

THE HOP



NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS JANUARY 2021

Lenny's Zoomies Help Us Get Through The Pandemic

By Samantha Rowan

I've had pets my entire life but have never spent as much time with a single one as I have with our rabbit, Lenny. The pandemic has meant that our entire family – two parents, one boy and one rabbit – are together almost 24 hours a day, and having Lenny has made what's been a difficult year a little better.

We adopted Lenny from Rabbit Rescue & Rehab a little more than six years ago.

(Continued on page 5)

Photo: Katie Tibaldi



Tina and Amy.

Tina, the Boy Who Passed as a Girl

By Jane O'Wyatt

"Amy Sedaris' pride and joy is Tina, her pet rabbit of the last four years – though she's had a bit of a surprise recently on that front. 'I found out Tina was a boy,' she says. 'That's a big thing happening in my life right now. Can you believe it? I can't change her name. She got sick and they had to give her a catheter and they were like, Amy, this is a boy rabbit.'"

– *Daily Beast*, Feb. 14, 2019

Tina has lived with Amy Sedaris for the past six years, and ever since Amy texted

me about Tina's belated gender reveal, I had been wondering how his sex came to be misidentified and why this false information had persisted for so long. So I asked Amy how she felt about me trying to solve this puzzle by writing a story about it, and she not only gave me the go-ahead but forwarded notes from rabbit volunteer Thea Harting about the litter of six baby bunnies from which Tina had come.

They were around three months old when they arrived at the Manhattan

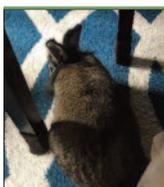
(Continued on page 2)

HRS Update: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) continues to spread. New cases were confirmed in December in California, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and Florida.

RHDV is a highly contagious disease caused by a calicivirus that affects rabbits.

(Continued on page 15)



Here Are Some Ways for You To Bunny-Proof Your Life

Page 5



A Brief Survey Of Rabbit Symbolism As We Seek Meaning In the New Year

Page 7



Never Underestimate The Abilities Of A Disabled Pet Rabbit

Page 9

Tina

(Continued from page 1)

shelter on Feb. 7, 2014. A weather buff in admissions named them Flurry, Tide, Sunshine, Seabreeze, Rainbow and Thunder, and the newcomers were sexed (precisely or not) by medical staff and volunteers. The small scale of young bunnies and the absence of visible scrotal sacs in prepubescent males can make gender identification tricky. Sometimes, too, it is difficult to distinguish one wiggly member of a litter from another, and the fact that Tina and every one of his siblings had agouti coats made it really hard to tell them apart. That litter was, in Thea's words, "a sea of big agouti babies!" Tina, known variously as Sunshine, a male, or Thunder, a female, limped due to a distinctive right front paw injury

that is conspicuous to this day. It seems, however, that sheer agouti-ness overrode Tina's injured foot as a signifier, and by Feb. 18, 2014, shelter volunteers had settled on the name Thunder for this bunny, described as "a sweetheart! Brave and inquisitive despite her handicap." Thunder was neutered (probably at the shelter, along with his two brothers) and

"A sea of big agouti babies!"

– Thea Harting

taken into foster care, where his unisex name was changed to Tina, a decision that both assumed and reinforced his gender misidentification. For four years the girly label stuck.

Later that same year, after six long months in a cage downstairs at the Union Square Petco store, Tina hit the jackpot. Amy, a longtime house rabbit owner whose beloved Dusty had died, adopted him. Like many rabbit people in mourning, Amy had donated all of Dusty's stuff to the shelter. She planned to wait for two years before getting another bunny. But "Rabbits seem to find you," Amy now says, and she made it easy for Tina to find her. "I went by Petco one day and saw Tina running around in a puppy pen," she remembers. "A volunteer in the pen with her said, 'How can someone not adopt this bunny? She is so charming.' Well, when I heard the word 'charming,' I was intrigued. I went back in the middle of the week and Tina was in her small, messy cage under a cardboard box. When I went back again a few days later, she was gone. I was very upset, because I really wanted her. Turns out she was in the back for some reason, so I was able to adopt her. Tina is the biggest rabbit I've ever had. She weighs seven pounds!"

In early 2016 I received an email from Amy asking if I could take care of Tina for a couple of days while she was out of town. I jumped at the chance because I had met Amy at a bunny conference in Westchester and had heard about Tina's adoption. Also, we lived in the same neighborhood, so her place was just a few minutes away. My job-interview visit was an eye-opener, because, while I had bunny-sitting cred with Amy (Dr. Laura George of Catnip & Carrots had recommended me), Tina subjected me to an exacting and initially skeptical examination – as if deciding whether he would ever allow me to enter his apartment again. I had showered and changed into freshly laundered clothes beforehand and was on my best behavior, sitting quietly on the floor of Amy's living room, without touching him, while he sniffed and sniffed me. Finally he invited me to scratch his forehead and then hopped away. Amy said, "Wow, she was all over you. I think you

(Continued on page 3)

Photos: Theo Harting



Tina and his siblings were hard to tell apart!

Tina

(Continued from page 2)

passed the test.” I was vastly relieved, because I knew that Tina was a smart and emotionally complex being who didn’t suffer fools gladly, and that Amy, who adored and was keenly attuned to him, was one of the best bunny people I had met. Her care of Tina was knowledgeable, her instructions clear and her preparations meticulous. She made individually bagged salads, and Tina’s hay supply was near her litter box – I never had to search for anything. Tina roamed freely throughout the bunny-proofed apartment, had perfect litter-box skills and was allowed to chew on everything within reach. He proved a cozy and entertaining host, who would run and binky despite his injured right paw, pose patiently for photos, park himself beside me on the floor for petting and show me his latest demolition projects, which included Amy’s bed-clothes and a tattered copy of the now-extinct Manhattan Yellow Pages. But there always came a time, after

“When I found out she was he, I thought, well, that makes sense – he can be so tough and moody.”

– Amy Sedaris

about an hour, when Tina would retreat to one of his power spots, seeming to dismiss me. When I took the hint and prepared to leave, he rarely followed me to the door.

I had no idea that Tina was a castrated male until Amy told me that Dr. Jennifer Saver of Catnip & Carrots had made the discovery while inserting a urinary catheter. At first Amy was gobsmacked by the news that this rabbit with whom she had been so intensely involved for four years was he and not a she. Amy wondered if she should call Tina Tino and struggled with pronouns. Recently I

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Tina with the Yellow Pages.

asked her if she found herself treating Tina like a boy. “Just to amuse myself, I do,” she said, “I like to pamper him more, I guess. Sometimes I just think of him as a little boy and want to mother him.” Then I asked, “Do you think that Tina acts like a boy or a girl?” Her reply: “All rabbits can be demanding and bossy. But I think Tina really responds to a male voice. When my friends Adam or Todd or Paul come by, Tina is all over them. But I have to really beg for attention sometimes. When I found out she was he, I thought, well, that makes sense – he can be so tough and moody.” Tina’s predecessor Dusty, a spayed Rex female, was very different from Tina. “He will get on the bed at night and morning but sleeps elsewhere. Dusty slept in bed with me all the time. Dusty was more affectionate. I love it when Tina lets his guard down and lets me cuddle him. When this happens, I always say to him, ‘Well, look where you are!’ Acting so tough and hard to get, but then there he is next to me wanting a rubdown. I caught Tina on my bed in the middle of the day last week and it made me feel really good.”



Tina.

Although I have met hundreds of house rabbits, neither a cursory look nor long-term acquaintance has ever yielded enough information for me to tell the gender of a “fixed” bunny without having a careful look at her or his genitalia. After generic hormonal behaviors subside

(Continued on page 4)

Tina

(Continued from page 3)

in the wake of spay/neuter surgery, the unique post-binary personality of each rabbit becomes apparent, and Tina, the boy who passed as a girl, is a case in point. But apart from rumor and/or paperwork, what could have sustained, over a four-year period, the original confusion at the shelter between Sunshine, a male, and Thunder, a female?

After neuter surgery, a young male rabbit's empty scrotal sacs quickly atrophy and become almost invisible. Unlike spayed or neutered cats and dogs, whose gender is discernable at a glance, sterilized rabbits have exterior sexual organs in their lower abdomens that are visible only on close inspection. Both penis and



Tina and friends.

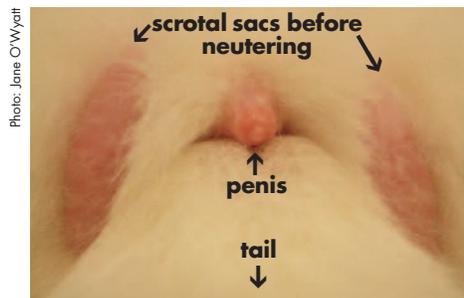
vulva are modestly obscured by fur and have to be manually extruded to be seen; they look different but not blatantly so. Assuming that a rabbit named Tina was a spayed female, Amy felt no need to pry, and some bunny vets would probably not have checked either, except in an emergency such as Tina's inability to pee. When taking a rabbit's temperature, it's possible to insert a thermometer into an anus that is just 0.5 centimeters away from a befurred penis or vulva – without knowing which is which. It's also possible to clean a rabbit's scent glands without knowing if they are hers or his. Only Dr. Saver, tasked with unblocking Tina's urinary tract, looked closely enough at his genitalia to be able to say, "Amy, this is a boy rabbit."

MALE? FEMALE? How to Tell the Difference

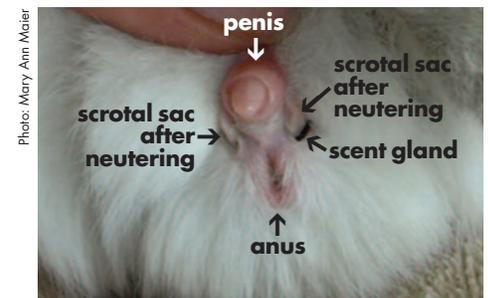
MALE

In a mature unneutered male rabbit, two pink, hairless scrotal sacs are usually visible. However, since a male can pull his testes up into his abdomen, scrotal sacs may be hard to see.

When gentle pressure is applied near the genital region, the penis in a mature, intact male can be extruded. In a very young male, or occasionally in a neutered adult, only the prepuce (foreskin) of the penis may be seen. The prepuce of a rabbit's penis is round and flat. Immature



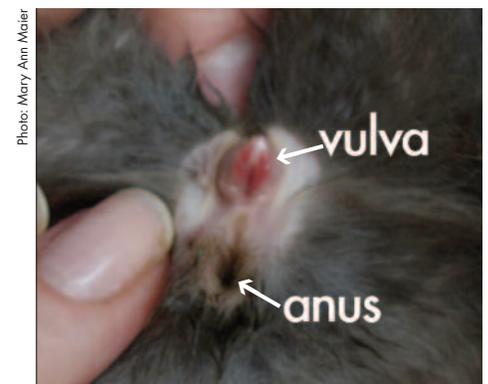
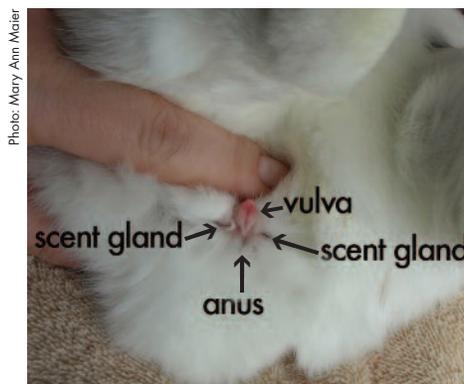
males with undescended testicles have scrotal sacs that are almost invisible, and it may not be easy to extrude the penis.



After a male has been neutered, his empty scrotal sacs atrophy until they become almost invisible.

FEMALE

When gentle pressure is applied near the genital region, the vulva emerges. A rabbit's vulva is slit-like, with a pointed protrusion. The vulva's protrusion is located cranially – toward the head, away from the tail.



Bunny-Proof Your Life: My Favorite Tips for Mischievous Bunnies

By Megan Hilands

I've lived with bunnies for more than eight years, and if I've learned anything during that time it's that bunny-proofing is more of a continuous process than a one-time activity. My bunnies have been completely uninterested in certain pieces of furniture for months – if not years. Then BAM! One day I walk into the room to find said piece of furniture “improved” (chewed) by a bunny.

Like many of us, I've had bunnies destroy more than one computer charger, and challenge my limited sewing skills after they've gnawed on a favorite sweatshirt. But I have learned a few tricks over the years that have helped protect my belongings from damage, and keep my bunnies from ingesting some (at best) questionable snacks. Here are a few of my favorite bunny-proofing tips.

If you're moving, look for a home's bunny-friendly features.

A few years back I read about a family who renovated their home to better bunny-proof and I absolutely loved the idea. Before we moved this past September, I mentally noted aspects of potential homes that would make them more amenable to bunnies.

The house we ultimately chose had the following:

- Multiple electric outlets situated 3+ feet off the ground(!)
- Doors to the kitchen and sunroom (which I use as my office) that can be closed to keep out mischievous bunnies as needed
- Radiators flush with the wall that the bunnies cannot attempt to crawl under, and aren't tempted to chew

I'm not necessarily suggesting that's why we moved into this particular house, but these features really helped me envision our family living there. (Note: I realize

not everyone is in a position to move but there are a lot of people transitioning to new spaces right now as a result of Covid-19.)

Never use the bottom of your bookshelf (at least not for books).

My main principle in bunny-proofing is to keep as much as I can OUT of the bunnies' reach. All of the bottom shelves on our bookcases are kept empty to reduce the temptation. Sometimes I'll use lower shelves for metal or hard plastic items bunnies would have trouble chewing, but for the most part I keep them bare. Sometimes the bunnies actually sit on or next to the empty bottom shelves... which is about as cute as it sounds.

Really mind your electrical outlets (keep 'em high if you can).

How much money have we all spent replacing whatever expensive charger the

(Continued on page 6)

Lenny

(Continued from page 1)

Lenny settled into life at our apartment perhaps a little more slowly than some of his predecessors – we think his time running on the streets of the Bronx made him less trustful of humans – but we realized early on that he was a complete snuggle bun who loved us and trusted us.

Life proceeded pretty normally for Lenny for the next six years – kibble and hay, head pets, long naps in the most inconvenient places, and couch snuggles. Like most rabbits, he was mostly sleeping when we were out of the apartment and at his best in the morning and evening.

And then Covid-19 happened. Suddenly, there were three somewhat agitated and bewildered humans around at all times. Lenny initially seemed to miss his usual set-up – long hours of quiet to nap during the day – and spent a week or so sitting with his back to us. To be fair, we made a lot of noise.

Then Lenny, like the rest of us, started to adapt. His favorite sleeping place became the area directly next to my chair and I got to watch his luxurious naps as I sat on endless Zoom calls. Sometimes he'd wake up and snuffle around my feet for some pets.

Photo: Samantha Rowen



Lenny.

He stands next to someone's chair and stares until he gets pets.

Always quick to express his pleasure or displeasure, Lenny has started to make his feelings even more known. If he wants to get pets, he stands next to someone's chair and stares until he gets pets. If he wants more hay, he goes over to the hay box and stares until he gets

hay. And when we have the temerity to pop the door shut on his cage while we are mopping the floor, he puts his paws on the food bowl and stares until we open the door again.

Nine months of this and you can imagine – we are pretty well trained.

I've always believed it was a privilege to have a pet and I've never felt that more than I have this year. Lenny, always a source of joy, was a wonderful friend during the worst days of the lockdown.

Lenny is eight or so now, but you wouldn't know that when you see his zoomies on the couch (now the whole family zooms in one way or another).

We've started to think about what it'll be like, eventually, when we're back at the office and school. Will Lenny miss us as much as we will miss him? Or will he be glad to get his quiet back?

It'll probably be a little of both.

Bunny-proof Your Life

(Continued from page 5)

bunnies have chosen as their latest victim? When I adopted my first bunny, the first thing the rescue told me to do was to cover all of the electrical cords in my apartment with plastic cord covers from the hardware store. I quickly found my bunny liked to chew the cord covers almost as much as the electrical cords themselves.

While I think cord covers are amazing for preventing the risk of electric shock, I find it more effective to keep chargers out of bunnies' reach as much as possible (hence why all of the high outlets in my house are such a plus!).

When I've lived in smaller places or places where all of the outlets are near the ground, I've devoted kitchen or even bathroom outlet spaces to chargers and hid necessary cords (such as those for lamps) behind dressers or other furniture.

My bunny liked to chew the electrical cord covers almost as much as the cords themselves.

Cover the legs of your wooden furniture with chair socks.

Before living in my current home, I was adamant about buying only chairs with metal legs. But then I was gifted a nice (but wooden) dining set.

For a few weeks my bunnies loved nothing better than to dart to our dining room and start trying to chew the chairs! I tried almost everything I could think of until one day I came across "chair socks" online. You can buy them cheaply on sites like Amazon or Walmart and they really have deterred my bunnies from trying to chew my furniture! As a bonus, the color almost matches the wood, and from a distance you can barely tell they're not part of the chair. These socks are probably the best purchase I have made all year.

I'd love to hear what other bunnies have done to keep their homes intact!

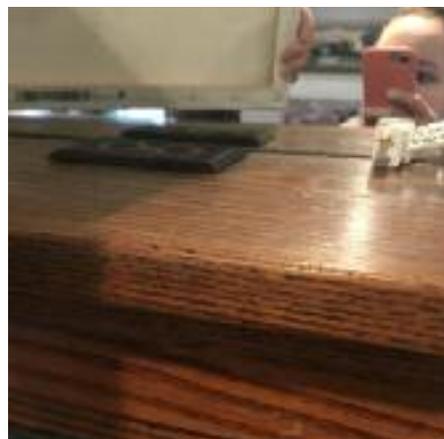
Photos: Megan Hlonds



I love this door – it's so easy to keep the bunnies out of the room! I guess I don't like open floor plans.



The bookshelf has the bottom shelf open. While the bunnies can technically reach the next shelf while periscoping, the books are much harder for them to chew.



My mantle has an outlet right at the top – how convenient! You can put a canvas or photo frame in front and you would never know it's there.



I also have outlets on built-in cabinets in my office. (Please ignore the outlet cover that has seen better days.)



Nala reluctantly approves of the TV setup, even though she can't chew the cords anymore.



Chair sock close-up.



Simba inspecting the chair socks.

Gazing at the Moon: A Brief Survey of Rabbit Symbolism As We Search for Meaning in the New Year



Art by Nadine Heidinger, inspired by Pippi Heidinger.

By Amelia Wilson

For many the “New Year” is a time heavy with symbolism and magic. Though there is scarcely a temporal difference between Dec. 31 and Jan. 1, we assign great expectation, ambition and resolve to that tiny sliver of time. We wish for health and prosperity, luck and brighter times, and search for signs that this year will be better than the last. The year 2020, in particular, is one so many of us want to believe can be “shut,” like a long, nightmarish book.

In the modern popular conscience, the rabbit is often associated with luck and speed. I recently learned that Sarah Jessica Parker’s first words each month are “rabbit rabbit,” which some believe will bring luck for the rest of the month. But the folklore of the rabbit is extremely long, rich, diverse and complicated.

In Greco-Roman mythology the hare symbolized lust and abundance. Rabbits were protected by Aphrodite, the goddess of love and fertility, while Freyja, the Norse goddess of sensuality, was accompanied

by several hare attendants. The Great Hare (Nanabozho) was an important figure in Algonquin, Winnebago and other central and eastern Native American tribes where he occupied an ambivalent space of both trickster and bringer of light.

The moon rabbit legend remains popular throughout Asia. The Moon Hare appears in the “Chu Ci,” an anthology of Chinese poetry composed during the Han dynasty but derived from poems that were written as early as 221 B.C. Many “Chu Ci” verses involved plants, spiritual journeys and interactions with deities. The Moon Hare can be seen in

A rabbit offers his own body to a hungry beggar who is actually the ruler of heaven.

the dark markings on the near side of the moon, where he is eternally pounding magical herbs into an elixir for the immortals. In the Buddhist Jataka Tales, a rabbit offers his own body to a hungry beggar who is actually the ruler of heaven, Sakra, in disguise. Sakra was moved by the rabbit’s charity and casts the rabbit’s likeness onto the moon for all to revere. In Vietnam the Jade Rabbit is one of three personifications of the Mid-Autumn Festival. Each year the Jade Rabbit and his companions descend to the mortal world to give mooncakes and lanterns to the children.

As Christianity spread throughout Europe the rabbit was treated less charitably. Rabbits were viewed with great suspicion, believed to be witches’ familiars or even witches in animal form. Carolyne Larrington writes in her book “The Land of the Green Men: A Journey Through the Supernatural Landscapes of the British Isles” that the “witch-hare”

(Continued on page 15)

These Videos About Rabbit Care Provide Help During Pandemic

By Katie Scarr

Veterinarians had to make the difficult decision to suspend face-to-face appointments this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. This has made many things – such as teaching owners certain discharging instructions – difficult. To help provide the same level of amazing service to their clients, Dr. Jennifer Saver of Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital asked Mary Ann Maier and myself to help her create videos to teach: how to check surgery incisions, giving oral medications, temperature taking, and litter-box setup.

These helpful videos are viewable with the below links and on LIRRG's YouTube channel along with other great outtakes from some virtual classes we taught through the pandemic.

[Female Incision](#)

[Male Incision](#)

[Giving Oral Medication](#)

[Temperature Taking](#)

[Litter-box & Housing Setup](#)

[How to lift your rabbit](#)

[Nail Clipping](#)

[Grooming your rabbit](#)



[Female Incision](#)



[Male Incision](#)



[Giving Oral Medication](#)



[Temperature Taking](#)



[Litter-box & Housing Setup](#)



[How to lift your rabbit](#)



[Nail Clipping](#)



[Grooming your rabbit](#)

Never Underestimate a Disabled Rabbit

By Celeste Roccanova

A little over a year ago, my parents and I discussed getting a rabbit. As part of our research, I looked on Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group's website. When I was scrolling through everything they had, I stopped for a second. There was a cute, ruby-eyed white rabbit looking out at me. Her name was Francine. I read her bio and I knew I would do anything to try to adopt this rabbit.

A while later, I was once again visiting the LIRRG website, and I decided to look at the disabled rabbits they had for adoption. I did already have my heart set on Francine, though. Scrolling down the list and learning about each rabbit was fun, until I saw her. Francine was on the disabled rabbits list. Upon reading more, I discovered one of her legs didn't work right. I knew I still wanted to adopt her, but what about my parents? This would be my first pet; would they be ok with me adopting a disabled rabbit?

I called my parents in tears, and begged them to let me adopt Francine. I just had to change my plans for her pen setup, save even more money for vet

She managed to hop up on the couch! I was so impressed!

bills, and basically change every plan I had, but that was fine...right? I still wanted to adopt this rabbit. I would do anything to adopt her. My parents had never said "yes" to my original request to adopt a rabbit, but after this moment many things changed. Their hearts must have softened.

My dad started talking to me about plans to build a pen for Francine. My mother and I would talk about different rugs to get so the floor would be soft in case she

lost her balance and fell. We started collecting supplies for little Francine.

Several months later, we were ready to adopt. I was so excited. I had everything ready. Francine came home and we were able to evaluate her condition better. She could hop around but she was a little shaky and uncertain. This was fine, and I made it so she didn't have to jump high for anything.

A few days passed and I took her out to play in an area of our house that was bunny-proofed. This area has a couch on which I had left a bag of treats, assuming Francine would never be able to jump that high. Because the room was bunny-proofed, I left her alone for a little while. Then all of a sudden, I heard a THUD. I rushed out to check on her, and the bag was on the floor. "Did she hop on the couch? She couldn't have, could she?"

I went over to where the bag had previously sat, and saw two little bunny poops. She had hopped up on the couch. I should have been mad that she had gotten into the treats, but how could I be angry? She managed to hop up on the couch! I was so impressed!

I went to tell my family, after clearing off some of the other tempting things I had put on the couch, and when I returned, I found her lying on the couch! She had jumped up there again! The couch is now one of her favorite places, and after settling in, she can do some pretty impressive binkies.

She still manages to get into trouble, even with her bad leg. I love her so much, but I learned my lesson. Never underestimate a rabbit.

Photos: Celeste Roccanova



Francine on the couch.



Francine with a special toy.

College With Cookie!

By Farah Hasan

The past semester was a tough one for college students. For those of us engaged in online learning, our days consist of joining one Zoom call after another. We are usually glued to our seats for hours at a time. Enduring this lifestyle for 16 weeks straight can get quite boring, and above all, quite lonely.

Through it all, however, my quiet but cuddly best friend has unfailingly kept me company. She comes to virtual lab meetings with me, watches bio lectures with me, and knows exactly how to help me de-stress before midterms or finals. Most surprisingly of all, she doesn't have to say a single word to do any of it. Yes, my silent BFF is my bunny, Cookie!

Each day, I wake up at least an hour earlier than I normally would to allow myself time to take care of Cookie-related responsibilities before my first class of the day starts. I turn on the golden string lights in her room for some light in addition to the sunlight already streaming into her pen, clean her litter box, refill her hay, and make her morning salad out of her favorite fresh vegetables. After I've finished these tasks and spent some time with her, I quickly eat my own breakfast and then proceed to start my school day.

As someone who is definitely not a morning person, having to wake up an hour earlier than usual was annoying initially, but Cookie's big brown eyes and loving personality keep me going. Contrary to what many people may think, having a pet is not necessarily a responsibility that adds to one's regular workload of school, work, family, etc. In fact, having a pet actually enhances one's other responsibilities for the better. Knowing that you always have a faithful friend by you and that you do the good deed of loving/caring for an animal each day is a daily boost of confidence and

Photo: Farah Hasan



Cookie.

reassurance as you tackle each day's tasks, which ultimately translate into improved mental health.

Cookie may not know how to solve synthesis reactions in organic chemistry or how to tell the difference between action

She comes to virtual lab meetings with me, watches bio lectures with me, and knows exactly how to help me de-stress.

potentials in skeletal muscle and cardiac contractile cells, but she *does* know how to keep me sane during difficult times, which I think is the most important thing of all. Waking up earlier makes me more productive throughout the day. I have an excuse to leave my house and get some fresh air once in a while when I buy more vegetables for her, and I have someone to rant to about school and exams. She may not be able to verbally respond, but her big eyes say it all!

Cookie won't be able to read this, but this article definitely goes out to her. I love you, Cookie!

Bunnies Are Full of Surprises

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Friends of LIRRG is a Facebook community of nearly 1,000 rabbit owners and rescue volunteers who live on Long Island. We asked our Friends, “What has been the greatest surprise for you since welcoming a house rabbit into your family?” and here’s what they had to say!

“My first pet was a bunny. I had no idea how much a bunny could poop & eat and how it was fine for them to eat their butt snacks (cecotropes). My greatest surprise was how picky and bossy bunnies can be. It’s incredible how their personalities shine.

“The way they let you know that they love you by licking and lying near you. Thumping! I had no idea that is how they warn us! When my rabbit first thumped I was confused. Now I just hug them through the scary stuff.

“I never knew how much loving bunnies changed me. The love I have for my

bunnies helps others understand that they are, ‘not just a rabbit.’” – Sandra N.

“That vet care for a rabbit is so specialized and, unfortunately, many vets won’t tell you that they are not rabbit-savvy.” – April O.

“Bonding rabbits is a roller-coaster ride! The first few weeks, my husband and I doubted our capabilities. It takes love, patience and commitment for them to tolerate, accept and eventually fall in love. Once they are bonded, it’s the sweetest thing to see.” – Angela C.

“The extended family that came along with my fur babies...bunny people rock!” – Lauren R.

“Our greatest surprise was the zoomies! Still so fascinating to watch our 2 lb Bruce show off his amazing strength and stamina as he runs around the house at about 30mph! We count the number of loops. He’s topped out at 10. His average is 5.” – Christina B.

“The greatest surprise for me was after working months at gaining her trust, one day she sat next to me and licked me. It was that day I knew she finally trusted me.” – Danielle P.

“The greatest surprise I’ve had since welcoming my baby into my home is how much unconditional love I receive every day. I come home and she runs over to me and immediately starts kissing me. I knew I was going to love her to the moon and back but I never expected her to give it back to me 10-fold.” – Rena D.

“The most wonderful surprise since we adopted Ru was how quickly she became attached to our 8-year-old son. Every morning, I wake up and let her out of her pen so I can spend time with her, but she will wait by the stairs for him to come down and cuddle her. She loves me and my husband for food, but she loves our son as her pal!” – JoAnna S.

Photos: Katie Scarr



Vera.



Mylo.

We Are Looking for Loving Homes: These Rabbits Are in Foster Care



Carmela.

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.

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.

JoJo

JoJo is a beautiful 8-pound blue-eyed white and tan rabbit who was found as a baby alone on the streets of Queens. A kind passerby first thought she must have seen a cat, but upon closer inspection



Ashton.



JoJo.

saw a little bunny she knew couldn't survive on her own. She took JoJo home to keep her safe and took wonderful care of her until JoJo moved into her Rabbit Rescue & Rehab foster home. Today, JoJo has grown into a big rabbit with an even bigger personality, full of puppy-like affection and enthusiasm. As a very young bunny, JoJo is looking for a forever home where she will have lots of room to run and channel her youthful



Skye.

energy into games and exercise. Very much a "people person," JoJo craves lots of one-on-one attention both during her exuberant waking hours and her quieter nap times. If you are interested in adopting JoJo, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Skye

Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit and mom to the litter of "colorful" babies (Pink, Green, Blue, Purple and Orange) who all look just like her. Skye was found alone, tragically dumped in Central Park in terrifyingly poor condition, clearly having been horribly mistreated for quite some time even before she was abandoned outside. A passerby thankfully saw Skye outside and, wanting to help this poor bunny, brought her back to his home. Once there, she surprised him with a litter of babies. When we first saw Skye shortly after she had given birth, every bone in her small, frail body was visible and all movement was taxing for her in her emaciated state. Still, Skye was a wonderful mother to her babies and slowly but

(Continued on page 13)

Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 12)

surely, she gained weight and became stronger. Today, Skye is completely healthy and enjoying some well-deserved free time now that her babies are grown up and off on their own adventures. Skye is looking for a quiet, calm human companion to match her sweet but reserved energy. She is a gentle soul who will form a close bond with her family and enjoy receiving affection, provided she is given the opportunity to approach first. Skye has a particular affinity for her Oxbow woven grass toys and is content to stretch out and fall into a deep sleep for afternoon naps. If you are interested in adopting Skye, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Pineapple and Sugarplum

Pineapple and Sugarplum are a beautiful pair of large Lionhead sisters who were



Pineapple and Sugarplum.

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 binkying 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.

Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Acoiris, Mars Bars, Chico, Snow, Bun Bun, Jazzy and Mulan.

Letter From Adopter

Mylo

Stephanie Towne adopted Mylo, formerly known as Jeremy, in 2018. He has been doing really well in his wonderful home.

I brought Jeremy (now Mylo) home from NYC ACC in May 2018. He was my first rabbit and I was clueless as to how to care for him. I got a lot of help from the staff and volunteers I am now hoping to take home a partner for him. I will be looking for another social, friendly and confident rabbit.

He has displayed so many good qualities. It's 2½ years later and I am so in love with him!

He is cage-free whenever I am home. I am 33 and single, with no children. Mylo and my niece are best friends. He also gets along really well with my mom's golden retriever and yellow lab. He is such a special part of the family.



Mylo.

It took a long time to trust the dogs around him. I'd say it took about a year. We noticed that the dogs would lie by the rabbit cage and took it very slowly from there. As close as the relationship is, we have a strict policy regarding food and toys around while rabbit and dogs are out together.

Thank you!

Stephanie Towne



Mylo with Stephanie's niece Everly and mom's dog Cody.

Dani, Our 'Tiny Beauty'

By Eva and Peter

We were so happy to take Dani home with us in February 2018. It took a while for her to adjust to her new home and to us (not her favorite species), but she started to communicate with us and the first thing she told us was: From now on, give me only Selective pellets and not Oxbow, which I ignored.

I think she loved her pen right away and in time learned that she could rely on us to take care of her and give her treats.

She learned very quickly to look for Selective pellets in my hand and would run off in a huff if I forgot. Slowly, she started to accept pets and would sometimes ask for them and other times would give us the tushy. I called her "my five-pound ball of No" as she had only one rubber stamp: "Not allowed."

Two and a half years later, Dani was diagnosed with a very large thymoma. When she started taking meds for her thymoma, I would put the medication in a sliver of banana as her microbiome was no longer a priority. (Using a syringe, which I had done in the past, was "Not allowed.") She was so happy to get the banana, her new favorite food, and all of her other favorites, which I kept rotating through the day. She was very "hopped up" from being on prednisone and would charge me to see what kind of treat I had for her.

In the end, we were with her all the time and she was finally accepting and asking for pets. It seems surreal to realize both that we had this little spirit and now that we don't. We still can't believe that we lost our "tiny beauty." Dani died on Dec. 8.

Photos: Eva



Dani.

Rabbit Symbolism

(Continued from page 7)

was a treacherous shapeshifter who steals from neighbors but uses its speed and guile to evade capture.

Rabbits' feet – the macabre talisman that even Franklin D. Roosevelt was said to have carried in his pocket – are thought to have emerged in the 1800s among European/Anglo Americans who likely appropriated the custom from Afro and Afro-Caribbean cultures that practiced witchcraft. In his 2004 book "Lucifer Ascending: The Occult in

Folklore and Popular Culture," professor of English and American studies Dr. Bill Ellis calls this appropriation "vernacular occultism." He asks whether these folk traditions – including not just rabbit feet, but also Ouija boards, black books and mirror gazing – can provide a "reasoned middle ground" in debates among Christian faiths about the existence of the supernatural (and demonic).

This short piece is far from exhaustive on the subject of rabbit lore. But it is an important reminder as we look to 2021 that we can find magic and majesty in our sweet companions. Since the earliest

recorded civilizations continuing through the modern era, rabbits have ignited our imaginations and connected us as human beings. May their resiliency, jubilation and abundance inspire us all, and see us through.

Contributor's note: I want to thank Terri Windling, whose "Into the Woods" series, 54: *Following the Hare* (Friday, Oct. 30, 2015) informed much of the research for this piece, as did her other entry, "Into the Woods" series, 43: *The Folklore of Rabbits & Hares* (Dec. 18, 2014).

HRS Update: RHDV

(Continued from page 1)

RHDV is often a very swift and sudden killer, giving little warning.

Symptoms may include loss of appetite; lethargy; high fever; seizures; jaundice; bleeding from nose, mouth or rectum; difficulty breathing and sudden death. Rabbits may die without showing any symptoms at all.

In December, new cases of the disease were confirmed in wild rabbits in the Bakersfield area of California. Affected California counties include Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego.

A new case of RHDV was confirmed in wild rabbits in Albany County, Wyoming. This is the first case of RHDV in the state.

RHDV2 was confirmed for the first time in Lake County, Fla., at the end of December.

New cases of RHDV were also confirmed in wild rabbits in Utah. Affected Utah counties now include Duchesne, Iron, San Juan, Sanpete, Wayne (Teasdale area), and Uintah.

There were also confirmed new RHDV cases in Colorado in December as well, in wild rabbits in Huerfano County. Affected Colorado counties now include Adams, Alamosa, Arapahoe, Custer, Denver, El Paso, Elbert, Fremont, Huerfano, La Plata, Larimer, Mesa, Montezuma, Prowers, Pueblo and Weld.

The outbreak has now spread to parts of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Florida and Mexico, affecting both wild and domestic rabbits. See a full list of outbreak areas at rabbit.org/rhdv.

Unfortunately, RHDV is expected to affect an increasing number of rabbits in the U.S. In 2015, in Australia the disease spread coast-to-coast in the rabbit population in 18 months (about 3 million square miles compared to the

United States' 3.8 million square miles) after it was first detected in the country. In Australia, RHDV outbreaks start in the fall and winter, peak in spring, and are mostly absent in summer, which was mostly the case with the 2020 Southwest outbreak.

For anyone living in an area affected by RHDV, the most important things you can do to help keep your rabbits safe are keeping your rabbits inside (including no outdoor playtime), taking biosecurity measures at home, and vaccinating rabbits when the vaccine is available (vaccine is available in current outbreak states only). Any sudden rabbit death is suspicious and should be reported to your veterinarian as a possible case of RHDV.

Download the RHDV handout to learn more at rabbit.org/rhdv.

As the outbreak continues to develop, House Rabbit Society will continue to keep the public updated.

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 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

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

Licensed HRS Educators

NYC/Westchester:

M.C. Basile, Chapter Manager,
NYC House Rabbit Society
Mary Cotter, Founder, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab,
Adviser to Thump, mec@cloud9.net,
(914) 337-6146

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

Marcie Frishberg

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

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

Monica Shepherd, DVM

Long Island:

Nancy Schreiber, President, Long Island
Rabbit Rescue Group,
nschreibmd@gmail.com,
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

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

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

Jennifer Saver, DVM

Laura George, DVM

THUMP JANUARY 2021

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.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 <https://www.rabbitrescueandrehab.org/donate>.

To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to www.longislandrabbitrescue.org.

Adoptable Rabbits

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

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

If interested in volunteering or fostering for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, please email 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). 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 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

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