

THE MARCH

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS APRIL 2014

Illustration: Michelle Nunnally



Do Rabbits Really Lay Eggs?

By Robert Kulka

It is about this time each year that we have March Madness, the return of Daylight Savings Time and auditions for the Cadbury Bunny commercial. These are the signs signaling the welcome arrival of spring and new beginnings. It got me to wondering how it all began. I mean, the rabbit and spring and Easter eggs and baskets of candy and all that. So I decided to do some research into

The Most Important Word in Bonding: P-A-T-I-E-N-C-E!

By Mary Cotter

Ed. note: Mary Cotter serves as vice president of the international House Rabbit Society, and is the founder and president of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, the NYC licensed chapter of HRS. She has been bonding rabbits since 1988, when, after living with a single rabbit for six years, she rescued and bonded her first pair.

Since that time, she has taught many volunteers and rabbit caretakers to bond rabbits using methods that avoid the use of force and that minimize stress, and she offers these tips to give rabbit owners a better understanding of the process.



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Dreihäsenfenster ("Window of Three Hares") in the cloister's inner courtyard of Paderborn Cathedral, Germany.

the origins of the traditions and beliefs associated with the rabbit. It goes way, way back in time. In fact, some of it can be traced to pre-Christian times in Germany as early as the 13th century. It seems that rabbits represented spring

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Pick partners carefully.

Abandon all expectations.

Time sessions religiously.

Interaction does not equal proximity.

Evaluate interactions frequently.

Neutral territory matters!

Cautious rather than risk!

End sessions promptly.

PICK potential partner rabbits carefully.

There is tremendous variability in how rabbits get along with each other upon first meeting. A few seem to genuinely like each other and seek out each other's company; many seem to "squabble" and bicker until it becomes clear that the other rabbit is not a threat; and a few seem to want to demolish each other. Many people, out of ignorance, make



Don't miss the first-ever national HRS Rabbit Conference in St Louis, Mo. See details at end of this issue!

Congratulations to Marcie Frishberg, winner of the national "Hearts of Gold" contest sponsored by Boyds Bears to recognize outstanding volunteers. Rabbit Rescue & Rehab will be receiving \$1,000 in Marcie's honor; look for an article about her in our June issue!

Photogenic Sandy and Sally, our masthead bunnies, were also featured on the December 2013 masthead (photographed from the rear). They are bonded now! Their humans, Mike and Vanessa, report that their rabbits couldn't be more different, yet both are "naughty in the cutest ways. Sally has taken to running up to her humans, looking at us lovingly, and then nipping our toes before binkying away. Sandy is a master escape artist who will use Sally as his ladder." Sandy and Sally were adopted from Long Island Rabbit Rescue. Photo by Mike Miranda. Photo illustration by Mary Ann Maier.

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the mistake of acquiring baby rabbits who get along just fine – at first, because they are juveniles, and subsequently because male/female pairs want to breed. Once the rabbits reach sexual maturity and are spayed/neutered, however, things may change. The smoothest bondings are typically those in which the rabbits have meaningful input in the process. The rabbit caretaker's choice of a partner rabbit (based on size, breed, color, etc.) may differ dramatically from the rabbit's own choice, and attempts to force a rabbit to accept another rabbit may end sadly.

In the early nineties, when I joined the first rabbit Internet listservs, I was struck by how many humans seemed to be trying to “threaten” rabbits into a bond. I remember one rescuer in particular who claimed to be able to bond any pair of rabbits, regardless of whether they “liked” each other. This was very impressive to me, until I learned how many bondings created this way subsequently fell apart. Pick the rabbit who gets along best with your own rabbit; you will have a much easier time, and you will increase the chances for a solid, long-term bond.

ABANDON all expectations. Owner expectations of how a bonding “should” proceed are almost always different from how it actually does proceed, and attempting to force rabbits to live up to expectations almost always leads to disappointment.

Some years ago, an owner complained that her rabbits “just weren't bonding,” although they had lived together peacefully for many months. She was not aware that some bonds seem to be “love” bonds, with constant mutual grooming, while others may seem more “platonic.” Either type of bond is just fine; let the rabbits decide the degree of closeness that works for them, and accept their decision without pressuring them toward further “closeness.”

That said, when rabbits are housed in side-by-side cages or puppy exercise pens (as they are in many rescue situations,



Illustrations: Michelle Nunnally

because those of us who foster often have little choice), the initial arousal caused by being so close to an unfamiliar rabbit often gradually gives way to indifference toward, or even acceptance of, the presence of another rabbit. I shared this information with our early volunteers, and we began to use this setup as a first step toward producing a peaceful bond. Rabbits who are given the opportunity to live peacefully near another rabbit, and who can see, hear and smell the other rabbit, are subsequently much easier to introduce outside their cages.

A note about “living peacefully”: pens or cages should be placed side-by-side with enough space between them (usually around 3 inches) so that the rabbits cannot press their noses through the spaces between the bars to touch (or bite!) each other. If necessary, place an object (such as a water bottle on its side) between the pens, to prevent the rabbits from pushing the pens closer. If one rabbit is getting out-of-cage exercise time, it should be in an area well away from the other rabbit's pen. These two considerations are key to keeping the peace.

Occasionally, rabbits will bond on their own without any special efforts on the part of their humans. In one instance, a fosterer housed two unrelated female rabbits in an extra bedroom for almost a year, and reported that she was getting the feeling that these rabbits “liked” each other, although they had never been introduced. She was right: we introduced those rabbits and they bonded immediately.

Was this “love at first sight”? Or was it the long-term effect of living peacefully in the same room? Hard to tell, and we may never know. But it certainly was not anyone's expectation!

TIME all bonding sessions religiously. In their eagerness to get the job done, many rabbit caretakers unknowingly slow down the bonding process by pushing for too much, too soon. Resist the temptation to extend bonding sessions “because the rabbits are doing so well!”

The best bonding sessions are short, and *always* end on a successful note. Set a

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timer for one minute at first, and separate the rabbits after that time, **no matter what they are doing.** Several very short, very peaceful bonding sessions per day will go much farther in creating a solid bond than longer sessions where the rabbits become hostile toward one another and need to be separated. After several, peaceful, one-minute sessions, increase the time to 90 seconds, and then two minutes. As you continue with bonding sessions, you will develop a good sense of how long the rabbits can be together successfully. As long as you do not exceed this time, you will not lose ground.

It is much easier to be patient if you remind yourself that a single incident of significant rabbit-to-rabbit aggression caused by owner impatience can set the whole process back days or weeks...or in some instances, months.

INTERACTION does not equal physical proximity. Interaction is *anything the rabbits do* while in the same space with another rabbit. Physical proximity is not the sole, or even the most important, criterion, for “interaction.” In other words, rabbits can be interacting regardless of whether they are physically close to each other. A rabbit who systematically moves to increase distance from another rabbit is interacting in a very clear way that should be respected.

Think of the New York City subway system: if, say, a woman enters a subway car at night where there is only one other rider – a man, sitting by himself, the woman is likely to choose a seat on the other end of the car from the man. Her choosing that distance is not a failure to interact; it *is* an interaction.

In nature, rabbits have virtually unlimited space to use as part of their communication when they meet other rabbits, but when we introduce them in our homes, the space we offer them is typically much more limited, so their ability to communicate using space (creating distance) may be impaired.

Nevertheless, when bonding rabbits in a limited space, many rabbit caretakers worry that the rabbits are “not interacting” when they choose to stay distant from one another, and these caretakers repeatedly move the rabbits closer in a misguided effort to “get them to bond.”

EVALUATE interactions frequently during each session. Do not let the rabbits’ apparently compatible behavior at the outset lull you into complacency. Things can change quickly, and a session that started out peacefully can turn sour with one backwards hump or head-to-tail chase! If you are not thoroughly familiar with normal rabbit behavior, ask someone who is to help you evaluate what you are observing.

NEUTRAL territory matters! Introducing rabbits in “neutral territory” can make a big difference in their ability to get along. If either rabbit “owns” the territory, the bonding process can be significantly more difficult, since the “owner-rabbit” will almost always want to remove the other rabbit from his/her turf, by whatever means possible. If your own rabbit is free-range and “owns” the whole house, consider doing the introduction and bonding in the basement or in a friend’s home. In apartment buildings that have carpeted hallways and friendly neighbors, it is often possible to use a public hallway for short periods of time. The bottom line: doing your best to find a space that is not “owned” by either rabbit will make the bonding process easier on both you and the rabbits.

CAUTION rather than risk! Serious, but completely avoidable, injuries have occurred during the bonding process simply because the humans involved took unnecessary risks. Have a friend or assistant help you with the bonding, if possible, and intervene swiftly and skillfully to prevent any sort of aggressive or dangerous behavior (e.g., lunging, ears laid back, head-to-tail circular chasing, jumping directly over the other rabbit, backwards mounting). Wearing a pair of soft-soled shoes or potholder mitts on your hands will allow you to intervene safely and will prevent injury both to you and to the rabbits. Simply plunge

your protected hands into any sudden fray or unexpected confrontation between the rabbits, in a manner that allows them to redirect their aggression onto your hands. If necessary, you can firmly and snugly “straddle” one rabbit’s body with your protected hands, while a friend or assistant removes the other rabbit, or blocks off his access to your rabbit.

If you are fairly new to rabbits, and are not sure what a particular behavioral display means, or if you even think one rabbit is becoming agitated or exhibiting aggressive behavior toward the other, err on the side of caution and separate the rabbits. If you wonder if the bonding session has gone on too long, err on the side of caution and terminate the session. Exercising caution may mean the bonding process will take a bit longer, but the process will be safer and more peaceful for both you and the rabbits.

END encounters promptly, and end on a successful note; do not be tempted to extend bonding sessions early on, simply because you feel that “the rabbits are doing so well!” Bondings are almost always much easier and more peaceful when they are short and frequent. Failure to end a session after a short time can lead to escalating stress, arousal and aggression on the part of the rabbits.



Illustration: Michelle Nunnally

Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Malo, Cornflake, Milo and Max, Maribelle, Beatrix, Rhino, Terrance, Curly and Moe, Puffernutter, Tide, Penelope, Thelma, Larry, Twitch, Hester, Francis, Leona, Prince, Easygoer, Stannis, Minerva, Dahlia.

Do Rabbits Really Lay Eggs?

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because of their fertility and prodigious numbers of offspring. Eggs, too, represented fertility and new beginnings, so it appears that the two somehow became linked. The Christian Church adopted rabbits by the Middle Ages, even including them in church architecture. These rabbits, or hares, are usually seen in groups of three representing the Holy Trinity. At first glance you might think it to be the signature of an artisan working on the church carvings. But as you observe these images in a number of different churches you realize they are, in fact, an intentional inclusion. The theory is they represent the resurrection, new beginnings and luck. As with many early pagan beliefs, these springtime symbols were blended into church traditions.

Somewhere along the way, the rabbit started to become the springtime Santa Claus. The Easter Bunny (also called the Easter Rabbit or Easter Hare) originated among German Lutherans. The Easter Hare originally played the role of a judge, evaluating whether children were good or disobedient at the start of the season of Eastertide. Eventually this little symbol started to be depicted in clothes – including jackets, bow ties, hats – or all of those rabbits carrying baskets of colored eggs and gifts for children. According to the Center for Children’s Literature and Culture, these legends were brought to the U.S. in the 1700s, when German immigrants settled in Pennsylvania Dutch country. One of my favorite stories is one I found while looking into this phenomenon of the Easter Rabbit. It is a legend of a young rabbit and Jesus. As the story goes, there was “a young rabbit who, for three days, waited anxiously for his friend Jesus to return to the Garden of Gethsemane, little knowing what had become of Him. Early on Easter morning, Jesus returned to His favorite garden and was welcomed by His animal friend. That evening, when Jesus’ disciples came into the garden to pray, they discovered a path of beautiful

Photos: Robert Kulka



Donut.

larkspurs, each blossom bearing the image of a rabbit in its center as a remembrance of the patience and hope of this faithful little creature.” Thinking about this beautiful little story brings me to the parallels in reality. Yes, rabbits represent many of the things associated with them and spring. And yes, they are gentle creatures that can easily be adapted to stories about and for children. Incorporating these images into the ceremonies and traditions of the Christian Church is a lovely and logical way to represent so many of the elements of the rites of spring and rebirth.

What is not evident in these stories and beliefs are some of the facts. Rabbits are real, beautiful and special creatures. They require love, interaction, care and attention. They may be cute and cuddly-looking but they are not always the right choice of pet for young children. Well-meaning adults often include a live rabbit in gifts of spring for a child. They don’t realize or think of the commitment involved with bringing a cute little bunny home. Rabbits need to be fed, given fresh hay and water – along with lots of exercise – and be checked in with each and every day to observe them and their behaviors. Rabbits don’t announce illness. Because of their shy nature you need to see it in signs they exhibit. Rabbits do not like to be picked up and held. Little children become bored with

the rabbit and parents end up as the caregivers. Eventually these rabbits are neglected and left alone in small cages or outdoor hutches. Sometimes they may reproduce, giving the adults a surprising handful to manage. Many are surrendered, or abandoned out in the open, as if they can live in the wild with their distant cousins. So many of these well-intentioned, fuzzy gifts end up sick, injured or worse. They flood the shelter and foster-care system, forgotten and ignored.

Before you decide that a rabbit is a good idea as a gift, think about a few things. A rabbit can be a 10-year-plus commitment. Rabbits are fragile and shy by nature and not always a good choice for very small children. They will need to be fed, watched and taken care of with daily exercise. You cannot go away and leave them alone for a few days. Do your research first and speak to rabbit counselors or experts about what to expect. Consider other options. A cute little stuffed animal goes much further in the heart and arms of a young child. Chocolate bunnies last through the season and leave no need for ongoing care, with the possible exception of an upset stomach should you indulge too much. Enjoy the season and all its traditions and be sure about decisions you may make related to a live rabbit. By all means, open your heart and home to a rabbit in need and adopt one if you are sure you are ready. Your care and love for one of these beautiful bunnies will return gifts beyond colored eggs and chocolate candy for a long time.



Luna.

Now if you will excuse me, I have to go help my little bunny package some Peeps in time for Easter. It seems I always need to help with her homework.

A Happy Ending for Frank, Formerly Francis

By Jane O'Wyatt

As determined as adoption counselors are to forestall the return of adopted rabbits – by asking questions and by listening carefully to potential adopters' accounts of themselves – rabbits are often returned to the shelter or to NYC Metro Rabbits. The reasons, if known, are various, so while we always feel sorry for the bunnies who come back to us, we acknowledge that any adopter's circumstances can change unexpectedly.

Yet it is unusual for a rabbit with all the desirable attributes – physical beauty, a love of caresses, a cheerful, easygoing nature (and good litter-box skills) – to be adopted, returned, adopted again and returned again, seemingly ad infinitum; and passed from one foster home to another between adoptions. Francis, about whose post-neuter-surgery complications I wrote (in “Rabbit Fostering,” February 2014 Thump, <http://rabbitcare.org/Thump%20Feb%202014.pdf>), was one of these rabbits. Francis was adopted in March 2011, returned, adopted again in July 2012, returned again and adopted again in the fall of 2013. While not living with volunteers or adopters, Francis spent weeks at Petco stores at Lexington Avenue at 86th Street, and at Union Square.

On Feb. 25, the day after the February 2014 Thump arrived in email boxes, Nancy Schreiber received the following from adopter Samantha Rowan:

Hi Nancy,

Thank you for this issue!

I think Francis, the bunny featured on the front page of Thump who had the hematoma, is the bunny that my husband and I adopted from Petco last fall [2013]. Francis (we call him Frank for short) is about four or so years old, and we were told that he'd been returned to the shelter at least

once before we adopted him. I knew that Frank had a hard time but I had no idea our poor bunny had been so sick when he was younger.

We're so grateful for all of the people who have been there for him over the years and finally matched us with him. Frank is a truly exceptional bunny. He's loving, gutsy, opinionated, intelligent and friendly, and we love him a lot. We think he loves us too!

I'm attaching two pictures.

Sam

Nancy replied:

Hi Sam,

Thanks for the update, the pictures, and especially for giving Frank such a wonderful, loving home. The picture of Nate and Frank is just adorable!

I'm copying the editors of Thump and the ACC volunteer coordinator to share this happy ending. They can also verify that Frank is indeed the same bun pictured in the article. He looks different in the story because his



Frank fka Francis with with his adopter Sam.

ears aren't down, but the markings do match!

Nancy

Then I emailed Francis's adopter Sam:

Yes, your Frank is our Francis, featured in Thump's fostering article.

THANKS for giving him such a great home! I am so glad he finally got lucky with you guys.

Attached is another pic of the bunny when he was recuperating in my bathroom. He looks younger and smaller in this pic – duh!

Sam replied:

What a sweet picture! Thank you so much for sending and for all of the care that you gave him. He still does

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Frank fka Francis with Sam's son Nate.



To Have and Not to Hold...Rabbits

By Mary Christine Basile

Unfortunately for rabbits, they are irresistibly cute and their good looks have been getting them into trouble for years. We try to educate the public and potential adopters to see past that adorable appearance and to help people understand just how different real rabbits are from stuffed animals, but sometimes that message seems to go in one human ear and out the other.

A few months ago I adopted out a friendly female rabbit who loved to be petted to a family with children ranging in ages 7 through 13. I explained to the whole family how “pet” rabbits are prey animals domesticated from European wild rabbits, which often become a meal for predator animals in nature. Despite being domesticated, these pet rabbits have retained a lot of the fear and instincts of

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Photo: Breck Hobeffer



Hester comes to Greta to be petted.

FOSTERING

Happy Ending

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that with his ears and one of the sweetest things is that when he wants something, he'll stop, stare and raise his ears. It's very effective.

Frank is extremely intelligent. I've had bunnies since I was about six years old and Frank, along with a bunny named Ben we had when I was in middle school/high school, is probably the smartest one I've ever had.

Also, I'm sure he was a lot smaller when he was living with you! Before he came back to the shelter, his previous family was overfeeding him. If I remember correctly, he weighed about 9.5 pounds when we took him to Symphony Vet and Dr. Levison quickly put him on a diet. We've taken him in for a couple of weight checks and he's dropped most of the excess weight since then.

So excited that we have baby pictures of Frank!

He's really a lovely bunny and we're lucky to have him.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Francis at AC&C, 2010, aerial shot.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Francis recovering in Jane's bathroom, 2010.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Francis at AC&C, 2010.

Photo: Samantha Rowan



Francis at Petco, 2013, aerial shot.



Don't miss the first-ever national HRS Rabbit Conference in St Louis, Mo.

See details at end of this issue!

To Have and Not to Hold...

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Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



"You may pet me now," is what Hester is saying.

wild rabbits; thus, they need a peaceful environment and gentle human interaction to feel safe. The only time a rabbit is lifted off his feet in the wild is in the jaws or claws of another animal that plans to eat the rabbit. As a result, when humans pick up rabbits to hold or carry them, rabbits respond with fear. To a rabbit, the person's actions are like those of a predator animal, triggering the natural response of fear and "fight or flight." This leads to countless rabbits being injured or killed when they struggle, fall or are dropped from human hands, and can also teach a rabbit to become defensive and afraid of people.

At the time, the adopters enthusiastically agreed that they would only pet the rabbit gently on her comfortable areas (the top of her head to the middle of her back) and told me they would never pick her up unless necessary. I showed the parents safe ways to handle her if they needed to. Fast forward to a few months later... They showed up at the shelter to return this fabulous rabbit for being "aggressive, growling and biting." I was shocked to hear that this sweet bunny could be engaging in behavior

like that without having shown any signs of it during her months at the shelter. However, I had a hunch as to why this would happen, and my initial conversation with the mother of the family confirmed it:

Me: "When did this behavior start?"

Adopter: "Two weeks after we adopted her."

Me: "Have you been trying to pick up and hold her?"

Adopter: "Yes, every day," she hesitantly admitted.

It was clear that this rabbit's new behavior was learned as a defensive response to the inappropriate handling she was experiencing from her adopters. Through further discussion, this family admitted that they couldn't accept that a rabbit didn't want to be picked up, held and carried. They seemed personally offended by this rabbit's fear of being picked up and held, as if there was something wrong with her, not them. Despite my attempts to explain the facts to them, this family couldn't let go of that horrible misconception that rabbits want to be cradled in human arms like a human baby.

I was more than happy to take the rabbit back, and moved her immediately into foster care, where she showed no signs of aggression. In fact, she was quickly back to her former friendly self, lying down by the feet and legs of her foster parents, seeking petting for extended periods of time while pancaking her head down and tooth purring. Her wonderful foster parents didn't try to pick up or hold her unless necessary, and simply let her be a rabbit who prefers all four feet on the ground. In turn, she trusts them and actively seeks out and enjoys their companionship.

Even some of the most educated, well-meaning and bunny-savvy people simply cannot resist picking up, holding and carrying around rabbits. I understand how endearing rabbits are, but we must put their safety and desires before our own if we are to do what is in their best interest. I will never forget the day another volunteer at a shelter told me how much a particular rabbit loved to be held and wanted to demonstrate for me. I watched as this wide-eyed rabbit clenched the volunteer's chest and

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Erin strokes Hester, who has pancaked down for petting.

To Have and Not to Hold...

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clothing with his nails, his heart pounding and eyes darting around and down searching for a way to escape. As soon as he was returned to his cage, he ran to the farthest corner, kicking his legs out as hard as possible to fling imaginary dirt at her, and then sat there shaking for 30 minutes, obviously traumatized by the interaction. His behavior and body language were far from subtle, but the other volunteer didn't want to accept what he was communicating to her.

Personally, when volunteering with rabbits in a shelter, I use a carrier when possible to transport the rabbits back and forth from their cages to the exercise pen, mostly to minimize cage aggression but also to minimize unnecessary carrying. I place the carrier inside the cage and allow the rabbit to enter it under his or her own free will. I then close the carrier door, transport the rabbit to the exercise pen, open it on the floor and allow the rabbit to exit the carrier under his or her own free will again. Thus, the only human handling the rabbit will experience is gentle petting and grooming (unless the rabbit is receiving treatment for medical issues as well). While rabbits do need to learn how to tolerate handling for essentials like nail-trimming and temperature-taking, I believe that rabbits in a shelter environment have such infrequent human contact that it is important to maximize positive interaction and minimize negative interaction as much as possible. Some rabbits that resist going into the carrier may need to be gently escorted into it; however, that is far less frightening than being picked up and carried around.

I have four forever rabbits and a revolving door of foster rabbits, and I only pick up and hold them when I need to. When I approach their rooms, they typically come running toward me in

Photos: Mary Christine Basile



Theodore and Bonny demonstrate how bonded rabbits cuddle side by side.

hopes of fresh greens or affection, both of which they receive ample amounts of every day. My form of affection consists of sitting on the floor or couch with them, petting them gently and playing with toys. Some jump into my lap or crawl on me, but they rarely stay there and instead typically settle down directly next to me. However, I do have one animal in my home who always wants to sit on my lap and lay his head on my chest. His name is Monty and he's a Pit Bull mix adopted from Manhattan AC&C. I highly recommend looking into adopting a lap dog of your own if a rabbit's way of socializing and sharing affection is not enough for you!

Rabbits are extremely smart to not want to be dangled up in the air at another creature's mercy. If you have ever met a rabbit with a fractured spine, pelvis or legs as the tragic result of being dropped, this concept should be even easier to understand. With so many things that can hurt and kill rabbits, why take additional risks simply to hold them in a way that nature never intended? Just

take a look at how bonded pairs of rabbits interact, sitting side by side— not one rabbit in the arms of another. While some rabbits may tolerate holding and carrying more than others, why do something that they simply tolerate and that can potentially cause fear, stress or injury? I strive to make the lives of my rabbits more than just tolerable, and prefer to make them as relaxed as possible. While we continue to work against the immeasurable damage inflicted by the cultural myths surrounding rabbits, caretakers should be paving the way by example. Let your rabbits take the lead in how they want to interact with you. Follow that lead and it will ensure a mutually beneficial relationship full of love and trust.

Bonny and Theodore sleep side by side.



Mom Gives Birth at the Shelter: 'I Started Hearing Little Squeaks'

By Cathy Zelonis

On Feb. 26, I went to the shelter to take care of the bunnies. Since there were only five there, I was happily thinking that I would get home before dark, for once. I even cleaned some extra litter boxes because there was so little to do. I was just about to leave when I was alerted a new rabbit needed to be situated. The workload was initially light, but as I prepared to leave, new duties awaited.

By fate, I was still at the shelter with our newest adoptive rabbit when one of the employees came up with three additional new rabbits for our room: one young adult and two 4-month-olds. When I opened the little container the adult was in, I noticed fur all over. I looked at the intake sheet, which said that they had come in three hours earlier. I was thinking that maybe the adult bunny had been very warm and stressed in that little carrier, but when I set her up in a cage, the bun was behaving

in that kind of frantic way of a mother-to-be who had to get that nest ready as soon as possible.

I started getting worried. My usual partner, Amy Odum, wasn't coming in that evening, since there were only five rabbits. The female rabbit ran around with a mouth full of hay for the longest time until she finally decided to put it in a hidey box containing hay and all the fur from the carrier. Finally, I started hearing little squeaks from the box.

I repeatedly called Cindy Stutts, who is in charge of the rabbit volunteers. I found out that babies will actually squeak for food if mom isn't giving it to them, which was my second clue that this wasn't an ideal situation. My first clue was the very thin mom.

After cleaning the babies, the mother bun should have started to feed right away, but she hadn't had the good nutrition that would have enabled her to make lots of milk. I went to get

someone from medical to report the birth of four babies. Cassandra, a vet tech, came up, and we observed the mother and kits. We discovered, unfortunately, that the mom had killed one of the babies. Nature has a way of trying to right wrongs sometimes, and I think that this was one of those times.

The young mom was too thin and malnourished to make as much milk as was necessary for four babies, so one was sacrificed. The dead baby was taken to medical, so the vets could check in the morning and report their findings in their daily reports. We saw that she was feeding the other three, so we covered the cage for privacy and turned out the lights and left.

In the next two days' reports from volunteers, it sounded like the babies weren't fat enough, although the mom was doing her best. Once again nature took over, and another baby died. Cindy decided that the little family had to go into a foster home.

Time to Leave AC&C – by Limo!

By Tracy Nuzzo

Early Sunday morning, March 2, I received a text from Cindy Stutts. Any early morning call or text from Cindy is generally serious business. Cindy indicated she had a mama bun and two babies who were born at the shelter just four days earlier. Cindy was very clear that the family needed a foster home, same day, if possible.

I have only one prior experience with baby bunnies. I am in the habit of adopting bunnies three years and older from the shelter, but whose heartstrings wouldn't be tugged by young babies and a mom who need a home? Knowing I

had an empty two-story Petwerks condo and the willingness to help, of course, I agreed. A short time later, Cindy called and wanted me to know the babies had no fur and transporting them on this cold Sunday afternoon had to be done carefully. I have a good connection to a limo service so I worked my contacts and made arrangements for a Lincoln Town Car to drive me to Animal Care & Control so we could liberate this young family in style and, more important, warmth!

I won't lie – I was afraid for the future of the two small kits in my care for the first week or so. Baby bunnies are born with



Photo: Tracy Nuzzo

Baby bunnies in their nest.

their eyes sealed and only a little bit of fur; they resemble aliens more than they do rabbits! As Cathy noted, the mother

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Time to Leave AC&C

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bun was extremely thin, so much so I could count her ribs and the vertebrae along her back. To me, she seemed to be a mom with great intentions, but maybe not the tools to help her babies. I valued this family as a unit, and didn't want to lose any of its members. For a few days, I hardly slept.

The first night, I did hear the squeaking sound from the babies that Cathy noticed in the shelter. I knew the babies were hungry and the mother was having trouble feeding them. Cindy had given me instructions on how to assist with nursing, by holding the mother on her back and placing the babies on her nipples. I was relieved that the mom took kindly to my assistance and as I cradled her, like an infant, she seemed to fall asleep as the babies jumped from nipple to nipple, drinking milk. I was ecstatic with that accomplishment and even more certain that, somehow, we would make it through this phase. Every day these babies survived, they would be stronger.

I had brought the nest home from the shelter, intact, and had placed that in the condo. The babies stayed there 24 hours a day and after a day or two, I witnessed the mom entering the nest, stomping her feet, and feeding the babies all on her own. Most bunny moms are ravenously hungry, as they try to produce milk for their young. This mom was trying to feed her babies and she was malnourished herself. I was sure to give her fresh alfalfa hay, alfalfa pellets, and lots of fresh greens. Just as the babies relied on mom for sustenance, mom relied on me, and she had a voracious appetite for dandelion greens and romaine.

A week after I had brought the new family home, the baby bunnies – now 11 days old – began to open their eyes. A very light fur was covering their bodies. They were hitting all the

Photos: Tracy Nuzzo



Grace stands up to watch the shelter disappear in the rear window of the limo.

milestones. A few days later, with eyes wide open, they were ready to see the world and start leaving the nest. That is when the fun began. Baby bunnies like to investigate their surroundings and start to test their ability to hop. Officially, mom and I had our hands full with what I called “baby bunnies gone wild!” The babies attempted to hop and ended “popcorning” into the air randomly, as they tested their skills.

The mother bunny is a very sweet Dutch. From day one, I found myself comforting and petting her and it turns out, she likes it. Now, when I walk past and don't pet her, she stomps, angrily. After watching her with the babies and knowing how difficult her life must have been before she gave birth, seriously underweight, at the shelter, I named her Grace.

It is by grace that this mom found her way to safety and that Cathy Zelonis was at the shelter, with Cindy on the phone, to assist. Cathy and I began emailing shortly after I brought Grace

(Continued on page 11)



The babies at 11 days.

Spring is in the (H)air!

By Kerstin Aumann

After what seemed like an endless winter, spring is finally here. Time to store away those winter coats and snow boots! The first signs of warmer weather mean that our bunnies, too, are ready to shed their winter coats...and anyone who has shared their home with a rabbit for more than one season knows what this means: Hair, hair, hair – everywhere!

Spring and fall are the typical molting seasons for house rabbits, who get their cues that it's time for a "wardrobe change" from changes in daylight. Now that the days are getting longer, our rabbits know it's time to prepare for the warm season.

Molting can be a challenge for bunnies and humans alike, but there are some things you can do to make it a little easier for everyone involved.

Hay, hay, hay! Your rabbit's first line of defense during the shedding season is a healthy high-fiber diet. Since rabbits are meticulous self- and social groomers, they inevitably ingest quite a bit of fur when they or their loved ones shed.

Unlike cats, rabbits don't get "hairballs" and it can be difficult for them to pass the hair through their gastrointestinal system. This is why a high-fiber diet is essential.

Hay should be the main part of your rabbits' diet. The long fibers of hay work kind of like pipe cleaners – they literally collect and clean the hair out of your rabbit's GI tract.

You may notice hair in your bunny's droppings when she molts. You may even see some "strings of pearl" – droppings connected by ingested fur like a pearl necklace. If you notice hair in your bunny's droppings, it's time to pay extra attention to her diet. Is she eating enough hay?

If your bun is not a fan of the grassy stuff, you may want to experiment by offering some different varieties in addition to the Timothy hay that should be the staple of her diet. There are many tasty types of hay – orchard grass, oat or brome. There are even types that have herbs mixed in, which can add a little pizzazz for the foodies among the bunny bunch.

Photo: Christie Taylor



String of pearl rabbit poop.

Also, make sure your bun is not over-indulging on things like pellets or treats. Rabbits love treats. And if they are given a choice between a bowl of pellets and some fresh hay, many will go for the pellets.

High-fiber veggies also help during the shedding season. Minimize starchy veggies and opt for leafy greens instead. Avoid fruit, which contains more sugar than is good for your bun. The sugar increases stress within your bun's GI system.

Make sure your bunny has plenty of **fresh water** at all times. Staying well hydrated helps ward off GI trouble and serves as a lubricant in the process of

(Continued on page 12)

VOLUNTEERS AND FOSTERING

Time to Leave AC&C

(Continued from page 10)

Photos: Tracy Nuzzo



Babies' first formal portrait.

and her babies home. One thing Cathy wrote to me was: "Two babies had to die so the other two could live." I have faith in nature and in all things working out as they should. I am certain Grace knew the other two babies wouldn't survive, for whatever reason. I can attest to her being an amazing mother to the two remaining babies.

Soon, we will find out the sex of these babies and I know each member of this amazing little family will find the best adoptive homes. You can view their earliest photos and videos, along with to their most recent antics, at www.facebook.com/SomebuntoLove.



Dinner for three.

Spring Is in the (H)air

(Continued from page 11)

moving hair and fiber through the GI tract. If your rabbit usually drinks from a bottle, you may also want to provide a heavy ceramic bowl of water during the molt to encourage extra drinking. Many rabbits drink more from a bowl than from a bottle.

Grooming. The second strategy to manage a heavy molt is grooming your rabbit to remove loose fur before she ingests it. Not all rabbits like to be groomed by humans, so it may take some patience and experimentation to figure out what works for you and your bun.

Still, daily grooming sessions – even two or more each day during the peak molt – are helpful in keeping your rabbit healthy. A brief session is better than none at all because any hair you remove while grooming will not be ingested. Proactive grooming can also help shorten the overall length of the molt.

There are many different types of grooming tools – they will need to be used with caution because rabbits' skin is very delicate and easily irritated by harsh tools or too much pressure.

A favorite in our home is the “Furminator,” which is available at most pet stores (also see <http://www.furminator.com>). A Furminator designed for small cats is best for rabbits because cat hair is similar to rabbit hair. Hands-down the most efficient grooming tool, the Furminator allows you to get out large amounts of loose fur rather quickly, but you need to exercise a lot of caution when using it. The edge is rather sharp, so use it very gently to avoid any pressure on the skin.

A hairbuster comb with a rubber band can also be effective in combing out loose fur (e.g., <http://www.bunnygear.com>). Again, use it carefully to avoid irritating the rabbit's skin. Other types of combs include butter combs, which have fine and coarse teeth.



Snowball is shedding!

(<http://www.chrissystems.com/grooming-tools/pet-grooming-show-dog-and-cat-combs.aspx>)

A soft brush can also be a good grooming tool. Although somewhat less efficient in collecting loose fur, it is definitely a safer choice for the skin and some rabbits may prefer this over a comb or Furminator.

We have also had success with the “love glove,” a rubber grooming mitt that's gentle on bunny skin (<http://www.wag.com/cat/p/four-paws-love-glove-grooming-mitt-for-cats-220926>). Some rabbits really like the love glove because it feels more like petting than grooming.

Another gentle method that minimizes skin irritation is simply using wet hands to give your bun a good rubdown. The loose fur will stick to your hands as you rub back and forth, and you can even gently pluck out loose tufts. This method may work well if your rabbit doesn't like to be groomed with any grooming tools.

Some rabbits will “blow” their fur rather quickly – making them look like a little “fur bomb” with loose hair sticking up all over. There also may actually be small bald spots. After a few days, you may notice the skin becoming discolored. This is the pigment from new fur ready to break through the skin and grow back.

If your rabbit's bald patches do not seem to fill in after a few days, the fur loss may be due to something other than a



Choco is shedding!

routine molt. In this case, you should consult with your rabbit-savvy vet.

HRS Educator Dana Krempels wrote a helpful article on fur loss in rabbits, including how to distinguish between a healthy, normal shed and hair loss due to a health problem:

<http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/furloss.html>

During the springtime molt, rabbit hair is everywhere... so, besides stocking up on hay, high-fiber veggies and any grooming tools, you'll want to include a good vacuum cleaner and lint brush in your survival kit. Soon, the molt will pass and you and your rabbit will both be ready for summer.



Don't miss the first-ever national HRS Rabbit Conference in St Louis, Mo.
See details at end of this issue!

Ten Things I've Learned About House Rabbits

By Sarah Willson

We brought home Juno and Owney one year ago, and I couldn't be happier about the decision to become a guardian of rabbits. Here are some things I know about rabbits now that I wasn't fully aware of a year ago.

The pleasant surprises:

They smell great. Rabbits eat the most delicious-smelling foods. I'm sometimes tempted to share their daily herbs and greens, and my apartment always smells like a fragrant meadow due to their unlimited supply of hay. Also, their litter box doesn't smell at all if you clean it regularly.

They are fastidious about using their litter box. Since the day they arrived, my rabbits have used the litter box exactly 100% of the time. Their litter box is also their hay box, so I guess it's just customary to hang out in there and let nature take its course. I feel lucky that I haven't had to worry about them deciding they wanted their bathroom to be somewhere else in the house.

They're easy to take care of. The Internet seems to be divided between "Rabbits are easy! They just need decent food and exercise every day!" and "Rabbits are sensitive to everything in their environment and if you feed them the wrong foods they can die." Turns out both are true, but if you know the basics and use good judgment, it's really not hard to provide them with a healthy, happy life.

They love having their ears rubbed. They don't just tolerate it – they love it. For some reason I thought rabbits wouldn't want their ears touched, but fortunately I had it all wrong.

If you're lucky, you might get a lap rabbit. I knew Juno was a sweet rabbit, but I didn't know she'd be hopping up



Juno and Owney.

in my lap every morning for a 15-minute massage. Her son is still more cautious around people, but apparently rabbit friendliness is more common than I thought, and it's the best!

The less pleasant (but still endearing) surprises:

They hate being picked up. This makes it really hard to trim their nails, or get them to go back in their pen when I'm running late for work. I feel bad, but sometimes it just has to be done.

They get scared easily. They hide when I do exercises in front of them; they can seem terrified of children's laughter, and

they really hate my dancing. An overly expressive hand gesture can send them running. They'll probably never lose that prey animal mentality, so I grudgingly avoid rapid arm movements and electronic music when they're in the room.

They can cause destruction in unexpected places. I knew I had to watch out for them chewing cables and grabbing books off of the shelves, but I didn't anticipate that they would chew a hole in the underside of the couch and gradually pull out the stuffing (dangerous for rabbits to ingest) until they could fit inside the hole. I'm still working on keeping them out of their couch burrow.

Hair goes all over the place during molts. Normally they don't shed very much, but during a molt, rabbit hair is a part of life. Places I have found rabbit hair over the past year: in the microwave, in my water glass, on my desk at work, inside my underclothes (while worn), on my toothbrush, everywhere else in the house. Fortunately, they only molt a couple of times a year.

They are slow to warm up. I knew they'd feel at home within a year, but I didn't realize how much time it would take them to get used to living here. They explored the apartment little by little over the first few months before they felt confident it was free of predators, and they're still suspicious of any changes. Owney didn't really enjoy being petted for the first six months, and Juno only started sitting in my lap about a month ago. This isn't really a downside, though. It feels like an accomplishment to earn their trust, and I'm hoping the trend will continue.

We're Proud to Welcome Ariel to Our Home

By Coleen Pilacik

Caring for “special needs” rabbits has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. My husband and I are the proud parents of five beautiful bunnies: Emily, Tess, Scout, Savannah and, now, Ariel.

Our love of rabbits began in 2001 with our first baby, Benjamin Bunny. Since then, we have rescued, fostered and adopted many rabbits. Several years ago, we made the decision to only adopt rabbits who had no chance of being adopted, either due to their age, health issues or both.

We live in Pennsylvania and are truly blessed to be able to have our rabbits under the care of Dr. Michael Doolen at

NorthStar Vets in New Jersey. NorthStar was named the 2013 AAHA-Accredited Referral Practice of the Year by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA).

Through Dr. Doolen, we adopted Sprinkles from Hug-A-Bunny Rabbit Rescue. Sprinkles was 10 years old and had been adopted and returned three times. She had spent six years of her life in a shelter, and she had only one eye and multiple health issues. She was perfect!!! She was just the best little girl ever! When she passed away in my arms last November, we were devastated. But we were grateful that before she left us at age 12, she knew what it was like to be truly loved and to have a “forever home.”

By January we were ready to adopt another “special needs” bunny, and had been following Ariel’s story closely from afar. I inquired about Ariel and before I knew it, Tracy Nuzzo (Ariel’s foster mom in New York City) and I were exchanging emails and having conversations on the phone.

Ariel, whose hind legs are paralyzed, is truly an amazing little girl; she is full of spunk and personality. She can be bold and even aggressive when she doesn’t get what she wants. Sometimes I think she is looking at me with a smirk on her little face.

She is very determined and loves to explore throughout the house. When she wants to explore, she doesn’t let any obstacles (literally) stand in her way. Ariel glides across the floor like a perfect little mermaid. She is full of energy – interactive and fearless. She acts like a little diva and is spoiled, and I encourage her.

It truly took a team of people to bring Ariel to where she is today: Tracy Nuzzo, Dr. Anthony Pilny with the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine, and Dr. Leilani Alvarez with Animal Medical Center. Ariel has touched so many hearts, but it wouldn’t have been possible without their devotion and love. Because of them, Ariel got treatments that no other rabbit would have access to.

Ariel brings us such joy each day, and for that, I am so thankful. She crawls over to me as soon as she sees me and loves to give me kisses. And when I look into her eyes, I can see how much she loves me, and I know she trusts me and knows she will be safe forever.

Is there anything as cute as a rabbit in a wheelchair? Although Ariel is not very fond of her wheelchair, we are NOT going to give up. We will keep trying, but, when I take her out of the wheelchair, she immediately starts biting it!

Ariel après bath.



Photo: Coleen Pilacik

Charlotte Loses a Limb and Gains a Family

By Tracy Nuzzo

The first week in January, a 5-year-old bunny was surrendered at Animal Care & Control of NYC. She arrived with very old injuries to her right rear leg. This bunny had never seen a veterinarian, was never spayed, and her injury had healed so badly that most assumed she had a deformed leg or a birth defect. The unfortunate name on her intake form was “Hopper.”

Cindy Stutts sent Hopper to the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine for an examination. Not only did this girl need to be spayed, but she needed a consult on her badly injured limb.

In 2012, my first-ever foster (Juno) came to us with a badly splayed leg and I brought her to Dr. Anthony Pilny at the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine. He performed an amputation surgery on Juno in December 2012.

I had later attended a lecture where Dr. Pilny discussed rabbit dental issues. During the question-and-answer section, he admitted that amputation surgeries are his least favorite. Amputations are very complicated surgeries and the result of a very bad event in a rabbit's life. Luckily for us, Dr. Pilny is very talented and although I understand his dislike of the surgery, he does it well.

Hopper's leg was amputated by Dr. Pilny in mid-January, but she also needed to be spayed. While all this was going on, my precious foster Ariel had been featured on NY1 and found herself a great forever home in Pennsylvania. The only hurdle to Ariel's adoption was being spayed.

Ariel and Hopper were spayed one day apart. I brought Ariel home and I was making final arrangements for her adoption. Cindy asked if I would consider fostering Hopper, with one condition – this girl bunny needed a name change, ASAP!

I picked up Hopper at CAEM. In a short time, Hopper had undergone two major surgeries and I wanted to give her a quiet space to recuperate. I decided she needed to be housed in a rabbit condo, in a separate space from the other bunnies who live in my apartment. Immediately I identified a fairly common issue I see in fosters at my home. I would give Hopper a plate of greens and she refused to eat in my presence. Once I left the room, she would polish off a whole plate of greens, in record time. I was happy Hopper was eating well, but wishing she didn't feel the need to eat so fast, in my absence.

Once settled into her rabbit condo, I knew selecting a new name would be a priority. The new name didn't come quickly. This tiny brown bun with a white nose was obviously feminine so she needed a strong “girly” name. In the days following her arrival, I tried many names, but somehow “Charlotte” was the one. It suits her perfectly.

Charlotte spent the next two weeks in a quiet room and each day, she refused to eat in my presence. She was clearly underweight, but afraid to eat. I began to wonder if Charlotte wouldn't be happier being close to my adopted bunnies Kelsey and Max. Bunnies are such social creatures and maybe I was doing Charlotte a disservice by separating her from my rabbits. I decided to set up an extra exercise pen in my living room and moved Charlotte into the space.

Two days before Valentine's Day, the city was scheduled to get another monster snowstorm. I had noted the mutual interest between Charlotte and my boys, but I was soooooo not looking for a third adopted bunny. Well, I had hoped my boys might fall in love with Ariel, but none of them expressed interest. With Charlotte, my concern was I had two bonded males (not an easy bond to



Charlotte, center, asleep with Max and Kelsey.



Charlotte.

achieve) and I feared the boys' bond could unravel.

I decided, on a snowy Wednesday night, that the three buns should have a trial meeting. I put Kelsey and Max in Charlotte's small X-pen, while I sat with the group. I knew at the very first sign of trouble, I was ready to pull the pin on this introduction. What happened next was totally unexpected.

The two-foot-tall X-pen that housed Charlotte was something Kelsey and Max

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We Are Looking for Loving Homes

Written and compiled by Kirsten Ott

Mumu

Mumu is a very large agouti lop with a giant dewlap and a strong personality. This big girl does not suffer fools gladly: she is wary of new people, and will examine you sternly, wiggling her nose as if she's passing judgment. But Mumu is a real mush underneath it all. She just has to make sure you're worthy of her time and affection!

Greyson

Greyson is a small Jersey Woolly/Dutch mix who arrived at the shelter with a severely matted coat. Greyson will need to be gently combed by his adopter at least every other day for the rest of his life. Unless he is adopted by a professional rabbit groomer, his coat should be kept short to minimize matting. Greyson is friendly, bouncy, interested in other rabbits, and completely adorable.

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Mumu.



Greyson.



Heaven.



Pomona.

FOSTERING

Charlotte Loses a Limb

(Continued from page 15)

could (and had) escaped with ease, in the past. But just days before Valentine's Day, no one wanted to jump ship. My boys seemed to react to Charlotte's handicap and wanted to help her. In return, Charlotte was the "girl" missing in their lives. She groomed each boy, paying special attention to their eyes. She seemed to somehow know how to make herself invaluable. Eventually I fell asleep, waiting for a problem to arise. I awoke to find the trio, also fast asleep, in Charlotte's litter box.

There was never a single fight or act of aggression. No circling, no tension at all.

Each boy loves Charlotte, and although she had never had a partner, she has seamlessly made herself a wonderful mate to both boys. The boys also seem intent on protecting her. At any given time, I find Charlotte and Max, Kelsey and Max, Charlotte and Kelsey in any combination – but usually, all three are heaped up together, best of pals!

Because of Charlotte's background, she is prone to stealing food – right out of the mouths of the other buns! Early each morning, I give a slice of banana to every bun who lives in our apartment. Stasis can strike quickly and the one bun who refuses banana is suspect. Charlotte gobbles her slice down and scopes out whose slice she can steal. I laugh as I observe my two "tough-guy"

Netherland dwarf boys surrender their coveted slice of banana to Charlotte. I am also proud that they defer to this tripod bun who has had more hardship than any bunny should ever know.

Why did this trio form? I wish I knew. All I know is all three ended up at AC&C. None of them had an easy life before being surrendered. They are all close in age and size, with similar life experiences. Charlotte came into my home "under the radar." I wasn't looking for an additional bunny, but as anyone with more than one bunny can attest, the bunnies make the choices and we just fill out the paperwork. Six weeks later, it's hard to remember when Charlotte wasn't a loved member of our family.

Harriet Cupcake Stutts: My Best Girlfriend

By Cindy Stutts

The kennel card said: “Reason for surrender: Bit grandchild.”

It was October 2004 and I had been volunteering for six months at NYC Animal Care & Control. We had just started our partnership in April and we were working on details for what to do

Photo: Cindy Stutts



Harriet.

with bunnies like Harriet. She had to be spayed, and since we did not have a regular spay/neuter-trained veterinarian, she was transported to Catnip & Carrots on Long Island.

I brought her home after the spay and then she developed an allergic reaction

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ADOPTABLE RABBITS

Looking for Loving Homes

(Continued from page 16)

Heaven

Heaven is a young, medium-sized, all-white female who was found by a trash can behind a building in the Bronx. Heaven's name suits her, because she looks and behaves like a little angel. She has super-soft white fur, gorgeous pink ears and ruby eyes. And she is as sweet and sociable as they come, hopping right up to you for petting. This heavenly girl is likely to become a real lap bunny in her new home.

Pomona

Pomona is a lovely medium-sized female bunny who was found on Lexington Avenue. This pretty girl is marshmallow-colored with tinges of gray and brown on her ears and around her eyes. Pomona's looks and personality are the epitome of innocence and gentleness. She's eager for love, and her tiny face will look longingly at you if you leave her side.

Tennessee

Tennessee is a medium-to-large male bunny who exudes enthusiasm and lust for life. This guy can't decide what he likes better, playtime or love time. He's very outgoing, eagerly craning his neck in your direction to signal his desire for petting, and once you've made friends he won't let you out of his sight. Sure,



Tennessee.



Bam Bam.

he'll return to playtime, tossing his belongings around, but he'll keep his eye on you all the while, hoping you'll come back for more togetherness. Delightful Mr. Tennessee is white with some dark gray markings, mainly around his big, handsome head. He would make a good family bunny.

Bam Bam

Bam Bam is a great big, lovable New Zealand White boy. This guy may be as



Aurora.

big as Montana, but he thinks he's still a baby. He'll lumber up to you and hunker right down for cheek and nose rubs, soaking in the love as long as it lasts. Bam Bam's name doesn't really suit him, because he doesn't have an aggressive bone in his body. He's a real mellow fellow and would make a great family bunny.

Aurora

Aurora is an extra-large Chinchilla gray bunny whose stature and posture make her seem like the queen of the rabbit room. This girl sits on her throne (a.k.a. hidey box) and examines you with an all-knowing expression on her face; you can feel her sizing you up. She will let you pet her head if you're respectful about it. Aurora wiggles her nose a lot, as if to impart her considerable wisdom.

Harriet Cupcake

(Continued from page 17)

to her sutures. Needless to say, she was not going anywhere for awhile. Her behavioral issues were also a problem; I couldn't see who would adopt this angry, defensive bunny.

Months went by and she refused to become part of our home. Then our big Checkered Giant, Ginger, had to be helped over the bridge. Ginger left behind her benevolent dictator, Winston, who always loved and accepted any and all bunnies. Could Harriet be bonded to him? It was a resounding yes, and she became his best buddy. For those who would like to see their special relationship, check out

<http://video.about.com/exoticpets/How-to-Rabbit-Proof-Your-Home.htm>

Once she became Winston's partner, Harriet was much friendlier with us. In fact, she became my much-loved girlfriend; a best girlfriend!

In 2012, the black rabbit came for Winston but we were able to introduce Chip Wilson to Harriet soon afterward. (For bunnies who lose their partners, it is usually much easier to find a new partner.) Harriet had a good year with Chip but her arthritis became insurmountable. He took good care of her in her last days like she did for Winston, but it wasn't enough in the end.

We all must make decisions for our little ones that are difficult but I will never forget the words of wisdom given to me by Dr. Gil Stanzione many years ago: "When a loved one no longer has a life of dignity, it is time to say goodbye."

It was time to say goodbye but it was an incredible 10-plus years and we learned so much from each other. Goodbye, my girlfriend!

Photos: Breck Hostetter



Greta and Reba.



▲ Reba awaiting breakfast. ▼ In the middle of everything.



Gentle, Affectionate Reba Was an Integral Part Of Our Family

By Breck Hostetter

We are the lucky, lucky family who adopted Reba the rabbit in July 2010. We saw her profile listing on the Rabbit Rescue & Rehab site and thought she was magnificent-looking (a giant white beauty) and loved reading that she would reward you with kisses after being petted.

We made arrangements to visit her in the shelter and fell in love with her and brought her home. She quickly became an integral part of our family and was usually in the middle of anything going on in our apartment. She was on the couch if anyone was watching TV. She was in the kitchen if any cooking was going on, and she lay at our feet if we were at the table eating or working. Although rabbits are usually not recommended for houses with children, Reba was an exception and was a loyal and enthusiastic companion for our daughter, Greta. Reba scratched at Greta's bedroom door to be let in if Greta was playing there with a friend, and she got in the middle of every game, puzzle and art project that was going on. At bedtime she hopped into bed with Greta to snuggle with her while she fell asleep. She was always right there and true to her reputation, she was always sweet and very affectionate.

She passed away in February from complications related to cancer, and her absence has been heartbreaking. We have been comforted, though, by all of the nice notes we have received from friends who had fallen in love with our lovely rabbit at our house and from Reba's rabbit rescue friends from her days at the shelter. It makes us so happy to know her sweetness was recognized

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Reba

(Continued from page 18)

and appreciated throughout her life. It has also reminded us of how amazing the rabbit-rescue community is. They have put us in touch with the best vets and with other families who have gone through similar medical ordeals with their rabbits. They have followed up on Reba's health and progress over the last couple months, and when she passed

Photos: Breck Hostetter



Reba on Greta's bed.



Reba, the new bunny, with Greta (2010).

away, they have offered kind words that made the loss and grieving a bit gentler. We're so thankful for having had the chance to make Reba a part of our family and for the people who have cared for her.

Letters From Adopters

Edison's Story: Rescued by a Snowball

Thank you for another wonderful newsletter! I was just jumping around reading and looking at the pics, when I saw Marylee Matturro on page 22 (February 2014 Thump, <http://rabbitcare.org/Thump%20Feb%202014.pdf>). Her 8-year-old bunny Edison was so named because she and others were abandoned midwinter at a Bronx Con Edison facility, and Mary Cotter, Nancy Schreiber, Will Leung (I think), and a whole group of us NYCBuns people (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/nycbuns/info>) spent a weekend trying to round them up with humane Havahart traps.

Great story: One night, after hours of tracking the last of the rabbits through deep snow, and well after dark had settled in, Nancy and I were gathering up our traps in order to go home when Edison suddenly appeared right next to one. We stopped breathing, praying she'd go in, and after what seemed like forever, she did!

BUT THE FREAKIN' TRAP DIDN'T CLOSE! Edison was just too small to trigger the door!

We feared that if we approached, she'd bolt, again, into the snowy abyss. So we took a chance, and I took aim, and **THREW A SNOWBALL AT THE CAGE DOOR!** And **IT WORKED!** Talk about a Hail Mary pass! Biggest adrenaline rush ever!

Mary Cotter had already lined up Marylee as a fosterer, and as so often and so wonderfully happens, Marylee's home became Edison's forever home.

It's so great to see folks from the past resurface in Thump!

Mary Ann Maier

Thank You!

Thank you for sending me this wonderful newsletter! I adopted a rabbit from your organization almost a year ago and now she has bunfriend who she really has come to adore.

Sincerely,
Natalie Pitheckoff

Dept. of Sociology and Gerontology, Miami Univ., Oxford, OH

Westbury

Westbury was adopted by Silvia Merced and her family. He is enjoying his new home.

Westbury feels like he is just another member of our family. He said hello to my dogs, especially my beagle, by sniffing him. Westbury wasn't scared at all. My beagle thought he was another dog and brought a toy for the bunny to play with.

One of my cats keeps going outside the pen and Westbury runs to him to sniff him and then follows him.

Westbury is a very good boy. He comes out of the pen and walks around but

Photo: Silvia Merced



Westbury with cat.

then he goes right back to his pen. He loves being there with my daughter. I'm so happy about adopting our little bunny.

Silvia Merced

(Continued on page 20)

Photo: Kelly Del Valle

Rachel

Laurel George and her family adopted Rachel in December. Laurel sent us this update in early February.

We adopted Rachel Bunny a week or so before Christmas 2013, so she's been with us for almost two months now. When I first met her at the Union Square Petco, I just fell in love with her adorable face and her sweet, if somewhat timid, demeanor. We've set Rachel up in our downstairs playroom with a big exercise pen outfitted with a cardboard hidey box, a hay-filled litter box and some toys (an old toilet-paper roll stuffed with hay is one of her favorites!).

Rachel has been slow to venture past the boundaries of her pen but she is more



Photo: Laurel B. George

Rachel and James.

comfortable with us every day. She goes right to the door of her pen to greet us when we come to give her pellets, hay and water in the morning, and in the evening we often feed her the first bites of

her "salad" from our hands. She gives nose nudges and hops to show her happiness.

I think she's a classic shy personality type and we've been finding Dana Krempels' "Winning over a Shy Bunny" article very helpful. Rachel loves it when my kids or I just hang out with her in her pen, and she rewards our patience with little nose nudges and rubs against us.

We are very grateful to Marcie and the other volunteers for teaching us about house rabbits and pointing us to so many resources.

We love having Rachel Bunny as part of our family!

Laurel, Erik, James and Sophie

Photo: Sheryl Hallett



Snuggles.

Snuggles

Sheryl Hallett, who adopted Snuggles, sent us this great update in early February.

Snuggles is such a sweet bunny! Within two hours of bringing him home, he was already binkying around his cage and around my room.

He loves jumping up on my bed and running under my sheets. He enjoys playing with his new toys; he even has a special place he keeps them. He has really made himself at home.

Snuggles is head-over-heels crazy about bananas and strawberries. They are his favorite treats, and he also enjoys his hay and veggies.

Sheryl

Tommie

Tommie was adopted in February and now has two friends, Lennox and Lily.

Tommie (who has recently been renamed Sochi because of his Olympic-worthy jumping and binkying abilities) is doing really well.

Photo: Victoria Cappuccio



Sochi(Tommie) Lennox and Lily.

He has quickly made friends with our other rabbits, Lennox (adopted from NYC Animal Care & Control last August) and Lily.

Some of their favorite activities include jumping, running, chewing, digging and eating. Both Lennox and Sochi are incredibly affectionate and love getting attention from us!

Before we decided to adopt Lennox, we had the misconception that rescued rabbits might be harder to bond, and less friendly (coming from stressful experiences and environments), but Lennox and Sochi are hands-down the

(Continued on page 21)

Letters *(Continued from page 20)*

sweetest bunnies we have ever met, and we can't imagine our lives without them.

The volunteers at NYC AC&C are always incredibly helpful and friendly, and are really knowledgeable about all the rabbits they care for. Thank you!

Victoria & Vidit

Photo: Ana Pulido



Chauncey and Maeby.

Maeby and Chauncey

Maeby was adopted as a partner for Chauncey, and the bunnies have become good friends.

A few months ago, we decided it was finally the right time to try to find a partner for our rabbit Chauncey (previously Augustus).

We set up a speed date through Cindy Stutts and couldn't believe our luck when he instantly got along with another lionhead mix. Maeby (previously Peanut), was pretty skittish after being rescued from a hoarding situation and sadly, her previous bunny partner had been adopted without her, so it took a few weeks for our two bunnies to settle in. Once they felt more comfortable with one another, Maeby went ahead and made herself right at home in Chauncey's bunny condo.

Adopting a second bunny has brightened Chauncey's and our lives immensely over the last few months. Chauncey is more active with Maeby around; when one bunny comes out in the morning to play, the other is not far behind. They spend their afternoons napping together and taking turns grooming each other. For anyone considering a partner for their bunny, we can't recommend it enough!

Ana and Chris

Proud Lagomorph Parents

Photo: Mandy Velez



Scout.

Scout

Scout was adopted in December as a friend for Milo, and the two bunnies are now good friends.

I adopted Scout (formerly known as Flossie) right before Christmas. Little did I know, the bunny I named after the free-spirited and brave character in the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" would be one of the best gifts in my life.

Milo (my first bun) and I showed up at the Union Square Petco looking to go on a couple of speed dates. I first saw Flossie on Petfinder – an adorable little lop that I fell in love with. She was at the 87th Street Petco, so a nice volunteer brought her down for us. We put her and Milo together and, as I held my breath, nothing happened – which in the bunny world, is a good thing.

So we brought her home to start bonding. Not only did the two fight, but Scout was very scared. You couldn't get near her without a thumping spree. But as time went on – and with a lot of help from my bun-tor mentor Marcie – Scout and Milo are now amazing friends. They are grooming each other and love to snuggle under the coffee table.

But the most remarkable thing about our Scoutie is that she now is so happy and comfortable in our home. She loves binkying, sprinting and pets. Her transformation brings tears to my eyes. My boyfriend, Ryan, and I, along with her big brother Milo, are so happy she's a part of our family!

Mandy Velez

Bella and Chewbacca

Bella was adopted as a friend for Chewbacca, and Darren Allicock sent this update in early March.

We adopted Bella (formerly Juliet) after we lost a bunny very near and dear to us. Of course, this had left her bonded mate, Chewbacca, distraught. We thought about it for a short time before deciding to bond him again. After several speed dates, we decided on Bella. She has to be the sweetest, smartest rabbit I have ever had the pleasure of caring for. She is so observant and full of curiosity. It is like having another child in our home.

Photo: Darren Allicock



Chewbacca and Bella.

The bonding process has been slow-going, to the point where we thought they weren't compatible with each other. For several weeks, Chewbacca didn't like Bella's presence and would attack when he saw her. Through this bonding process, we've discovered that Chewbacca is a pessimist, and basically anything scares him. Bella, on the other hand, is mellow and allows Chewbacca to do anything he wants. This was a new experience for us because Chewbacca and his former bonded mate were "in bunny love" after first seeing each other and we didn't really have to work at bonding them.

We allowed Bella room to settle in and to let Chewbacca get comfortable with her. We swapped litter boxes and kept bonding sessions very brief for several

(Continued on page 22)

Letters *(Continued from page 21)*

weeks. It's come to a point where we can open their respective playpens and they will come out and hang out with each other. They will groom each other and then Chewbacca will run off to his favorite corner of the room while Bella will hang out under my daughter's red chair in the living room, observing daily life with us. Chewbacca will come back every so often to say hello to Bella then run off to explore some more. Bella is playpen protective against Chewbacca, though. He mistakenly tried to enter her playpen once when they were out and she gave him a good whack on the forehead. He hasn't tried since.

So things are progressing. They are far from a bonded pair. However, they are getting along at a tolerable level. We feel it will take much more time to fully bond them, but we are happy that they are here to keep each other company. :)

Darren

Peppercorn and Cloud

Sydney and Jenevive adopted Peppercorn and Cloud. Sadly, Cloud died on March 25.

We were so lucky to have had Cloud and Peppercorn in our lives these past two months. This little duo gave us so much joy and love, and their contrasting natures were so much fun to watch and interact with.

Peppercorn is explorative, adventurous, and refuses to be tamed! Cloud was cuddly, gentle and very affectionate. These traits made sense, given how we picked them out of the litter (Noodle's babies): we chose Peppercorn because she was the only one of the litter to jump onto one of the bigger cardboard boxes in the room, and Cloud because he came up to us with his sweet face and allowed us to pick him up easily.

Unfortunately, tragedy befell us only seven weeks after their adoption. Cloud passed away during a routine neutering procedure, possibly due to an underlying, undetectable heart condition. Though

Photo: Sydney S. Kim



Peppercorn and Cloud.

we only had him for two short months, we loved him dearly, and will miss him very much.

In his absence, Peppercorn seems to be getting along okay – still very mischievous and adventurous, binkying and bouncing onto whatever surface she can find.

Sydney came home the other day to find that Peppercorn had somehow knocked down her stack of straw hats and chewed on the brim of one of them. Because Peppercorn also has snacked on some of our most treasured art books, we can only assume that this is a sign that she has very good taste. We hope to find Peppercorn a new friend soon, as we are sure she misses her brother as much as we do.

Best,
Sydney and Jenevive



Don't miss the first-ever national HRS Rabbit Conference in St Louis, Mo.

See details at end of this issue!

Photo: Mimi Franco



Milo and Max.

Milo and Max

Mimi Franco adopted Milo and Max in March. Here is her update.

We are so happy to have Milo and Max. Milo enjoys running at our place. He is a very friendly and curious bun! Max is still a bit shy. Now he is only interested in his food. LOL. Max was smaller than Milo at first, but now he is getting to be about the same size.

I really appreciate the volunteers at the shelter, and special thanks to Cindy and Alex!

Mimi

Rudy and Rusty

Rudy and Rusty were adopted by Lisa Epps, who sent us this update in late March.

It's nice to sit on my couch and do work while spending time with Rudy and Rusty. My Facebook page certainly has turned into one of those proud-parents situations with all my bunny postings.

More people should adopt rabbits. Rudy is a lot more curious about everything than Rusty is, and Rudy knows when he's getting into something he's not supposed to. I'll make a funny "hey you" cat call and he knows he's in the off-limits zone. Ha!

Even when I give them little treats, they are so gentle about how they take something from my fingers! To enjoy

(Continued on page 23)

Photo: Lisa Epps



Rudy and Rusty.

them you have to realize they are not dogs; one should not train them to be like dogs, either. They are bunnies, and allowing them to be just that, bunnies – that’s what is so enjoyable. They’re both very affectionate but it has to be on their terms. If I sit on the floor they always come over and start sniffing on me, climbing all over me and my things. Sometimes they will lick my feet or nibble, but not bite, me and they like to sleep with me.

In the morning, they know the first thing I do is go upstairs and turn their light on and feed them. Trust me they are waiting at the door for me when I get up the stairs. I’m really lucky to have them both. :)

Lisa

Puffernutter

Puffernutter was adopted in March by Meredith Spiegel and her family. She sent us this note right after the adoption.

My mom made a whole section in the fridge dedicated to Puffernutter.

He’s great! He is loving life here at the Spiegel home.

He is going to be a little spoiled over here!

Meredith

Photo: Meredith Spiegel



Puffernutter.

Photo: Susan Lillo



▲ Bailey the dog with Puffernutter. ▼ Puffernutter.

Photo: Meredith Spiegel



Photo: Celina Valentin



Penelope.

Penelope

Penelope was adopted in March by Celina and her family, who sent this update.

We love Penelope. We call her Nellope for short.

She has opened up so much, playing a lot and jumping into our laps. She is so calm and sweet.

Thank you for allowing us to have this great new addition to our family.

Celina Valentin



Maribelle appeared in a photo shoot for New York magazine on March 6. Volunteer Jess Wolfinger transported Maribelle to the shoot, and Tai Shimizu took her own photos of the event. Maribelle was adopted two days later. Here is a link to the New York magazine article, which is titled: "Little Ones: Pets for the dog-and-cat-averse":

<http://nymag.com/guides/everything/alternative-pets-2014-3/>

Tai's photos are at <http://taishimizu.com/Maribelle-NYMag/>

Photos: ©Tai Shimizu



CELEBRITIES IN THE SPOTLIGHT



▲ Luna. ▼ Petal.



Marilyn Bunroe.



▲ Scribble. ▼ Rego.



Sunshine.





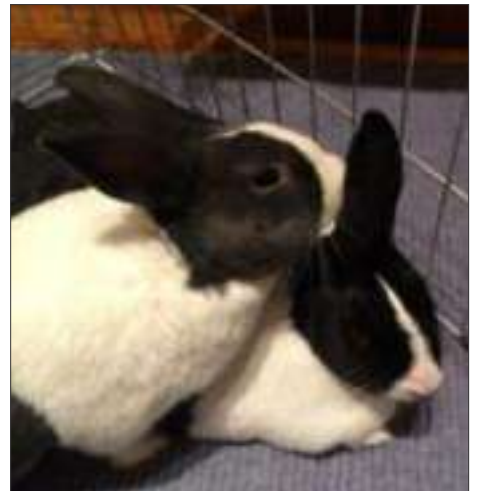
▲ Stannis. ▼ Petal checking out Luna.



Harry.



Hester.



▲ Sylvie and Baxter. ▼ Pop.



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

Kristen Miller, DVM

Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital
2056 Jericho Turnpike, 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

Mary Cotter, HRS Licensed Educator,
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,
nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com

Mary Ann Maier, HRS Licensed Educator,
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group Volunteer,
altitude8@yahoo.com,
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

Donna Sheridan, HRS Licensed Educator,
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group Volunteer,
hpocus217@yahoo.com,
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

Kerstin Aumann, HRS Licensed Educator,
NYC/AC&C Volunteer,
nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com, nycacc.org

Mary Harnett, HRS Licensed Educator,
mmharnett@optonline.net, (914) 948-7976

Gabrielle LaManna, HRS Licensed Educator,
New Fairfield, CT,
gabbysbunnies@yahoo.com, (203) 746-7548

Mary Christine Basile, Educator-in-Training

Jennifer Saver, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

Laura George, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

Monica Shepherd, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

THUMP April 2014

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS

56 West Pondfield Road #5C

Bronxville, NY 10708

www.rabbitcare.org

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

Masthead Logo Designer: Mary Ann Maier

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 public on rabbit care through
publications, phone consultations, home
visits and presentations. This newsletter is
published by RRR/NYC HRS, which is
solely responsible for its content. We retain
the right to edit all submissions, which
become the property of the NYC Chapter
and cannot be returned.

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. For contributions
to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go
to www.longislandrabbitrescue.org.

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
four 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.

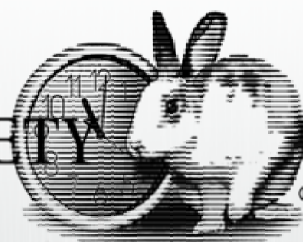
Rabbits for adoption can be found by going
to: <http://www.nycacc.org/> and doing an
adoption search. Volunteers are there every
weekday evening and on Saturday and
Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange
an appointment first.

Bunny speed dates can be arranged by
appointment only on weekend afternoons
either at Columbus Square or Union Square.
Please contact Cindy Stutts at
bygolyoly@yahoo.com to make
arrangements.

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.

HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY



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HRS Educational Conference: Taking Rabbit Knowledge to a Higher Level

Mar 8, 2014 by HRS



HRS

A NATIONAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

House Rabbit Society's first ever Educator Conference, *Taking Rabbit Knowledge to a Higher Level*, will be held **September 26-28, 2014** (to coincide with [International Rabbit Day!](#)) at the [Humane Society of Missouri](#). The conference is hosted by [St. Louis House Rabbit Society](#), and is being organized by the [HRS Conference Committee](#).



All House Rabbit Society Educators are invited and the cost is free for them. For others, please check the [registration form](#) for information on costs. There will be a charge for meals for all attendees.

Speakers include Carolynn Harvey, DVM, Susan Brown, DVM, Micah Kohles, DVM, Peter Fisher, DVM, Avery Bennett, DVM, Anthony Pilny, DVM, Marinell Harriman, Margo DeMello, PhD, Joy Gioia, Diane McClure, DVM, Debby Widolf, Dana Krempels, PhD, Mary Cotter, EdD, LVT, Nancy LaRoche, Dawn Sailer, MS, Susan Smith, PhD, George Flentke, PhD, and Anne Martin, PhD. (Bios for the speakers can be found [here](#))

To see the schedule of events, visit the [schedule page](#).

To find out about getting to St. Louis, where to stay and what to eat, visit the [lodgings page](#).

To find out details on each class, visit the [classes page](#).

To find out about sightseeing in the St. Louis area, visit the [St. Louis information page](#).

To find out about the vendors who will be attending, visit the [vendors page](#).

To find out about the lunches on Saturday and Sunday, visit the [Lunches page](#), and to find out about the Saturday evening dinner and program (HRS reps, speakers, and families only), visit the [Dinner page](#).

PLEASE REGISTER EARLY – SPACE IS LIMITED!

Use [this form to register](#) and use [this page to pay for meals and any non-educator attendees](#).

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This will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to meet other HRS educators and the leadership of House Rabbit Society, including House Rabbit Society founder Marinell Harriman, and as a bonus, we will be visiting the new shelter owned by St. Louis HRS!

House Rabbit Society is grateful to have the sponsorship of the following generous and amazing companies:



If you are interested in making a donation to help support the cost of this conference, [please click here](#). If you'd like to find out about sponsorships, being a vendor at the conference, or advertising in the conference program, including placing a small memorial ad in memory of your rabbit, please email [Margo DeMello](mailto:Margo.DeMello@hrrs.org).



Related Posts

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Posted on Mar 7, 2014

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Posted on Mar 6, 2014

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Posted on Mar 5, 2014

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HRS CONFERENCE

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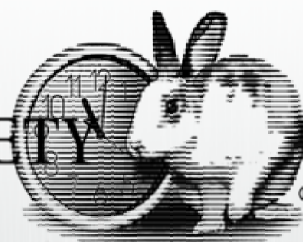


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Conference Schedule

Mar 7, 2014 by HRS

FRIDAY, SEPT. 26, 2014

Print

House Rabbit Society of Missouri Shelter and Headquarters

7:00 – 9:00 Reception – HRS Educators and family only

SATURDAY, SEPT. 27, 2014

Main Hallway. Humane Society of Missouri, 1201 Macklind Avenue

7:00 – 7:30 Registration & Breakfast (attendees may also take breakfast into first class)

7:30 – 7:35 Welcome & Conference Information

Lecture Hall

7:35 - 8:00 **Joy Gioia:** So You Think You Know Rabbits?

8:00 – 8:15 Break

8:15 – 9:30 **Joy Gioia:** Adaptive Impoverishment/Total Rabbit

9:30 – 9:40 Break

9:40 – 10:20 **Margo DeMello, PhD:** Bunny Bonding 201

10:20 – 10:30 Break

10:30 – 11:30 **Carolyn Harvey, DVM:** Palliative Care

11:30 – 11:40 Break

11:40 – 12:40 **Panel:** Working with Shelters and Handling Confiscations

12:40 – 1:45 Pre-ordered individual lunches. Browse vendors.

Classroom

Debby Widolf, Diane McClure, DVM and Frank Bossong, DVM: Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) for “Community” Domestic Rabbits.

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1:45 – 2:45 **Susan Smith, PhD:** Practical Nutrition: Adapting Dietary Recommendations for Specific Rabbit Needs
 3:00 – 4:00 **Dana Krempels, PhD:** Emergency Care
 4:00 – 4:10 Break
 4:10 – 4:40 **Marinell Harriman:** Meet Marinell Harriman (an interview)
 4:40 – 5:00 **Panel:** Pushing the Mission Forward with the HRS Board
 5:00 – 5:30 **Marinell Harriman and Margo DeMello:** Book Signing: *HRS Handbook* and *Stories Rabbits Tell*

Anne Martin, PhD: Fundraising and Networking

SATURDAY EVENING, SEPT. 27, 2014

Favazza's on the Hill

7:00 – 9:00 Dinner – HRS Representatives, speakers, and family only
 Presentation: **Missouri HRS and Georgia HRS:** New Shelters, Raising Funds, and Recruiting Volunteers

SUNDAY, SEPT. 28, 2014

Main Hallway

8:00 – 8:15 Check in, get name tags if needed, get drinks, proceed to Lecture Hall

Lecture Hall

8:15 – 9:45 **Mary Cotter, EdD, LVT and Susan Brown, DVM:** Solving "Problem Rabbits": Strategies for Managing Behavior Problems in Companion Rabbits
 9:45 – 10:00 Break
 10:00 – 11:00 **Micah Kohles, DVM:** It's a Gut Thing: Rabbit Gastrointestinal Anatomy, Physiology and Nutrition.
 11:00 – 11:15 Break
 11:15 – 12:15 **George Flentke, PhD:** Rabbit Pharmacology: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly
 12:15 – 1:00 Pre-ordered individual lunches. Browse vendors.
 1:00 – 2:15 **Avery Bennett, DVM:** Surgery: Then and Now
 2:15 – 2:30 Break
 2:30 – 3:30 **Anthony Pilny, DVM:** Rabbit Dentistry
 3:30 – 3:45 Break
 3:45 – 4:45 **Peter Fisher, DVM:** State of the Art Diagnosis and Treatment of Common Rabbit Diseases
 4:45 – 5:00 Thank you for coming!
 5:00 – 6:00 Trip to MO HRS building for anyone interested or whoever couldn't make it Friday

- Rabbit Behavior (85)
 - Aggression and Age-Related Behavior (10)
 - Multiple Rabbits (28)
 - Rabbit Personality (33)
 - Rabbits & Other Pets (4)
 - Rabbits & the Family (15)
- Rabbit Care (148)
 - Allergies (2)
 - Babies & Orphans (8)
 - Diet (23)
 - Elderly and Special Needs Rabbits (27)
 - Grooming & Handling (10)
 - House & Home (24)
 - Litter Training (10)
 - Mental Health (18)
 - Safety (14)
 - Spay/neuter (7)
 - Travel & Holidays (9)
- Rabbit Health (118)
 - Alternative Medicine (11)
 - Cancer (6)
 - Ears (7)
 - For Veterinarians (8)
 - Fur & Skin (5)
 - Gastrointestinal Tract (10)
 - Head and Mouth (16)
 - Heart Disease (2)
 - Infections (20)
 - Liver Disease (6)
 - Mobility Issues (7)
 - Neurological Problems (7)
 - Pain Management (7)
 - Parasites (9)
 - Poisons (4)
 - Urinary Tract (6)
 - Where to Find Medical Information (9)
 - Working with Vets (23)
- The Rabbit in Culture (19)
- Video (72)
- What's Happening? (34)
- Wild Rabbits (5)

Related Posts

- HRS Educational Conference: Taking Rabbit Knowledge to a Higher Level
Posted on Mar 8, 2014
- Conference Classes
Posted on Mar 6, 2014
- Speaker Bios
Posted on Mar 5, 2014
- Conference Vendors
Posted on Mar 4, 2014

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