



## NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS JUNE 2018

Photo: Christina Rocco



RIP Benita. See Thump's coverage of Benita's rescue and rehabilitation in 2010 and 2011, pages 19-26.

### Benita's Mission Was to Love, Be Loved

By Christina Rocco

Benita's purpose in life was to love and to be loved. For a bunny whose introduction into this world was human cruelty, she was an outgoing, confident bunny who thrived on being the center of attention.

She was left for dead in a dark, secluded alley in Manhattan, covered in feces, urine and an unknown sticky orange substance. She was found in a cramped wire cage on Labor Day in 2010 by Ben McCool, completely malnourished and on the brink of death. Benita was brought to the Manhattan shelter and her will to live amazed the staff. Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Mary Cotter, Jane O'Wyatt and

other volunteers helped in the intake process and immediately afterward, and Mary brought Benita home to foster her during an extended rehabilitation period. Benita recovered and then was ready for a forever home with endless snuggles and kisses.

On May 7, 2011 when I went to the Rabbit Rescue & Rehab to adopt a bunny, Benita was already claimed. She, however, felt she should choose her home. With energy and passion, Benita bit and dug at the bars of her cage until I opened the door. Then she gently extended her head and placed it on the

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### Storm Taught Us To Be 'Bunlingual'

By Nicole Albani

We took our baby girl, Storm, home in December 2014 and she has forever changed our lives. My husband, Andrew, and I have never loved something so much, and while we don't even have any human children yet, we consider Storm our first child. Storm has taught us many things, but one of the coolest is how to be "bunlingual." I've always

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Photo: Megan McLarney



Ares, Hank and Coco.

### The Saga of Hank, Ares and Coco

By Megan McLarney

"Hank. Hank. Hank!" was the chant from my son Nathan. We had perused pictures and descriptions of adoptable

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**Volunteers Offer Tips for Helping Bunnies Stay Cool in Summer**

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## Hank, Ares and Coco

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rabbits, cats and dogs on the Animal Care Centers of NYC app, and finally decided to give a home to a rabbit in need.

Born in the Chinese zodiac Year of the Rabbit, I have always felt a kinship to rabbits. My mother still she sends me rabbit postcards, hand towels, plates, serving dishes and other knickknacks. For years, I wanted to share my love for rabbits with my son but hadn't felt ready to take on more responsibilities or give my heart to another rabbit after losing a 9-year-old Holland lop named Edward Bunny Hopper in 2006.

Edward was my husband's first pet and our first pet together. I'm embarrassed to admit Edward was a bit of an impulse buy. There was a pet store around the corner from our midtown apartment, and I would stop by occasionally. When I saw Edward, he looked so cute but so sad in his little cage. We bought him. Luckily, we had a good vet, but we didn't really know much about proper rabbit care. My husband, Daniel, found House Rabbit Society, <https://rabbit.org>, and we learned a lot from that website. Edward lived a good, long life despite having misaligned molars that needed to be

Photo: Nathan Lefcourt



Our "House of Hank" family crest shield.

surgically trimmed regularly. Eventually he succumbed to an abscess.

When we saw Hank's picture and description on the NYC ACC app in 2017, we fell in love. He had a big brown mustache, a large behind, and one ear that went down and one ear that went up. (Those ears have since become our "House of Hank" family logo.)

Hank had been at the shelter for six months. During his first few months with us, he was distrustful. But eventually, with lots of patience, we were able to pet and feed him, and we all bonded. He would do happy hops and Bunny 500 laps down our long hall. He still thumps at the sound of house keys, but

generally he enjoyed sprawling across the floor contentedly, or flopping over on his side.

We decided to adopt a buddy for Hank nine months later because he had become very social and things were going so well. He would sit in front of us when we watched TV, come to the refrigerator just in case there were extra greens in there, and go to the bathroom when we did (his litter box was in there). When we went to bed, he would pitter-patter under the bed and then go to sleep.

So, we took the plunge. We visited all the eligible bachelorettes at the Brooklyn and Manhattan shelters. Then we emailed the speed-dating rabbit volunteers and made an appointment with Amy Odum at the same location where we had adopted Hank.

We read the bonding articles Amy sent us from Thump: "The Most Important Word in Bonding: P-A-T-I-E-N-C-E!" (April 2014 issue, page one, <http://www.rabbitcare.org/ThumpApril2014.pdf>) and "Have We Got a Girl (or Boy) for You!" (Fall 2009 issue, page 6 <http://www.rabbitcare.org/NYC%20Metro%20Rabbit%20News%20Fall%202009.pdf>). We made preparations at home and then headed out with Hank to meet three potential female partners at the Manhattan ACC.

The first date wasn't terrible. The second was uneventful. The third went pretty darn well, and we probably would have taken Jojo home, except that we decided to look for one more date to make sure Jojo was "the one." Now, enter stage left, the darling duo Coco and Ares. Ares was a soft heather gray with an orange glow. Her ears were classic rabbit ears, sticking up and on alert. Coco, her bonded sister, was jet black with white socks on her front paws. She had one ear up and one ear down, like Hank. Hank and Coco have many qualities in common, which may have contributed to their antipathy. But I'm hopping ahead.

Amy agreed to let us try them. So, we put the girls in the pen with Hank. What

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Photo: Megan McLarney



Ares, Coco and Hank.

**Benita** (Continued from page 1)

floor of the cage for a petting. I was hers, and she was mine.

Whoever said rabbits were quiet creatures did not know Benita. She was a loud, determined girl who knew how to make all her wishes come true. Known for going through grocery bags in pursuit of something yummy, Benita would snag a treat. A master beggar, she would nose bump, spin around, go up on her hind legs, and then nose bump again, until you would follow her to the refrigerator, where she would help herself to her desired snack.

Benita appointed herself the official head of the welcoming committee at our home. She was always there to greet a guest and request treats and pets. Early on it was made clear she didn't tolerate pens. Since she was well trained, she had the freedom to be at the front door to say hi.

Most of all, Benita wanted snuggles and kisses. As much as she loved to play with her favorite toys – wicker baskets from Busy Bunny – she would drop them in a second to snuggle up beside me. If I stopped stroking her, I would get a nose bump asking me to continue. If I fell asleep, as sometimes happened, she would dig on me to wake me up. Just as on the day I adopted her, she would extend her head and gently place it down for “kissies.”

She preferred to be an only bunny. Sharing toys was not her thing, and sharing me was really not her thing. In 2013, however, when I was involved in a rabbit rescue in East Rockaway, Benita, on her terms, opened her heart to Uriel. It was not a perfect bonding. Benita liked her own toys and space. They comforted each other through a gate, sitting side by side. Uriel is grieving for her now, terribly.

Benita and Uriel had a bedtime routine. He would go in his big boy pen for the night. First he would use the litter box

Photos: Christina Rocco



Benita and Uriel.

while she supervised. Sometimes they would share hay together in the hanging hay ball. Then he would find a comfy spot by the gate and she would lie beside him. She loved to observe him. Benita made a great cottontail nanny. She always informed me when it was “sleepy time.” Uriel adored and looked up to her. Like a kid, going to bed was not his favorite thing, but for her he would do it. It was their special bonding time. Since she's moved on, he no longer sleeps in the big boy pen. Instead, he sleeps where she used to sleep after she put him to bed.

When life is almost taken away from you before you've even gotten the chance to experience it, you live it to the fullest! Nothing held Benita down or stopped her. She played with vigor, ran with excitement, ate with great gusto, and explored everything. We celebrated birthdays, Christmas, Easter and Rescue Day, where the bunnies got presents and extra treats. Benita enjoyed the adventure of what was hidden under all that paper. Wasteful she was not, but she had a blast tearing up that very same paper.



Busy Benita.

Benita was an extremely affectionate bunny. There was never an awkward adjustment period. She needed to be loved, and that was her only requirement. She was not the same bunny that initially had bitten many of the volunteers and was cage-aggressive. Once she found the love she craved she became the sweet, tender, warm-hearted bunny she was meant to be. I miss her deeply. She had a great life designed by her! She vacationed with Aunt Diana and Aunt Nancy at Kamp Kronenberg. She adored them and they adored her. She took over their house and had the family cater to her. What more could a girl want?

Benita died of a heart attack on Tuesday, May 15, at 11:44 p.m. I was with her when she crossed over the Rainbow Bridge. She had just celebrated her eighth birthday on May 7.

The story of Benita's rescue, recovery and adoption appeared in THUMP, issues October 2010, December 2010 and August 2011. See pages 19-26 of this newsletter.

## Bunlingual

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wanted to learn another language fluently. I admire my father-in-law and my students who can so seamlessly switch back and forth between two languages. The day we took Storm home is the day I discovered the language of bunnies. It's the day I started to become "bunlingual."

The first term I learned was binky. It is a bunny's greatest expression of joy. I had never seen a rabbit do this, and when she did it for the first time, I was in love. When rabbits run at full speed and throw their bodies up into the air in a twisted hop, it just makes your heart melt! Grunts are when she doesn't like what I am saying or doing and she lets me know with an annoyed grunt. My husband has been fortunate enough to never hear this (and doesn't really believe me when I describe this behavior). I guess we know who daddy's little girl is. Chinning is when she rubs her chin on something or on us. It basically means "this is mine now," and at this point, my husband and I own nothing in our home anymore. One of our favorite sounds is when she "purrs" or makes a click sound when we pet her. This means



Storm.

she is happy and wants more and we basically cancel all plans for the rest of the day to oblige! The foot stomp is another thing my husband has rarely seen. It's amazing how loud that foot can be when slammed against the floor. It's a very rare occurrence, but when it happens, it generally means she is very stressed or angry. The other day she stomped when I sneezed. I guess she was displeased with me. The nose bonk is a cute little tap with her nose that means, "Please move, please pet me, or what is this?" It's the cutest feeling to have that little nose tap up against you!

The flop was one of the scariest things I had encountered. It is a sign of extreme

relaxation, which is wonderful, but when rabbits throw themselves down on their side and are limp, and don't move, it's enough to give any mama a heart attack. Now that I know what it means, I love when I see her flop down and show me that little belly. It makes me feel happy to know she feels relaxed and safe. On the other hand, it is frightening to see signs of possible stasis. In the case of my little one, she squirms a lot and lies in places she normally doesn't (like her litter box). She doesn't want treats, and will let me pick her up and take her temperature, and that's when it's time to break out the medicine (and maybe make an emergency call to Auntie Denise Bertolotti). I know my baby so well that I can sense immediately when something isn't right.

Storm has taught us all the normal rabbit lingo that bunnies use, but she also has her very own unique personality that we've gotten to know. She loves to run at 100 mph around our house, and she loves to flip over cardboard boxes and chew toilet-paper rolls (she is our little recycler). She loves to sleep under the couch, as well as dig on top of the couch. She will run to us when she sees us and sometimes waits outside the bedroom door for my husband to wake up. She knows the word "dinner" and knows she eats at 5 p.m. She also loves to lie in her bed with her stuffed animal and watch TV with us. She enjoys anime and always comes running when we have it on (we're raising a nerd, and couldn't be prouder). She has a gigantic personality in a tiny body and we love her sassy little attitude!

I never knew there was so much to learn about rabbit lingo before Storm came into our lives. She has taught us a lot and has made us better bunny parents. Learning any new language takes time and patience, but most of all, love. If you get to know your little ones, learn what to look for, and listen to their own special personalities, you, too, can be "bunlingual!"



Storm at home.

## Hank, Ares and Coco

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happened next made everyone ooh and ahhh and take out their phones. Ares hopped over to Hank and started grooming his eyes, and this prompted Coco to groom Hank, too. They did this for a bit and then just hung out next to each other. Finally, I convinced my husband to let us to take them home.

Photo: Megan McLarney



Hank.

I completely underestimated how hard it would be to bond three rabbits.

Ares and Hank got along from the start. Hank and Coco were a different matter. Our entire apartment was Hank's domain already. He had started as a nervous tough bunny who growled and cuffed us. He wasn't giving up ANY territory and we didn't have one of those neutral territories they mentioned in the articles. Borrowing a neighbor's apartment or using our building's hall for bonding sessions was just too complicated. We thought we could set up the girls in one room and Hank would have the other half the apartment. This was a bad idea. Bonding sessions never went great and then it got worse.

I combed the internet for advice. Amy Odum came to our home to help us, and I spoke with a bunny whisperer in California named Darrin.

After three months, I concluded that we had I failed. I wrote an email with the subject ANIMAL RETURN. I tried to find the words to explain what had happened. But then I resumed the bonding sessions, adding some of the techniques discussed with Amy and Darrin: Feed them their greens during bonding sessions. If they fill their mouth it means they are not ready to bite. Slowly, over a few sessions, move the greens closer together. Add some pellets to the greens. Pellets can make rabbits more sluggish, which is good when you have them lunging at each other for combat. Take away rugs so they can't move fast. I put down towels (more slippery than a rug) and litter boxes for rest areas. Give them a willow wreath ([binkybunny.com](http://binkybunny.com)) to share, a healthy treat. Give them another treat like a strawberry top or mini carrot when it's all done. Keep it a positive experience in a relatively small space. Try to get them back in their pens before they get aggressive with each other. And try to relax. Deep breath.

A key mistake was not setting up our house exactly as recommended by the experts. We knew the recommendations – two pens next to each other with space in between. We were torn because Hank had a particular aversion to closed doors and cages. When we first brought him home, he scratched, chewed and dug at the pen. As a free-range bunny, he was happy as a clam. We didn't want him to suffer by putting him in a pen again, but in the end we prolonged his suffering by a drawn-out 100-plus days of bonding.

Unbonded rabbits, I had been told, needed to be in separate pens next to each other, arranged side by side with enough space between them so they can't scratch or bite through the pens.

Our magic combination was three pens. Imagine an overhead view of a rounded triangle with 2 living pens on the bottom (space between them) and a third on top. The third pen was used for bonding sessions and as an extra length for exercise. This tired them out before the sessions

and they could get in and out without being picked up. I'd open one gate and let one party in the bonding arena, close their gate, then let the other in. It also made it easy to swap their spaces at the end of each session. There was less stress for me and less stress for them.

Hank and Coco were the two that were having a problem bonding. Ares was the peacemaker. She would go from one to the other grooming them and taking their scent back and forth. She was the helper in the bonding process. I was never sure whether to let her spend time alone with Hank or time alone with Coco or have them all separate. We tried everything in the three-plus months but in the end I felt it right to keep Coco and Ares together at all times because they were already bonded and it felt scary and unfair to break their bond. Hank got to see his new love Ares only when he put up with his sister-in-law Coco.

"It is with a very heavy heart that I feel we need to bring back the two beautiful bunnies we adopted, Coco and Ares. We have been trying to bond them with Hank, who we adopted last year. After all these months, they still fight and I don't think I'll ever feel confident leaving them alone together. I have reached out to all I could for advice and guidance but we can't seem to get them bonded. It completely breaks my heart." I drafted this email and then cried.

During the next week while I was home all day with the flu, I used my new bonding tips – no rugs, greens together, pellets on top or before, lots of exercise first, and a good proper setup. I continued to do two sessions a day, mostly because I liked spending time with the rabbits. Then one day Coco and Hank accidentally ran into each other and ended up in the litter box for a moment together, both looking surprised.

The bunnies were getting along! They ate together. Then they began lying near each other, closer, and closer. I opened up the other pens and let them explore

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## Scout's Rescue Taught Me Some Important Lessons

By Jacey Buttacavoli

It was a really busy week in April. Three exams, numerous days with a two-hour commute, hardly any time to shower, bathe and sleep. I had just returned home, got into my pajamas and was more than ready to relax.

A notification on my phone popped up, and my phone buzzed. A rabbit was loose in Patchogue, about 10 miles away from me on Long Island, and crazy enough, it looked just like my own rabbit, Cooper. I grunted, groaned and yawned. How long will we be out there? What if it rained? What if the rabbit gets away? How will I study for school? What will I do about dinner? I don't have any extra X-pens or supplies!

I called the finder, still not totally psyched to leave my warm house at 7 in the evening with no idea what was in store. The finder, Michelle, hadn't seen the rabbit all day because landscapers were in the area. I called Dee Carbone, one of the volunteers who was going to join in the rescue attempt. When I spoke to Dee, she put all of my negativity and doubt aside and said she was ready to go. Her only focus was getting that rabbit into a warm, safe home before an approaching storm arrived. Dee had her mind set on getting that abandoned rabbit. And so, my boyfriend, Bryce, and I left for Patchogue.

Photo: Michelle Primiceri



Scout just before her rescue.

Dee, Bryce, new volunteer Trini and I all arrived at the apartment complex where the rabbit had been spotted. Dee said to me as we started our rescue effort, "This place is huge!" I was less than thrilled to hear that. After we had wandered around for five minutes in the sprawling complex, next to some railroad tracks, and about 100 steps from the start of our search, Bryce whispered, "There it is!"

The rabbit was sitting in the grass, munching on leaves, in all of its white and brown beauty. Bryce ran back to the car to grab the carrier, pen and some treats that might appeal to the poor little bun. Short on supplies, we knew we had to act quickly and effectively.

Photo: Jacey Buttacavoli



Scout in carrier.

We stood on either side of the rabbit, with the other two sides blocked by a fence and homes. Our pen only blocked off one side, though, and with no pens left, we were apprehensive as to what to do next. I grabbed some nearby garbage bins and cardboard boxes, and used what I could to barricade the opposite side.

Trini and Dee started to try to approach the bun. We tried luring the rabbit in with food, opening the carrier so it could jump in, and then chasing it around. This rabbit was fast...and scared.

After about 20 minutes, with a lot of running around, involving one scared rabbit and four discouraged volunteers,

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### Hank, Ares and Coco

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them, ready to jump in and separate them. I gave them more time together, in the bonding pen, with food, water and litter boxes. Eventually Coco put her nose to the floor, submitting to Hank, her alpha bunny. Then she groomed Hank. Everybunny now had figured out his or her place in the trio.

These days they are their own bunny colony, adorably lounging around together in various combinations of one, two and three. Sometimes when snuggling together, they form a heart.

Hank used to spend all his time with us. Our relationship has changed but Hank, confident, relaxed and loving, always comes to greet me with a bump of his nose. Ares follows along, happy,

buoyant and clever. Even sweet, cunning and curious Coco comes to see if I have anything tasty for her before scampering away. I'm applying the bonding techniques with myself and Coco. It is taking a little longer than I would have hoped, but I'm not as handsome as Hank.

## Cardboard: The Ultimate Rabbit-Toy Material

By Diana Kronenberg

Whenever I buy an expensive, fancy toy for my rabbits, the same thing usually occurs. They check it out initially, and play with it for a few minutes. Their interest may be held for up to a day, but not long after that they are completely bored with it. I have found that my rabbits' favorite playthings are either the legs of my furniture, or something I'm much happier to let them chew on: cardboard.

Cardboard can be used in a variety of different ways to make fun and inexpensive rabbit toys. The most important thing to watch out for, though, is that your rabbit is not eating it all. A few tiny pieces here and there are okay as long as he or she keeps eating and pooping normally, but if you notice an entire toy disappearing, it is probably a better idea to switch to seagrass or straw-based toys for your bun. Every rabbit is different, so you never know what is going to catch his or her interest.

One thing that I have found all rabbits need is a hidey box. These are usually made from wood or cardboard, making them both a shelter and a chew toy, all in one. You can make a basic cardboard house by using any cardboard box large enough for the rabbit to fit under, and cutting two or three openings on the sides. Some people like to get really creative and build forts and castles with multiple floors and ramps. You can even buy some fancy cardboard cottage creations online.

Since rabbits are diggers by nature and would be spending time in underground tunnels in the wild, cardboard tunnels are a great idea. I even found a wonderful cardboard tunnel-creating shortcut online. Most hardware stores have large, thick cardboard tubes for forming concrete columns. These make perfect tunnels for buns. I have used a box

cutter to create skylights in the top of tubes, making sure to prop them up on either side to prevent rolling while bunnies are scampering through. Over the years my bunnies have even "expanded" the skylights themselves with a little chewing.

A simple way to use cardboard for toys is to stick pieces under heavy objects, like furniture and fences, and let your rabbit rip up the pieces. My rabbits love to do "bunstruction" to the cardboard in their pen. I usually stick a piece in the corners of the pen and let them rip it to shreds. Then I just slide in a new piece and the fun begins anew!

One cardboard item that my rabbits absolutely love is a jewelry or candy box. My Charlie favors Tiffany boxes, but any sturdy little cardboard box will do. He likes to toss it and chew on it until there's barely anything left. He scatters the pieces around his play area, and I watch to make sure he isn't ingesting the cardboard.

Small cardboard tubes from toilet paper and paper towels also make great toys,

especially when you stuff them full of yummy hay or other treats. Once the buns have pulled all the hay out, they still have a tube to toss. If your rabbits are flingers, empty toilet rolls are great for this. Just make sure the tubes are thin-walled and not too wide in diameter. Rabbits can squeeze themselves into very small places, and have been known to get stuck inside thicker cardboard tubes. When in doubt, slit the tube down the side.

One thing to watch out for with DIY or purchased cardboard toys are items with layers of cardboard that are glued together. If your rabbit is eating some of the cardboard, he or she may also be eating glue, which is certainly not good for bunny tummies. If you notice that occurring, you are better off taking the toy away than risking an obstruction or a bout of GI stasis. Your rabbit may be angry with you, but an annoyed bunny is better than a sick one.

Aside from toys, there is another way that cardboard has been profoundly useful to me over the years. I take a long piece of cardboard that's a foot or two high and flex it until it bends all over. I use it to corral rabbits when I need to clip their nails or groom them. I also use the cardboard pieces outside when I rescue rabbits. Pens are great for blocking a rabbit during a rescue, but sometimes pieces of cardboard can prevent a quick breakout. They are lighter and can be maneuvered into place much faster during a catch, where speed is of the essence.

Cardboard is so versatile that you are only limited by your own imagination, or by what you find online. Whether your bunny is a flinger, a chewer, a hider or a digger, cardboard is an ideal toy material. It's cheap, easily replaceable, and allows for endless combinations of ripping and shredding fun!

Photo: Diana Kronenberg



Charlie and Piper with cardboard tunnel.

## Fun Ideas to Increase Bunny Happiness!

By Shane York

When they're not out gambling or drinking shots of grape juice at the Bun-a-Bing! Club, my boys, Vinny and Pauly, the Dutch "Malachi Brothers" of Bronxville, (yeah, they took over the neighborhood) also enjoy stimulating activities at home. Studies have proven that our brains (including animal brains) need to be stimulated to stay healthy, and in the case of animals, keeping them busy and challenged allows them to tap into their natural senses. This significantly increases their happiness and curiosity.

Even if you have limited space, you can still make playtime entertaining. Here are some of the Bunny Zen tips I use to help keep Vinny and Pauly happy, healthy and off the streets.

Buns love "projects" where they can focus on their natural instincts. This includes chewing, pulling, climbing, hiding, investigating and sourcing food, so it helps to try to think like a bunny. Plan out "fun stations" throughout your home to keep them running from one experience to the next. There are lots of low-cost ways to integrate these activities with everyday life.

Keep it moving. Toys and new objects need to rotate so that there's always a

reason to investigate. Sometimes just rearranging the current setup keeps things interesting. Try to introduce new playthings (even if it's just an Amazon box or paper-towel cardboard toy).

When I first brought Vinny and Pauly home, it became clear that they needed separate puppy pens. This limited their play space outside of the pens, but we cleverly instituted a DMZ. Yes, it's a demilitarized (safe) zone that's created when you move the cage or pen just around 9" from the wall. Bunnies love spaces where they feel protected and the long, narrow passageway between the cage and wall (much like their underground burrows), allows them to lounge separately from the cage and gives the feeling of freedom and security without demanding a lot of extra space.

Bunnies also love it when they're chewing something that has a bit of resistance. Allowing them to tug on cardboard or material gives them a feeling of a small "win" for each little piece they liberate. Pauly and Vinny have a game called "Gimme the Money" where I put a piece of light cardboard under a chair or table leg, so they can tear and pull vigorously. Just be sure to use natural paper without dyes.

Personally, we've find the interactive games are the most stimulating, and Pauly and Vinny adore what they call their Shill Game. Our favorite is the "Living World Teach N Treat Toy" and you can find it on Amazon for about \$14. A treat goes in a little alcove and is covered up by a removable cup. Bunnies must choose the right cup and then remove it with their mouths to receive the treat. So much fun to watch, and it's been a big revenue generator at the Bun-a-Bing! Club.

The point here is that whenever they work for the treat, it's always better (and more delicious) than handing it to them. Everyone loves to win, so whether you rig a cardboard tube with treats and hay, or hide small treats underneath small items they can find, your bunnies will be thrilled with the challenge.

When serving time in their cage, Vinny and Pauly greatly enjoy the willow barbells from Ware Natural Woven Willow Pet Barbell Chews for working out. The barbells have two willow chew balls on either end and are not only delicious, but they can be used to intimidate whistle blowers. A 5-pack is about \$10.

Cage or pen toys are important because they keep bunnies focused on chewing projects. Simple finds like a willow ball with a bell or a treat inside, a nice piece of cardboard or any of the natural wood toys – especially the ones that hang on the side of the cage – offer the good chewing resistance bunnies love.

Then, of course, there's Binky Bunny's Cottontail Cottage. This two-story cardboard condo allows lookouts on three levels, with a rooftop for a possible helicopter escape. The first thing Pauly and Vinny did was put in a bar, some poker tables and a pole, and the place has been hopping for months. It is easy to put together for about \$25.

<https://store.binkybunny.com/cottontail-cottage-p43.aspx?widget=mp>



Pauly with the Living World Teach N Treat Toy.



Vinny's slam dunk, under human supervision.

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## Fun Ideas

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While at Binky Bunny's website, check out the bunny maze, which is kind of amazing. This pre-planned maze can be configured as either a one-level play space or as two levels. We chose the two levels because of space issues. The brothers love it, although there are ways to spring out on to the roof of the maze, which is rather high. I didn't want them to be tempted to throw someone off, so I taped some clear plastic over the top holes to allow for natural light but keeping everybun safe inside. Maze Heaven is priced at about \$30.

<https://store.binkybunny.com/maze-heaven-binkybunny-p15.aspx?widget=mp>

You can also make a little tent by layering towels through a chair's bottom rungs, creating a little hideaway where the bunnies can hide inside and wrestle with the towels. Vinny made an "Occupied" sign for his tent, but if he thinks that'll stop the police, the joke's on him.

My latest gadget is the most fun for me. Littlelf's Wi-Fi Pan & Tilt Security Camera is a perfect way to make sure

the Brothers aren't back digging that tunnel to the Yonkers casino. The camera can sit on a shelf, but it comes with hardware for mounting. Like most of these new video cameras, you access your viewing through the app on your phone. Some even have cool night vision and a button on the app that transmits your voice through the speaker in the camera. The Littlelf is a little pricier than some at \$60 but there are lots of similar cameras for around \$30 that still allow you to check in when away from home.

Who knew bunnies love Country music? Music is also wonderful for them when you're away from home. Every day Pauly and Vinny listen to many different genres and have demonstrated their clear favorites. Some of our top playlists include the Rat Pack (Frank, Dino and Sammy), Native American flute, Cassandra Wilson (they love women singing the blues), and, of course, the all-time favorite, Kenny Rogers. One day "The Gambler" started playing and both of them stood up with their small carrot/microphone singing, "You gotta know when to hold 'em, know when to

fold 'em, know when to walk away, and know when to RUN!" They'd yell the last lyric, then fall down in hysterical laughter.

If you think about what bunnies like to do best, there are lots of things you can find just around the house to keep them curious and interactive. Get a box and cut out little doors on two to four sides. They'll hop on top, chew the inside flaps and the doorways and have a great time. Want your buns to hang with you in the living room or a specific area of the house? Then keep the area inviting for bunnies. Perhaps add a water bowl and/or small hay box in the corner. Provide a hideaway and a chew project and you've created a little bunny haven or what the Brothers call "safe house #1."

Much like us, our furry friends need mental stimulation and continual challenges to grow and develop into happy, well balanced creatures. You will get lots of mental stimulation from devising these little projects, and they will appreciate your creative efforts.

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## RESCUES

### Scout's Rescue

*(Continued from page 6)*

Dee completed the catch of a lifetime. The rabbit went to jump over her and ended up right in her arms. Bryce quickly came in with the carrier and the rabbit was finally safe. If only it knew that!

We brought the rabbit home, and it sat in the corner for about four days straight. It was petrified after its outdoor experience. This precious little bunny didn't know what to do with the warm fuzzy blanket, endless supply of hay, and fresh food and water.

Upon a visit to Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital a few days later, we learned that the rabbit was a girl! Little Miss Scout!

Fast forward to today, a week and a half later. Scout's paws are clean, and she's learned to use the litter box. She takes treats from us, and she eats her pellets and hay. She loves salad time! Each night I take her out for an hour or so, wrap her up and cuddle her for an hour straight.

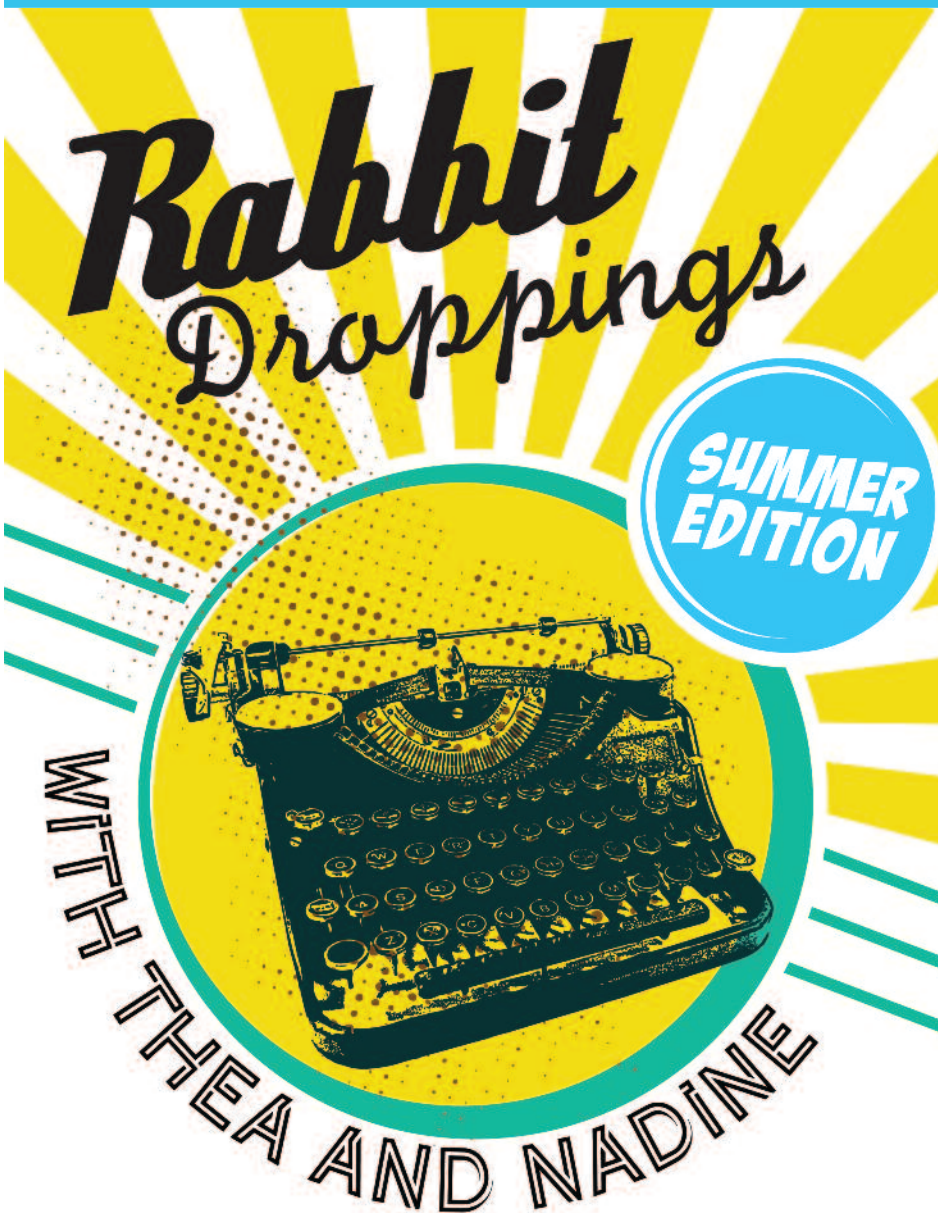
At first, she would flinch when she would see my hand coming. Now she pushes her head into my hand when I take a break! Her personality is starting to show, and she is blossoming into a wonderful, incredible little girl.

I am so lucky to be her fosterer and to be the one to show her that all people are not bad, life is not scary, and love is so precious!

I guess the biggest takeaway I'd want people to get from this story is that you're never too tired, busy or too important to save a life. All lives are precious.

Everyone, and everybun, deserves a chance at the best life possible. If you ever get the opportunity to save a life, no matter how small the creature is, take it. If it weren't for us, Scout would have never had the chance to experience unconditional love.

Don't let your fears, doubts or negative thoughts keep you from doing something that can change the course of an animal's life. Your love will be rewarded. And I can guarantee you that there isn't anything better than that.



*Dear Rabbit Droppings,*

*I wondered if you had any creative ideas for keeping bunnies cool in this warm, muggy weather. I basically try to keep the air conditioner on most of the day, but I find that my rabbits get tired out easily when the humidity is high. Maybe you have some additional suggestions.*

*— Hot Not Heavy in Hempstead, Long Island*

Dear Hot Not Heavy,

As I type this, I'm stretched out on a ceramic tile, snuggling with a frozen water bottle and a fan blowing (not directly) on me. I'm just not built for summers in NYC, with its "urban heat

islands" that can make it feel even warmer than surrounding areas, and with a heat index that can soar to the upper 90s for multiple days at a time. I would rather



Arnie with frozen water bottle on ceramic tiles.

escape to a cool underground bunker for a long siesta through the hottest part of the day, coming above ground only in the early morning and evening.

Seriously folks, our bunnies have it even harder than we do in the heat. We can sweat easily. They can't. We tend to think about air-conditioning in terms of our comfort, productivity and ability to get a good night's sleep, but for house rabbits it can be life-sustaining. Rabbit species don't do a good job cooling their bodies in the heat and can only thrive in hot climates by going into underground warrens where it is safe and cool. Their bodies simply have not adapted to warmer climates the way ours have.

What does this mean for rabbit caretakers? Our rabbits can't endure the summer in the NYC area without extra care and proactive plans to manage the temperature of our homes, especially considering how unpredictable the weather has been the past few summers. Everyone's home is different, and there are various ways to cool down your rabbit's area and minimize costs associated with AC. Start with the tips listed on LIRR's website: <http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org/summer.htm>.

Here are some practical suggestions:

1) Leave your air conditioner on, even while you are out of your house at work all day.

Leaving the air conditioner on is not spoiling your rabbit, and it isn't indulgent or wasteful. Maintaining a cool environment for your rabbit is a health issue. Your Con Ed bills will be higher, but you'll avoid having to rush your bunny to the vet for a heat-related illness.

2) Determine the actual temperature of your rabbit's living area.

I've been using a nifty, inexpensive, digital indoor thermometer and humidity monitor that I purchased from a major online retailer. I clip it to my rabbits' pen, close to their favorite lounging

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Droppings

(Continued from page 10)

area. It tells me not only the current temperature, but the highest and lowest temps within the last 24 hours. This gives me a much better idea of how I need to adjust the settings on my cranky old AC while I'm at work all day.

3) Plan for the inevitable multiday, insufferable heat wave.

When the heat index rises sharply, it's not unusual for air conditioners to break down, and for fuses in old buildings to blow. There is even the occasional power outage. What if your AC dies while you are at work or on vacation? We suggest asking a friend, neighbor or super to stop by your home during hot weather to make sure your apartment is an acceptable temperature, and to notify you right away if anything is wrong. This person would let you know the temperature reading on your indoor digital thermometer, adjust your air conditioner, and alert you if the AC isn't working. If you are on vacation, this would be in addition to your rabbit-savvy pet sitter, at a different time of day from when your sitter visits. You also may want to have a plan in place for where you can take your rabbits in the event of a heat emergency or if your AC fails. This may sound paranoid or excessive, but planning ahead can save your rabbit's life and give you peace of mind.

*Dear Rabbit Droppings,*

*I'm very involved in rabbit rescue and barely have time to even write this email but I hear that the summer is a nice time to throw a party. Naturally I want it to be rabbit-themed. Do you have any suggestions for what to serve? Cocktails? Decor?*

*– Party Pooper in Park Slope*

Dear Party Pooper:

We don't know who told you but you have come to the right Ladies of Leisure.

A Rabbit Rescuer's time is precious, and assuming that this is not a party-for-one (though that would be total cool, too), let's hop right in and start with a signature cocktail. After much deliberation and, most importantly, taste and quality control (side note: Nadine was more diligent than Thea) we decided on what we call Krolik in the Sun.

Krolik translates to rabbit in Russian and this summer-ready cocktail features a favorite treat, the carrot, accented with spicy ginger for general good health and merriment.

1¼ oz. vodka  
¾ oz. ginger liqueur (see below)  
¾ oz. carrot juice  
¾ oz. fresh lemon juice

To make the ginger liqueur:

8 oz. vodka  
7 oz. simple syrup (1:1)  
2 oz. raw ginger juice (this is hard to find, so grating a medium-size ginger root and infusing the vodka overnight works nicely as well)  
1 oz. water

(Combine all the ginger liqueur ingredients in a container and whisk until combined. Store in the refrigerator when not in use.)

Tools: shaker, strainer  
Glass: coupe  
Garnish: mint, basil or dill

Shake all the ingredients together in a shaker with ice. Strain into a chilled coupe. Enjoy!

As for beer and wine to keep the party going, you can pretty much walk into any decent wine store and find at least five different bottles with either a rabbit in the name or on the label (another side note: Nadine has done a lot of research on this). In the spirit of inclusivity, non-alcoholic options should also be made available, since you never know who's on antibiotics or is unfortunate enough to be on a juice cleanse that day.

Moving on to bites and nibbles, vegetarian and vegan options are a MUST at any

Photo: Nadine Heidinger



Krolik in the Sun.

serious animal-themed gathering. The Google can provide you with many scrumptious recipes and options but a personal favorite is the endive boat (obvit!), mozzarella and tomato skewers cutely arranging like bunny ears, and a slow cook with veggie meatballs – which yes, does indeed look like a Flemish Giant's litter box. You're welcome!

Speaking of litter boxes, they make excellent serving trays for your Krolik in the Sun or as a container for various dips and chips. You can leave them empty or top them off with either hay or yesterday's news. New ones probably work best but hey, we ain't your mother so do whatever you want. NIC cubes make the perfect trivet to serve bruschetta or a bowl of carrots...and yes, there MUST be at least one heavy ceramic bowl of carrots.

Dessert is easy: mini vegan carrot cupcakes served in a Teach N Treat, chocolate mousse with blackberries, and a bowl of cocoa puffs. Done!

Lastly, with all that rabbit proofing you surely have done, decor should come naturally. However, we have two words: hay bales. Depending on the square

(Continued on page 12)

## At the Shelter in Brooklyn, I Fell in Love With Rabbits

By Claudia Sencion

Hey Everyone, I hope you are all having a Hoppy Day!

My name is Claudia Sencion and I am a vet tech student at LaGuardia Community College. I have been working at the Animal Care Center in Brooklyn for over a year. Before I started working there I had no experience and knowledge about rabbits, but as I continuously interacted with them I started to fall in love with them and learn a lot about them.

I have always had my favorites – that is until they get adopted, which becomes a good thing. The best parts of my mornings are entering the room and saying my “hellos” to everyone, taking them out of their cages for exercise and watching them binky. Their joy and happiness as they hop makes my day a

Photo: Theo Horfing



Claudia Sencion with Ireland.

lot brighter. I know some people see them only as pets, but I tend to see them differently; each of them has his or her own personality, some a little more

challenging than others. But who blames them when they are stuck in a cage every day?

I loved to spend time with Ireland, one of our “long stay” rabbits. Ireland was a bunny who needed time to warm up to me because he had such a unique personality. After a while, he became my favorite “love ball” in the rabbit room. At first, I was not aware of his sweet nature, but as time passed I saw how he became comfortable around me. He was a very funny rabbit with a lot of love to give. I am sad deep down but also very excited because he was recently adopted!!! All my babies deserve to be cared for, loved and, above all, they deserve the best from all of us. After all, we are their voices, and it is up to us to make them feel as comfortable as possible here at the shelter.

### Droppings

*(Continued from page 11)*

footage of your home, decide between horse and Netherland Dwarf size, and don't forget the antihistamine, as yes, even rabbit people can have hay allergies. Additionally we highly recommend watching an origami bunny napkin tutorial, as well as taking these words by Julia Child to heart: “It's so beautifully arranged on the plate – you know someone's fingers have been all over it.”

*Hi Droppings,*

*Can I take my rabbit for a walk on a leash?*

*– Charlotte, Washington, D.C.*

Dear Charlotte,

The short answer is, “No, you cannot take your rabbit for a walk on a leash.”

The long answer is: NO! You CANNOT

take your rabbit for a walk on a leash! First, your bunny would likely become frightened, which does not bode well for prey animals. Second, rabbits are easily stressed by sounds and unfamiliar environments, so while you may be proud of your local park resplendent in national monuments, to them it is fraught with peril (hawks among them). And third, many lawns are treated with fertilizers and pesticides that you don't want little Marlon Bundo ingesting, not to mention the various nasty parasites waiting to hitch a ride on his shiny black and white coat and wreak havoc on his system. Even the Secret Service can't see these little buggers, and their damage isn't always apparent until it's too late. Imagine Wesley's heartbreak if anything happened to his beloved Marlon Bundo! So keep your Marlon indoors – oh, and off of Air Force Two.

### ABOUT RABBIT DROPPINGS:

We are not veterinarians or veterinary technicians, and claim no expertise in rhetoric, political maneuvering, comedy, or math. We are, however, curious, dedicated, long-time rabbit owners, fosterers, shelter volunteers, rescue advocates, and litter-box cleaners. As volunteers in a busy shelter like Animal Care Centers of NYC, we see, hear and chat a lot about rabbits – and we are excited to share all those little droppings. Please email us at [askrabbiddroppings@gmail.com](mailto:askrabbiddroppings@gmail.com) if you have any questions or comments. Sometimes we embellish and combine questions we hear frequently in order to present common themes in an entertaining way.

We look forward to hearing from you ... until then, Cheers, Buns!

## How I Learned to Become a Nurturer of Two Boy Bunnies

By Jillian Jacobs

I had no idea what I was getting into. Naturally, I always admired the idea of having a bunny. They're friendly, they're clean, and their diet includes lots of fragrant hay.

But becoming a pet parent to a rabbit for the first time was something that I can say was quite unpredictable. My emotional attachment to them was something I was unable to plan.

My husband, Andrew, and I looked into having a pet for over a year. He had rabbits during his college years, so he appreciated the idea. But he yielded to the side of caution, noting that they can cause damage despite their cuteness – mainly because rabbits love to chew. They're designed to constantly eat so when they are not chewing on hay, they find something else to nibble on.

Still, every time I saw a rabbit, I just wanted to take the bunny home.

While visiting his folks one weekend, my husband finally suggested that we “go look at rabbits.” He said a place nearby had rabbits of many different breeds. I knew from his last experience

that he was partial to lop-eared bunnies. But when we got to our destination, the first bunny that melted in my hands was a tiny black Havana rabbit. No discussion necessary; he was coming home with us! However, I knew I had to give his little gray and white, lop-eared, cage companion a home, too. As rambunctious as he was, he eventually allowed me to scoop him up in my arms and then my husband held him and that was it. No exceptions, no excuses; our family had just grown by two.

Watching their personalities unfold during their development, there were a few facts that caught me by surprise as a first-time bunny parent:

—Rabbits Don't Like to Be Held. They are fragile prey animals that

constantly feel the need to run fast in order to feel safe.

—They Are Fierce: Both in Loyalty and Fighting. My rabbits are young males and had shared a living space. Right before their scheduled appointment for neutering (at the peak of their adolescence), however, they began fighting. A wave of relief washed over us after the neutering took place. The fighting came to a screeching halt. They are now bonded and inseparable.

—When Rabbits Stop Eating and Drinking, Their Lives Are in Danger. One day, I realized that I had not seen our lop-eared bunny, Marbles, eat and

*(Continued on page 14)*

Photos: Andrew Jacobs



Blackberry and Marbles.



Blackberry with Jillian.

## VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

### Volunteer Is Profiled in Staten Island Newsletter

Rabbit volunteer Cathy Zelonis was featured in a recent article in a newsletter published by the Jewish Community Center of Staten Island.

The newsletter, CLLD Gazette, offers news about members of the local community who take part in programs at the Center for Life-Long Development.

The article about Cathy described her work fostering rabbits and volunteering at the Brooklyn shelter.



Romeo.

Cathy's recent foster rabbits include Romeo, Lucia, Paul, Pia and Pinky and Wonder. Cathy has taken care of Romeo for about three years. Cathy's own rabbits include Jared, Maya Angelou, Bertram Checkers, Lily and Scooter (aka Tinkerbell).

The article mentioned that some pet rabbits in Staten Island are abandoned in area parks, including High Rock and Bloomingdale Parks and along Bedell Avenue.

## Burrito Bun 101

By Valerie Nagy

Back as a new bunny mom in 2008, I always loved petting my rabbits. It started with my Hunny Bunny. He was a brown lop and he loved snuggling. But his brother, Lucky, a spotted gray-and-white lop, was very nervous. He would shake if I groomed him or let him out for playtime. He chewed his nails.

One day I talked to a vet about Lucky's nervousness. I understood that rabbits disliked being picked up, and I wanted to find a way to help Lucky become more comfortable with me. I understood his fear of nail-clipping and cage cleaning, for example, and I wanted to make him feel safer in my home. I also knew that there would be certain occasions when I would have to pick him up briefly, for vet appointments, grooming or in the case of an emergency.

I began using a burrito technique with Lucky, wrapping him a towel and petting him on the floor. He enjoyed these burrito sessions, hanging out with me as I stroked and kissed him while he was burritoed.

Photo: Valerie Nagy



Lucky as burrito bun.

Eventually, after a little bit, he became my nap bun. I would take him out, burrito him and we would sit together and nap on the floor or couch. He would stay for hours with me and snuggle. Buns that I have had over for nail-trimming have proved that the burrito method generally works as a calming technique when a rabbit must be handled or picked up.

Start out by laying out a small bath towel (like a bunny towel or similar, folded in half). Go over and open your bun's exercise pen and pet the rabbit,

talking to him softly. Put the rabbit on the towel in the middle, and wrap him snugly with the towel, folding one side over the bunny. While you make the burrito, praise the bunny and give him lots of affection.

The burrito makes an anxious rabbit feel protected, and this helps to calm him down. When you are finished, unwrap the bunny and let him hop away. Your once-nervous bunny eventually will learn to love this interaction and look forward to it as much as you do.

## Two Boy Bunnies

*(Continued from page 13)*

drink for several hours. It grew alarming to my husband and me when night fell and he had not touched his favorite vegetable (dandelion greens). We called our vet, who told us to get Marbles to a rabbit-savvy veterinarian immediately. Our poor bunny boy had GI stasis, which is a condition that causes their digestive system to shut down and can lead to death if not treated in an urgent manner. The hospital gave him subcutaneous fluids and he recovered and regained his healthy appetite.

—They Are Easy to Litter-Box Train. We supplied the bunnies with a litter box full of hay, and they jumped right in.

—They Are Very Smart Animals with Tons of Personality. Both boys have shown us they are masterful escape artists. They tend to find ways to wiggle out of their play pen or leap up high when least expected. Our Havana rabbit, Blackberry, likes to run around as fast as he can and use us as a climbing apparatus. Our German Lop bunny, Marbles, is very social and enjoys hopping up to us eagerly, nudging our hands to be petted.

I never had thought much about nurturing an animal before. I grew up in a house full of animals and I mostly saw the work behind the care they needed. I didn't focus on the joy and enthusiasm that an animal expresses when he sees me walk into the living room after a

long day's work. But in this stage of my life, I can now say that it feels amazing to know that Marbles and Blackberry want to interact with me. I love to see them brimming with anticipation when they hear my voice. I need our playtime, too! Playing with them is a reminder at the end of the day that love and happiness are the moments to be appreciated the most.

Both our babies just turned a year old, and I cannot imagine how life could have given me a better opportunity to become a more giving, caring human being than to have welcomed them into my home. Happy birthday, Marbles and Blackberry! I dedicate this to you!

## We Are Looking for Loving Homes:

### These Rabbits Are in Foster Care



Wilbur.



Garbo.



Butters.

#### Wilbur

Wilbur is a handsome, young New Zealand White rabbit and we all know how wonderful they are! He is the sweetest bunny boy you will ever meet. He had a rough start in life, but that certainly does not keep him from looking for love everywhere he turns his beautiful eyelashes. Wilbur is great with his litter box, eating all types of hay, and he loves to play hide and seek. He is curious and playful, but his favorite activity is lying down next to a human and melting into your hands for pets like a big puppy. He will grind his teeth in pleasure as you kiss him between his ears. Simply put, he is amazing at being loved and is ready to show you! For more information, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Garbo

Garbo is a stunning medium-sized agouti female. True to her name, this bun is a classic beauty with an edge. She's a big city girl with smarts and wit, and yet she is as mellow and easygoing as they come. Garbo loves playing with her willow toys and tunnels, doing super-fast binkies, and exploring new places. She is quite independent and will follow her own whiskers wherever they take her, even if it means getting "stuck" on a soft blanket that just happened to fall on the floor. Once ready to take a break from her glamorous adventures, she will come when called and settle down next to her human for pets and/or a body massage. (She is Garbo, after all!) Garbo has the whitest of bellies, softest of necks and dreamiest eyes. Her litter-box skills are impeccable, and aside from radicchio there is not much this divine lady does not enjoy. She has been spayed and is in foster care. For more information, please contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Butters

Butters is a beautiful white and tan Dutch rabbit. She is an energetic young



Lex.

bun and needs plenty of room to show off her binky jumps and kicks. When she's not on the move, she enjoys being petted between her ears, purring in delight when given a good bunny massage and on-the-ground cuddle. Butters enjoys a lot of human attention and prefers not to be left alone. Unfortunately, she is losing her current home and is looking for a calm, loving home where she can take center stage. If interested in potentially adopting her, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Lex

Lex is a medium-sized male harlequin Rex, approximately 2 years of age. He has a medium to high energy level. He is a shy guy when meeting new people, but quickly warms up. This sweet, gentle boy is very inquisitive and likes to play with his toys. Because of his sweet demeanor, he would make a great companion rabbit. Lex is an excellent eater, loves his greens and hay and has exceptional litter-box skills. He is very well behaved and enjoys petting and hanging out with his foster mom in her kitchen during playtime. Lex has been neutered. If interested in adopting Lex, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

*(Continued on page 16)*

## Looking for Loving Homes

(Continued from page 15)

### Romeo

Romeo is a medium-sized black and white Dutch bunny who was found in the woods in January 2015 and brought home by a Good Samaritan. He is bursting with personality and will totally charm the person who adopts him. Romeo has been neutered and is currently in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Romeo, please contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Carmela

Carmela is a young medium-sized Rex rabbit. Her beautiful coat is mostly white with tan and black spots. She is a sweet rabbit who loves to have her soft nose petted. She also likes to explore her house, but her favorite thing is to relax with a nice soft blanket. Carmela is shy and would likely do best in an adult-only home. She would also likely make a good partner for another rabbit. She has been spayed and is in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Carmela, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Eeyore and Lola

Meet bonded pair Eeyore, a handsome gray dwarf mix, and Lola, a beautiful tan Harlequin rabbit! When Eeyore and Lola are not playfully chasing each other around and doing binkies, they are snuggled up like a big spoon/little spoon combo. They care for each other immensely, and are very sweet buns toward humans, too. Eeyore is the shyer of the two, while Lola is more curious and affectionate. They are both spayed



Romeo.



Carmela.



Eeyore and Lola.

and neutered. If interested in potentially adopting them, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

## These Rabbits Are Available At Manhattan Animal Care Center (NYC ACC)

(Check Petfinder for Updated Listings; Some Rabbits Have Found Homes!)

By Kirsten Ott

### Snowy

Snowy is a New Zealand White female with a very large body and an equally outsized personality! This girl gets very excited as soon as she detects your presence – she'll stare at you eagerly and shove her nose through the cage bars to get your attention. She's very mighty as well as frisky, and may lunge out of enthusiasm, so it can be a challenge to calm her down to the point where you can relax together. However, if you can finagle a way to start stroking her head, she'll succumb very quickly to petting and will tooth-purr contentedly. Snowy's ginormous ears suggest that she could be younger than her officially-posted age and may even grow bit bigger. In any case, she's a handful of rabbit and is probably best suited for an experienced bunny home.

### Nagi

Nagi is a medium-sized female Harlequin Rex. This girl has a very special coat – it has both the typical velvety Rex feel and very interesting coloring. The fur is mostly dark charcoal/brown, but there are splashes of lighter brown on her right side and left cheek. One ear is dark while the other is lighter, and she sports a signature patch of burnt orange fur on her forehead. There's nothing inconsistent about Nagi's personality, though – she's as sweet and demure as can be, and she loves gentle petting. She's sure to be a total love sponge in her forever home, and would probably make a good choice for a first-time bunny owner.

### Cookie Dough

Cookie Dough is a medium-sized female Dwarf mix. This yummy girl is super sweet and easygoing, and she absolutely

(Continued on page 17)

## Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Rubio, Orea, MJ, Russell, Jeremy, Lulu, Beans, Mandy and Clover, Zack, Colorado, Hopper, Annie, Cookies N Cream, Little Dipper, Judy Hops, Thor, Puff, Orlando, Rose and Puff Puff.



## Looking for Loving Homes

*(Continued from page 16)*

adores affection. She looks as though she may have gotten into the cookie dough herself, as she's a little bit chubby – but nothing a proper diet and plenty of exercise can't fix. She's a beauty, nonetheless: she has big brown eyes and a white coat covered with spots the color of...you guessed it...cookie dough! This cutie would make a good choice for a first-time bunny home.

### Bubble

Bubble is a small male Dwarf mix who's just sweet as can be. This little guy adores being petted – he lies or sits very still and soaks it all in. As of this writing, Bubble was brand new to the shelter, so he was a bit shell-shocked and a little nervous, and the petting probably gave him comfort. He may become more active and relaxed once a few more days have passed. In any case, he's definitely well socialized! Bubble is as cute as a button, too, with beautiful dark, almond-shaped eyes and an adorable little cottontail offsetting his brown coat.

### Mango

Mango is a medium-large, absolutely perfect-looking Silver Marten female. This gorgeous, dramatic-looking lady can be a bit wary and defensive when first approached. However, if you read her signals right and take your time, she will be receptive to affection – and before long she'll cuddle up like a baby, enjoying the love. She'll surely learn to trust and open up quickly in a good forever home. Though on the large size for her breed, Mango has classic Silver Marten looks, with a very dark coat and the usual creamy accents.

### Bettina

Bettina is a medium-sized brown and white Dutch mix – with stunning baby blue eyes! This gorgeous girl has a typically Dutch cozy and chill personality. She loves affection, and as far as she's concerned, a petting session can go on forever, thank you very much. Though beautiful, Bettina is also somewhat



Snowy.



Nagi.



Cookie Dough.



Bubble.



Mango.



Bettina.

comical looking. She has an oversized white nose triangle and a white bib that seems to be taking over her whole body – it's a bit as though she's being gradually covered by a slow-moving glacier. She also has ears that stick out to the sides, cute white socks on her back feet, and a bitty patch of white on her left ear that looks like an artist's mistake. Bettina, in all her sweet, gorgeous, comic glory, would make a good choice for a first-time bunny home.

CELEBRITIES IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Wilbur.



Pippi.



Garbo.



Sweetie with Thea Harting and Colleen AF Venable.



Lola.



Happy tails for Myka (now Bobe) and Gena (now Shoozee), who live with Andrew Gonzalez and Rachell Wong.

The rabbit in our masthead is Long Island volunteer Carlina Jarmel's Robbie Two, who is bonded to her other rabbit Robbie. Their names are a coincidence.

# THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS OCTOBER 2010

## Ben's Discovery: A Rabbit in Need

By Ben McCool

People never cease to amaze me.

I come from a family of ardent animal lovers, and as a child I thought that everybody shared a similar kinship with the creatures living with us. Over time I grew to understand that this was an unrealistic notion; after all, taking care of animals requires a degree of effort, and laziness is an unfortunate human condition.

A few weeks ago, I was walking back to my Manhattan apartment after a shopping trip, arms filled with groceries. Thing is, the bloody things were heavy! I decided to take a shortcut through a neighboring building's passageway – a route I almost *never* use – hoping to relieve my aching arms a few minutes sooner.

From here, my afternoon took a deeply upsetting turn.

After passing by the entrance to the aforementioned building, I noticed a small box in the doorway. Upon closer inspection, it appeared to have something inside it: something *alive*. That's when my heart sank; it was a filthy bunny rabbit trapped inside an even filthier cage, stewing in a concoction of its own urine, feces and God-only-knows what else. The cage – barely large enough for the rabbit to stand upright – was rusted and the attached water bottle also heavily oxidized, barely capable of releasing the murky fluid inside. At first I panicked, completely overwhelmed by the shocking discovery; how could somebody just *abandon* an animal like this? I rushed back to my own apartment, dropped off the groceries (my appetite having since expired) and got online to contact my



Photo: Jane O'Wyatt

Benita on the scale in Medical.



Photo: Kathryn Pizzo

The bottom of Benita's cage.

local animal rescue shelter. This is where I encountered my first problem: it was Labor Day, and the shelter was closed.

*Nightmare.* What should I do now?

I expanded my Internet search and came across a bunny rescue center located in a suburb of New York. Mercifully, a delightful woman named Mary Cotter answered my phone call, and I explained the situation in rather frantic fashion. A little too frantic, in fact: Mary had trouble understanding my nervy British accent! Once I'd managed to calm down a little, we managed to battle out a plan of action: Mary knew a rabbit volunteer who was at the uptown animal shelter, and with a huge stroke of luck was able to contact her. Despite the shelter being closed, I was told that the staff would take in the animal. *Thank God*, I thought. There was still hope for the poor little thing.

I managed to flag down a cab, and despite the driver's lack of enthusiasm toward having a crud-filled cage in the back of his car, I convinced him to take me to the shelter. The roads were relatively clear (any other Monday at 4 p.m. would've been a very different story in New York) and I arrived shortly afterward. I got the staff's attention, and though they were initially dubious about letting me in (after all, the place was technically closed), I mentioned that I'd been chatting to Mary Cotter, who had told Jane O'Wyatt (another caring rabbit-rescue volunteer) to expect me. First indications were far from good: the receptionist noted that the rabbit was covered in blood, and though I disagreed (it looked more like diarrhea to me; hardly a pleasant alternative, but surely a less serious one), I was in no position to argue. It was observed that the rabbit was in very poor condition, and would likely need to be destroyed. However, I was

*(Continued on page 2)*



Photo: Jane O'Wyatt

Ben McCool where he found Benita.

EXCERPTS FROM THUMP ARTICLES

## Benita's Road to Recovery

After Ben McCool delivered Benita to the East 110th Street shelter on Labor Day, her life changed. Jane O'Wyatt was at AC&C and kept a log of the rabbit's arrival. Later, Mary Cotter provided emailed updates, which are excerpted here.

### Jane O'Wyatt's Log Entries

Monday, Sept. 6, 4 p.m., AC&C

Announcement over PA system: rabbit volunteer, please come to reception. I go, but am told a new bunny in bad shape has already been taken to Medical. Rabbit's rescuer, Ben, sweet, worried young English guy in reception, says he found her abandoned outside, at Second Avenue and 27th Street. Mary Cotter told him to bring the bunny to the shelter. Ben asks if he can hang out till we can give him some news. Yes, I say, and rush into Medical, but no one is there. Where is the rabbit?

Then I spot a small cage (footprint approx. 14 x 10) near the big sink in the treatment room. White bars look as though they were sprayed reddish orange. My God, there's a small rabbit in that cage and she is soaked to the skin. Small tan-and-white Dutch mix looks and smells like she is drenched in rust-colored urine. I grab a clean bath towel, undo cage clips, take bunny out, wrap her in a towel and hold her close to my chest. Bottom of cage is awash with 1/2- to 3/4-inch of water and/or pee, with liquefied poops and a couple of leaves of Romaine lettuce.

Sitting on the exam table, the bunny tries to groom herself but can't raise front paws to her face. Extremely weak and emaciated, long nails, hock sores. Techs suggest bathing her, giving her sub-q fluids. I call Mary Cotter and ask. "Don't bathe the bunny, it could kill her. Don't give sub-q fluids; her oncotic pressure may be too low for her to absorb them. Offer her water, pellets mushed up with water. Do you have any kale? Try wet kale. If she's trying to groom herself, she wants to live."

A tech weighs the bunny (2 lbs. – she should weigh twice that) and he takes a picture for the record. Then I am free to take her upstairs to start with Mary's suggestions.

My helper Kitty Pizzo gasps, looks horrified when I bring the bunny into rabbit room. We set up cage: litter box lined with kraft paper, topped with soft Organic Hay Co. 2nd-cut, trimmed AC&C cardboard carrier with clean towel as a hideaway, water bottle with sipper tube. Rabbit sits in litter box in corner of cage with her back to us. She is wet and trembling, so I ask Kitty to find and nuke two SnuggleSafe heating



Sept. 6, 2010. Benita taking a rest break while eating pellets.

pads, which go in the litter box under the hay and in the hideaway under a layer of towel. We add water to pellets and try to crush/mush them in a hurry. Offer mushed-up pellets and bunny eats some. We offer small pieces of wet kale. Bunny grabs and munches on the kale! Ditto cilantro, parsley. We watch, enthralled, as a strand of hay disappears into her mouth. We offer dry pellets and bunny has some, chewing slowly, sometimes stopping mid-mouthful to

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Benita *(Continued from page 1)*

assured that a more comprehensive checkup would be conducted before resorting to this (horrible-sounding) outcome.

They took the bunny away, leaving me feeling apprehensive and still very upset. But at least she was in good hands and out of her sordid cage. A short time later, I received a phone call from Mary informing me that the bunny – now named Benita – was eating and drinking. A very encouraging sign!

Slowly but surely, Benita is recovering. I've received regular updates on her condition, including photos, and continue to hope that she heals up fully. How somebody could neglect a poor defenseless animal to this extent is beyond me; as I said earlier, people never cease to amaze me. But not *always* in a negative way – Mary and Jane's dedication to Benita's welfare is incredibly touching, and the fact that she now has a fighting chance of pulling through is very inspiring.

Ever since that fateful day, I've been taking the shortcut on a frequent basis, keeping my eye out for any more abandoned animals! Thankfully, I've found none yet. Here's hoping it stays that way...

---

*Ben McCool is a British writer living in New York City. A huge animal lover, he is incredibly grateful to those who care for neglected creatures, bunnies or otherwise!*

**Log** *(Continued from page 2)*

rest, then starting to chew again. She staggers around cage, very weak, looking as though her feet hurt, stumbles into a shallow water bowl. Wanting her to get dry, we decide to remove the water bowl and let her get water from greens. Kitty runs downstairs to get cage card from Medical (they've named the bunny Angel) and to take pix of cage she came in. Kitty says the cage has a water bottle fastened to it, so the bunny knows how to use it.

Bunny is so weak and uncoordinated, it's a struggle for her to get in and out of smallest litter box, so Mary (whom I continue to call for advice), says get rid of litter box, spread hay on cage floor. That done, I remember Ben waiting anxiously in reception. Not wanting to leave the bunny, I ask Kitty to go downstairs and give him an update. But Ben is gone, asked to leave by skeleton staff (it's Labor Day), so again I call Mary, who has his cell number, and ask her to call him. She says she will, though I know she's swamped in deadlines. Mary says she will come tomorrow to see the bunny, whom she has named Benita, after the man who saved her life.

About 7 p.m., Cindy Stutts arrives and examines the bun. Puts HEALx Soother Plus on hock sores. Asks what bun has eaten and says we have apple-banana Critical Care in fridge. I mix up some CC, which Cindy offers in a plastic spoon to the bunny, who is now in the front of the cage, bracing herself against wire walls in the right corner. She is mildly interested in CC but has eaten enough for now. Cindy says you have to be very careful when feeding an emaciated rabbit.

After Kitty and Cindy leave, I reheat both SnuggleSafes and put them back in cage (it's 8 p.m. and maybe they will stay warm through the night, though manufacturer guarantees only eight hours of heat), set up a salad bowl with wet greens and add dry pellets to bowl on top of which Cindy had put the



Sept. 7, 2010. Benita eating greens, ears up.

uneaten CC. I notice a small cluster of poops where the bunny had been sitting, another poop over near towel. Soft but formed poops: good news. I pick them up with a paper towel and throw in garbage. Drape pieces of kraft paper over top and side of cage, turn out rabbit-room lights, go home.

Sept. 7, 2010. Mary Cotter examines Benita in AC&C's rabbit room.

**Tuesday, Sept. 7, 7:30 a.m., AC&C**

Lights are on in rabbit room when I arrive. Benita is sitting alertly on the SnuggleSafe in her hideaway, surrounded by poops! More poops near the almost-empty food bowls! For the first time since she arrived, her ears (which looked like wings lying over her back yesterday) are up and they are huge. The other rabbits in this room, Geppetto & Jiminy, Rochelle, Corrine, Chavez, Nikita, Louis, Isis, Tom, Nugget and Chocolate, surely helped Benita get through the night, with their bunny smells and rustling and chewing pellets and veggies and tearing paper and moving stuff around in their cages.

I've brought copies of amNew York – it's ubiquitous, softer than kraft paper and has no staples – and I replace the paper and hay in Benita's cage. She is hungry, so she gets more greens and some Critical Care. After eating, she grooms her face, which she can now

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Mary Cotter's Email Updates, Excerpted

To AC&C rabbit volunteers  
Wednesday, Sept. 8

Hi all,

Benita seems to have her own fan club, and Jane has asked for updates, so here goes:

I removed her from AC&C because she needs some care immediately that is just about impossible to give her at AC&C, including (but not limited to) a wet-cleaning and partial (probably pretty extensive) shave-down to get off the "mystery substance" that won't come off with cleaning. Her hocks are also in very bad shape, but right now that's probably the least of her problems.

Last night, when I got her home, she settled in right away, seemed comfortable and relaxed, and had a very good night.

This morning, however, I came out to discover that all the good, fresh food she has eaten for the past couple of days at AC&C seemed to have exited her all at once. There were the usual normal poops, but her cage was also FULL of stinky mushed cecals, and she had urinated copiously, all over the place.

I gave her a half-body bath this morning in a white tub, and the water immediately turned dark brown – not from poop or urine, but from the mystery substance that is smeared and dried over her fur. Whatever it is, it has a quite strong

chemical odor, and a very greasy feel to it when you rub it between your fingers while trying to wash it out of her fur. There are multiple places on her body where the very loose skin folds (from her emaciated state – all the sub-q fat is gone) is caught up into dried balls of this gunk, and this has got to be quite uncomfortable or painful for her.

Underneath her chin there is a sizable, very hard lump – not an abscess, but a hunk of that mystery substance with all the under-chin hair caught up in it – probably extremely irritating to her, since she cannot stretch her neck out to chin anything until this lump is removed.

I had thought I'd be able to cut it out, but this will probably not be possible because of the amount of skin that's caught in this hair-glue-rock.

Same thing under her right arm, and on her underside: lots of hard lumps of hair dried into the gluey stuff that's smeared all over her body.

Anyway, I dried her off as thoroughly as possible with both turkish towels and paper towels, and she is now on a heating pad, working hard on continuing to groom herself.

I am going to try to get some help today in getting the rest of the stuff off (hopefully with an electric clipper), as it is just not possible to do this without skilled help to restrain her safely, and the stench

of her in my otherwise-odor-free apt. is overwhelming (to me, at least). The clothes I wore to clean her absolutely REEK.

Ordinarily, a rabbit in this shape (covered with a dried, mystery substance) would be anesthetized for the kind of cleanup that is needed, but this bunny is a poor candidate for anesthesia because of her extremely debilitated state, so we will have to do the best we can with her awake.

Thanks so much to all who have participated so far in Bennie-Angel's care. She could not have made it without all the wonderful help she got from the AC&C bunny volunteers for the two days she was there.

Once she is cleaner and more stable, she will need a temporary foster home (probably for 2-3 months), to give her a chance to gain weight slowly but safely. When she reaches a normal body weight, she can be spayed and put up for adoption.

Her will to live, in the face of what she has been through, is nothing short of astounding, and whoever becomes her forever parent is going to have an extraordinary little spirit on his/her hands!

To AC&C rabbit volunteers  
Saturday, Sept. 11

Benita has spiked what is commonly known as a "fever of unknown origin": 105.6.

I spoke with two of our vets, and they advised me to put her on injectable penicillin and an NSAID – preferably Banamine – but I just discovered that my Banamine is long-expired, so, after another veterinary consult, started her on Metacam.

She also has ice water to drink, and an ice pack to lie against.

She is still eating and pooping up a storm.

Please send her healing vibes and keep her in your thoughts and prayers. There's no question that she has the will to live; we are just hoping that her weakened, emaciated body won't give out on her in spite of her fierce will.

*(Continued on page 5)*

### Log *(Continued from page 3)*

reach with her paws. She's not quite dry yet and she feels a little cold, so I re-nuke her SnuggleSafes and replace them in her cage under fresh hay and a clean towel. Return home, will go back this afternoon for rabbit-room shift.

Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2 p.m., AC&C

Mary comes to shelter to see Benita. She doesn't think all the stuff in the bunny's coat is urine – says the smell isn't right, it's some chemical – familiar odor that she can't place. Mary invites me to sniff

and I agree with her, but when Benita came in, before she dried out, the top note was urine, the other smell submerged. Mary asks for a comb and grooms Benita's head while the bunny holds out her ears cooperatively. After evaluating Benita, Mary worries that the rabbit will need more intensive care than possible at AC&C, so she decides to take Benita home to foster. We set up a carrier with paper, hay and fresh greens. Ready to leave, Mary puts Benita in the carrier, where the bunny starts nibbling greens.

**Updates** *(Continued from page 4)*

Subsequent emails were addressed to Jane O'Wyatt

Monday, Sept. 13

Still hanging in – fever up and down – eating and pooping well, and letting me know – very clearly – which foods she wants, and when.

She is easy to medicate – licks the Metacam right out of the syringe, and sits perfectly still for her penicillin injections.

I'm working on cutting off those hard, sharp, dried spikes that are all over her body, one at a time (this is a must, as she cannot really get comfortable lying on them, and has made no headway trying to groom them off herself), and even shaving some areas with the surgical blade (#40) on my electric clippers. It is painstaking work that requires a lot of patience on both our parts.

It is truly astounding what she will let me do, with no restraint, just sitting on a thick towel on my lap. Folds of her thin, delicate, emaciated skin are caught up tightly in many of the dried lumps of fur (so much so that, unless you look closely, they look sort of like cutaneous tumors), so it is VERY tricky and VERY time-consuming to free her skin from these dense mini-glue-balls.

She gives a quick startle and jerks away when I am too close, or nicking her skin, but she settles right back down on my lap, unrestrained, ready to tolerate more. I am able to use one hand to hold up the spikes, and the other hand to work them loose with tiny scissors or with my electric clippers – leaving no hands to restrain her. She permits me to use those loud electric clippers even right next to her enormous angel-ears. Some very sensitive areas (especially under her chin) she does not want me to touch, but we “negotiate,” and sometimes she relents a little, and I am able to make some progress. And when she has had enough, she lets me know, and I put her back in her cage so we can both take a break.



Sept. 19, 2010. Scabs on hocks

And so it goes. We are both taking it one day at a time, and I'm still keeping my fingers crossed for her.

Tuesday, Sept. 14

She DEMANDS greens and is not having any loose cecals, so her body seems able to handle them. Green leaf lettuce she attacks with gusto – as if it will disappear if she doesn't scarf it down fast enough.

Thursday, Sept. 16

Her spirits are great and she is still eating like a little piggy.

Today she weighed 3 lbs.

Friday, Sept. 17

So far I have kept her caged (she's in a Leith condo – one level) in order to give her time to rest and to keep her from burning off the desperately needed calories that her body is using to restore her health.

But her temp. this morning was normal (though it doesn't always stay this way) and now she seems strong enough for some exercise, so she is having her first session today, in my carpeted exercise hallway.

At first, she didn't know what to make of it, and kept standing (I should say, wobbling) on her tiptoes looking around. But then she started to move around in the hallway and to get her “land legs.” With her skinny little legs, her half-shaved back and her scissors-snipped paws and chest, she looks pathetic – like a half-plucked chicken.

She rocks back on her heels to keep her weight off those sore spots in the middle of her hocks.

Monday, Sept. 20

No more scab pads (I applied Soother Plus around this time yesterday), and it looks like bone is exposed, though without a closer look I cannot tell.

Yesterday when I applied the Soother Plus, she would barely let me touch those spots – just got a glob of Soother Plus on the scabs and she struggled to jump free, before I could even rub it in. Now, I'm really glad I didn't apply any pressure to that area.

Monday, Sept. 20

Vets say the spots are too superficial to be bone, so we are continuing with the Soother Plus, but with bandages as well.

Benita is a BEAR to handle when she decides she'll have none of it, and she made it a real challenge for Jennifer and me to get bandages on her feet tonight (she now has more than enough strength to struggle when she wants to!). It remains to be seen if I'll be able to do this without someone to restrain her (the bandages must be changed daily).

Friday, Oct. 1

Benita now weighs 3.7 lbs.

Saturday, Oct. 2

The body shot shows a) how/where her hair is growing in – FINALLY! and b) how she is still rocking back on her heels even on soft surfaces – her hocks are healing nicely but still not healed enough

*(Continued on page 6)*



Oct. 2, 2010. Clipped fur is growing in.

**Updates** *(Continued from page 5)*

to bear body weight – we are guessing another couple of weeks on Soother Plus will do the job.

*(To be continued in Thump, Dec. 2010.)*

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab wishes to thank Drs. Jennifer Saver and Gil Stanzione for generously providing assistance and advice during Benita's recovery. Our rabbit-savvy vets have provided invaluable emergency help for many of our rabbits. Unfortunately, Benita's case is not a particularly unusual one. Often AC&C rabbit volunteers are confronted with medical emergencies and receive assistance from the shelter medical staff, from knowledgeable vets, and from other volunteers and HRS educators. Our success stories must be credited to this large circle of people who have helped us over the years.



Oct. 11, 2010. Mary brings Benita to visit AC&C to show the progress of her recovery.



**THUMP**

NYC Metro Rabbit News, December 2010

Photo: © Mary Collier 2010



**Benita's Ready to Ring in the New Year**

After her rescue on Labor Day, Benita's recovery is complete.

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Benita with admirers at annual Rabbit Rescue & Rehab conference at the end of October.

*(Continued on page 7)*



(Continued from page 6)

**RESCUE & REHAB**

**Benita Bounces Back**

By Susan Lillo

Benita is making an amazing recovery, both physically and mentally. Benita's story, told in the October Thump, began on Labor Day, when writer Ben McCool found her in an abandoned cage outside his apartment building. Covered with urine and an unidentified brownish chemical, she was suffering from severe malnutrition and was barely able to stand. Ben brought her to the AC&C shelter, where her intake photos showed a scrawny, wet, terrified bunny.

Benita, already improving in rehab, made a guest appearance at the Rabbit Rescue & Rehab conference in October, where a sign on her puppy pen said, "Yes, I am the famous BENITA."

Since then, Benita has grown into a feisty, beautiful creature with spectacular ears and soft, shiny, golden fur. She has a strong personality in an equally strong body. She eats with great gusto, and moves constantly, leaping to the front of her cage and standing on tiptoes to greet any passerby. She is looking forward to the New Year, which, according to the Chinese calendar, is the year of the rabbit – HER year!



Photo: Mary Ann Moier



Photo: © Mary Cotter 2010



Photo: © Mary Cotter 2010



Photo: © Mary Cotter 2010

Photo: © Mary Cotter 2010



Left, Benita at an adoption/education event in Westchester in early October. Top left, Benita costarring with Mary Cotter in a temperature-taking demonstration at the 2010 annual Rabbit Rescue & Rehab conference. Top right, hopping up stairs. Middle, humbling Mary Cotter's dog, Murphy. Bottom, sniffing Santa Claus.

(Continued on page 8)

*(Continued from page 7)***THUMP**

NYC Metro Rabbit News, August 2011

**RESCUE AND REHAB****Eight Months Later: Benita Finds a Home**

Photo: Mary Ann Maier



Benita with Christina Rocco.

**By Nancy Schreiber**

Readers have asked us about Benita, the rabbit who was rescued last Labor Day by Ben McCool. Ben discovered Benita in a filthy cage near his Manhattan apartment. She was covered with urine and an unidentified brownish chemical, and she was suffering from severe malnutrition. Ben took Benita to the Animal Care & Control shelter on East 110th Street, where volunteer Jane O'Wyatt was caring for the rabbits at the time. Jane alerted Mary Cotter, chapter manager for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, and Cindy Stutts, manager of the NYC/AC&C Rabbit Program. Benita received initial medical care at the shelter, and then was taken home by Mary Cotter for further treatment. Benita recovered and blossomed into a feisty, healthy bunny.

She was featured in the October and December issues of *Thump*.

The Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group looked for a home for Benita, and she was adopted on May 7 by Christina Rocco, who had recently lost her bun of many years. It was love at first sight for both Benita and Christina.

Benita is an "only child," so she gets lots of love and attention in her new home. She finally has the home that she deserves.

*Benita's Adopter Writes:***She Has 'Warrior Spirit That Finds Mischief'****By Christina Rocco**

Benita is doing very well. She is an extremely happy bunny and has been kept very busy training me. She is keeping me on my toes!

She has an appetite that is amazingly and unbelievably huge for such a small creature. She has quickly learned where her treats are kept and begs shamelessly. Benita wakes me up bright and early for her breakfast. It used to be 4 a.m., but I pushed it to 7 a.m.

Benita is also enjoying her freedom, and she has a lot of it! Although she had a generous-sized pen she did not feel it

was appropriate for her. Benita is an impressive jumper and utilized that talent to continually break free. She was very insistent, and being that the apartment is bunny-proofed, she now spends her time in the kitchen and foyer when I am not home. Benita has taken over the apartment!

She is well stimulated with toys. Her favorite toys are baskets, which she can demolish. When I clean up the pieces she leaves behind, she always supervises me and makes sure everything is put back to her liking. She also takes inventory. Benita is very protective of her toys.

Amazing is the best word to describe her. She is sweet, loving, playful and smart. She has a strong personality with a warrior spirit that finds mischief. I have been spending a lot of time bonding with her and building trust. Given her history, she was difficult to handle at the beginning. However, she has come a long way. She is absolutely a joy to have hopping around the house.

**THUMP**

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS  
56 West Pondfield Road #5C  
Bronxville, NY 10708  
[www.rabbitcare.org](http://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 general public on rabbit care through publications, telephone consultations, home

visits and public presentations. This newsletter is published by RRR/NYC HRS, which is solely responsible for its content. Letters, photographs and other submissions to the newsletter become the property of the NYC Chapter and cannot be returned. We retain the right to edit submissions for publication.

## Letters From Adopters

### Baloo

*Priscilla Duff adopted Baloo in late April, and she sent us this great update.*

I'm a first-time bunny owner and Jeanine Callace suggested that I visit with some of the bunnies at the Union Square Petco. Jeanine mentioned that a new bunny was arriving that week – Baloo.

Once I sat down with Baloo, I fell in love with him. He came up to me immediately, flopped, and then let me pet him almost the whole time I was there.

It has now been two weeks since I brought Baloo home, and I'm so happy! So is he!

He loves to lounge all the time, does lots of flops, and performs a binky every day! He loves his hay and his stacking cups!

He is the absolute sweetest and I'm so glad I got him!

Priscilla

Photos: Priscilla Duff



Baloo in cardboard tunnel.



Baloo hiding.



Baloo stretched out.

## 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.

### Manhattan:

**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**  
The Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine  
568 Columbus Ave., New York, NY 10024  
(212) 501-8750

### 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

### Long Island:

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**  
**Laura George, DVM**  
Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital  
2056 Jericho Turnpike  
New Hyde Park, NY 11040  
(516) 877-7080

**Heidi Hofer, 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

**Shachar Malka, DVM**  
Long Island Bird & Exotics  
Veterinary Clinic  
333 Great Neck Road  
Great Neck, NY 11021  
(516) 482-1101

## Licensed HRS Educators

### NYC/Westchester:

**M.C. Basile**, Chapter Manager, NYC House Rabbit Society, bunnytorts@gmail.com

**Mary Cotter**, Founder, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, Adviser to Thump, mec@cloud9.net, (914) 337-6146

**Jeanine Callace**, Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net  
**Alex Mcle**, alexlmcie@gmail.com

**Marcie Frishberg**

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

**Cindy Stutts**, bygolyoly@yahoo.com, (646) 319-4766

**Monica Shepherd, DVM**

### Long Island:

**Nancy Schreiber**, President, Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, nschreibmd@gmail.com, (516) 510-3637, LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

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

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

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**

**Laura George, DVM**

## THUMP JUNE 2018

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS  
[www.rabbitcare.org](http://www.rabbitcare.org)

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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 by sending contributions to: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab/NYC Metro Rabbit, 333 Mamaroneck Ave, #363, White Plains, NY 10605 or <http://rabbitcare.org/donations.htm>.

To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).

## Adoptable Rabbits

There are lots of adoptable rabbits available in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Westchester and Long Island.

To adopt a rabbit in **New York City** or **Westchester**, contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com). On **Long Island**, contact Nancy Schreiber at [nschreibmd@gmail.com](mailto:nschreibmd@gmail.com) or at 516-510-3637 ([www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org)).

**If interested in volunteering or fostering for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).**

Adoptable Rabbit Rescue & Rehab rabbits are at Petco's Union Square location. Rabbit volunteers are present at these stores on Saturday and Sunday afternoons to answer questions.

You can also visit Manhattan Animal Care Center at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues, and the Brooklyn Animal Care Center at 2336 Linden Boulevard.

Rabbits for adoption in Manhattan and Brooklyn can be found by going to:

<http://www.nycacc.org/> and doing an adoption search (for ACC inquiries about adoption/bunny dates, email [adopt@nycacc.org](mailto:adopt@nycacc.org)). 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 at Union Square. Please contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.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 [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

For basic information about rabbits as pets, go to [www.rabbitcare.org](http://www.rabbitcare.org), [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org) and the House Rabbit Society main site, [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).