple of weeks on her meds, she made an appearance on CBS to promote the annual Whiskers in Wonderland adoption event. The cats she co-starred

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Photo: Cathie Rekis



Rabbit-savvy toy shoppers are responsible for this collection.

We Love Our New Toys!

When a large number of donated toys from Kylie Edmond with Rock & Rawhide rescue group were misplaced recently, Cathie Rekis and Susan Lillo decided to replace the lost toys. The bunnies at the shelter now have lots of fun playthings to keep them busy. Cathie dropped off the toys on March 23, and what followed was a day of fun and

excitement. One bun immediately began playing a wild game of soccer with his ball, while several other rabbits seemed determined to destroy their toys during the course of an afternoon. All the bunnies loved having something to play with or attack in the cage. Our thanks go to Rock & Rawhide for their generous support, as well as to Cathie and Susan.



Shelter bunnies with their new toys.

When They Can't Tell You What's Wrong (Part One)

By Robert Kulka

Rabbits can't always tell us that something is wrong, and by their nature don't want you to know. As animals of prey, they are very careful not to let a predator know they are ill or weakened. So, when my girl, Lara, started to show a problem with her front right leg, it was difficult to tell what was happening.

Let me take a step back and fill in a bit of history – at least what I know of it.

Lara came to our group about a year ago, abandoned in a local Starbucks and with five young babies. She and the babies were housed at Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine (CAEM) until they were determined to be in good shape. She was also spayed during that time. From foster care, Lara was brought to the 86th Street Petco last summer, awaiting adoption. She was quite the beautiful big girl. After several weeks of

waiting, she was adopted. Unfortunately, as is sometimes the case, she was returned after about six weeks, and with a lot of extra weight on her. Again she stayed at the 86th Street Petco for several weeks. During that time she was diagnosed with and treated for bunny syphilis. Finally, in October, it appeared she was about to be adopted when she began to exhibit a problem with her front leg. She started

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Sophie *(Continued from page 5)*

with wiggled and squirmed, but Sophie was a tiny, furry, nose-twitching Audrey Hepburn. Everyone praised her poise and confidence in the television studio and how, really, how could you not fall in love with her?

We finished the regimen of medicine prescribed for her and she joined the Petco 86th Street family. She should have been scooped up immediately at the store; her loving nature, youth and good looks (from one side, anyway) created the perfect trifecta to being the perfect pet. However, her eye didn't cosmetically appear any better and in fact, seemed to be getting worse. The amazing and astute volunteers at Petco 86th Street dutifully made notes on her eye in their reports and I was called in to see if, in fact, it did appear worse than when I was fostering her. It did. From one side, she was perfect looking; from the other, she was a perfect freak with a scary red, cloudy orb for an eye, as if her real eye fell out and someone replaced it with an eyeball plucked from a goblin.

Whatever discomfort she felt, she certainly hid it from us, and each week there was report after report about how she was "almost" adopted and how the volunteers spent so much time cuddling her. But... there was always a catch.



Photo: Jillian Nelson

Photo: L. Barbour

Sophie loves greens!

She needed an enucleation, or eye removal. I had seen this done before, in the tiny and beloved rabbits Marge and Hunter—except in both of those cases, I didn't see the rabbits until quite a bit after the procedure. By then, they looked like teddy bears whose button eye had fallen off. When I picked up Sophie following the procedure, one side of her face was

simply raw. The area where her eye had been was swollen, with red and purplish skin stitched together. It looked profane. I cautiously touched her and she immediately pancaked and purred. I knew she was going to be just fine.

Her vet suggested keeping some Critical Care at the ready in case she did not eat, which wasn't an issue for Sophie at all. Merely hours after having her eye removed, she was munching on hay and devouring her favorite greens, cilantro and parsley. She was slightly skittish around any sudden movements or loud noises, but aside from that, she was her normal self. After a five-day regimen of twice-daily Metacam, she was back at Petco on 86th Street, waiting patiently to be the love of someone's life.

Sophie is so resilient that it will break your heart and make you wonder just how much these tiny little bodies can endure – and still she loves and is playful and affectionate and will cuddle anyone lucky enough to step into her puppy pen at Petco. No matter how many years I volunteer or how many buns I come across, I know I will never lose my sense of wonder about them. Sophie and all others who touch my heart make sure of that.

(Sophie was adopted on April 14 by Nina Katzenstein.)

What's Wrong

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to hold it close to her body and didn't seem to want to put weight on it. Despite this, she was still active, ate well and had healthy bathroom habits, as well as a very easygoing personality.

In order to make sure she was ready for adoption, she was brought back to CAEM for observation and diagnosis. X-rays were done to determine if there was a bone or fracture problem. Initial results didn't indicate anything major. If there was a fracture, it was hairline and didn't show on the radiographs. It was recommended that she be put on Metacam (an NSAID used for pain and inflammation management, administered orally in liquid form) for a week and be kept in a quiet and less stressful environment. Since I had a space in my heart and home after the loss of my rabbit a month before, I decided to foster her for the week and take care of her. The adopter who had shown interest disappeared in the meantime, and so I officially adopted her at the end of October.

When I brought her home, she adapted quickly to a new environment and was quite active and apparently getting better. We ended her week on the Metacam regimen. But within a week she began to slow down and held her right leg up and didn't let it touch the ground. I brought her to Dakota Veterinary Center in White Plains to follow up on the condition. X-rays were done and Dr. Gil Stanzione did a very thorough examination of Lara. The X-rays still showed no fracture--but did seem to show a problem at the elbow joint. It was determined to go back on a slightly lower dose of Metacam and to watch her progress.

Over the next week or so she appeared to be getting worse. Lara was less active and holding her leg up and close to her body. We went back to see Dr. Stanzione. We did another set of X-rays, and

Photos: Robert Kulka



Lara at home.

consulted with an expert on the West Coast as well. This time we could see major deterioration in the joint. The diagnosis was most likely osteoarthritis due to an apparent earlier injury that may not have healed properly. The recommended course of action was to administer a shot of Adequan (a prescription, water-based, intramuscular, polysulfated glycosaminoglycan – PSGAG) that helps prevent the cartilage in the joint from wearing away. It works to keep the cartilage healthy and intact, so that the bone in the joint cannot touch other bones. Along with the shot, she would get laser therapy to help reduce pain and inflammation and promote healing. At home, we continued a low dose of the Metacam each day.

The treatments were to be done once a week for a month. After that, treatments would be every other week for four sessions, with a goal of moving to every third week and then every month. Our hope was that the condition wouldn't worsen and possibly restore some fluid between the bones and make sure she wasn't in pain.

Two months into the treatments, we discovered a small round lump developing on the elbow joint. This started a new set of tests and evaluations. The lump was aspirated to perform lab work to determine what the growth might be.



We needed to know if it was related to the ongoing condition, something other than the osteoarthritis, or an infection. Initial results indicated necrotic debris – a sort of cyst that had formed and was breaking up. But the culture didn't produce an infection outside her body, and so we were still left with making assumptions and looking for an option that wouldn't necessitate surgery.

(To be continued)

Mama Jett and Dylan Find a Loving Family

Photo: Susan Lillo



Dylan and Mama Jett with adopters Kirk and Sarah.

By Tracy Nuzzo

It seems whenever I have taken Mama Jett out – usually to Petco or the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine – she is recognized, and cheered, thanks to the coverage from Thump, so I am delighted to write my final chapter on her.

Jett checked in at CAEM on Dec. 5 and had a lengthy amputation surgery performed by Dr Anthony Pilny. To anyone unfamiliar with how a bunny could function on three legs, I can only say that when her doc removed the mangled leg, it seems he equipped Jett with some invisible wings! As soon as the anesthesia wore off, Jett began to run and she hasn't stopped. After her life-changing surgery, it was time to start planning Jett's future.

Jett and her three babies came to me in an emergency foster situation and it was

impossible not to fall in love with her. Her sheer will and determination to succeed under terrible conditions, along with her sweet and gentle nature, pulled me right in. As much as I would have loved to keep her, I knew my bonded boy bunnies wouldn't be happy with that decision. I felt that finding the right home for Jett might be a tall order, but if there was a family who didn't mind Jett's "handicap," I knew that, in return, they would get an amazing bunny.

Cindy Stutts emailed me and said she had a great idea. Jett would benefit from having a partner bun, and perhaps she should be adopted with one of her babies. As luck would have it, Jett was extremely attached to one baby in particular – a boy bun who resembled her. Jett is head-to-toe black and her son, Dylan, looks identical, except he has white mittens on his front paws. He

started as the runt of the litter, and Jett seemed to take special care of him. In return, he was greatly attached to her. They would make a perfect bonded pair.

I took photos of mom and son and put together a description for Petfinder. The two rabbits would be labeled as "special needs" and also "no kids," because of the circumstances under which they were rescued. I liked that they wouldn't be the easiest choice on the site, because they wouldn't be the right pair for most folks browsing Petfinder. Only a very special family would even consider having Jett.

I was almost immediately contacted by someone who was very interested, but then was accepted to grad school out of state. Two weeks into the ad being placed, I got the email that would change Jett and Dylan's life. Sarah Willson and her boyfriend, Kirk, were interested. They had prior experience with special-needs pets and they were also clients of CAEM, where Jett's surgery was performed. A few emails were exchanged and we spoke on the phone to arrange a meet-and-greet for the following weekend at Petco.

Sarah and Kirk sat with Jett and Dylan for about an hour. They were able to hold the bunnies and ask a lot of questions, but they never once seemed uncomfortable with Jett's tripod status. It warmed my heart to see strangers who simply accepted Jett and didn't feel they were compromising by considering her. As they were leaving Petco, Sarah let me know that they were going home to bunny-proof their home and that they would be in touch to formalize the adoption. I knew this was the one-in-a-million home I had hoped for and I was filled with joy.

On March 9, I awoke early. The sun was peeking through my windows and melting the surprise snow we'd gotten the night before. The big day had arrived: Jett and Dylan were going to their new home. I packed up their favorite toys and blankets as I watched Jett groom each baby for the last time. I put the pair into a travel bag and we left for Petco.

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In celebration of the ruby

Did you know that ruby-eyed bunnies (a.k.a. albinos or New Zealand Whites) are some of the most intelligent and affectionate pets around? However, because some folks don't like the color of their eyes, these poor bunnies sit for months or even years in shelters, unadopted and unloved. Take a minute and read what experienced "ruby lovers" have to say about these oft-overlooked treasures!

**Treat yourself to a real gem:
Adopt a ruby-eyed bunny!**
www.rabbit.org

Testimonials from 'ruby lovers':

- "He's like a Golden Retriever in a white bunny suit!" —AC
- "I'm blessed to be owned by her!" —NR
- "Every white, red-eyed bunny I've ever met has been a doll!" —CS
- "Big, white, uber bunnies have the best sense of humor—they make their own jokes and laugh with their whole bodies!" —OC
- "I love his larger-than-life personality!" —LW
- "I will always have a New Zealand White in my family!" —JW
- "I love that she has my hair color and uses to me when I call her!" —DE
- "I wish I could rescue them all!" —SC
- "Forget the others," he seemed to say at the shelter. "I am your bunny!" —JC
- "Everyone who meets him is amazed at how sociable he is!" —DT
- "His huge spirit shines like light through her ruby eyes." —CP
- "His eyes used to spook me, but now they seem more expressive than any other color!" —CV
- "She demands affection and loves me when I lie down so much more than I did!" —LB
- "He waits for me at the door like my dog used to!" —AD
- "When I get home from work, he comes bounding over!" —RW
- "To me, those eyes are gems, just like my BooBoo is!" —JS
- "I used to think they all looked the same, but now each looks so distinct!" —LS
- "The bigger they are, the harder they fall—in love with them, that is!" —AL
- "They are so loving and really seem to appreciate of having a home with us!" —LH

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ADOPTIONS

Mama Jett and Dylan

(Continued from page 8)

Sarah and Kirk showed up early because they couldn't wait to see their new bunnies and take them home. The adoption paperwork was completed, and I held Jett for the last time. I whispered in her ear the same thing I told her just before her amputation surgery: "Don't worry, Mama. I promise, this is going to be GREAT!"

Now, a few weeks later, I know what I whispered to Jett was right. Sarah and I stay in touch via email and her updates make me so happy. Sarah and Kirk are very caring people, and they have showered Jett and Dylan with attention

and affection. They have given the bunnies plenty of room to jump and play, and indulge the buns with gourmet greens. Jett has settled in nicely and enjoys giving kisses to her new parents. Dylan, who was super shy in my home, is developing a playful personality.

I couldn't have envisioned the happy ending to this story when I first took in Jett and her babies, but I am so grateful. In just four months Jett lost a useless limb, gained a new family, and changed my life forever. I will always love that little mama who came into my house with her babies and I am permanently inspired by her grace and courage. Best wishes to the new family!

As a postscript, Sarah sent this email in late March: "After we brought them home, Jett and Dylan settled in amazingly fast—I think I was more nervous than they were. They were romping around the living room and throwing cardboard boxes around from day one. Over the past couple of weeks, they've gotten even more comfortable. Jett enjoys hopping up onto the back of the couch to hang out with us and have a look around. Dylan is still shy, but he's starting to trust us more every day. I've never had rabbits before, but spending time with them has been a crash course in rabbit behavior. They're so incredibly sweet, and we feel very lucky to have them."

We Are Looking for Loving Homes

By Kirsten Ott

Mocha

A volunteer writes: Mocha is a lovely large agouti lady who was surrendered by someone who claimed they had no time for her. Unfortunately, her owner did not find the time to overfeed this girl, and consequently she needs to lose some weight. It will be important for her new people to put her on a healthy diet and exercise regimen, under the guidance of a rabbit-savvy vet. It will be worth the effort: Mocha is an absolute love sponge. When approached, she turns herself into a pancake right away (and with her coloring, she even looks like a pancake!). So in addition to good nutrition and exercise, Mocha will need a lot of TLC. She's very mellow and easy to handle.

Zorro

A volunteer writes: Zorro is a medium-sized black-and-white boy who was found hopping around a parking lot in Astoria. This cute boy is a little shy at first – maybe he's not terribly used to human contact – but after a couple of tries he'll submit to some head strokes, and he'll enjoy it. Zorro has truly striking and unusual looks: he's jet black except for a white sleeve on his right front leg (the mark of Zorro?), a little white nose, and white front feet. (He's probably part Dutch.) And he has the cutest chipmunk cheeks you've ever seen!

Polar Bear

A volunteer writes: Polar Bear is a marvelous, extra-large male bunny who was found at 103rd Street and Central Park West. If you like gentle giants, this is your guy. He's very handsome, with beautiful dark eyes in a lovely big head. His all-white coat has a grayish-brown cast to it in places, suggesting he may have some Himalayan blood. Polar Bear is a little bit shy at first, and doesn't particularly like to be picked up, but he loves to be petted and will approach you, puppy-like, once you've demonstrated you're good at it. He is sure to become a total love bug in his new forever home.

Edwin

A volunteer writes: Edwin is a medium-sized young harlequin boy who is always ready for action. If he could talk, he'd be saying "Let's go!!" Edwin has a handsome face and an attractive gray and brown coat, but vanity isn't his thing. He's all about play time and exploration. When he sees you, he'll start dashing around his cage to get your attention, and climb his cage door looking for the secret way out. Needless to say, Edwin will need a home with lots of play space, plenty of opportunities for discovery – and excellent bunnyproofing!

Isabella

Isabella is the princess in residence at the Petco on Lexington Avenue. She has made many good friends there, and she definitely has a regal aura about her. She is a large white girl who loves to eat and play. Isabella is always busy with her toys, but she will stop for a long massage and pets on her face. If you bend down to pet her, she will lift her head to let you know that she welcomes your loving touch. She is an unflappable and energetic bunny who would make a nice family companion.

Clovis

Clovis was dumped in the woods in the winter. He was fed by some kind people, who contacted Rabbit Rescue & Rehab. A placid bunny, he was easy to catch. Since then he has stolen the heart of his foster mom. He weighs 6.6 and is a real love bug.

Jingles

A volunteer writes: Jingles is a beautiful large Californian female who was rescued in Queens. Her name may be a little silly; however, Jingles is anything but! She has a truly regal stature, classic Californian markings, and a very wise expression in her ruby eyes. She also sports an unusual light-brown dewlap – probably another symbol of royal lineage. Jingles is independent-minded and rather wary; she has to assess new people for awhile in order to decide whether



Polar Bear.



Edwin.



Isabella.



Clovis.

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Looking for Loving Homes

(Continued from page 10)



Jingles.



Rachel.



Octavia.

they're trustworthy. But you might catch her tooth-purring while you talk to her in a soothing voice. Jingles would do best in a quiet home with gentle humans.

Rachel

A volunteer writes: Rachel is a jet-black lionhead mix who was surrendered along with a dominant partner whom she clearly didn't like; as a result, she was

very fearful all the time. We separated the two, and Rachel has begun to calm down and come into her own. She is still shy at first, but she's curious too; she'll come up and sniff you, and before too long she'll accept gentle petting. When you remove your hand, she'll tilt her head and gaze at you with her striking big brown eyes until you come back. Rachel is clearly a very sweet bunny who will become a total love sponge in a good home. She would also benefit from a new bunny partner – one who treats her with the love and respect she deserves.

Noelle

A volunteer writes: Noelle is a small- to medium-sized all-black bunny who was abandoned in the lobby of the Manhattan shelter. This darling girl was emaciated and extremely thirsty when she first came in, and had to spend a day in medical getting rehydrated. She's doing much better now, thanks to the daily ministrations of staff and volunteers. Despite her recent history, Noelle is curious, friendly, and eager to explore the world. She has a charming disposition, and sports the silkiest, shiniest black coat this side of the Atlantic.

Octavia

A volunteer writes: Octavia is a medium-to-large dark agouti bunny. She was very frightened when she first arrived at the shelter, cowering in a corner of her cage. She's doing better now, and has even binkied with joy on several occasions during her "out time." Octavia must have been improperly fed or inadequately exercised by her former owner, because she is somewhat overweight; her new people will need to take better care of her! Octavia's coat is an unusual dark brown color and is very soft. She has lighter brown eyes and a dark nose that looks a lot like a Hershey's kiss.

Nemo

A volunteer writes: Nemo is an absolutely adorable little boy who was inexplicably surrendered by his owner. This young pumpkin has a very attractive, ultra-soft strawberry blond coat and the cutest chipmunk cheeks! He's still a little bit



Nemo.



Luciana.

wary, watching you closely as you initially approach his space. He may never have experienced human affection before arriving at the shelter, but he will submit to petting and enjoys it. Nemo will need lots of room for exercise and plenty of objects to play with.

Luciana

A volunteer writes: Luciana is a large white lop with pink eyes and a very feisty temperament. This smart girl knows exactly what she wants and does exactly as she pleases. She loves to renovate and redecorate her habitat, ripping paper and tossing toys and boxes with great verve; therefore, she'll need a very stimulating environment in her new home. Luciana is somewhat cage-protective, and is in need of further socialization. Because she's such a handful, she would probably do best in a home with experienced bunny people.

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Looking for Loving Homes

(Continued from page 11)

Sophia and Duke

Meet Sophia and Duke, a brother and sister bonded pair! These cuties were born in October 2012 and have lived in their foster home since they were 3 weeks old. In addition to being siblings, these two are simply the best of friends. They do everything together – eat, play, sleep – and they love to groom each another.

Sophia was the biggest of her litter and she still has a few ounces on her brother, Duke, but that is just one of the differences between these two bunnies. Sophia is outgoing and tends to be a bit of a daredevil. Playful and sweet, she is the first to try new foods and investigate new toys. Sophia would be quite content with a new family that has time to give her all the back rubs she deserves and when you least expect it, she will reward you with a soft bunny kiss. Duke is more cautious. He approaches each new situation with healthy skepticism and takes on challenges when he is ready. Before he decides to run through a new tunnel, he has probably measured it for length and read online reviews to make sure it is safe for bunnies. Duke is



Sophia and Duke.

shy, but once his sister has made friends with you, he will soon follow. Sophia and Duke have terrific litter-box skills

and have been spayed/neutered. They love to eat hay, and they have tried (and liked) every green on the bunny-safe list.



Candy in a recent photograph.



Candy, white bunny in the middle of the pile of siblings. In the foreground is Trixie, mother of them all.

Candy's Progress

Candy, who was the subject of an article in the February Thump (<http://rabbitcare.org/ThumpFeb2013.pdf>), page 5, continues to make progress in her foster home. Will Leung reports that she has been growing, though not as fast as her siblings. We will continue to follow her story. All of the volunteers hope that Candy and the rest of her family find wonderful adopters soon.

The family appeared March 29 on "Fox & Friends,"

http://video.foxnews.com/v/2262438582001/buying-an-easter-bunny-many-end-up-abandoned/?playlist_id=86912

Working With Supermodel Bunnies

By Natalie L. Reeves

My own pictures of my bunnies are my most precious material possessions, whether they are on the photo jewelry (www.planetjill.com) I wear, or in the framed gallery on my office walls. Wherever I am, I feel closer to my bunnies when their pictures are close by, and I know others feel the same about their pets. Not only are pictures important to those of us with bunnies in our lives, but they are critical for attracting the interest of potential adopters. Pictures are powerful.

Why is it that bunnies – perhaps the most adorable creatures to hop the earth – can be so difficult to photograph? All that hopping, twitching, flopping and ground-level action can be hard to capture, as my hard drive full of blurred images of fuzzy heads will attest.

Most of the great pictures I have of my bunnies were taken by professional photographers, but sometimes I am able to get some good shots myself using a point-and-shoot camera. In fact, the Today Show website

http://celebrate.today.com/_news/2013/03/12/17225223-photos-of-cute-bunnies-our-readers-hop-to-it!#

features two pictures of my bunnies in a photo gallery. One of those (of Goldie and Queenie) was taken by a professional and the other (of Robin) was taken by me in my apartment.

I've learned a few photo tips through the years:

- **Quantity matters.** I rarely get a good photo immediately. I take lots of photos and hope that I get one or a few that I can use. For example, when I take photos of the adoptable bunnies at the shelter, I usually take about 120 photos. Out of those 120 images, I'll be happy if I can use 20.

I can take hundreds of photos of shelter bunnies because I am working with many animals. My own bunnies would not enjoy such a lengthy photo session, so I know that when I take pictures of one or a few bunnies, that I may not

have any luck that day. That's ok because the next time I might.

When I am photographing adoptable rabbits, I try to get, at a minimum, a close-up of the rabbit's head turned so that I can see his or her eyes. Rabbit photos are a bit tricky because the eyes are on the side of their heads, unlike dogs and cats. If I have more time and the rabbit is amenable, I try to get candid shots of the bunny doing something, such as standing up, eating hay, playing with a toy, etc.

It can be particularly difficult to photograph bonded pairs. My goal is that any photo I use of bonded bunnies should show them interacting or show their closeness. For example, we recently had an adorable bonded pair of girls at the shelter named Harmony and Melody who obviously loved each other. Despite their mutual affection, when out for play at the shelter they weren't always moving in the same direction. But I finally did get them together in a photo. (see below)

Photos: Natalie Reeves



Harmony and Melody in photo shared on social media.

- **Focus on unusual physical attributes.** If I'm photographing a Flemish giant or a Netherland dwarf, I like to get a full body shot because I want to show the unusual size, whether large or small, of the animal. With English spot bunnies, I like photos to show the bunnies' beautiful markings. Whatever stands out is what I want to feature most prominently. Ash, a bunny recently adopted out from Manhattan's AC&C shelter, provides a good example. Ash has extraordinary helicopter ears and beautiful mustache markings. I took



Ash.

several photos of him that were very popular on my Big Apple Bunnies Facebook page. Can you immediately tell which picture was more popular?

Ash looks cute in both photos, but it is the second that people will remember.

- **Props.** The bunnies should be the stars of the photos, but props can be fun additions. There are an endless number of creative pictures you can take using a variety of themed props. The key to getting good pictures with props is twofold:

First, don't use a prop that your rabbit is accustomed to. If you set up a prop in your bunny's area, your bunny will most likely want to check it out the first time he sees it. Be prepared to snap a photo of your bunny as soon as he explores the prop. Second, make the prop enticing by giving your bunnies something to munch on near or on the prop. I often will try to put a couple of sprigs of parsley on or in a prop to maintain my bunnies' interest.

Post-holiday sales are great times to purchase cheap props. For example, after Valentine's Day, Barnes & Noble sold valentine-themed signs 50% off. Michaels (the craft store) often has great holiday-themed props available.

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Supermodel Bunnies

(Continued from page 13)

Photo: Natalie Reeves



Brainstorm ways to create a nice background and figure out how you'll entice your bunny to remain long enough for a picture in front of that background. For Halloween, I fill plastic pumpkins with hay and add a few sprigs of parsley to the top. The bunnies like sticking their heads in the pumpkins and one of my bunnies loves to roll her pumpkin like a ball each year.

One of the most popular pictures I've shared on my Facebook page, Big Apple Bunnies, was taken by Tanya Tidman, who recently adopted a lop named Morris from NYC Metro Rabbits. Tanya was unpacking Morris's things on the day she brought him home, when she turned around and saw him lying down next to a big stuffed lion. She grabbed her camera and snapped a shot that was shared more than 100 times on Facebook. Tanya treasures the photo because she didn't make Morris sit there – he chose it on his own accord, and since then his place next to the lion has become a favorite hangout. Tanya recommends always having a camera ready to memorialize those times our bunnies do something to melt our hearts.

Photo: Tanya Tidman



- **Handler help.** It's much easier to get good photos, particularly if you are photographing more than one rabbit, if you have someone helping you. When I take my rabbits to the professional photographer, I'm usually on the ground corralling my bunnies as they try to explore the studio. I pick them up and put them in the view of the camera until the photographer gets a good shot (or we give up).
- **Use Photo-Editing Software.** I don't have a lot of time (or know-how) to improve my photos using photo-editing software, but I've found that a few simple editing tools can make a world of difference. When I photograph shelter bunnies, there is very little room to maneuver and I invariably capture images I don't want to use. For example, the

bunnies at the shelter are more likely to leave territorial droppings, which I remove with an eraser or blur tool in Photoshop or iPhoto. I also remove any red-eye effect from the flash and crop the photo so that the focus is on the bunny. Since the bunnies are indoors and the lighting may be poor, I sometimes alter the brightness of the photo.

- **Capture the Unexpected.** Sometimes unusual shots are the most popular. For example, I shared a photo on Facebook that received many "likes" that showed the back ends of two cute bunnies resting together. People loved looking at the bunnies' tails and their cute back feet. (see photo below) If you can only take one or two photos to upload on Petfinder,

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Bunny resting in a tunnel at Petco.

Photo: Natalie Reeves



Supermodel Bunnies

(Continued from page 14)

then a shot showing the head with an eye in view is the most important in my opinion. But on social media, it's great to mix things up and show close-ups of feet, tails, noses and other body parts. Variety is fun!

- **Tell a Story.** On my Big Apple Bunnies Facebook page, I have to remember that New York City bunnies are competing for attention with bunnies from all over the country. How am I going to show that our adoptable red-eyed white bunny is extra special and get people to share that photo to help increase his/her adoption prospects? I try to tell a story because a portrait shot simply isn't enough to create interest in many cases, unless the bunny has unique attributes.

Volunteer Marcie Frishberg, who heads up NYC Metro Rabbits' Petco program, rescued many bunnies from a Brooklyn backyard, and NYC Metro Rabbits has worked hard to find homes for the bunnies. Since most of the bunnies in that backyard were related to each other and thus shared similar physical resemblances, it was challenging to attract the interest of potential adopters on social media. I had the best luck when I told the stories of individual bunnies through various pictures. For example, Rizzo was one of the sweet girls up for adoption whose photos I shared.

I shared the photo at the top of column 2 with the caption, "When I sat in an exercise pen with Rizzo at Petco Union Square, she was quite interested in the smell of my own bunnies that must have been on me. She had to chin it all away."

I shared the second photo of Rizzo with the caption, "Rizzo was sad when I left her pen (she loves people!) so she went to the front of the pen to encourage Petco customers to pet her."

These photos and others in the series received many "likes" and "shares" because people liked Rizzo's personality told through pictures.

Photos: Nathalie Reeves



Rizzo.

You don't need to be an expert to take good pictures. We're lucky in that all of us have supermodel rabbits (and if you don't, you can take pictures of adoptable rabbits). If you get pictures that you'd like to share with other rabbit lovers, you are always welcome to post them on the Big Apple Bunnies Facebook page.

A Professional Pet Photographer's Basic Guidelines for Success

By Sophie Gamand

Attention: Get the rabbit's attention. Learn what the rabbit likes and dislikes, produce small sounds that will captivate the rabbit's interest, and be ready to shoot!

Background: Never underestimate the importance of the background: a rabbit placed in a sad/filthy environment will look sad and filthy, but a positive image projects a positive rabbit. Make sure the rabbit is groomed – if needed – and clean, and that there are no droppings, cage bars, etc., next to him/her.

Calm: Before starting to take pictures, take a moment to let the rabbit calm down, get used to the camera, hop around and work out his/her excitement and curiosity. It will make your work much easier.

Drop: Drop down and photograph from the rabbit's eye level. That means you will be on the floor a lot, but, hey, it's for the love of the bunnies! You can also set up the rabbit on a couch to make things easier.

Embrace: Embrace your equipment and make the best of what you have available. You may not have the best photo gear or the ideal environment, but that shouldn't stop you from making your rabbit shine. Be creative!

Flash: Avoid using the flash indoors, especially when there is very little light available, because that will produce a red-eye effect. Try photographing the rabbit during the day, close to a natural light source (window) or in a well-lit room.

Go for it: Try many different angles and don't hesitate to over-shoot. It's better to have too many photos to choose from than too few. Share the photo that speaks to you the most. If it does, it will most likely speak to someone else, too.

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Bunny-Sitting Balancing Act

By Diana Kronenberg

I sit for rabbits because I love being around them. If I had the space, I'd keep a house full of them. Instead, I offer my home up as a temporary haven for bunnies whose humans have to be away from home. My own two rabbits, Charlie and Bella, don't always feel the same way. As someone who loves rabbits with a passion, it's important to me that my own never feel neglected when other bunnies are in the house.

Charlie is a real rabbit's rabbit. He'll hop right up to any bun, or anything that smells like one. Bella on the other hand, is a shy girl when it comes to meeting new animals and people. Once acquainted, though, Bella craves attention from her new-found playmates. Since I don't usually let my bunnies downstairs to meet the rabbits I'm watching, their interaction is minimal. Charlie tends to sit at the top of the stairs trying to catch a glimpse of the rabbits down below, but Bella is generally less interested.

As long as his meals still come on time, Charlie is content to sit and ponder the new visitors in the living room. Bella, however, can get quite upset if I'm spending too much time with some

“other bunny.” It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of a new bun in the house, even for the non-rabbit-obsessed residents, but my rabbits will never let me forget it if I don't meet their attention quota.

Initially, it never occurred to me how my rabbits would feel about bunny-sitting. The first two times, I bunny-sat single buns who didn't demand a lot of attention. I fed them, played with them, and made sure there was someone around for most of the day. It was definitely less work than when I sat for my cousin's puppy.

This all changed when I sat for five rabbits at once. It was a bit of a challenge, to say the least. The ground floor of my house was divided into three sections with interlocking fences and bunny toys spread across the floor. When I wasn't tending to the rabbits' food, litter and escape attempts, I was being ambushed by one particularly energetic young rabbit. This didn't leave much time for me to spend with my own buns, but I also had hoped they would be distracted by the antics of the visitors downstairs.

I quickly discovered that five new rabbits to gawk at are no match for a familiar human's presence. Charlie was a bit cold with me and was very resistant to most petting attempts. The worst though, was what happened to Bella: she started building a nest in my closet. Bella has

been spayed, so I knew no babies were headed our way, but this nesting was still a problem. Why should she suddenly now feel the need to build a nest?

At first I thought it might have been because of one of the visiting buns. The spunky one was an unspayed female and perhaps she had given off some kind of pheromones that triggered Bella's hormones. That theory didn't make a whole lot of sense to me, but stood until Bella began nesting again, months later. During two separate vacations for human members of the household, Bella nested. It finally dawned on me that Bella might have been nesting because of emotional stress. While I can't confirm this by asking, no matter how hard I try, I believe that is her reason.

I never would have thought that spending the majority of my day with other rabbits would upset Bella so much that her hormones triggered a physical response. It didn't matter that these rabbit visitors were only temporary. All Bella knew was that she suddenly wasn't the center of my world. As much joy as I get from meeting new rabbits, I have to remember that my own buns need to come first. After all, I wouldn't even be sitting for other rabbits if I hadn't welcomed Charlie and Bella into my home and discovered the joys of having them around me.

Guidelines *(Continued from page 15)*

Help: Get someone to help you during the photo shoot. That person can position the rabbit and get his/her attention. You should only have to focus on taking the photos. (Always be ready to click! Don't miss the money shot!)

Sophie Gamand is a bunny-loving and trend-setting professional pet photographer who has a portrait studio in Brooklyn and who is available to shoot rabbit photos in the New York area. You can get more information at www.strikingpaws.com.

Bella and Charlie.



Two Bunnies Hit Turbulence Trying to Board a Flight to the U.S.

By Desirée van Welsum

Meet Ponponne and Biscotte, two truly international bunnies. Both born in little towns close to Paris, France, they lived with me in Geneva (Switzerland) and Brussels (Belgium), with trips by car back to Paris most weekends, and occasional trips to the Netherlands. In October 2012, I moved to the U.S., determined to also bring my bunnies. Meanwhile, Ponponne and Biscotte moved temporarily to live with my parents in the Netherlands.

Having arrived in New York, my first task was to find an apartment that would allow bunnies. Then I tried to find them a nice cage, but I ended up shipping one here from Europe, where there are nice, convenient cages that I wasn't able to find in the U.S.

Then came the big undertaking: organizing their trip. My first request, for them to travel on Delta Airlines, was denied. For some unspecified reason, Delta only allows dogs, cats and birds in the cabin. Thankfully, United Airlines allows bunnies, so my parents started arranging their paperwork, vaccinations, vet declaration, etc., in the Netherlands. The bunnies even got their own passports. However, United came back to me, saying the airline would only allow one bunny per person. After endless negotiations and many hours with customer service on the phone, they agreed to put a note in my file stating, "Please allow this passenger on board with two rabbits." They said there would be no problem at check-in in Brussels.

Having bought a nice airline-approved pet travel carrier, I flew to the Netherlands to get my bunnies ready to return with me to the U.S. I put the carrier out in my parents' living room for a couple of days so that the rabbits could get used to it, and also put them regularly inside it and walked around with them. I bought Ziploc bags and veggies to take with me. On the big day we started early. At 5:30 a.m., the bunnies went into the pet carrier for the drive to the Brussels airport. Check-

in at 7 a.m. proved a challenge, though. The ground staffers weren't happy with the note in my file and wouldn't accept two bunnies traveling in one carrier with only one human passenger. I had to talk to three airline employees before the bunnies could be checked in. What a relief!

Next, we had to go through passport control and security. At security, I had to take the bunnies out of the carrier and walk through the detector with one bunny under each arm. The security staff thought the rabbits were cute, and everyone came over to look at them. They were quite the attraction, but the buns seemed unimpressed.

Then it was off to the boarding gate. Shock. The supervisor said United didn't allow rabbits in the cabin. WHAT? So she called headquarters in Chicago, and asked me a bunch of ridiculous questions like, "Why are you taking them? Is it for medical reasons?" and "It says here they are a bonded pair. Are they physically attached?" But then the decision came through and they were allowed on the plane. Ponponne and Biscotte were on their way!

On board I had two seats to myself, so with the pillows and blankets I created a protected, shielded-off area so as to reduce the stress as much as possible. I was well equipped with little bags of their favorite herbs and greens, which I offered to them throughout the trip and which they happily ate. They mostly just "rearranged" the hay and ignored the pellets. They also had some toys, so they played and snoozed. I had a little water bottle that I regularly offered to them, and they drank a fair amount during the flight. Getting close to Newark airport, I threw away all the food and hay (no fruit or vegetables are allowed through U.S. customs) and just left a towel in the carrier. I had brought a bag full of old towels to change the bedding, but the buns kept the towel clean during the entire trip. The line for immigration was long, but we went through, and



Ponponne re-arranging the sofa cushions at home. Biscotte and Ponponne snoozing.

then faced one last hurdle, customs. I was directed to the line for secondary inspection. The officer looked exasperated and just asked me, "What food are you trying to bring in?" Uh, no food, officer. Just two rabbits. That surprised him! He checked their papers and passport, and we were cleared to leave.

Ponponne and Biscotte had made it into the U.S.A.! We got a car service home, and after the 15-hour trip, during which they hadn't been allowed to come out of the carrier at all, I could finally put them in their new cage at home. After a few hours of resting and getting used to their new surroundings following the tiring trip, I opened the cage and my resilient bunnies just picked up life as if they had always lived here. They immediately took ownership of the place, ran around, had a look at everything and tested all the good flopping and sleeping places. The floor was a bit slippery for them, so I immediately ordered some rugs. They are completely at home, settled in and fully adapted. Amazing Ponponne and Biscotte, two European bunnies now living in New York!

Tripod Bun Chessie Becomes a California Girl

By Laura Rebecca

We adopted our bunny, Chessie, from Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group in September of 2008, and now she lives in California. Her life has had its share of difficulties, but she now spends her days relaxing with her friend Smokey. Here is Chessie's story:

We had only had our baby, Smokey, for a few months, but he was quickly growing into an adult. Since our other rabbits had to be euthanized due to severe illness earlier that year, we were afraid Smokey would get lonely all by himself. We looked on the LIRR website for adoptable buns, and I happened to notice a beautiful picture of a snowy white rabbit on the Sanctuary Rabbits page (the page for special-needs rabbits with little chance of getting adopted). This is what we read: "Chessie came in to the NYC shelter with a horrific injury – her right hind foot had been bitten off by a predator of some sort and she was found wandering around the streets of Brooklyn... Now [after surgery] she is as good as new and can hop and play like any four-footed rabbit."

Once we had read her heartbreaking story, we knew we just HAD to meet her. We contacted LIRR and they suggested that we bring Smokey up to the shelter in Great Neck for a bunny "speed-dating" session, to see if he would be compatible with Chessie or any other bun. Several of the dates were disastrous, but after two tentative minidates, Chessie and Smokey were the best match. Needless to say, we were thrilled! Smokey wouldn't be lonely, and Chessie would finally have a forever home.

Fast forward to 2012, and there was a major turn of events: We decided, due to a number of factors, that we needed to move to Los Angeles. By now our family had grown to four rescued rabbits, and we agonized for weeks over how we



Chessie's photo on Petfinder.



Chessie and Smokey in New York.

would ever be able to transport them (along with our 5-year-old pug) across thousands of miles. We ultimately decided to pack them up in cages with crate fans, lots of water, hay and veggies, secure them in our SUV and simply drive!

It took us seven days to make the trip because we didn't want to keep the rabbits in the car for too long. In the evening, Chessie and Smokey had a chance to stretch out on some fine hotel carpeting. What I remember most about the trip is how Chess took it in stride compared to the other rabbits. The whole time she sat up and watched out the car window, chewing a stalk of hay and with her ears alert. For her, it was a real adventure.



Smokey and Chessie in a Nebraska hotel room.



Chessie and Smokey.

When we finally arrived in Los Angeles this past July, she settled in with no trouble at all. Today everyone is doing fine--especially Chessie, who loves to nap in the California sun's rays that always stream through our window.

Thanks to Nancy Schreiber and everyone at Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group for taking such good care of Chessie until she found her forever home, and especially to Donna Sheridan, Chessie's rescuer in New York. Who knows? Maybe Chessie will get her own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. We'll keep you posted.

RIP: Dolly You'll Always Be My Little Girl

By Richard Picone

A number of years ago, I was helping clean rabbit cages at the NYC animal shelter. One of the rabbits, Doderina, was peculiar. She had an enormous dewlap, making it difficult for her to walk. Several months passed and I received a call: A veterinarian had reduced Doderina's dewlap and they needed someone to foster her as she healed.

Doderina was so frightened in her new home that she would charge anyone entering the room. Yet her charge was more roar than bite, and soon Doderina became "Dolly," named after the well-endowed country singer Dolly Parton.

In a few months, Dolly was relaxed enough to be introduced to another bunny, Lulu. Lulu had been adopted a few years before, and I had been unsuccessful finding her a buddy. To my pleasant surprise, Dolly and Lulu became best of friends.

With Lulu now showing her the ropes, Dolly grew bold and even defiant. No pillow, wire or wall was off-limits when

it came to the sharp teeth of my "Little Girl." Dolly even coaxed Lulu into periodic "wilding" sessions. Together, the fearsome twosome would destroy any pillow mistakenly left anywhere less than three feet from the floor.

Dolly had another oddity: she would have occasional false pregnancies. For several days, Dolly would frantically build a nest, gathering hay and pulling out her chest hair. Her work was beautiful.

This winter, Dolly became lethargic and an echocardiogram revealed she had a damaged mitral valve. Her prognosis was poor.

Dolly came home for her last few days to say goodbye to Lulu, me and the other bunnies in the house. Dolly was laid to rest in the rose garden, in the nest that she had built.

I know Dolly is with me now as I write this. She is rallying me to wipe the tears from my eyes, the drip from my nose. She is thanking me for the life I gave her and demanding that I continue to give love to bunnies who need it just as she did.

Dolly working on a nest.



Photo: Richard Picone

Letters From Adopters



Photo: Catherine Cairo

Cristina reads to Thumper Jackson and Ginger Gracie.

G.G. and T.J.

Catherine, who adopted G.G. and T.J., previously known as Battina and Miguel, sent us this thank-you note in February.

After several emails and phone conversation with Vivian Barna, I was able to keep a promise to my 8-year-old daughter, Cristina, and get her a bunny. We met with Vivian on a Saturday afternoon to visit with a bunny and see if we would be a good match. Though it did not work out with that bunny, there were two bunnies that my daughter fell in love with. They were a bonded pair and their names were Miguel and Battina. I never really had any intention of adopting two bunnies, but they charmed my daughter and I could not refuse.

So on that cold but sunny Saturday afternoon, Vivian allowed me to keep a promise to Cristina. And we were able to get not one great bunny, but two great bunnies.

So at the end of January, T.J. (Miguel) and G.G. (Battina) were added to our family. They have adjusted well and are being well cared for. I took them over to

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Letters *(Continued from page 19)*

see Dr. Jennifer Saver for a wellness visit, and she said they are two healthy and happy bunnies.

Thank you to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab and volunteers like Vivian.

Sincerely,
Catherine



Labbit fka Captain.

Labbit

Sueminn adopted Labbit in early February, and she sent this update.

Captain (now renamed Labbit, after the Smorkin' Labbit) is asleep next to me right now. His adjustment has been great. I'm in love.

Sueminn



Rumi and Reese.

Rumi and Reese

Rosalia Abreu, who adopted Rumi, wrote to tell us about his new friend.

It's February and I have great news. On Feb. 21 Rumi will have spent one year in his new home with me! AND! As of Dec. 26 I rehomed a young bunny I named

Reese. I am still in the process of bonding them and it's been a little over six weeks now. Reese is very skittish and not at all as affectionate as Rumi, who runs away whenever I'm near.

At first, Rumi wasn't too fond of Reese during their daily supervised visits. But now I can leave them alone together.

Rosalia

Grady and Lana

Courtney O'Neil adopted Grady as a partner for Lana in January, and the bunnies are enjoying their time together.

So we knew our Lana (the rabbit we adopted from Animal Care & Control in October) was lonely. And when she met Grady it was love at first sight. They immediately started cuddling.



Grady and Lana during their speed date.

Grady had a tough couple first days with us, getting used to new people, new smells and his new cage. However, after getting a little more used to things, he became very content and affectionate. He loves to be petted.

Lana and Grady are still in separate but close cages. We swap them every night for about an hour or two and then they have a date. They are very happy together and we can't wait to see how their relationship further grows. Nick and I are loving this full family!

Courtney



Merlin and Inga.

Inga and Merlin

Christina and Dave adopted Inga in February as a partner for Merlin. They sent us this letter about the bonding process.

We fell in love with Inga at first sight. She's such a sweet, dainty girl, and we thought our boy Merlin might be ready for love again after losing his longtime companion last fall. It looks like we were right. She is already settling in to her new home, and while she and Merlin are still figuring each other out, they are well on their way to bunny bonding.

Luckily for us she loves to be petted – her tufted fur is so soft that we're happy to indulge her. The first time I cleaned her litter box I learned that she's impossible to "shoo" away – she just leaned into my hand for what she thought was a petting session!

We look forward to many happy years with this sweet, quirky girl.

Christine and Dave Cyr

P.S. Christine wrote on March 29:
They are best buddies now.
The hard work paid off!

Arnold

Arnold, previously known as Piper, was adopted by Tessa, Sam and Camille, who sent this update to volunteer Cathy Zelonis in late February.

Hey, Catherine!

Piper is doing so well here! His name is actually Arnold now; figured he could probably handle one more name change.

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Photo: Camille Geitz



Arnold.

He was a little hesitant to come out of his cage for the first few days, but now whenever we open the door he hops right out! He loves climbing all over the furniture. I've attached two pictures: one of him in his favorite chair, and one of him sunbathing.

He is still wary of new people (and even us, sometimes) but he's getting better. We love him very much and are so grateful to you and the adoption volunteers for matching us with him!

Best,
Camille

Photo: Andrea Hubbard



Fenway and Christian.

Christian

Andrea and her family adopted Christian in February. Here's an update.

Christian is a great bunny! He is the most lovable one I've had yet. He really just wants to be next to you (or the dog). He demands to be let out of the ex-pen when I get home and tries to jump out if I'm slow to open the door. We had to get a

taller ex-pen because he could jump out of the last one since he is a big guy, and once he figured that out there was no keeping him in that pen.

He will jump on you and expect to be patted for as long as you're willing. He does not respect your personal space when eating fruit and will try to take food from your mouth or the dog's. Silly bunny. He jumps in his hay box to eat hay, and he knows the best hay is at the bottom.

If I leave the room to go to another he follows me like a dog. He also likes to follow the dog if he thinks there's something going on.

He's also a bit of a neat freak in that he tries to move shoes or any laundry that's left on the floor.

As for big white rabbits with red eyes, I've met a lot with great personalities. I wish more people would give these guys a shot. He proves that big white rabbits can be awesome snuggle bunnies. Thanks again for rescuing and caring for these rabbits in need!

Andrea Hubbard

Photo: Valeriya Kovalenko



Weezy and Marley.

Thank You!

I'd like to thank Mary Cotter for speaking with me on a day when my doubts and guilt had taken over. She helped me to see that I am a good bunny mom and gave me the confidence I needed.

Instead of feeling guilty that I am not physically present for a large portion of the day, I now concentrate on ensuring that my bunnies are healthy and happy. I spend a reasonable amount of time each

day just letting them know they are loved. Mary told me the best gift I gave to my bunny, Weezy, was a buddy, Marley. I see now how happy they are together. Keeping in mind all of Mary's advice, I feel that they are in the best place they could be and I look forward to getting the most of this bond.

Best,
Valeriya Kovalenko

Photo: Brynne Thomas



Ivy.

Ivy

Brynne adopted Ivy in February, and sent this letter a short time afterward.

Ivy continues to amaze me every day. I can leave her pen open when I am around and she chooses when playtime is over. I never thought a bunny could be so confident and fearless.

She binkies. I've heard the happy teeth grind, and she is so cute she makes my heart melt. One of her favorite spots is under the bed with some towels to scooch. We are both very happy.

Thank you,
Brynne

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Photo: Darren Allcock



Chewbacca.

Chewbacca

Chewbacca, who used to be called Roger, was adopted by Darren Allcock, who reports that Chewbacca is having a great time in his new home.

When we adopted Roger, now known as Chewbacca, we hoped he would help fill the void of our beloved English spot, Cupcake, the bunny we recently lost. I'm happy to say he has more than filled that void.

I believe we adopted the most lovable bunny I've ever met. He is so playful, relaxed and social that he instantly became a part of the family. If it were possible, Chewie would let us pet him all day long. He loves to be groomed and to have his ear stroked ever so gently.

In the morning he stands up in his playpen with his nose wiggling in anticipation of his daily greens. In the afternoon he's waiting for us to come home and love him up, and before we go to bed he loves to lie on the couch and watch television with us while enjoying gentle strokes from forehead to tail.

If you don't pet him, beware. He will follow you playfully until you give him his daily love. It's such a joy to watch him outside of his playpen roaming around the living room and playing with the cardboard houses and tunnels we've created for him. We love him so much and feel lucky to have found him.

Darren

Photo: Natalie Reeves



Kylie and Casey with Jeremy and BB.

Jeremy and BB

Jeremy and BB (formerly known as Kissena and Rosie) were adopted in early March by Patti Reid and her family. She sent us this letter just after the adoption.

My daughters, Kylie and Casey, have renamed the bunnies Jeremy (aka Kissena) and BB or Bada Bing (aka Rosie). The girls like the idea of BB having a big brother, Jeremy, to look after her.

The bunnies are doing great. We got them everything they need. For now, we are keeping the cage in a separate room so that they can get used to us and their new home before they have to contend with six cats staring at them! I told the girls we'll introduce them slowly, by bringing the cage into the living room in the evenings. Please thank Natalie and the other volunteers for us. She was such a huge help in helping us choose which pair to adopt and giving us so much information. We look forward to lots of fun with our new family members!

Regards,
Patti Reid

Jett and Dylan

Jett and her son, Dylan, were adopted in early March by Sarah and Kirk. The bunnies are doing well in their new home.

Thanks for all the information. After a couple days of bewilderment, I think I'm starting to understand rabbit behavior,

Photo: Sarah Willson



Dylan settling in.

and both Jett and Dylan seem to be settling in fairly quickly. We love them!

Sarah

Photo: Melanie Nanez



Velvet.

Velvet

Melanie adopted Velvet, previously known as Cadbury, in March. We received this great letter.

I renamed Cadbury as Velvet, because that's the first thing that comes to mind when you pet him.

He was a little leery when he first came home, but he OWNS the place, particularly when he sees anything cardboard (he goes Godzilla on it). He's very independent, but he's also affectionate, particularly when you have any bok choy or carrots.

Thank you for helping me find my new friend!

Melanie

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Photo: Maeve Butler



Clytie the cat, Marisol and Sebastian (foreground).

Marisol

Marisol was adopted by Maeve in March as a partner bunny for Sebastian, who lost his buddy, Little Gloria, in December.

Marisol is an absolute delight. What a bossy little bunny she is, and very affectionate. Hopefully, Sebastian will be equally entranced when the bonding process starts in April.

As soon as Marisol is completely settled in, either side-by-side with Sebastian or in her own territory if they prefer that, I will take more photos.

And thank you to Cindy and everyone who takes such good care of these rescue bunnies and helps them find homes.

All my best,
Maeve

P.S. Maeve said April 1: As of last night, they are eating their meals out of the same dish and spending time together.

I think a car ride tomorrow might help seal the deal.

Photo: Sharon Jamison



Lucy and Nicholas.

Nicholas and Lucy

Nicholas was adopted as a partner for Lucy, and Sharon Jamison sent Cindy Stutts this update in March.

Hi Cindy,

Nicholas and Lucy get along really well, as you can see!

They spend a lot of time grooming each other and both seem happy.

Thanks for the bunny matchmaking help.

Sharon

Photo: Mahala Schligman



Tucker.

Tucker

Tucker was adopted about a year ago by Mahala and Shalom, who sent this note to volunteer Alisa Christopher in March.

Tucker is a wonderful, smart bunny with a great personality. Every morning and evening he shivers excitedly and runs around his cage when he sees us coming to feed him pellets or change the hay in his litter box.

He sleeps pretty much all day, but at dusk he starts hopping around our apartment to play. His favorite spot is the crevice between the air conditioner and our couch, where it is dark and burrowlike. At one point, he started to chew the back of the couch, and so I (Mahala) stuffed newspapers behind there to prevent him from getting to the chewed spot. He loved the newspapers so much that he forgot all about eating the couch. He can literally spend hours digging through balled-up newspapers ... and (per Shalom) will get super grumpy and refuse to come out when it's time for playtime to end, even with the promise of treats. The couch literally has to be moved more often than not.

Other favorite activities include stuffing his blanket into corners of his cage and eating blueberries.

Mahala and Shalom

Rabbit-Savvy Veterinarians

Here's our recommended vet list for the New York metropolitan area. Please note that many clinics have multiple veterinarians, and our recommendations are for specific veterinarians in those clinics. If you can't get an appointment with a recommended vet at one clinic, don't assume (no matter what you are told by the clinic) that other vets in the same clinic can help your rabbit. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the vets on this list, please contact Mary Cotter at (914) 337-6146. When you make an appointment with any of these vets, please tell them you were referred by us.

Long Island:

Jennifer Saver, DVM

Laura George, DVM

Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital
2221 Hillside Ave., New Hyde Park, NY 11040
(516) 877-7080

Heidi Hoefler, DVM

Island Exotic Vet Care
591 East Jericho Turnpike
Huntington Station, NY 11746
(631) 424-0300

Jeff Rose, DVM

Jefferson Animal Hospital
606 Patchogue Rd. (Route 112)
Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776
(631) 473-0415

Manhattan:

Becky Campbell, DVM

Deborah Levison, DVM

Symphony Veterinary Center
170 West 96th Street, New York, NY 10025
(212) 866-8000

Katherine Quesenberry, DVM

The Animal Medical Center
510 East 62nd St., New York, NY 10065
(212) 838-7053, (212) 329-8622

Alexandra Wilson, DVM

Anthony Pilny, DVM
Cynthia J. Brown, DVM
The Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine
568 Columbus Ave., New York, NY 10024
(212) 501-8750

Shachar Malka, DVM

Humane Society of New York
306 East 59th St., New York, NY 10022
(212) 752-4842

Westchester County:

Gil Stanzione, DVM

Dakota Veterinary Center
381 Dobbs Ferry Road, White Plains, NY 10607
(914) 421-0020

Laurie Hess, DVM

Veterinary Center for Birds and Exotics
709 Bedford Road, Bedford Hills, NY 10507
(914) 864-1414

Licensed HRS Representatives

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Chapter Manager, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab,
mec@cloud9.net, (914) 337-6146, rabbitcare.org

Nancy Schreiber, HRS Licensed Educator,
President, Long Island Rabbit Rescue
Group, nschreibmd@aol.com, (516) 510-
3637, LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

Cindy Stutts, HRS Licensed Educator,
Manager NYC Metro Rabbit Program,
bygolyoly@yahoo.com, (646) 319-4766,
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altitude8@yahoo.com,
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Donna Sheridan, HRS Licensed Educator,
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LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

Kerstin Aumann, HRS Licensed Educator,
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Jennifer Saver, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

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THUMP April 2013

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Rabbit Rescue & Rehab is a not-for-profit,
tax-exempt corporation in New York State.

Our purpose is to rescue, rehabilitate and find permanent homes for abandoned, abused and neglected rabbits, and to educate the general public on rabbit care through publications, telephone consultations, home visits and public presentations. This newsletter is published by RRR/NYC HRS, which is solely responsible for its content. Letters, photographs and other submissions to the newsletter become the property of the NYC Chapter and cannot be returned. We retain the right to edit submissions for publication.

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them. Mailing address for contributions to **Rabbit Rescue & Rehab**: Gabrielle LaManna, 7 Carriage Lane, New Fairfield, CT 06812. Mailing address for contributions to **Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group**: Nancy Schreiber, 12 Grace Court North, Great Neck, NY 11021.

ADOPTABLE RABBITS

There are lots of adoptable rabbits available in Manhattan, Long Island and Westchester. To adopt a rabbit in **New York City**, contact Cindy Stutts at bygolyoly@yahoo.com or call her at 646-319-4766. On **Long Island**, contact Nancy Schreiber at nschreibmd@aol.com or at 516-510-3637 (www.longislandrabbitrescue.org), and in **Westchester** contact Mary Cotter at mec@cloud9.net or 914-337-6146 (www.rabbitcare.org).

The rabbit volunteers' email address in New York City is nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Adoptable NYC Metro rabbits are at Petco's Lexington Avenue (86th-87th) and Union Square locations; rabbit volunteers are present at both stores on Saturday and Sunday afternoons to answer questions. There are two rabbits living at each of those stores.

You can also visit Animal Care & Control of NYC (AC&C) at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues.

Rabbits for adoption can be found by going to: <http://www.nycacc.org/> and doing an

adoption search. Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

Bunny speed dates take place 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays at the Petco store at Columbus Avenue and West 100th Street. To arrange a speed date so that your rabbit can find a buddy, contact Cindy Stutts at bygolyoly@yahoo.com. The bonding sessions sometimes take an hour or more, so only three speed dates are scheduled each Saturday.

Many of our rabbits are living in foster homes and you can meet them as well. You also can arrange to foster a rabbit until he or she finds a permanent home. Contact Mary Cotter at mec@cloud9.net or Cindy Stutts at nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

For basic information about rabbits as pets, go to www.rabbitcare.org, www.longislandrabbitrescue.org and the House Rabbit Society main site, www.rabbit.org.