

# THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS FEBRUARY 2020

## Join the Push to End Rabbits as Classroom Pets

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab holds a strong position against housing rabbits in classrooms. Rabbits' care requirements cannot all be met in a classroom setting and sadly, rabbits that we have taken in from classrooms have routinely been among those requiring the most rehabilitation as they adapt to their new lives in safe homes. Many exhibit stressed, nervous and defensive behaviors and have unnoticed health issues.

These situations are still very common. We have been contacted about classroom rabbits who are not being sufficiently cared for, have become dangerous to students, or are being kicked out of the

classroom and have nowhere to go. In one email, a concerned teacher wrote that a rabbit had been "donated" to the school, but no one was knowledgeable about rabbit care or had been designated primary caretaker for the rabbit. The rabbit was regularly found to be without food or water, and was left alone over the weekends. In another, a parent noticed that her child's classroom rabbit had a gradually worsening eye condition. By the time the parent discovered that the rabbit was not receiving vet care and kindly offered to take the rabbit to a vet herself, the rabbit's vision could not be

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Photo: Alex Mele



Puffin and Angie.

## What Is Love?

By Robert Kulka

*"Love consists in this, that two solitudes protect and touch and greet each other.*

– Rainer Maria Rilke

It is that time of year when we are faced with a barrage of boxes of candy. Every kiss begins with Kay – or with Zales diamonds, Be Mine heart-shaped candies or Valentine's Day cards. In other words, we are required to say things, buy things and do things that would be approved by Hallmark. Phooey!

True love can be observed more directly and sweetly when you are around a bonded pair of rabbits. Those of us who have a single rabbit are familiar with the

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## Adopt a Lifelong Companion

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab is looking for fosterers who can provide a safe and loving permanent home for a sanctuary rabbit. These are bunnies who may have unique care requirements or need more frequent visits to the vet depending on their particular needs. RRR covers the cost of all veterinary expenses for sanctuary rabbits.

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## Classroom Pets *(Continued from page 1)*

restored. As each school vacation approaches, we receive inquiries about whether we can board classroom rabbits when no one else is willing or able to take the rabbit home for break. Our organization does not have space available in our foster homes to provide boarding at such a capacity, and we have learned later of rabbits who were left in an empty school building over breaks with only occasional visits to refill food and water. Many times we have been contacted about rabbits that have caused students to have severe allergies and must now be relocated “immediately.” We have also been asked to take in classroom rabbits when teachers relocate, or rabbits become older and their care needs intensify.

Still, the unsuitability of rabbits for classrooms is not ubiquitously known. In the summer months before an upcoming school year, we regularly receive inquiries from teachers seeking to add a rabbit to their classroom. We are pleased to say that once we have discussed with the teacher the reasons why rabbits are not suitable for living in classrooms, we are overwhelmingly met with understanding, support and gratitude for explaining the reasons why we do not adopt rabbits out to live in classroom settings. We therefore ask that educators, parents of school-aged children, and others in our community advocate alongside us to spread the message that having rabbits as “classroom pets” is a practice that must be phased out for the health and safety of rabbits, and in order to promote a message of responsible animal care for children in school.

The following are among the points of greatest concern for rabbits living in classrooms:

- Rabbits are highly fragile and sensitive prey animals who need a consistent environment with the same people caring for them, as they form deep bonds to their families.
- Being crepuscular, rabbits need at least 4-5 hours of exercise each day during the very early morning and late evening

hours when no one is in a classroom, and they need quiet time to sleep during the day when classrooms are the most active and noisy.

- Rabbits cannot be housed in small cages and they require a large amount of exercise and mental stimulation, without which they can become bored, stressed, aggressive and destructive.
- Rabbits require constant monitoring of their health. GI issues can become fatal in a matter of hours.
- Rabbits require a constant and unlimited supply of fresh hay that cannot be withheld if students present with allergies (which are very common).
- Rabbits cannot be left alone for a weekend and it is not recommended for a rabbit to be traveling regularly. Their happiness and health are negatively affected by the stress of frequent travel.
- Rabbits are sensitive to loud noises and sudden movements and can learn to react with defensive behaviors such as biting and boxing.
- Rabbits live for 10+ years, and senior rabbits require special additional care. They may no longer use a litter box, need extra assistance grooming, and may need treatment and accommodations for common conditions like arthritis.
- Rabbits should never be picked up, held or carried, because this is very frightening for them. They are extremely fragile and it can be difficult for children and some teenagers to safely interact with them. Tragically we see many rabbits surrendered to shelters with broken bones from being unintentionally injured.
- Rabbits are expensive. Veterinary bills can easily reach thousands of dollars in a rabbit’s lifetime, and even one GI episode can cost potentially hundreds of dollars. Unfortunately, children’s literature and our culture are still full of misconceptions about rabbits. We rely on our whole community to share our knowledge about rabbits and promote our shared interest in their well-being. Phasing out rabbits in classrooms would be a compassionate step forward.

## Love *(Continued from page 1)*

relationship that often develops between a rabbit and a human. We get to know one another, trust one another and understand the language we develop. I have also seen two rabbits not bonded to one another, and separated in their individual pens, develop an awareness and a certain fondness for each another from a distance. Even in those relationships, it is still clear that nothing compares to the bonded pair.

Photo: Alex Mele



Purple and Blue.

A bonded pair become very much like a long-time married couple. They watch one another, take care of one another and keep each other in line. They develop their own patterns and behaviors together. They exhibit a true affection

*(Continued on page 3)*

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## Lifelong Companion

*(Continued from page 1)*

If you can provide a permanent home for a bunny and would love to adopt a lifelong companion but are concerned about the cost of veterinary care, then fostering a sanctuary bunny may be the right choice for you! Send us an email at [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com) to inquire about fostering a sanctuary rabbit and for more information!

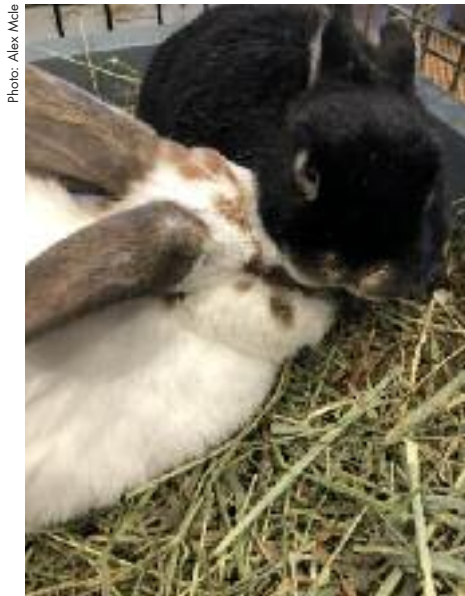
## Love *(Continued from page 2)*

for one another and even live in a world that is unique to them and apart from their surroundings. In the pair, one may take on the role of protector and attentive boss. The other partner will often be more of the follower, exhibiting a gentler side. Those roles, unlike the ones in the Hallmark world, are not assigned by sex as much as by a DNA in the personality. In fact, many individual personality traits show up in the bonded pair and prove once again that rabbits are much more than what they may appear to be.

Watching a bonded pair groom one another, play with one another, make room for the partner to stretch out and cuddle affectionately with one another, is charming, to say the least. They develop play patterns and activities together. When it is mealtime, sometimes one will grab the food first while the other patiently waits to be permitted to share in the meal. I have been intrigued to see how they will follow one another, testing things and, if approved by one, then the partner will also feel comfortable to test.

The bonded pair, when separated on occasion for a trip to the vet, for instance, will show that each knows the partner is gone as they await the return of that other half – even appearing a bit lost when alone. If you are lucky, the pair actually allows you to share in some of their personal routine and domain, making you feel privileged and special to be acknowledged in that way. Just a little bit of an invitation into their world can be an amazing treat.

The next time you see a commercial or TV show about a Hallmark Valentine's love story remember this: All of that is a fabrication so that people can have a role model for how to behave in love. If you really want to see pure love, hang out some day with a bonded pair of rabbits. They can teach us exactly what love is. They show us a true love built on acceptance and partnership.



Neville and Remington.



Daisy and Wally.



Angie and Puffin.



Peaches and Winter.

# Voice Your Support to Ban the Sale of Cats, Dogs And Rabbits in Retail Pet Shops in New York State

The New York State Senate has reconvened, so it is important to reach out to your state senators, encouraging them to vote in favor of a ban on the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores all across the state.

The proposed ban advanced on Feb. 3, as the State Senate's domestic animal welfare committee voted 6-0 to approve the legislation. Roughly 80 pet stores in the state would be affected. The next step will be for the senators to take up the issue in a floor vote.

Please use this link to urge your [senator](#) to support this bill.

Please also follow that up with a phone call to your senator's office.

There is a pet store lobby that is working hard to defeat the bill. We need to flood our senators with pleas to support the bill. Even if you already contacted your senator's office when we asked last June, it's critical to do it again now.

And, as before, please make sure to follow up your email with a quick call to your senator's office to ask for support.

We remain hopeful that with continued enthusiasm in support of a ban, we will

quickly see it come to fruition. In 2016, New York City banned the sale of rabbits

in pet stores throughout the five boroughs, and we ask that people continue to voice support for expanding this ban into the entire state of New York.

The need for this bill to pass is enormous. Between June 1, 2018 and June 1 of last year, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab received individual relinquishment requests for a total of 1,268 rabbits, a number that excludes all large-scale surrenders, hoarding cases, and over-reproduction situations that may involve 100+ rabbits in each scenario. A significant number of these surrender requests come from people who purchased a rabbit from a pet store on impulse, received a rabbit purchased from a pet store as a gift, or were given incorrect information (or no information) about rabbits from a pet store and only later learned that they were not prepared for the commitment or the expense. Upon learning about the special diet and care needs, cost, and commitment involved in rabbit care, many chose to abandon their rabbits or relinquish them to a shelter rather than stepping up to provide the correct

home and care for the rabbit that they purchased.

We must work to push our way out of this horrendous situation that leaves intelligent, sensitive, loving animals tossed away as though they are temporary commodities. The first, crucial, step will be banning the sale of rabbits in pet stores. Shelters (the few that are even able and willing to take in rabbits) and rescue groups are utterly overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem. Following New York City's 2016 ban on selling rabbits in pet stores, we saw a decrease in the proportion of rabbit surrenders coming specifically from within the five boroughs. This evidence leaves us deeply optimistic about the impact that a statewide ban would have on the rabbit abandonment crisis across all of New York.

Rabbits are counting on us to come together and push for this ban. We are a small community in a very large state, so please ask your friends, relatives, colleagues and neighbors to voice their support to representatives as well. Thank you so much to everyone for your continued support!

Photos: Alex McIle



Winter and Peaches .



Remington, at back, and Neville.

# Ban the Sale of Fur in New York City: Support Intro 1476

Following the news that California's fur ban, AB-44, has been signed into law, we must focus on a bill that was introduced in the New York City Council to prohibit the sale of fur in New York City.

The city is the largest fur market in the U.S. and one of the largest in the world. A ban on selling fur in New York City would not only have a massive impact on fur sales and trade globally, but also would set a strong precedent for other cities, fashion designers, retailers and countries around the world. The fur industry is a dreadfully violent and cruel business with no place in a humane 21st-century world.

Each year, more than 100 million animals suffer horribly and are killed solely for their fur world-wide. A large portion of these animals are rabbits – the exact same domestic rabbits that we have the privilege of caring for in our own homes.

To our readers in New York City, please call City Council members and urge them to sign on to the bill if they have not already, and call to thank them for their support if they have. Find your Council member's name and contact information at this website:  
<https://council.nyc.gov/districts/>

Seven Council members are on the committee that will vote on whether the bill will move forward. At least four of them must vote "yes." The committee will gauge support for the bill based in part on how many Council members have signed on to it, so be sure to urge

Poster: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



your family and friends to voice their support to their council members as well.

The Council members on the committee are: Rafael L. Espinal Jr. (chair), Justin Brannan (sponsor), Margaret S. Chin, Keith Powers, Peter Koo, Karen Koslowitz and Brad Lander (sponsor).

Please especially take the time to contact these Council members.

Despite growing consumer awareness of the cruelty of fur industry and the steps

recently taken by major fashion designers to ban fur products (in the past 18 months, Chanel, Phillip Lim, Jean Paul Gaultier, Coach, Burberry, Gucci, Michael Kors and more have all banned fur. See [www.furfreenyc.com](http://www.furfreenyc.com)), there is concern as the fur industry will be pushing hard against this bill. Everyone's voice is needed to speak out in support of Intro 1476 and advocate for the millions of animals unnecessarily tortured and killed each year.

## Marshmallow and Carmine

Marshmallow and Carmine are a perfect pair of bonded rabbits looking for the loving forever home that they deserve. Marshmallow is a white and brown female English Spot mix and Carmine is a white and brown male Dutch and Lionhead mix. This sweet and spunky pair of buns hope to find humans who

Marshmallow and Carmine.



will love them as much as they love each other. They would do best in a home with lots of attention and time to exercise. They are both fixed and litter-box trained. If interested in adopting Marshmallow and Carmine, please contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

# A Very Happy Valentine's Day From Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Photo: Diana Kronenberg



Cameron and Piper, Diana Kronenberg's pair (adopted from LIRRG).

Photo: Diana Kronenberg



Hershey and Butterscotch, Diana Kronenberg's pair.

Photo: Jessica Berman



T-Rex and Riptide, Jessica Berman's pair.

## LIRRG Adoptable Pairs:

Photo: Katie Scarr



Aegon and Daenerys.

Photo: Denise Schwarz



Marie and Claire.

Photo: Katie Scarr



Albert and Riley.

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**Adoptable Pairs**

*(Continued from page 6)*

Photo: Katie Scarr



▲ Betty and Wilma.

▼ Cupid and Chance.

Photo: Katie Scarr



**Feeling Better,  
With a Little Help  
From My Friend:  
Bonded Rabbits  
And Healing**

By Amanda Puitiza

Recently, my bonded rabbits Jack and Athena faced a new challenge in their lives and it wasn't something their humans could help much with.

Jack, known for his inquisitive nature and burst of nonstop energy, suddenly showed a decrease in appetite. This was the first time that either one of them had ever felt sick since being bonded to each other.

Photo: Amanda Puitiza



Athena, at left, and Jack.

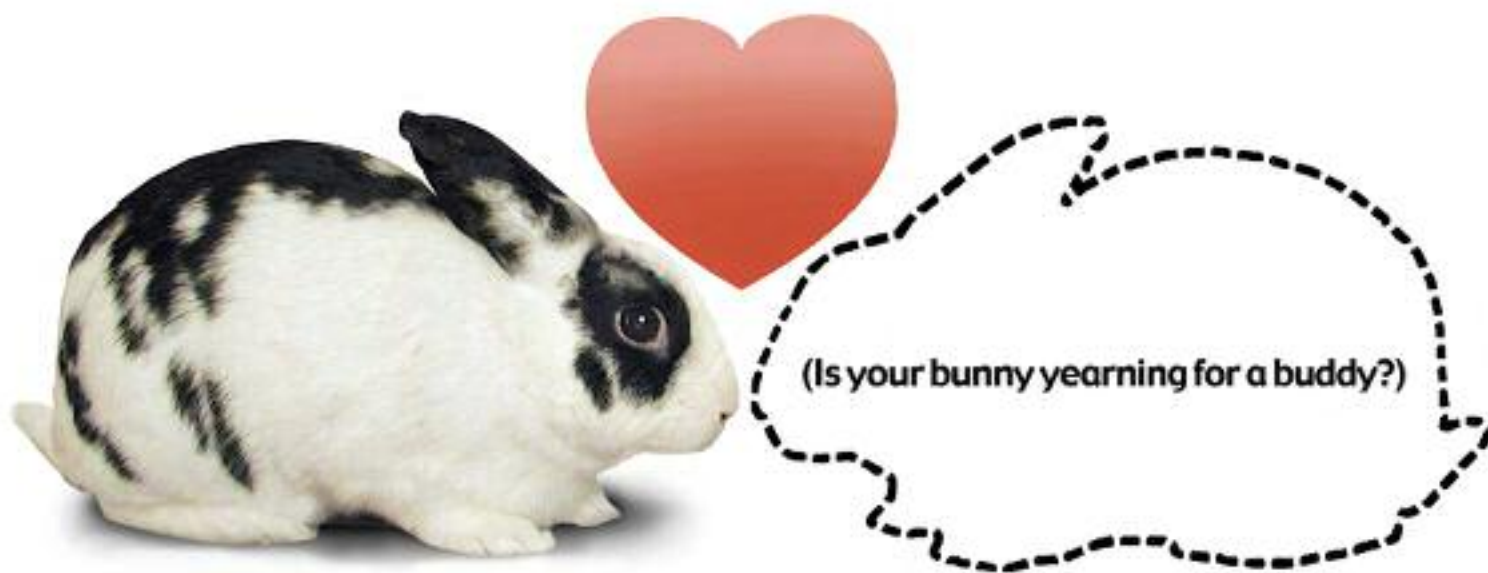
As behavioral changes became apparent in Jack due to lack of adequate nutrition, Athena became more attentive and protective of Jack.

After a couple of vet visits, we settled in for a long recovery period during which we humans administered medication to, syringe-fed, and constantly watched over Jack.

Athena, however, was the one with him around the clock, and it was she who

*(Continued on page 9)*

# February is Adopt-a-Rescued-Rabbit Month!



**This month, match your bunny—or yourself!—  
with a rescued rabbit.**

**Nothing can match the love.**

**Please visit [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org) today!**



HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY



## **Bonding: Patience, Perseverance and Plenty of Love**

By Ashley Rockholt

Unfortunately, I have to admit that I bought my first rabbit from a breeder who lives nearby. We wanted two rabbits for our teenage boys as a Christmas present, but secretly this was a gift for myself. The breeder only had one female bunny, available a week after Christmas. We rescued Bella from a dank, dark dungeon on Jan. 5, 2019. She was only eight weeks old. Even though we technically bought her from a breeder, in our minds we rescued her from a very precarious living environment, especially since this breeder had numerous rabbits living in outdoor hutches in the middle of winter.

After she chewed every baseboard and dug up every corner of carpet her first week home, we decided she needed a companion as soon as possible. I researched adopting a rabbit in my local area and came across a website that would change my (and Bella's) life forever, [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).

I emailed Denise Bertolotti, one of the members of Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group (LIRRG), last Jan. 16, hoping to adopt a young male rabbit as Bella's companion. Denise provided a huge amount of information regarding bonding rabbits and what to expect. After Bella's spay surgery, a phone interview and a home visit, on June 23 I received my confirmation email from Denise that I was officially approved to adopt.

I couldn't wait to take Bella speed dating to see which male bunny she would like best. On July 7, we loaded Bella into her carrier and drove to the main foster home of LIRRG. Once there, Bella was introduced to Christian and two other sweet bunnies. We spent a couple of hours allowing Bella and the other bunnies to be in the same pen together so that we could observe their behavior and interactions. Finally, the wonderful

volunteers instructed us to think about which bunny we might want to adopt. Bella had gotten along well with all of the boys.

My web browser already had been fixated on the LIRRG website for months, even before we went for the speed date. Once I read Christian's story of being abandoned at Jefferson Animal Hospital on May 15,

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Photo: Ashley Rockholt



Bella and Christian.

### **Feeling Better** *(Continued from page 7)*

provided the most basic, necessary component of the healing process: an understanding and constant companion.

You could easily see that she groomed him much more than she typically did. She also appeared less demanding

during her own grooming time, which worked well with Jack's low energy level during his recovery.

We still don't really know what Jack was sick with, and maybe we will never know. What I do know is that I believe in what a rabbit vet once told me at a conference: It is always best to keep your

bonded rabbits together when one of them falls ill.

I am still amazed at the power and strength of bonding and how the bond is a fluid relationship that can be influenced by the environment, as well as the health and personality of each partner.

## **Patience and Perseverance**

*(Continued from page 9)*

I just had known he would be our first choice – as long as Bella agreed.

After going over rabbit education at the main foster home, we were able to bring Christian home. On the first night, Christian was able to get acquainted with his new hutch and attached exercise pen setup that was alongside Bella's hutch and attached exercise pen. Bella became very territorial that first night, and I knew instantly that this was going to be a long journey.

Bunny growls and grunts were sounds I had never heard before bringing Christian home, nor had I ever seen Bella act so aggressively and territorial. She scratched at the exercise pen and even jumped over the pen before we could clip a sheet over the top. I felt the best way to proceed was to allow Christian to become comfortable in his new home and establish a connection with me before starting the bonding process with Bella, due to his skittish disposition. The first week Christian was in his new home, I spent a couple hours every day just sitting in an area with him, letting him smell me and take dandelion stems out

of my hand. After the first week, I put the rabbits side by side in exercise pens without the hutches, enabling them to see each other 24/7. The first bonding session did not go well, ending abruptly when Bella nipped a tuft of white fur from Christian's back side.

After that, we paused for a few days. The second 2-minute bonding session went better, without any scuffles. I continued to switch the bunnies into each other's pen, and every day I continued the two-minute bonding sessions until we eventually progressed to three- and four-minute sessions. During the bonding period, if they appeared tense, I would separate them immediately and wait a few days before allowing them to have another bonding session. I always gave them treats and pats after each session to encourage them and end on a positive note. There were days when I thought that these two would never bond and days where I was really making some progress. We moved the bunnies to the dining room where they could have side-by-side exercise pen setups with fewer human distractions. One day when I was sitting in the living room with Bella during her personal exercise time, she managed to escape from the gated area.

I heard the rattling of the exercise pens from the dining room and a sense of fear surged through me. When I entered the dining room, I had an eerie feeling and soon found Bella had entered Christian's pen while he was inside. Quickly, I scooted Bella out of the pen, but found a substantial amount of Bella's gray fur on the floor. Bella realized that Christian would fight back and defend his territory.

Within a week of this experience, they seemed to want to spend more time near each other, though they weren't ready to live together in the same space. During daily exercise time, for instance, they would lie side by side in the living room area, with the exercise pen between them.

I gradually increased the bonding sessions, and once I saw them lying together, I allowed them to remain in the living room area together for two hours of supervised interaction. There was a little chasing at first, but then they started eating together and lying approximately three feet away from one another. The juxtaposition of my feelings of joy and anxiety were palpable. I was happy, yet still very fearful.

I increased the time they spent together daily by hour increments. Once they were able to spend all day together without any scuffles for an entire week, I felt they were ready to be in the same pen together all night. The first night, I slept nearby in order to intervene if necessary. They did great, and I realized that all of my hard work over the seven-week period had paid off. Now, they groom and snuggle with each other all day. It is the sweetest and most rewarding feeling to have two bonded rabbits.

Each bonding experience is different, however. Therefore, don't be discouraged if your bunnies take longer to bond. Perseverance, patience and plenty of love allowed my two bunnies to become happily bonded partners.

Photo: Ashley Rockholt



Christian and Bella share a salad.

## Top Nine Reasons to Become a Rabbit Volunteer

By Sari Krieger Rivera

**Entertainment:** Are you bored of watching Netflix, playing video games or reading books? Rabbit volunteering provides hours of entertainment. From bunny zoomies to binkies, rabbits are always fun to watch in an exercise pen.

**Good stories:** Looking for something a bit naughtier, maybe even material for your novel or next outing with friends? You may see some very naughty bunnies humping a stuffed animal or maybe even your leg!

**Shredding:** Do you have top secret documents you need destroyed? Just put them in the pen with a bunny and watch him go to town. Just be sure to take out all staples first.

**Healthy eating:** Rabbits will demand fresh dark leafy greens, inspiring you to buy a little for yourself, too!

**Finding your tribe:** So you live with a rabbit. Your rabbit bosses you around and you love her for it. Other people give you rabbit-themed gifts. You are already a “rabbit person.” You might as well admit it and spend time with other rabbit people. You will feel oddly right at home at the parties.

**Rabbit training:** Just because you have a rabbit or two at home doesn't mean you are fully rabbit-trained. Let the rescue or shelter rabbits continue to train YOU in the ways of rabbitdom.

**Therapy:** Having a rough day? Petting a soft bunny is soothing. And if things are really bad, maybe they will let you hide in their play tunnels.

**Confidence:** Feeling like you need a boost? Becoming a rabbit expert through extensive volunteering is tremendously confidence-building. People will look to you to decode the behavior and health needs of these adorable but sometimes mysterious creatures, and that feels really great.

**Giving Back:** As much joy as your own rabbits provide, you can spread the love by helping those who don't yet have homes. You'll have fun giving them the royal treatment.

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*Sari Krieger Rivera is the volunteer coordinator for the Animal Care Centers of NYC's Brooklyn location at 2336 Linden Boulevard.*

Photos of BACC bunnies by volunteers Ilana Kahl and Sari Krieger



Lola.



Mack.



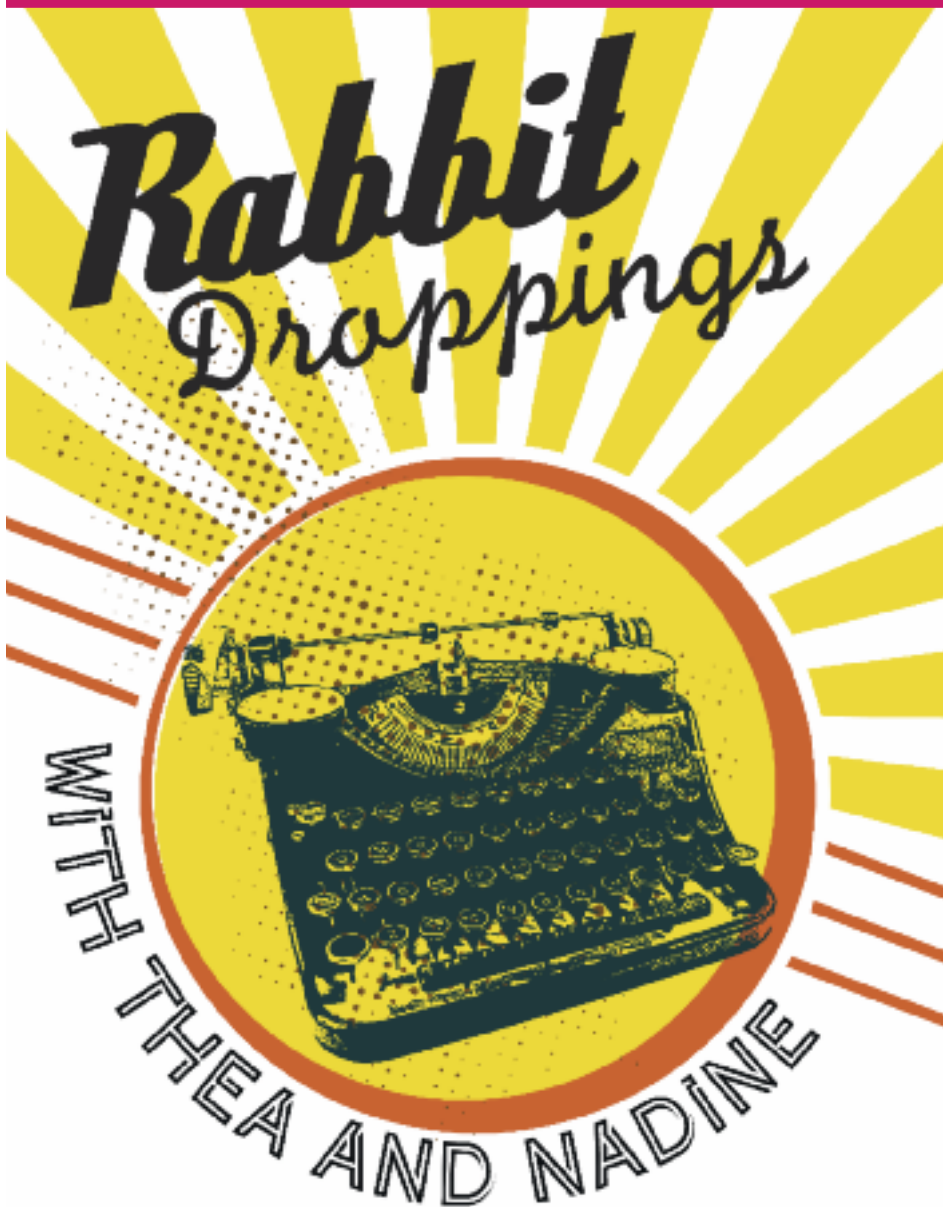
Puddin.



Marlow.



Snowball.



Dear Rabbit Droppings,

*I have a bunny but am planning on moving in with my girlfriend, who has a senior kitty. How – if at all – can I introduce them in the safest way possible?*

– Animal Lover in Amagansett

Dear Ala,

What an excellent question and one we get A LOT at the shelter. To start, always keep in mind that you are dealing with a predator/prey scenario, no matter how lazy, senior, dog-like, or domesticated they both are.

Indoor/outdoor kitties are never great candidates for many reasons. If the kitty is indoor only but has a high prey drive (aka chatters and tracks birds through the window, hunts for bugs, “bunny kicks” every single toy she owns, or attacks the toilet paper roll), she is less likely to be a friendly companion to the bun. Remember, a split-second accident can be fatal for the rabbit. Keeping a kitty with those characteristics separate from your hoppy friend is a risky endeavor, and you will have to take extra, extra precautions that will be challenging.

Trust your gut! If you think your/her kitty will harm a bunny or other small

Photos: Nadine Heidinger



Butter and Bouquet relaxing at the fireplace.



Butter and Bouquet ignoring each other.

mammal, chances are that she will – and even senior kitties still pack quite the punch...and claws!

The best case scenario – THE BIGGER the bunny is, THE BETTER.

A big bunny (think New Zealand White or Jello, who is currently available for adoption at Brooklyn ACC), and an indoor-only, middle-aged or senior kitty probably have the best chance of becoming roommates without bars and boundaries.

Not to be lazy here, but House Rabbit Society’s website, [rabbit.org](http://rabbit.org), provides excellent detailed instructions and suggestions for the initial setup at home, tips on introducing a new rabbit to a resident cat, and what to do when the bunny ends up being too bossy. Yes, rabbits can be bossy and territorial ...what the what ;)

For a happy tail about bunnies and kitties living their best lives together,

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**Droppings** (Continued from page 12)

see the article on page 14 of this issue of Thump.

Dear Rabbit Droppings,

*It's so hard to be single in the big city. I met this lovely gal at an adoption event and was immediately smitten: busty gal with a heart of gold, junk in the trunk, and a large, square head on her shoulders. The chemistry was through the roof and I felt like I hit the jackpot. Things moved along quickly and she moved in with me later that day. At first it was total bliss. We spent all day together stretched out in front of my faux fireplace, sharing salads and talking about how she's the prettiest girl in the world. At night, we took Netflix and Chill to new heights, snuggling up in bed watching our favorite classics, like "Watership Down," "Peter Rabbit" and "RuPaul's Drag Race."*

*But I'm beginning to suspect that we're not compatible in the bedroom, if you know what I mean. It starts out vanilla, with some face rubs and tooth grinding, but after a few minutes things start getting musky and then there's a pile of poop and puddle on the bed. Water sports just aren't my thing. Once in a while is ok if it makes her happy, but the activity has taken over our entire bedtime routine. I'm starting to feel resentful about all the laundry and going to sleep angry and could she even try to make an effort and see this from my point of view for once? I'm trying to be GGG, but when I talk about it with her, it's a total shirt storm. It's like she doesn't even care about my own need for dry sheets. How can I cope with this Princess and the Pee?*

*Are we doomed to sleep in separate beds? Will we ever get our snuggle bunny groove back, or is it all 50 Shades of Hay from here on out?*

— Prince and the Pee

Photo: Nadine Heidegger



Bouquet photobombing Pippi and Dashie.

Dear Prince and the Pee,

Long-term relationships are messy, but there is nothing that a few spritzes of white vinegar and an expensive set of waterproof sheets can't fix. No muss, no fuss! I suggest the Kink Wet Works Bedding (no affiliation) for its excellent traction and color range. If you absolutely insist on staying dry during your playtime on the bed (what fun is that)?, I suggest placing a large plastic grid over your mattress, covered by a thick layer of hay to protect your lovely lady's hocks. Maybe you should open up your relationship? Perhaps both of you can go cruising at the shelter and see if there's anybun who catches your eyes?

I can tell you're really struggling in this relationship, Prince and the Pee, but at a certain point you are going to have to look inward and address the root of this issue: your problems with intimacy. A savvy, out-of-network therapist may be able to help you explore why you are so

territorial in bed. After all, what is a bed, if not a giant litter box?

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 [askrabitdroppings@gmail.com](mailto:askrabitdroppings@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!

# All That Pritters

By Amelia Wilson

Bouquet is not a bunny. She is a cat. A “super senior” cat, in fact – about to turn 19. And like any kitty her age she may have dropped a few pounds, dropped a few teeth, and added a few neuroses along the way. What never changed was the strict routine she observed dutifully and daily for almost two decades, until one recent afternoon when she had a trans-orbital stroke that robbed her of her ability to walk. That routine included an early morning perimeter patrol, an afternoon sunbeam surveillance, an evening door-greeting, and a bedtime round-up. She was like a sweet but bossy internal clock that also warmed your feet at night.

You may wonder what any of this has to do with bunnies. It was as I held her closely two weeks ago, while she tremored and drifted, that I reflected back on her life and all the ways she had been so kind and nurturing to so many for so long. Not just to me in 2001, as I wept alone on the bathroom floor my first year of law school; but also to our Mini Rex, Greta, aged 10 years, as he started to fade from this world in an age-related decline. One morning not long before he slipped away, I found Bouquet lying in his pen very close to him, like a watchful sphinx, her paws stretched out to gently make contact with his head as he slept. She was always intuitive that way; she knew when an animal needed comforting and exactly how to provide it. She sat vigil with him for days.

Don't get me wrong. She was still a cat. When every bunny and human in the house was in hail and fit form, she could be aloof and even downright haughty. She loved to saunter past pens housing curious foster bunnies without deigning to look their way. At worst she would ignore them, giving them a wide berth, but often she would bend down and give them a couple of licks on the head. Endless fosters (Radar, Boom-Boom, Bronco, Mistletoe, Weeble, Pippi, Ella,



Photo: Nadine Heidinger  
Bouquet, at top, and Butter surveying their kingdom from the couch.

Titus, Bongo, Kelly, Carmela, Iggy, Mona, Hendrick, Gwen, Adele, Lavender, Sheri and Henry) have bowed before Bouquet and received her benediction.

Some fosters came to us with a pronounced fear of humans; but for some reason, no matter what their comfort level with us, none of them ever expressed a fear of Bouquet. The more bashful among them (I'm thinking of Dashie, who is still dubious of me after years of living in our home) were imbued with great confidence and bravado by Bouquet. Dashie loved to follow her around the apartment, nudging her with his nose and smooshing down before her when she would finally turn her gaze toward him.

And then there was Butter – our beloved broken Dutch harlequin fireball, ever vexatious and impish toward Bouquet. Bouquet just wanted to doze unmolested on her couch pillow each evening, but she nightly suffered Butter's mischief. Butter would watch Bouquet from below, waiting for her to be fully lulled into complacency, and then BAM! She would catapult onto the couch, sending the poor kitty flying with a yowl of protest. Butter would binky-scamper away and then wait – wait for Bouquet to once again return to her couch-pillow, and once again settle into untroubled slumber...

This dance of theirs went on for years, with Butter darting and feinting at/around/ toward Bouquet, and Bouquet reacting with annoyance. That isn't to say that Bouquet didn't have her retributive moments. Butter, especially, was a bunny who hated boundaries, be it a pen, a closed door, or even the limits of gravity. She wanted to dominate the apartment untrammelled, both vertically and horizontally, and others' mobility presented an endless frustration. Bouquet seemed to know this, and would perch on some table or bookshelf where Butter could not access her. Butter would zoom around the offending furniture while Bouquet looked mildly on. When Butter passed away abruptly this September, Bouquet refused to leave her room for days and would barely eat or drink. We believe she was grieving.

The bunnies gave back to Bouquet. She had never been liked by other cats, and in fact was repeatedly bullied and rejected by those she encountered – be it my mom's cats over Christmas, my roommate's cat years ago in Chicago, and two fosters. Something about her seemed weak and undesirable. She, in turn, became fearful of most living things. But the bunnies changed that. When Greta first joined her home in 2013, Bouquet gained in confidence. Each new bunny that entered the house, even for a day, would be anointed by her – first with a forehead sniff, then a nose nudge, and usually a lick on the ear or head. She soon added them to her daily perimeter patrol.

Bouquet is not gone. But her world shrinks smaller each day. Tonight we plan on carrying her down to her couch-pillow where she can look down on Pippi and Dashie as they binky and pritter-patter about. Butter won't be there to vex her. But when Bouquet stands, the markings on her two legs will together form a perfect heart. Which is what she will always be to us.

## We Are Looking for Loving Homes:

These Rabbits Are in Foster Care



Ashton.



Romeo.



Ernie.



Gussie.



Carmela.

### Ashton

He is a medium-sized dark chocolate Rex who is as soft as he is fabulous! Ashton is a super-friendly, young boy who loves attention. He is an easygoing, inquisitive extrovert. Ashton has been enjoying living in a bunny-friendly home. He has been moderately active, but we have much more to learn about him. If interested in potentially adopting please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

### Gussie

Gussie is a small, young girl who is cute as a button. This little nugget has big beautiful eyes, one blue and one brown,

surrounded in thick black eyeliner. Gussie is very a sweet little cherub. She loves to snuggle with her stuffed animal friend, explore and eat. She is on the independent side, but loves nothing more than to be petted by someone who has gained her trust. She has been affected by some trauma in her life that left her quite anxious. She desperately needs her own person – someone with a calm demeanor who can provide her with a peaceful, quiet and stable home to call her own. Gussie is spayed, litter-box trained and living in a foster home. If you would like to help this little one find happiness, please contact us at [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### 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).

### Ernie

Ernie is a handsome, medium-sized young bunny who was in bad shape upon being rescued, apparently because

*(Continued on page 16)*

**Rabbits in Foster Care**

*(Continued from page 15)*

he was left outdoors. We got him the vet care and TLC he needed, and now he is looking for a forever home. Ernie has a great appetite for pellets and greens, but still will not eat any hay, so about every three months he must have his molar spurs filed down by a rabbit-savvy vet. This is a relatively quick procedure, and he has always started eating immediately afterward. Ernie is an active and curious rabbit, but still very shy and not much interested in humans (other than when you offer food, of course!), so we think he would be best off as a partner rabbit. He has been neutered and has very good litter-box skills. If interested in fostering or adopting this resilient, hunky bunny, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Pineapple and Sugarplum.

**Pineapple and Sugarplum**

Pineapple and Sugarplum are a beautiful pair of large Lionhead sisters who were born in the shelter as part of a litter of five babies, before we took the whole young family into our rescue. Their mother, two sisters and brother have all been adopted and now it's their turn. Pineapple is black and white, while Sugarplum is all black – and both have amazing manes of hair! These girls are shy at first but have tons of energy and are a joy to watch as they exercise--running and binkyng with reckless abandon! They have been spayed and are living in foster care. If you are interested in adopting Pineapple and Sugarplum, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Margo and Diamond.

**Forever Homes Found!**

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Angel, Violet, Lola, Jack, Sashimi, Lulu, Cinnabon, Nova, Lannister, Milo, Poppy, Peter, Silly Billy, Gouda, Pirate Loot, Rutabaga Rabinowitz, Penelope, Charlie, Nina, Bonnie and Clyde, Corazon, Lulu, Zhen, Gleep, Strawberry Truffle, Sunday, Noir and Marble.



# Letters From Adopters

## Penny

*Amy Liao adopted Lola, now known as Penny, in early January. Here is her great update, sent shortly after the adoption.*

We adopted Lola on Saturday, Jan. 4, and named her Penny (because she has patches of copper-colored fur)!

Penny is such a sweetheart. She shows no signs of aggression and enjoys head scratches.

She was a little shy and lethargic the first two days we got her. According to her adoption papers, she had been spayed a week earlier, so it made sense, but I monitored her poop. She's eating and pooping regularly now.

Photo: Amy Liao



Penny.

At home, we have a pet pen that is 4 feet by 8 feet, in the middle of the living

room, and it's expandable! We keep it open when we are at home.

Inside her pen she has a giant hay bin, a big bowl of water, a smaller bowl for pellets, a hut, and a cardboard hidey house that I constructed.

Most nights when we are watching TV, she'll hop up next to us on the couch and nap. A few times we caught her snoring!

She's really has become a part of the family. We love her so much.

All the best,

Amy Liao

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Photo: Beth Metro



Bugs.

## Bugs

*Bugs was adopted in early December by Beth Metro, who reports that he is having a wonderful time.*

Bugs is doing great.

He's such a character. I wish my camera had a setting that was quick enough for him.

He's an avid jumper who only stops to be adored with attention or to investigate the contents of a bag or box.

He has a welcoming spirit that everyone has enjoyed.

Beth Metro

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Photo: Mattie Digiovanni



Sashimi.

## Sashimi

*Sashimi was adopted in January by Mattie Digiovanni, who sent us this great update.*

Sashimi is one year and one week old and knows exactly what she wants.

When she wants to be petted, she boops her nose into your hand.

She loves romaine lettuce and raspberries as treats.

Her favorite toy is a round wooden ball that she pushes with her nose. Sashimi enjoys chillin' in her pen and being joined by human friends for playtime!

Mattie Digiovanni

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CELEBRITIES IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Victoria.



Peter.



Nova.



Star.



Tina.



Pippi and Dashie.



Penny has first dibs on the couch.

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# HE'S NOT AN EASTER TOY.

## HE'S A REAL, LIVE, 10-YEAR COMMITMENT.

It's that time of year again. Pet store windows are filled with adorable baby bunnies. Your kids are begging you to buy one. It's so hard to resist. After all, you think, wouldn't this be the perfect, low-maintenance "starter pet" for a young child?

Think again! Every year, many thousands of rabbits are abandoned to shelters or released outdoors (a sure death sentence for a domestic rabbit), often because of misunderstandings on the part of the parents who bought them for their kids.

Rabbits are prey animals by nature. They are physically delicate and fragile, and require specialized veterinary care. Children are naturally energetic, exuberant, and loving. But "loving" to a small child usually means holding, cuddling, carrying an animal around in whatever grip their small hands can manage — precisely the kinds of things that make most rabbits feel insecure and frightened. Rabbits handled in this way will often start to scratch or bite, simply out of fear. Many rabbits are accidentally dropped by small children, resulting in broken legs and backs. Those rabbits who survive the first few months quickly reach maturity and are no longer tiny and "cute." Kids often lose interest, and the rabbit, who has no voice to remind you he's hungry or thirsty or needs his cage cleaned, is gradually neglected.

Parents, please help! If you're thinking about adding a rabbit to your family, think about this: pet rabbits have a life span of 7-10 years. Don't buy on impulse. Wait until after the holiday. Make an informed decision by learning about rabbit care first. Consider adopting a rabbit from your local shelter or rescue group. For the rabbit's health and well-being (as well as for your child's) make sure an adult will be the primary caretaker and will always supervise any children in the household who are interacting with the rabbit. Domestic rabbits are inquisitive, intelligent, and very social by nature. A rabbit is a delightful companion animal as long as you remember: he's not a child's toy. He's a real, live, 10-year commitment!

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON RABBIT CARE AND ADOPTIONS  
IN YOUR AREA, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HUMANE SOCIETY OR  
VISIT THE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY AT [WWW.RABBIT.ORG](http://WWW.RABBIT.ORG)**

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## 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

## 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).

## Licensed HRS Educators

### NYC/Westchester:

**M.C. Basile**, Chapter Manager,  
NYC House Rabbit Society

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

**Jeanine Callace**, [Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net](mailto:Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net)  
**Alex Mcle**, [alexlmcie@gmail.com](mailto:alexlmcie@gmail.com)

**Marcie Frishberg**

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

**Cindy Stutts**, [bygolyoly@yahoo.com](mailto:bygolyoly@yahoo.com),  
(646) 319-4766

**Monica Shepherd, DVM**

### Long Island:

**Nancy Schreiber**, President, Long Island  
Rabbit Rescue Group,  
[nschreibmd@gmail.com](mailto:nschreibmd@gmail.com), (516) 510-3637,  
[LongIslandRabbitRescue.org](http://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org)

**Mary Ann Maier**, Long Island Rabbit  
Rescue Group Volunteer,  
[altitude8@yahoo.com](mailto:altitude8@yahoo.com),  
[LongIslandRabbitRescue.org](http://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org)

**Donna Sheridan**, Long Island Rabbit Rescue  
Group Volunteer, [hpocus217@yahoo.com](mailto:hpocus217@yahoo.com),  
[LongIslandRabbitRescue.org](http://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org)

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**

**Laura George, DVM**

## THUMP FEBRUARY 2020

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS  
[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 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).