

THE HUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS FEBRUARY 2012

Rabbit Romance: Signs That Your Bunny Is in Love

By Kerstin Aumann

Many times, I have argued the case for adopting partner bunnies. Rabbits living in bonded pairs (or trios, quartets, etc.) enjoy many advantages over singletons. Perhaps the most important benefit rabbits gain from relationships with their own kind is the 24/7 company they naturally crave as social animals. How do you know your rabbit is enjoying the company of his or her mate? Below are some ways rabbits express their love for each other.

Bunny kisses. In the world of rabbit romance, “kisses” are perhaps the pinnacle of bunny love, a sign of deep intimacy and affection. Kissing involves grooming a loved one and giving gentle bunny “kisses” by tongue. This kind of physical affection requires true trust between the partners. You wouldn’t let someone kiss you without trusting that he or she won’t bite you! That said, some bunnies do give their beloved a gentle love bite every now and then, and that’s okay if the partner doesn’t mind. Not all rabbits reciprocate kisses, and that’s okay, too. True love means accepting your partner just the way he or she is, and some are just less inclined to express their love in

(Continued on page 2)

Photo: Alister Drummond



February Is Adopt a Rescued Rabbit Month.

Isabella, left, was adopted recently as a partner for Arnie. See Letters, pages 11-14.

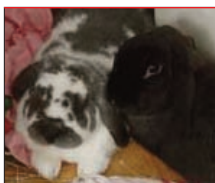
My Challenge: Making Peace With a Biter

By Jane O’Wyatt

Eli, a Columbia archaeology student, comes up for air during finals week and suddenly realizes that he hasn’t made arrangements for the care of his rabbit during Christmas break. He calls and asks if I can take care of Libby from Dec. 23 to Jan. 4. I am booked through Dec. 26, but can start the following day. “Okay,” Eli says, “I can get friends to take care of her till then. Can you pick up a set of keys from my roommate before he leaves town?”

Libby shares a room with Eli in a fifth-floor walk-up near the Columbia campus. The place is a converted attic, measuring no more than 300 square feet. When I arrive to pick up the keys, Robbie the roommate opens Eli’s bedroom door and a buxom, shaggy-coated Californian scrambles out from under a king-size bed to see who’s there. I am thrilled to see Libby, whom I last saw at Animal Care & Control over three years previously.

(Continued on page 4)



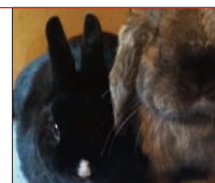
My Two Very Special Valentines, Ollie and Maya

Page 3



An Adoption Event Was Team Effort In December

Page 6



These Bunnies Love Music, Especially If It’s Classical

Page 8

Our masthead bunnies are Betty and Wilma, rescued from Alley Pond Park in Bayside, Queens, by Jean and Skip Ponto. The rabbits are bonded, spayed and available for adoption.

Rabbit Romance

(Continued from page 1)

kisses than others. In a healthy romantic relationship, both partners give and receive as many kisses as they need.

Snuggling. Rabbits are such cuddly creatures with their soft fur and cute looks. Who wouldn't want to snuggle with a bun? Some rabbits enjoy being cuddled by a gentle human, but many don't. What does another rabbit have that you don't have? Soft, warm fur! And time – rabbits snuggle for hours, sometimes all day long. Good thing neither partner has to leave for work or school. For a rabbit, nothing beats a good long snuggle with a beloved rabbit mate or friend, side-by-side or one on top of the other. There can be full-body contact, or just touching between smaller parts, like noses or butts. Either way, both partners are relaxed in each other's presence.

Flopping. Rabbits must feel completely safe and secure in order to relax to the point where they just flop on their side. Sometimes this behavior is described as the “dead bunny flop” because the rabbit lies completely still on his or her side, eyes closed – and completely vulnerable. If your rabbit feels safe enough in her relationship, she will happily flop, trusting her partner to protect her.

Sharing meals. Like humans, rabbits often enjoy romantic meals together. Eating from the same bowl or pile of salad also involves a great deal of trust. But the trust level need not be quite as high as in kissing, snuggling or flopping, because both rabbits are alert and in a position to either run away or defend against a surprise attack. Sharing meals together often begins early in a bunny romance and helps build trust over time. Stealing food from each other is often part of a romantic dinner, if the buns trust each other enough not to get upset about it.

Like humans, each rabbit has his or her own unique personality, and rabbit romance is shaped by the individuals involved in it. Like people, rabbits have

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Jerry grooms his partner Bella.



Delilah and Samson share pellets.

many ways of expressing love, trust and affection. The language of love can be complex, no matter the species. In the end, most rabbits think “love is grand!”

– so, if your rabbit is still single, speak with a member of the rabbit rescue team about bonding your rabbit with a partner, and about arranging some dates.

My Two Special Valentines

By Katelyn Belyus

Why do we love our rabbits so unconditionally?

On a nasty night in late January, I found myself nursing my little Ollie who had a bad case of GI stasis. And I thought about my deep emotional attachment to him.

I never grew up with animals. I was a suburban teenager in the '90s living with a mom who never had an animal and a dad who worshiped my mom. Pets were out of the question. "You have two brothers," my dad would say. "What can a dog or cat do that they can't do?"

But I was never drawn to dogs or cats, anyway. I became determined to have a bunny. I adopted my first rabbit when I was 19. I was a sophomore in college, and fell in love with Frankie, named for his bright blue eyes. He was temperamental and a little skittish, but he was also friendly and loved going out. In nice weather, he was outside more often than in. He was funny and fuzzy, and he zipped around the apartment cage-free. He was everything I wanted.

Frankie went everywhere with me. I'd take him to the quad, spread out a blanket, and carelessly let him wander. He'd hop from blanket to blanket but always returned. He came to student protests and to potlucks. I even brought him to a pumpkin patch once.

Anyone who says a rabbit lacks smarts is mistaken.

You've seen it in your own rabbit: the joy he shows when you return from a trip, the recognition of meal times, the games of hide-and-seek.

I began volunteering with House Rabbit Society even before I adopted Maya and Ollie, my two current rabbits. I loved rabbits so much – they seemed personable, loving and gentle. I am afraid of dogs and not interested in cats, but bunnies

were perfect for me. When a person asks why I love my rabbit, I answer, "It's why you love your dog or your cat."

But a cat or dog, they insist, can love you back: "What can a bunny do?"

My bunnies love me back.

As someone who was never "an animal person," I didn't understand that animals not only bond to each other, but to people, too. And yes, people bond to animals.

I love Maya and Ollie because they are pure in spirit. They do not wish ill will on anybody. They just are and they are naturally. That is how they were born. My bunnies bring me comfort. They give me the chance to care for two animals who rely solely on me, and they make me laugh.

I care for my rabbits because they care for me. It is that simple.

We may not be fluent in each other's languages, but we communicate. I know when Maya wants greens because she hops to the space where the greens dish

goes. I know that Ollie will let out a sigh when he is utterly relaxed. And they both know that when I have a bad day and lie on the floor, that I'm in need of bunny kisses.

They care for me, and I do the same. It's the reason why I was up at 2 in the morning, heating towels in the dryer to raise Ollie's temperature from 91 degrees to 101. It's the reason I don't mind taking temperatures rectally, that drops of medicine on my shirt don't bother me, that I actually encourage Ollie to "go poops on Mommy's bed" when he has a bout of stasis. Because when you love something – someone – and adopt him into your life and your home, be it a person, dog, cat, or a loving rabbit – you make a commitment to care for him as you would your own family.

I love my bunnies because they love me. And this is something I know instinctively and undeniably, whenever I am nursing one of them back to health.

Ollie being nursed back to health.



Photo: Katelyn Belyus

Making Peace with a Biter

(Continued from page 1)

Then known as Louise, she was a lanky, almost completely white rabbit who had yet to grow into her ears. She had arrived at the shelter with a silver marten mix named Bonnie. The two females shared a cage harmoniously until Bonnie became ill and was rushed to Dr. Jennifer Saver's office, where she died of GI stasis. I remember Louise's distress and bewilderment at losing her cage mate and my relief when she left the shelter with her adoring adopter Eli.

After a cursory albino glance in my direction, Libby hops into her litter box and starts digging. Interpreting her lack of interest in me as a sign of comfort and security, I note that Eli's bedroom, which is in effect Libby's cage, is about nine feet square and is crammed with the bed and other furniture. On the floor are a litter box, water bowl, rabbit toys and a plastic colander; in a closet is a 50-pound box of Oxbow Western Timothy hay.

Five days later, on my first unescorted visit, I open Libby's door and she growls and attacks my left foot, sinking perfect incisors into my ankle and scratching at my shoe with her long-nailed feet. What has become of Louise, the nice rabbit I thought I knew at AC&C? She has become a bunny analog of Cerberus, classical mythology's ferocious guardian of the underworld! I slowly lift my foot up a few inches and she lets go. Then I freeze and she sniffs my shoes and my pants, neither of which smell like other rabbits. I survey the room and see that the litter box is all poop and pee, without a stem of clean hay. A water bowl, which was brimming last time, is almost empty. No food in sight. Whoever took care of Libby over the Christmas weekend didn't do a very good job. Poor Libby. No wonder she's agitated!

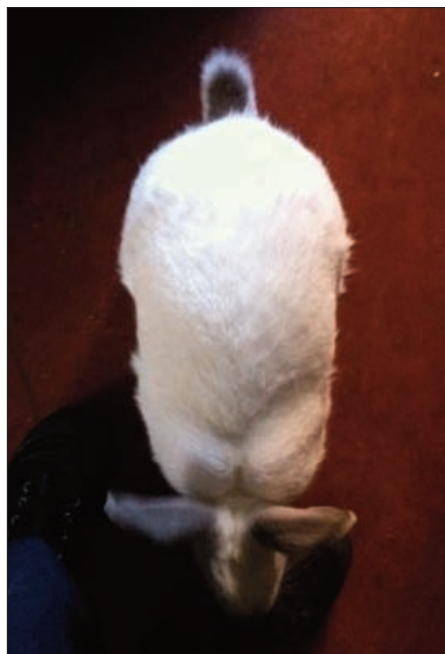
I speak softly to her, saying what a good, beautiful bunny she is, and I ever-so-slowly shuffle away from the bedroom door. I turn toward the tiny kitchen and she follows, chinning, nudging and

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Above, Libby, then known as Louise, with her bunny partner Bonnie at AC&C, October 2008.

Left, Libby sniffs my shoes, December 2011.



nipping. Eli said that there would be cash for extra greens on the kitchen counter, and I spot a curling ten-dollar bill. The fridge contains carrots but no greens. However, I've brought romaine, parsley, cilantro and kale. Now Libby, who smells the greens, is standing on her hind feet, apparently undecided whether to bite my knee or to wait for the long-stemmed sprig of parsley with which I hope to bribe her. For the moment more hungry than hostile, she yanks the parsley from my grasp.

While Libby's mind and mouth are occupied with eating, I wonder how to keep from getting bitten again. She and I have to manage seven more once-a-day visits for care and feeding until Eli returns. (Also, she is shedding and could use a nail trim.) Her most vigorously defended territory is clearly Eli's bedroom, which I have to enter in order to refill the water bowl, clean the litter box and serve salads. At the shelter I've learned rabbit rescuers' nonreactive strategies for dealing with fearful cage-guarders who growl, snort, lunge, box and bite intrusive hands. It's one thing, though, to put your hand in a rabbit's cage, and another to put your whole unwelcome body in her cage. Furthermore, in Libby's home turf, where the bed takes up most of the footprint, there's little room for evasive action.

Having eaten the parsley, Libby stands up on her hind feet again and I reach down and scratch her pale gray forehead and rub her cheeks. Receptive rather than retaliatory, she lowers her head and then the rest of her body down to the linoleum kitchen floor. She grinds her teeth in a loud bunny purr. I kneel down

(Continued on page 5)

Making Peace with a Biter

(Continued from page 4)

to massage around her ears and shoulders. Her muscles relax. Have I tamed this lonely, territorial rabbit? She nips when I stop petting her.

Eventually, Libby allows the intruder that I am to do pet-sitting chores in her bedroom/cage. She is hungry for attention and food, food and attention – on her terms, which fluctuate. When I reach down to pick up the colander in which Eli gives her greens, she charges but is thwarted by my using it as a shield. Extravagant compliments, quiet body language and caresses yield mixed results. Undeterred by my clothing, she tugs, chins, nips and bites. Careful to avoid bites on my hands, I endure intermittent toothy attacks on legs and arms. Finally, as she concentrates on wolfing down a big salad, I slip out and close the door.

A couple of hours later I stop at the office of Cindy Stutts of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab. We discuss some shelter-rabbit business, and then I mention Libby and pull up a sleeve to reveal a bite wound that is beginning to scab over. Cindy looks at my wrist and says, “Yes, Libby is a handful. She’s not a bad bunny; she’s just very bossy. She’s very smart and she demands a lot of attention.” It turns out that Cindy has also taken care of Libby; Libby bit and scratched her, too.

In early January, after I’ve returned Eli’s keys, I stand in the doorway of his room and greet Libby, who is lounging on the bed. Within seconds she is attacking my left foot the same way she did on Dec. 27. Again, I lift my foot up a few inches; again, she lets go. Mouth open, teeth bared, she lunges again. “Libby, stop it,” Eli says, and she stops. Then she hops back up on the bed and pancakes down for him pet to her, allowing him to pluck out masses of creamy-white loose fur.

Taken aback by Libby’s behavior, Eli apologizes. He assures me that she has only attacked him on one occasion, for a

minor infidelity: he came home reeking of a Holland lop female. Well, Libby nips in a conversational way, Eli admits, when she wants something. He asks if I suppose she remembers me from her time behind bars at the shelter. Possibly, since she spent a month at AC&C – but I have no recollection of conflict with her. In my opinion, Libby simply associates my presence with the absence of her “husbun” Eli. Since I have been her nonresident, once-daily caretaker for a little over a week, we haven’t yet achieved a bilaterally peaceful relationship.

“Would you be willing to take care of Libby again?” Eli wants to know, and Cindy has suggested that I board her in a big pen at my place next time. This should help to assuage her loneliness and neutralize her territoriality. “Plus, you can be sure Libby won’t take any nonsense from your cats!” Cindy says. Without mentioning the boarding scenario, I tell Eli, “Yes.”

Since we are discussing the future, I mention bunny speed-dating, which would allow Libby to choose another rabbit for their ménage. Having a bunny partner would make a huge difference in the quality of Libby’s life, I say, especially

when Eli is traveling. Because he is devoted to her, he is open to the idea and tells me about the time she discovered he had been petting a male Californian. Far from attacking him, Libby was fascinated with the scent of this other rabbit and sniffed and nuzzled Eli all over. Unfortunately, he expects to be living in the same cramped student digs for another couple of years. Assuming that his next place is spacious enough for bonding, Libby will then be about six years old – which is not too old. But knowing Libby, I suspect that the bonding process, though ultimately successful, might be bumpy.

If you would like to learn more about rabbits who bite, here are some online sources:

The Basics of Rabbit Aggression: Ballistic Bunnies 101

By Susan Davis (primary author)

Sources: HRH, various articles from the HRJ, RHN

<http://www.rabbit.org/faq/sections/aggression.html>

The Biting Rabbit

By George Flentke

(Wisconsin House Rabbit News)

<http://www.wisconsinhrs.org/Articles/The%20Biting%20Rabbit.htm>

Libby eats salad in the bedroom she shares with her human partner Eli.



Photo: Jane O'Wyatt

Whiskers in Wonderland Was Team Effort for Foster Buns

By Natalie L. Reeves

Approximately 20 bunnies looking for forever homes were the stars of the Whiskers in Wonderland adoption event for cats and rabbits in December at the Metropolitan Pavilion in Manhattan. The event, sponsored by the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, was staffed by Rabbit Rescue & Rehab volunteers. Since the same event in 2010 had been that year's single most successful adoption event, hopes were high for a repeat. Sadly, that was not to be the case.

Cindy Stutts led a team of volunteers who arrived early on Saturday and Sunday and stayed late each day. The venue did not permit animals to stay overnight, so volunteers had to set up, clean up and transport the rabbits back and forth each day. The rabbits featured at the event were being cared for by foster families.

With all of the hard work of our volunteers, we were anticipating lots of happy stories, but not a single adoption occurred over the weekend. The rabbits looking for homes were a diverse lot – from a Flemish Giant named Amber to a bonded lionhead pair named Norton and Trixie.

Although the event did not produce the results everyone had hoped for, we know that the visitors who stopped by at least learned more about rabbits. Perhaps some of those people will adopt from us in the future.

Photo: Philip Forrest



Photo: Philip Forrest



Photo: Natalie Reeves



Photo: Natalie Reeves

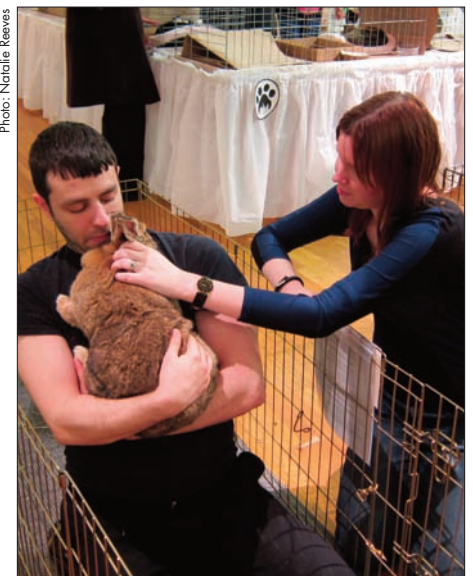


Photo: Natalie Reeves



Top, a lionhead pair, Norton and Trixie, and a lop, Satchmo.

Middle, Flowerpot with volunteer Hilary, and Amber with admirers.

Bottom, Whiskers in Wonderland was sparsely attended.

Photo: Lila Schisgal



Baxter's Best Day

Beloved Baxter, who charmed staff and customers at the 86th Street Petco during his weeks there, was adopted on Dec. 17 by Lila, 8, and her family.

Lila and her mom, Liz, were at the store to sign the official adoption contract.

Also on hand were volunteers Loraine Kopf, Alisa Christopher, Astrid Hesse and Susan Lillo. A very special canine guest, Jack, was there to say goodbye. Jack had regularly visited both Petco bunnies, Baxter and Sophie, and had developed a close relationship with high-spirited Baxter.

Baxter was known for his great energy level and constant efforts to get the attention of Sophie when they were out in their separate exercise pens at the store.

But Baxter also had a very special attention-getting trick. He would carefully rip off long, two-inch-wide strips of newspaper that he would grasp in his mouth. He then raced around in circles with the paper streamer, getting lots of laughs. Volunteers thought this was a particularly ingenious way of getting Sophie's eye. (For her part, Sophie usually turned her back on Baxter when he engaged in this activity, just to let him know that she wasn't going to give in to his playful attempts to entertain her.)

We all will miss Baxter, but we are so happy to see him find a wonderful home. Baxter, congratulations to you and your new family! Your adoption brightened our holiday. (See a letter from Lila on page 14.)

Photo: Susan Lillo



Photo: Susan Lillo



Photo: Lila Schisgal



Photo: Susan Lillo



Top, Baxter at home.

Middle, left, Lila with Baxter on the day he was adopted.

Middle right, the dog Jack with his owner, Gary.

Bottom left, Baxter with Sam in his new home.

Volunteer Loraine Kopf with Baxter at Petco.

Our Musical Household

By Holly D. Gruskay

Our house is filled with devoted classical music fans. Living in the metro New York area, we are avid WQXR listeners. My two middle schoolers (11 and 13 years old) still think everyone listens to classical music at home. (Shhhh. Don't tell.)

So when we acquired bunnies, it seemed natural that they would follow suit. Since we listen to WQXR around the clock (it has always soothed the kids to sleep), the radio station is part of the fabric of the household.

We didn't expect the bunnies to actually fall in love with the music. But they did.

When we are in the kitchen (the one room that can't receive the radio signal), we listen to the cable-music channel. And the bunnies literally sit and watch the TV as the various slides come on describing what's playing and providing information about the composer. We thought that was funny.

Photo: Holly Gruskay



Music lovers Cookie (black), Andrew (brown) and Angel (white).

And then we couldn't figure out why they kept migrating to my daughter's room during the day, sleeping all stretched out on their sides. That lazy kid keeps the radio on even when she goes to school.

Someone on a local blog recently asked, "How does your bunny react to a music box?" And we had to respond. Our bunnies don't like Beethoven (too scary). They prefer Mozart, Elgar and other more soothing composers. They also prefer instrumental music to vocals and –

well, you get the picture. The bunnies have very defined musical tastes. On the more modern scene, they prefer Adele and Taylor Swift to hip hop.

Our tastes in music are actually quite similar. The rabbits like lighter classical pieces, just as we do.

In a family of music lovers, we have discovered that our rabbits are really the biggest enthusiasts of all. Our enjoyment of music is truly a family affair.

Sherpa, a cinnamon female, loves to navigate the couch, windowsill, and, most of all, to groom and lick whoever is reclining on the couch or trying to read! Sorry, Ben!

Photo: Emma Mullins



Why Shouldn't I Bring My Rabbit Outside to Play?

By Lisa Carley

So many of us grew up thinking of rabbits as outside pets that it seems odd that we shouldn't take our rabbits outside. Yet, we (yes, you) should not.

Obviously, an annual or emergency trip to the vet is not open for discussion – that's mandatory. Taking the bunny to the park is not.

When I first adopted Wabbit (my two-pound Jersey Wooly), I bought him a harness and a "bunny bag" so that we could go out and play together in the park and visit friends. Holding him in my arms, he was wearing his harness when I walked him through Central Park to our veterinarian's office. I was very proud of myself; he was so cute! One woman even thought he was a guinea pig, but I digress.

Well, the doctor politely informed me that while he certainly did seem safe enough in my arms in the medical office, I should probably take a taxi home. What I didn't understand was how frightened Wabbit probably felt in my arms as I



Top, Pi eating and Pickle picking up cardboard tunnel. Bottom, Pickle playing with tunnel.

carried him. He was exposed, with no way to flee from danger. Ouch... that was certainly not my goal.

My next thought was to ask whether or not it was okay for me to take him to the park in his bunny bag and then let him hop around on a lead. It was (is) not okay.

The reason for this has a lot to do with both his little bunny psyche and his physical health. It seems there are various bacteria and parasites (including *Baylisascaris procyonis*, aka raccoon roundworm, which can be lethal to rabbits – see, e.g., <http://www.hrschicago.org/rabbitfr.html>) on the grass from other animals that can make him very ill. And, of course, there is the constant danger posed by other animals in the park who view a rabbit as prey. A confrontation with a threatening predator in the park was definitely a possibility, particularly in Manhattan.

I also learned that rabbits never should use a harness because of the many dangers involved. (See article about harnesses on page 14 of the April 2011 Thump at rabbitcare.org.)

Please feel free to learn from my (now) 10-year-old rabbit's experiences, and leave your rabbit happily at home, where he feels safe.

(See Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's handout on this subject, page 16.)

Nutmeg's New Life

Nutmeg's incredible journey to the U.K. was described in the December 2011 Thump. Her family sent this letter to Cathe Rekis and Jane O'Wyatt on Dec. 20.

Hi Cathe & Jane,

We just read the article about Nutmeg in the Thump newsletter you forwarded. It was excellent and brought back many memories. Thanks for sending it through.

We're all in the U.K. and getting ready for the holidays, including getting some presents for Nutmeg. She's doing very well and getting lots of attention. I've been able to bring a few of her toys and her same familiar floor-matting with me on my last couple of trips.



Nutmeg in her U.K. home, December 2011.

Wishing you a very Happy Holiday and best wishes for 2012!

Warm regards,
Gurpreet, Mandeep, Jas & Harpal

Fund-Raising on Long Island

Photo: Mary Adler



Yuna, Lindsey and Ellen wanted to help rescued rabbits, so they ran a lemonade stand last summer on three days, donating the proceeds to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab. The donation was in honor of the two rabbits adopted in 2000 by Lindsey's family from Mary Cotter. Both rabbits lived to be 11 years old. The family has subsequently adopted two rescued rabbits from the Bergen County Animal Shelter.

Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Ernie, Claudette, Brody, Pickle and Pi, Sophie, Pierre, Oreo, Greg, Xena, Tucker, Oreo, Jack, Sally and Thomasina, Lola, Francis, Alijah, Elvis and Priscilla, Alesha.

Photo: Robert Kulka



Tucker.

Foster a Bunny!

If you would like to foster a rabbit, contact Cindy Stutts at bygolyoly@yahoo.com.

Photo: Susan Lillo



Heather Lorence and her family fostered Bambam.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Caramel, shown with five of her 10 babies (two litters less than three months old), arrived at AC&C at the end of January. Caramel has been spayed and remains at AC&C. The baby bunnies, who are all weaned, need foster care until they are old enough to be spayed/neutered and adopted.

Letters

Reba

Breck Hostetter sent us this update about his family's adopted rabbit Reba in mid-January.



Photo: Breck Hostetter

Reba.

I am always glad to have the opportunity to sing the praises of our beloved Reba and also to express our extreme gratitude to Amy Odum and everyone who works with these rabbits at the shelter. We adopted Reba after our other sweet rabbit passed away. We debated whether we should look for a young rabbit we could "raise" with our daughter, but then we started looking at the rabbits on the N.Y. House Rabbit Society website and decided right away that the right choice would be to provide a good home to a rabbit who needed another chance.

We brought our daughter with us when we visited the shelter to see the rabbits and Amy introduced us to Reba. She knew Reba's personality (as well as the other rabbits there at the time) and believed Reba would be a good match for us. Reba was sweet and gentle and calm around our daughter and we were smitten and brought her home. We have had her for a year and a half now and she has charmed everyone who has ever had the pleasure of meeting her. I've had rabbits for 30 years now and she is the most social and affectionate, and funniest, rabbit I have ever met.

She has the run of the apartment and follows our daughter from room to room like a dog. She pulls apart Greta's Lego constructions, climbs into her dollhouse and cuddles next to her on the couch,

Photo: Gracie Huang



Morgan.

Morgan

Morgan was adopted in October by Gracie Huang, who sent us this update a short time afterward.

I hope Morgan is ready for a smotheringly loving mommy. Morgan now has his own Facebook page, and his first status update was rabbitcare.org :)

Best,
Gracie

Thomkins

Megan Whitman adopted Thomkins in September. She sent us this email.

Thomkins is truly a joy, and he's already beginning to settle in. He especially enjoys his "penthouse" area at home. Thomkins, who we now call "General Thomkins" due to his large personality, is doing wonderfully and makes a great companion in my room. We have truly bonded (though he thinks he is the one in charge!).

Best,
Megan Whitman

Photo: Megan Whitman



Thomkins.

and licks Greta when she is watching TV. Reba scratches at the bathroom door to get in if Greta is taking a bath; she follows her to her bedroom and jumps on Greta's bed to be petted while we're reading the bedtime story. She sleeps in there with Greta for a bit and then comes and sleeps next to or on top of my feet while I am at my desk. She runs and greets us at the door when we come home; she hangs out in the kitchen begging for vegetables.

We know nothing of her past home but she must have been treated very well and we are thankful that she somehow made her way to the shelter and then to us. When Greta had to tell her class a story

about her family the first week of school, she chose to tell the kids about the day we went to the shelter to get Reba.

I would not always recommend a rabbit as a pet for a young child, but in our case we really hit the jackpot. We are lucky to have Reba in our family as she makes us smile and laugh every day and she helps teach our daughter about compassion, kindness and the responsibility of caring for someone who needs us.

Reba has all-white ears and nose in the summer but they turn gray in the winter. So funny!

Warm Regards,
Breck

(Continued on page 12)

Thor and Barbara

Photo: Paula Siry



Thor and Barbara.

Paula and her family adopted Thor last year as a partner bun. She sent this update in early January.

We adopted Thor from the AC&C last July as a partner for Barbara.

We carefully followed bonding instructions from Cindy Stutts, and the pair quickly became an item.

They have their own bedroom in our home, equipped with a two-story hutch and an open play area. They are quite a show-and-tell centerpiece for our two little boys and their friends.

**A bunny's a delightful habit,
No home's complete without a rabbit.**
— from "Marshmallow,"
by Clare Turlay Newberry

Paula Siry

Napoleon

Napoleon, formerly known as Twist, celebrated his anniversary with Abigail in early December. She sent this letter to Susan Lillo.

Dear Susan,

I am thinking of you on my one-year anniversary with Napoleon. You were the one who packed him in the box for me on that exciting day – thank you for all your help!

I can't believe he was picked up as a stray on the street! Now he has lots of love and attention. Here is one interesting thing that transpired:

Napoleon is a good eater and was checked out by the vet, with no health problems, and I am experienced at feeding bunnies, but there were recurring episodes of stomach problems (refusing to eat for hours and appearing uncomfortable). I could get him out of it with simethicone, along with water in a syringe, but I really wanted to prevent this from happening, knowing that if my efforts didn't work we would have to go to the vet for sub-q fluids, etc. Finally, I asked Cindy Stutts. She said, "Some people swear by papaya tablets. Also, you can soak his greens."

So I discovered that Oxbow makes papaya fruit pills. I started giving Napoleon one a day, broken up on top of his pellets. (It

Photo: Abigail

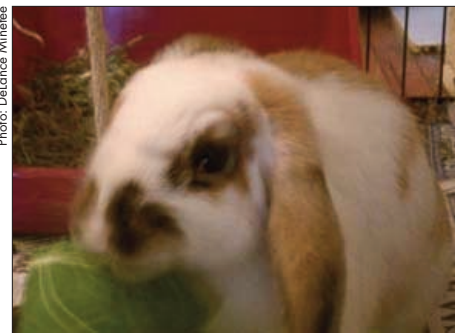


Napoleon.

took a few days for him to warm up to the idea.) And I changed the salad prep routine to include filling the little bowl with water first, placing the leaves in that after I wash them, and draining off the excess before serving – which means a bit more water in the tum, and every little bit helps. (Using slightly warm water takes that fridge chill off the salad, too.) Also, in case the problem was fur-related, I got Napoleon to tolerate a slicker brush, which helps a lot during a molt. It has been three months since I revised my routine and there've been no more tummy aches, thank goodness. Knock on wood!

XOXO
Abigail

Photo: DeLance Minefee



Phoebe Justine.

Phoebe Justine

PJ, formerly known as Justine, was adopted by Kaaron and DeLance, who sent this email on Dec. 12.

Here's a little update on Justine. We've renamed her Phoebe Justine (PJ), and she got a clean bill of health from Symphony.

We're getting used to each other bit by bit. She seems like she's getting more comfortable, judging by the state of her cage. When she first got here she wouldn't move things around too much, but now she starts ripping up paper as soon as I clean it.

My husband, DeLance, and I love watching her race around and exploring our apartment. She's a wonderful bunny, and we're so happy to have her. I have attached a picture of her eating her breakfast.

Kaaron Minefee

Ernie

Ernie was adopted in mid-December by Christine, who sent this thank-you note.

Thank you for the warm welcome! We are very happy to have Ernie as part of our family. He has adjusted beautifully. He is so friendly and loving toward each person in our family. He is a big, gentle mush, filled with wonder.

The children adore him and love him more each day. They wake up each morning anticipating some time with Ernie before they go to school – and dash through the door after school wanting to see Ernie right away.

(Continued on page 13)

Photo: Christine McCarvill



Ernie.

There is so much joy in our home since Ernie arrived. It's like Christmas every day! He is a perfect match and it appears that he was meant to be with us.

Your attention and concern for Ernie is most appreciated. I know that we will have more questions and I am so glad I have you for references.

I wish I had this much attention and support when I came home with each of my three children. I really appreciate your time and concern.

Happy Holidays.

Take care,
Christine McCarvill

Arnie and Isabella

Isabella was adopted as a friend for Arnie by Alistair, who provided this update.

Dear Friends,

I am so delighted to share the good news of the adoption of Isabella bunny (Izzy) as a partner for Arnie on the first of December. I had been contemplating the idea for Arnie for some time, but with a lot of procrastination. With the encouragement of Jane O'Wyatt, I contacted the bonding expert Cindy Stutts and took Arnie to the shelter for speed-dating under the watchful eye of Cindy. We judged Izzy to be the most promising match. So after the formalities of adoption, for two weeks I had them living in separate cages three inches apart in the same room, with supervised dates two or three times each day in the long hallway of my apartment.

Then the big day came when, after checking by email with Cindy, we judged that they were bonded (mutual grooming had been taking place!!), and from that day on they were together 24/7 and they haven't looked back. Dominance issues are still not resolved between them, but there has been no fighting. When out and about in the apartment they are quite independent of each other, but at home in their room, there is lots of

Photo: Alistair Drummond



Isabella and Arnie.

loving interest in each other, and lots of grooming and flopping together. I am still amazed at the sharing of the food bowl, water bowl, litter box and hay.

The delight that these two have brought to so many visitors and to my daughters visiting over the holidays has been a joy to behold. There is no question that the beauty and pleasure of living with and observing two of them together is more than double the pleasure of one alone. Thanks to all my bunny friends for the encouragement and support in bringing us all to this happy place.

Happy New Year to all the readers of
Thump!

Alistair, Arnie and Izzy



Kelsey.

Kelsey

Kelsey was adopted in January 2011 by Tracy Nuzzo, who sent us some recent photos of them together. Kelsey has had thyroid problems over the past several months, but he is on the mend.

Happy New Year. Kelsey went to his photo shoot and he was so well behaved!

He is doing great. We doubled his Soloxine dosage and he tolerates the meds just fine. It's a routine. I scoop him up and take him to the kitchen in the a.m. I draw up his dose and as I put the syringe near his mouth, he opens WIDE. What

a cutie. We go back in three weeks for another blood test.

The normal range of thyroid for rabbits is 2.5-3.5. The first test showed Kelsey had 0.4 and that was bad. After a course of antibiotics to cure his infection, the number jumped to 0.7. After four weeks of the small dose of Soloxine, Kelsey was at 1.0. Better – but we have a small ways to go. Dr. Pilny started conservatively, which I like, and it may take a little bit for us to get it just right.

We still have coughing and gagging episodes, but they are quick and not as

(Continued on page 14)



Kelsey and Tracy.

scary. Kelsey seems to think they are a nuisance, but he no longer has to sit on his hind legs, flailing his arms as I watch on in horror. Now, if he coughs, he doesn't even bother to sit up because it passes so quickly. The miracle of science and pharmaceuticals!!

I think Kelsey's FAVORITE Christmas gift was something I would recommend for all bunnies and that is – wooden blocks! So simple, but he enjoys throwing and chasing and sometimes (maybe by accident?) he stacks one on top of another. He also got a wooden PIANO, meant for toddlers, but just the right height for him to stand up against and hit the keys!

Hope you enjoy the photos!! Take care and Happy 2012!

All the best,
tracy + kelsey



We are grateful to all of our wonderful hay donors. A special thanks to Best Pet Rx and Robin Sternberg for donations of large bales of hay to the shelter. Also, a heartfelt thank you to volunteers and others who purchase hay for our bunnies on a regular basis. Your generosity is inspiring.

Baxter

Baxter was adopted in mid-December by Lila, 8 years old, and her family. Lila had been visiting Baxter regularly at the 86th Street Petco. (See article on page 7.) She gave us this letter, which was handwritten in pencil and included a sketch of Baxter at the bottom. Assisting in the adoption were Loraine Kopf, Alisa Christopher, Astrid Hesse and Susan Lillo.

Photo: Liz Niles



Baxter and Lila.

Dear bunny ladies,

Baxter has settled in. He is very happy and I think he will be happy when we switch to the country house. He is very active at night. Is that normal?

He has plenty of vegetables and he always eats them. I think he loves parsley, so earlier I gave him some.

He has eaten plenty of his hidey house, which is made out of cardboard and food coloring, and he loves his tree. His tree is cardboard with holes that you put vegetables in. Me and Sam [Lila's brother] have fed Baxter a little strawberry (he really likes the berry part) and some baby carrot. He loves to push paper leaves (made of brown paper) out of his house. He obsesses over his straw hat and eats it continuously.

We are going to the country house, and I wonder if he likes the radio.

Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas to all!!

Love,
Lila

Photo: Rachel Maslow



Greg.

Greg

Rachel and her family adopted Greg in early January. Here is her update.

My family adopted Greg on Jan 8. I took him to the vet the next day to make sure that everything looked okay, and he's doing really well! He weighs three pounds and seven ounces.

Greg loves the house that I built for him out of cardboard with an opening and exit. He likes to take his romaine lettuce from his plate and eat it in the house. He also loves to chew his wicker ball. He likes to rearrange his playpen often, moving around his litter box and pushing his cardboard box a few inches.

Greg likes to stretch out and relax in the afternoon, and then becomes more active after his dinner. He likes to binky a lot.

Everyone in my family loves Greg. My mom likes to eat her breakfast with him and I love to watch him play. My dad loves to talk to him. We all think he's adorable and we're so happy we had the chance to adopt him!

Rachel Maslow

Rabbit-Savvy Veterinarians

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

Long Island:

Jennifer Saver, DVM

Laura George, DVM

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

Heidi Hoefler, DVM

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

Jeff Rose, DVM

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

Manhattan:

Becky Campbell, DVM

Deborah Levison, DVM

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

Manhattan (continued):

Katherine Quesenberry, DVM

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

Alexandra Wilson, DVM

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

Shachar Malka, DVM

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

Westchester County:

Gil Stanzone, DVM

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

ADOPTABLE RABBITS

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

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

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

You can visit the **New York Animal Care & Control Center** at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues. Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

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

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

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

Licensed HRS Representatives

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

Nancy Schreiber, HRS Licensed Educator, Co-Chapter Manager-in-Training, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group Volunteer, nschreibmd@aol.com, (516) 510-3637, LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

Cindy Stutts, HRS Licensed Educator, Manager NYC/AC&C Rabbit Program, bygolyoly@yahoo.com, (646) 319-4766, nycacc.org

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

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

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

Gabrielle LaManna, HRS Educator-in-training at large, New Fairfield, CT, gabbysbunnies@yahoo.com, (203) 746-7548

Jennifer Saver, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

Laura George, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

THUMP February 2012

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS

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

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them. Checks should be made out to **Rabbit Rescue & Rehab** and mailed to: Nancy Schreiber, 12 Grace Court North, Great Neck, NY 11021.

9 REASONS TO KEEP YOUR BUNNY INDOORS

1) Outdoor rabbits are exposed to extremes of weather: heat, cold, thunder, lightning, high winds (which can damage or destroy housing). Of these, heat is particularly dangerous: rabbits succumb very quickly to high temperatures, and need to be kept cool in the summer. In extremely cold weather, drinking water freezes and rabbits can become dehydrated.

2) Outdoor rabbits are prone to insect/tick bites and fly strike (flies laying eggs on the rabbit and the larvae burrow into the rabbit's flesh).

3) Outdoor rabbits are exposed to parasites and diseases carried by other animals; e.g., raccoons carry *Baylisascaris procyonis*, which rabbits can pick up on the ground and ingest (by grooming their feet), and which can then migrate to the rabbit's brain, where it is fatal.

4) Outdoor rabbits often become the victims of poisoning from pesticides, herbicides, and/or fertilizers. Even if your neighbor uses them, rain will wash the chemicals onto your property. In many areas, ground and air spraying of toxic chemicals is used because of the threat of West Nile Virus.

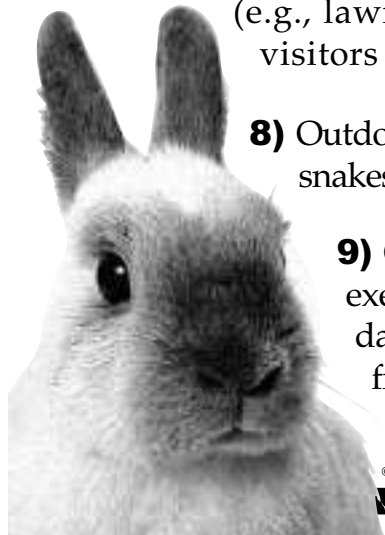
5) Outdoor rabbits often are often neglected or forgotten once the novelty wears off. Their food and water may become infested with insects, bacteria, or molds. They do not get the human interaction they need in order to develop trust, and often become extremely hard to handle as a result.

6) Outdoor rabbits are "out of sight," if not "out of mind," and this makes it almost impossible for owners to become adequately familiar with their bunny's "normal behaviors." When you are not thoroughly familiar with your bunny's normal behaviors, it is difficult to recognize subtle signs of illness/injury in time to prevent emergency visits.

7) Outdoor rabbits experience fear from unfamiliar sounds, from which they cannot escape (e.g., lawnmowers, leaf/snow blowers, tree chopping), smells, unfamiliar visitors (e.g. neighborhood children, passersby, etc.).

8) Outdoor rabbits often become the victims of predators (dogs, cats, hawks, raccoons, snakes), and can suffer fatal heart attacks from even the approach of a predator.

9) Outdoor rabbits (especially those housed in hutches) often get little or no exercise. Rabbits that are let loose in a yard for exercise face all of the above dangers, as well as road hazards and the risk of getting lost if they escape from the yard.



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