



## NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS MARCH 2023

### In Memory of Carmine and Marshmallow (And Every Other Rabbit I Have Ever Known)

By M.C. Basile

All rabbits deserve to be remembered, including Carmine and Marshmallow.

I met Carmine for the first time in February 2013 while volunteering in the rabbit room at an animal shelter in Westchester County. He was a young and grumpy brown-and-white Lionhead and Dutch mix who had not yet grown out his full mane. I did not know where he came from or how he ended up at

the shelter, but he was endearing and reminded me of Elvis, and I hoped for the best home for him. At this shelter there was the typical complicated dynamic with volunteers and staff, with volunteers such as myself trying to help the staff and potential adopters understand rabbits in the way they should be understood, and the staff trying to adopt out animals as quickly as possible. Animal shelter

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### Is Your Bunny Lazy, Or Just Bored?

By Megan Hilands

I can hardly believe that my bonded bunnies, Simba and Nala, are now 8½ years old! I vividly remember bringing them home on a brisk January evening in 2016. As they settled into their X-pen, inspecting and chinning new boxes and toys, I remember thinking the color point on each of their noses looked a little like a heart. It was surely a sign, as it did not take me long to fall head over heels in love with them, even as I was still grieving the sudden loss of my first bunny, a 12-pound Californian named Baby.

As Simba and Nala have become more and more comfortable with their surroundings and their humans' routines, I have found that they can be a little lazy. In this way I find they are quite like us humans. If there's nothing exciting to do outside of our home, like seeing new shows or eating at restaurants, many of us will be a little less inclined to venture outside. I am certainly guilty of this at times.

Simba and Nala (and my younger bunny, Charlie, for that matter) are definitely similar. No new furniture to chin or wood blocks to chew? Well, they might as well just lounge in their home base/X-pen!

Fortunately, given that many buns like novelty, there are lots of easy strategies

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Photos: M.C. Basile



Carmine at play last spring.



Young Marshmallow relaxing in M.C.'s lap.

## Lazy or Bored

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you can employ to help them beat boredom and stay active.

### Find out what toys your bunnies really like

It took me the longest time to figure out what toys Charlie would actually use. When we first brought him home, he simply did not seem interested in the same things as Simba and Nala. For weeks, he did not touch the seagrass mats and cardboard tubes we offered in the X-pen.

It took some patience, trial and error, and a lot of Google searching to get him to do something other than chewing the X-pen bars. It turned out Charlie loves stackable plastic cups of all things, toys in which Simba and Nala really never showed much interest. He's branched out a bit more since, and also loves deconstructing wicker balls, particularly if he can stow them away in his hidey box after some nice handiwork.

Photos: Megan Hillands



Charlie with some of his most cherished belongings.



Simba and Nala are sitting with one of their favorite toys, a seagrass mat with extra goodies inside from Napoleon Bunnyparte.

## Involve your whole home

For a time when we let Simba and Nala free roam during exercise time, they would dart straight from their X-pen to the dining table (their favorite place in our home) and more or less remain there until it was time for the next meal. At first we thought maybe it was because they were getting a little older, but we started to troubleshoot because we wanted them to still have a good amount of physical activity.

We realized that they may have headed straight to that table because our main living area did not have much to entice a bunny. We then started to include treasured possessions like their cardboard tunnel and chew toys around the house. Suddenly, our home turned into something of a bunny jungle gym! Although visitors might wonder whether humans or bunnies are the dominant species in our house, the daily sprints and binkies are worth it.



This collapsible cardboard tunnel is one of Simba's favorites.

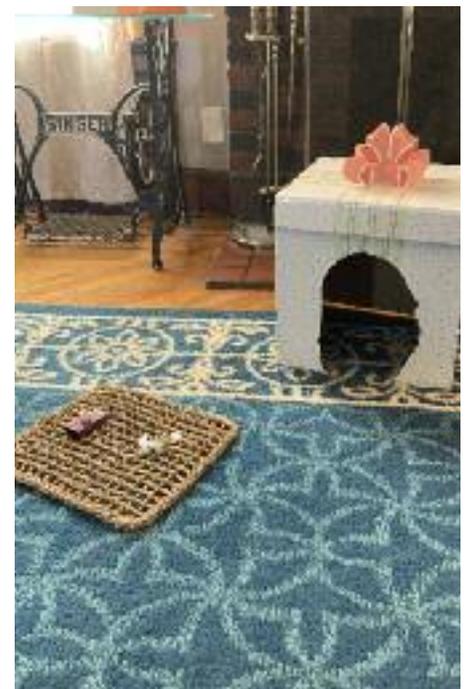
## Change up their surroundings

If bunnies had a real-estate slogan, I think it would be "rotation, rotation, rotation!" Keep a wooden chew toy in their area constantly and they might ignore it after a while, but include a few different toys in various places each day and I guarantee they will be rediscovering old classics again and again.

If you're more adventurous, you might also try moving around your own human furniture. I know some friends have said that after simply redecorating, their bunnies have been active for hours while they were thoroughly inspecting the seemingly new space.

However, with this advice, I would keep in mind that you likely know your bunny's temperament best and gut instinct will serve you well. It's possible that a big change like rearranging some couches or beds might cause a particularly nervous bunny to become a little upset, in which case you might be better off with smaller changes like new boxes or toy rotations.

With all this in mind, the next time you find yourself thinking, "Is my bunny too lazy?" try some of these tips to see if you re-stimulate their interest instead!



Some examples of the toys I lay out for the bunnies before exercise time.

# Thinking About Rabbits Ahead of the Easter Holiday

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

## Here is why it's a bad idea to buy a live bunny as an Easter present:

A gift of a live rabbit means no more to a small child in a few weeks than a plastic Halloween mask or a toy Santa Claus. But unlike those things, a rabbit will need daily care and attention to survive. A better choice is a plush toy Easter bunny that can be loved by small children without any maintenance and without any risk of injuring the fragile bunny. Live rabbits are not passive and cuddly. They are a ground-dwelling prey species and they feel frightened and insecure when held or restrained.

A rabbit can live eight to 12 years and may still be alive when the child goes off to college. A rabbit is a long-term commitment, not a child's toy.

Helpless females are often overbred in puppy-mill-like conditions to accommodate the seasonal market for Easter bunnies (as well as baby chicks and ducklings) and excess unsold "stock" is disposed of at the end of the Easter season. Disposal could mean a number of things: used as snake food; dumped outdoors to fall prey to raccoons, hawks, disease or the elements; or killed so as not to take up valuable store merchandise space.

Many pet-store baby bunnies don't survive past a few weeks, either because they were weaned underage to be sold as "baby dwarfs," or because they've contracted disease that their overstressed, overcrowded, and immune-compromised mothers carried. Overcrowded conditions help maximize pet-store profits for Easter, and many of these bunnies are sick at the time of purchase, often resulting in costly vet bills for the new owners, death for the young bunny, and trauma for the child who loved him.

A cute and cuddly tiny baby bunny soon grows larger and becomes a hormone-driven adolescent whose negative behaviors may cause people to regret buying the rabbit. Since many pet stores don't inform customers about the important role neutering plays to correct those behaviors and make a rabbit a more loving companion, local rescue groups receive many calls from people wanting to re-home their once-docile pet.

## Adopt a rescued rabbit from Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab or other groups if you are sure it is the right pet for you and your family because:

You are saving the life of an abandoned rabbit and making room in foster homes for one who would otherwise be euthanized in a public shelter.

You will be choosing a rabbit based not only on looks but on personality, too. He or she will be socialized and used to human contact.

Your rabbit will be vet checked, and spayed or neutered.

Your rabbit will be litter-box trained.

Rescue groups like ours provide instruction on handling, nail clipping, temperature taking, and assistance in integrating a bunny into your home. Volunteers are there for you if you have questions or need help after you've adopted and provide ongoing support.

## Consider these Easter gifts instead for small children:

Chocolate or marshmallow bunnies

A plush toy bunny

A Peter Rabbit video

Bunny slippers and other fun items to wear.

If you know someone who's thinking about purchasing a pet rabbit for Easter, give them the [House Rabbit Society's Children and Rabbits flyer](#) and ask them to watch this [Howcast video](#) with Mary Cotter titled "[Are Rabbits Good Pets for Children?](#)"



## In Memory

*(Continued from page 1)*

volunteers know about the fine line you teeter between making sure you remain on the good side of shelter staff as a helpful supporter of their efforts while doing your best for the rabbits and sometimes dying inside from the things going on that you cannot control. It is an incredibly emotional experience for volunteers who care for and grow to love a rabbit in a shelter, for sometimes weeks or months, only to have the rabbit disappear one day and not know where he or she went. Often, shelter volunteers spend a lot of time doing damage control after adoptions have already taken place, trying to make the situation for the rabbit better if the adopter is open to it. I developed a good relationship with this shelter's staff and eventually oversaw their rabbit adoption program, but at this time they would only provide me with the contact information of rabbit adopters, and I would reach out to them after the adoption, offering rabbit-care information and my support however they were willing to receive it.

When Carmine was adopted, I found out by seeing a post on the shelter's Facebook page late on a Friday night. I can still remember where I was in my living room and that sick feeling in my gut, desperately hoping his adopter knew about proper rabbit care and wondering what kind of situation he was going to. After reaching out to her, I was relieved to find his adopter open to information and my support, and even home visits. She turned out to be a great adopter and eventual volunteer, even adopting another rabbit shortly after to bond with him and keeping me updated on Carmine and Marshmallow's happy lives. I knew Marshmallow from when she was a baby as well, having been brought to the shelter after being found in a box outside of a store in Larchmont. I fostered her at home for several months and through her spay. She was one of the few rabbits I have known who willingly jumped into my lap and sat

Photos: M.C. Bealle



Young Carmine at the shelter.



Baby Marshmallow at the shelter.



Marshmallow and Carmine in April 2020.

there, lapping up love with no fear. She was an absolute joy to be around, and I was thrilled for her to eventually become Carmine's partner after a promising speed date.

Life circumstances can change even with the best adopters, but I was still shocked when this incredible pair was returned almost seven years later. The rabbit program they were adopted through no longer existed due to the shelter's building being deemed structurally unstable, and Rabbit Rescue & Rehab had taken on the responsibility for all rabbits adopted through it. So, into my home they came to be fostered, much older than the last time I had seen them but still with the spunk and sweetness of their younger selves. They were back up for adoption but it is very hard to find adopters for

older bonded pairs, and when adopters return rabbits, they rarely come with a donation of funds to help pay for their continued veterinary care. That financial burden then falls on the rescue, and it also means a space for another rabbit who needs a foster spot may not open for a long time, often years. It's an unfortunate situation and part of why those who foster for and donate to the rescue are so greatly appreciated.

Marshmallow and Carmine continued to live happily together, but Marshmallow had severe arthritis in her back legs and eventually lost her ability to use them. We tried various cocktails of medications and faux sheepskin flooring, but she reached a point when it was clear that for her own dignity as a rabbit, it was

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## In Memory

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time to help her cross over to the next chapter. Even when the right decision is so clear, it does not make it any less difficult, and with Marshmallow it was no different. Saying goodbye to her was heartbreaking, as it always is with someone you know and love. No matter how long I have had a rabbit in my home, a few months or a decade, whether they were adopted or fostered, that loss of them when they pass away just knocks the wind out of me and I seem to need to remind myself to breathe. I want my human children, who also have grown to deeply love the rabbits in our home and grieve when they leave our lives, to understand that what we do for them matters no matter how much it hurts in the end. We cannot take in everyone, and we cannot change what happened to them before they came to live with us, but we can make the rest of their lives great for those we can help. And hopefully, they only remember the kindness and compassion that surrounds them now and at the end of this life.

While we struggled with the loss of Marshmallow, thankfully Carmine

adjusted well to bachelor life. He shared a room with various other foster rabbits over the next few years, not bonded but always intrigued by his roommates. He had a few bouts of bladder sludge, but with supportive care pulled through well every time. Like my beloved Athena who passed away in 2018, his favorite fresh green was dandelion, so I provided ample amounts to him and hoped that its healing properties would keep an aging guy healthy. In the spring of 2022, it became clear that Carmine was slowing down and something was not quite right. X-rays showed that there was a growing mass in his chest cavity and it was likely cancer or an abscess, the location of which made it impossible to do anything significant to stop it. Knowing we had limited time, I worked especially hard to make Carmine as happy as possible, spending endless hours with him and petting him while he tooth purred between his feasts of dandelion.

Dreading it but knowing it was impending, I waited for the sign. Carmine was trying so hard to be normal, hopping around to his favorite spots in his room where he could see his roommate and stretching out in supermans on his fleece. He finally gave me that sign the

morning of June 25, when he was waiting for me in the doorway of his room and for the first time, he had difficulty breathing. I called Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital and the staff allowed me to bring him in right away. Dr. Jennifer Saver confirmed that he was at the very end, and in the most compassionate and gentle way as she always does, helped him painlessly cross over while I softly petted his head. The tissue sample taken from the mass in his lungs during his necropsy ultimately revealed that it was histiocytic sarcoma, a rare and aggressive form of cancer, which had unfairly shortened his life. I would like to think that somewhere, somehow, Carmine is now reunited with Marshmallow, and they are snuggling and grooming each other again as they did for so many years.

Despite the grief, I am profoundly grateful to have known Carmine and Marshmallow throughout their journey on Earth, and to have cared for them in their final years. I will never forget any of these beautiful creatures I am lucky enough to share my life with, and they have all become intricately woven into my own life, forever a part of me and my family.

Photos: M.C. Basile



Carmine letting his mane take a dip in his water bowl in 2021.



Heart-shaped Carmine and Marshmallow in spring 2020.



Carmine and his dandelion in April 2022.

## New RHDV2 Confirmations in California, Wyoming, Texas and British Columbia

By House Rabbit Society

RHDV2 continues its spread. It is the first of the rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus strains to affect both domestic and North American wild rabbit and hare species. The virus has a high death rate and a very short incubation period.

Symptoms of the virus can include loss of appetite, lethargy, high fever, difficulty breathing, seizures, jaundice and bleeding from the nose, mouth or rectum. As many as 70% to 100% of rabbits exposed to the virus will die within 48 hours to 10 days after exposure.

Even indoor-only rabbits are at risk of RHDV2, since the virus can be transferred to them by people (on their shoes and clothes), other animals (including dogs and cats, especially if they go outside), and even insects.

The most important thing you can do to protect your rabbits is to get them vaccinated, in those areas the vaccine is available.

In mid-February, RHDV2 was confirmed on Vancouver Island in British Columbia in feral rabbits. Also in February, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife confirmed RHDV2 in wild jackrabbits in Santa Clara County.

In January, both Wyoming and Texas reported more cottontail and jackrabbit deaths due to RHDV2.

A U.S.-based RHDV2 vaccine was given Emergency Use Authorization in 2021. The Medgene vaccine is available in 45 states and Washington, D.C., and is safe and effective. So far, Medgene safety testing studies report only rare instances of swelling at the injection site that resolve within 48 hours. Other possible side effects are a temporary slight fever and/or lethargy for one to two days.

To learn more about the Medgene vaccine, visit House Rabbit Society's RHDV resource [center](#).



If you have professional experience in PR, news media, broadcast media, social media or website management and would like to help rabbits, please reach out!

NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com

## Tips to Prevent Poisoning

By House Rabbit Society

Rabbit guardians should be aware of products that are toxic to rabbits.

Rodenticides are pesticides that kill rodents, and should be kept away from rabbits, whether in bait or trap form. Depending on the type, mouse and rat baits can cause bleeding, kidney failure, seizures, or even death in pets, including rabbits. For 17 states, including California, the most common pet toxin that people contact the Pet Poison Hotline about is rat bait, according to the ASPCA. Keep rodenticides far away from rabbits, including areas they might exercise in, and consider more humane methods of rodent control.

If your rabbit has mites or fleas, never use Frontline. Frontline (fipronil) has been linked to neurological damage and death in rabbits, although this product is apparently safe for dogs and cats. The manufacturer (Merial) has placed a warning on the Frontline label stating that Frontline should never be used on rabbits. Safe treatments to prevent and

kill fleas on rabbits include Advantage (imidacloprid), Program (lufenuron), and Revolution (selamectin). Learn more [here](#).

Toxic plants may result in death. Don't assume that if a bird, squirrel or pig ate a plant without any problems, others (rabbit or human) can do the same. Common toxic plants and plant parts include agave leaves, apple seeds, buttercup leaves, daffodils, holly (berries), hyacinths, irises, mistletoe (berries), sweet potato, and tomato (leaves). Learn more [here](#). Research any plant before bringing it home. Be mindful of where in your home it is placed, and whether your rabbit can access it or its branches or leaves should they fall onto the ground.

Keep cabinets with household-cleaning chemicals shut and secured, and take care to block access to potential toxins like paint or spackle. By making dangerous chemicals inaccessible, you are taking a big step toward protecting your rabbit.

# No Photos, Please!

By Samantha Rowan

As a friend of bunnies, I follow a number of Instagram accounts that highlight long-eared lagomorphs from around the world. It is a diverse group of bunnies that are large and small, young and old, fluffy and sleek, sweet and salty, and I always thought there was a place for Lenny, our senior bunny, in this online world.

There is one problem, however. Lenny detests having his picture taken.

Lenny is unlike any rabbit I've ever had. He is feisty and strong, opinionated and angry – but at the same time, he has moments of extreme sweetness. He bangs around in the living room until he gets his breakfast, grunts if you pass too close to him, cringes if you pet him when he doesn't want to be petted – but then will sit for hours with his eyes half-closed, snuggled up with me, my husband or our son.

In addition to wanting people to admire a bunny who is clearly extremely cute, I

Photo: Samantha Rowan



Lenny is a camera-shy bunny.

thought Lenny's unique characteristics would counter some of the misconceptions people have about rabbits being quiet, meek things who don't merit the same kind of place in a family as a more mainstream pet. Lenny, for example, purrs when he's really happy. Who wouldn't

love a video of a little fluffy bunny purring as he's being petted?

The answer, of course, is Lenny. Every time I try to document his innate cuteness, he rouses himself from a nap or whatever he is doing, stands up, cocks his ears at me and gives me what I call his "Are you talking to me?" look. Even worse, if I manage to take a picture of Lenny in what I think is an extremely cute pose, he moves at just the wrong moment. I swear he is doing this just to mess with me.

I've come to understand one thing, though. Documenting Lenny's special attributes is one thing. Being present for them is something entirely different – and much more enjoyable.

One of the things Lenny has taught me is the importance of being in the moment with my bunny and, to do that, I can't be chasing him with a camera. While it would be nice to have Lenny as a shining star on Instagram, I'd rather have him as our shining star at home.



## BUNNIES AREN'T EASTER GIFTS

WE'RE 10+ YEARS OF COMMITMENT.

- We're part of the family.
- We have a special diet.
- We visit the vet regularly.
- We require an indoor-only environment, safe from predators and parasites.

**We depend on YOU to take care of us!**

LONGISLANDRABBITRESCUE.ORG 

## Who Is Your Rabbit's Favorite Human?

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Friends of LIRRG is a Facebook community of over 1,000 rabbit owners and rescue volunteers who live on Long Island. We asked our Friends to tell us about their rabbit's favorite human. Here's what they had to say.

"Bruce has zero interest in those hay sticks but my husband picks one up and Bruce is all loving them!" – Christina B.

"Our angel Tater Tot loves Chris! Tater rarely sat with me like that, but he spent many hours snuggling with the man who served his salads!" – Denise B.

"Ellie 1000% prefers my partner. Even though I feed her almost all the time, I'm still mean mama who grooms her and gives her medicine and brings her to the vet. Meanwhile, she runs over to the gate whenever DJ gets home (or even just wakes up) and won't relax till he acknowledges her." – Emily V.

"Franklin's favorite human is Dennis (my husband). He is the only one allowed to actually hold him. Franklin also never lunges at him when he opens the cage. As a result, he now has earned the absolute privilege of being the daily litter box cleaner, as he was literally chosen by Franklin." – Jessica C.

"We know who the favorite is in this house (for Bertie and Leonardo). That's certainly not MY lap. Definitely not my legs. Or chair." – Amy B.

"Christian tolerates my pets and lovessss Mackenzie. He is not a fan of Kevin or any male human. June was able to pet Christian a couple of times. Mackenzie LOVES Kevin and his treats/pets. I'm the groomer, so she loves me until grooming time." – Ashley R.

"MaryJane loves me; she tries to brush my hair...with her teeth, will hop in my lap when she needs comforting, enjoys sitting on my back, lets me smush her head, and never gets mad at me for all the times I need to clean her eye." – Katie S.



Bruce.



Tater Tot.



Franklin.



Bertie.



Leonardo.



MaryJane.

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## Favorite Human

(Continued from page 8)



Sienna and Skyler.



Pearl.

“Sienna is mainly a daddy’s girl and Skyler just loves everyone (but is mostly a mommy’s boy). Sienna is occasionally my bestie when she knows I’m not trying to give her medicine or cut her nails. They love each other most of all though.” – Brooke S.

“Pearl loves foster bun daddy, because he doesn’t poke her with needles.” – Katie S.

“I’ve got a couple of mama’s boys (Virgil and Gus). They just naturally gravitate toward me and come to me for love, comfort and attention. Their daddy is very involved with them, so we’re really not sure why they’re so obsessed with me.” – Tracey B.



Virgil.



Gus.

“Derek is Olaf’s favorite human because he spends the most time petting and cuddling with him.” – Aviva R.

“They definitely love both their pawrents or anyone giving them food but they love the pets bun mom gives them.” – Nathaly M.

“I can confirm. Queen Diamond and Sir Reginald love pets from their mama.” – Roberto M.

“Mr. Wade loves a good mom snuggle nap time and to give mom kisses. Foster’s fave is when she hears me and bun dad having conversations...always gets her to binky around but I took a foster/mom selfie bc she has the cutest little face.” – Salina V.



Olaf.



Queen Diamond and Sir Reginald.



Wade.

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## Spokesbunny Noah Reports From Long Island

By Noah the Bunny with assistance from Shari Zagorski

Hello human friends!

This is Spokesbunny Noah here with an update on our busy pre-Easter education squad tour! My humans asked me to volunteer as an advocate for the domestic bunnies out there who need loving homes, so I eagerly accepted the assignment. It started with an event here or there, but recently I seem to need my own calendar to keep track of my schedule.

On Jan. 28, I went to the Merrick Library for a story, crafts and presentation in celebration of the Lunar Year of the Rabbit. The program was for elementary school children and their families. My job was primarily to sit on a special table while the Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group volunteers told our guests all about what LIRRG does, how to care for bunnies, and why it's so important to foster and adopt rescued bunnies like me. I sometimes had to remind the speakers to say things by giving them a nudge or two, or even a lick on the hand. My favorite part was when the children each came up to pet me after they finished their crafts.

Photo: Kristin Weingartner



Spokesbunny Noah at Uniondale Public Library.

My most recent education event was on Friday, Feb. 24, during school vacation at the Uniondale Public Library. This presentation was for young children and was in a theater with really nice acoustics— quite pleasing to my bunny ears! Once again I had my special table for sitting quietly and then for petting by the visitors. There was one small girl who was scared of bunnies – even me! But I think I patiently charmed her because she got on line a second time to pet me and gave me an extra piece of parsley.

With Easter approaching, it seems that more libraries would like presentations

about rabbit rescue efforts and adoption. Apparently when one library posts an event on social media, other libraries may notice it and think it would be a fun program to have and contact LIRRG to request my help. The next few weeks are getting very busy but I'm happy to have the opportunity to help educate people about how amazing bunnies really are and what we need. On March 4, I have a double-header appearance at Elmont Public Library in the morning, and North Merrick Public Library in the afternoon. On March 11, Oceanside Library will host us, and East Williston Public Library will have us on April 1. We also have an event set for Lindenhurst Memorial Library in May.

Besides meeting and greeting loads of new people who want to learn about bunnies, I also get to meet some wonderful human LIRRG volunteers. They help set up the event display table, talk about various aspects of what LIRRG does – such as rescues, fostering and adoptions – and often give me extra smushing and attention.

My own humans take care of all of my needs while on the road. They bring my

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### Favorite Human

*(Continued from page 9)*

“We were lucky enough to get Addison from your amazing group less than 3 years ago. She is the sweetest animal and brings so much joy to our lives.”  
– Taryn T.

“Mallie loved to sleep on my chest, on the bed cuddled under my arms. She was the ultimate mush!” – Jenna L.



Foster.



Mallie.

## Spokesbunny Reports

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travel pen and my very own carpet (with a plastic liner to protect any flooring under me just in case I spill my water dish), my litter box filled with loads of fresh hay, a water dish that I may or may not enjoy tipping over, and a bottle of familiar-tasting water from home to fill and refill my dish. They also bring along a stuffed bunny for the demonstrations on how NOT to pick up a rabbit. Humans also supply one of my favorite greens, cilantro or parsley, in tiny portion sizes so that program participants can all share the treats with me. And, of course, they bring a nonslip mat with my special towel so that I feel secure on a table top. When we arrive at the libraries about an hour prior to the event, humans set up my pen and carpet and give me plenty of time to settle in, graze on my hay and take in the new smells and sounds of the environment.

Photo: Shari Zegorski



Spokesbunny Noah admiring a colorful paper rabbit at Merrick Library.

I feel so fortunate to have the opportunity to be a volunteer spokesperson for LIRRG. Many of my bunny friends do not enjoy car rides, new places, or strangers touching them. But those things don't bother me. I know I'm only one little bunny, but the more humans I can reach and educate, the greater the chance of helping to save another bunny!

Photo: Shari Zegorski



LIRRG volunteers at Merrick Library.

Photo: Kristin Weingarner



LIRRG display table at Uniondale Public Library.

Looking forward to more education events with LIRRG. Please feel free to join me if you can.

Until next time, this is Spokesbunny Noah signing off!

## Rabbits Are Awesome

By Jilian Kelly

Rabbits are awesome pets to have because they can be great companions.

They are very clean and they have great litter-box habits.

Rabbits can be bonded with other rabbits. When the bonding is done properly, the bonded pair or trio develops a close, loving relationship.

Photo: Deanna Calloun



Eden, an adoptable Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group bun.

## Year of the Rabbit

Photo: Gabbi Campbell



Marshmallow and Ebony know that this is a special year.

Wake up, wake up, rabbits everywhere!

It's the year of the rabbit, the bunny, the hare!

We wait 12 whole years for our year to come

Watching other animals gloat when it's their year for fun

So move over tiger, you were fiercest no doubt,

You left us so restless, just wandering about.

But the year of the rabbit is one to embrace

We are gentle and mellow and will spread our good grace.

People all over will welcome this New Year.

With the rabbits in charge let's give a big cheer.

– Gabbi Campbell 2023

## ADOPTIONS

### Forever Homes Found!

We are happy to report that Gomez, Pugsley, Morgan, Joshua, Dawson, Joslyn, Merri, Colita, Cecile, MaryJane, Paxton, Lottie, Miso, Mary, Jolie, Blitzzen, Linnea and Ruby were adopted since the were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

## Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

For Information on Adopting Any of Our Rabbits, Contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)



Skye.

### 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 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



Indigo.

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](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Indigo

Indigo's puppy-like playfulness is as endearing as his ears are enormous! Indigo arrived at ACC showing signs of terrible neglect. When we pulled him from the shelter, the veterinary treatment he was receiving had already filled an 8-plus-page-long medical record in that short time. He was facing an abscess, severe sore hocks, skin conditions, parasites and more. Today, Indigo has settled in beautifully and gained a whole 3 pounds since he first arrived at the shelter (currently tipping the scales at a magnificent 9.5 pounds!). Now living on cushy, appropriate floor material, Indigo's once infected and painful hocks are growing in nice new fur to protect his wonderfully giant feet. Indigo has been neutered and is living in foster care. He hopes to soon meet his forever family who will enjoy playtime and cuddle time as much as he does! If you are interested in adopting Indigo, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Lucy.

### Lucy

Lucy was found outside in a dirt alleyway off a busy street where someone had cruelly abandoned her. Now adjusting to the safety of her foster home, Lucy's active and curious personality is shining through. She is a very young and playful rabbit who loves interacting with people and toys, and especially enjoys carrying her stacking cups to different spots around her pen and exercise space. If you are interested in adopting Lucy, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Blue and Purple

Blue and Purple are a young brother/sister pair of 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbits. Blue is the more outgoing of the two, and enjoys being wherever his people are at all times. He loves having his cheeks rubbed and will happily melt into the floor for long petting sessions. Purple is shyer than her brother, but is never far behind Blue and enjoys occasional head pets from quiet, gentle people whom she trusts. Blue and Purple are a wonderful pair who are very affectionate with each other and spend a lot of their down time closely snuggled up together or grooming one another.

*(Continued on page 14)*

## These Rabbits Are Available for Adoption From Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group has many rabbits available for adoption. Here are a few of the wonderful bunnies looking for homes. For more information about adoptions, please contact LIRRG at this email address: [information@longislandrabbitrescue.org](mailto:information@longislandrabbitrescue.org)

### Ravi

Big girl with an even bigger personality. Ravi was found shortly after Easter, abandoned in a residential area in Suffolk County. Although she was only a few months old, her GIANT ears were our first clue that Ravi would grow up to be

a big puppy-like rabbit. At 7.5 lbs. and still growing, we can safely say our hunch was correct.

Ravi is a spunky yet always sweet bunny and she gets along with other animals – supervised, of course. This girl is so friendly, she will immediately come to you if you call her name. Her eyes glisten with a desire for playing and adventure. But she also chills back and enjoys head pats, looking at you with adoration as you pet her. She loves to jump up on the couch and other furniture to explore her foster home. If you're looking for a



Ravi.

### RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

*(Continued from page 13)*

Blue and Purple are neutered/spayed and living in foster care. To inquire about adopting Blue and Purple, please email [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).



Juliette.

rabbit to interact with the family and provide endless entertainment, Ravi is your girl.

### Juliette

Juliette was being bullied by the family cat in her previous home and was surrendered to the Southampton Animal Shelter. She was nervous and terrified when she arrived at the shelter, so LIRRG stepped in when a foster space was available and she has been blossoming ever since. A once scared rabbit is now happy and energetic.

A volunteer describes Juliette as shy, but very curious and playful. She loves to throw around her stacking cups and if you sit on the floor with her, letting her come to you, she will start to explore, nudge and get to know you.

*(Continued on page 16)*



Purple and Blue.



Carmela.

ADOPTIONS

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

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

Photos: Kristen Ghiraldi



Snowball.



Peter.



Snowball.



Enchilada.



Batman.



Penny Proud.



Bistro.



Snowball and Sandy.



Arturo.

*(Continued on page 16)*

**ADOPTIONS**

**Rabbits at Manhattan ACC**

*(Continued from page 15)*

Photos: Kristen Ghiraldi



Gwen.



Olei.



Timmy.



Cafe.



Gwen & Penny.



▲ Gina. ▼ Stormi.



**LIRRG Adoptable Rabbits**

*(Continued from page 14)*

**Brodie**

He may be shy at first, but Brodie is the ultimate goofball and a thorough escape artist. He was rescued on the lawn of the Great Neck Library in March of 2022 along with another rabbit. Brodie has a strong personality: He can be territorial and has a lot of confidence and energy. An example of his silliness is how he likes to sit in his water bowl without a care in the world. So, if you're looking for an active companion who will certainly keep you going, Brodie is the guy for you.



Brodie.

ADOPTIONS

**These Rabbits Are Available  
At Brooklyn Animal Care Center (NYC ACC)**



Olive.



Cousin It.



Thumper.



Sherlock Holmes.



Bugs Bunny.



Brownie Batter.



Piper.



Sweeney Todd.

*(Continued on page 18)*

ADOPTIONS

**Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 17)*



Jazzy.



Tiramisu.



Delilah.



Toki.



Fruity Pebbles.



Bunny.



Olaf.



## Dental Disease in Rabbits: A Simple Overview

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

*University of Miami Biology Department  
House Rabbit Society of Miami*

Even if your rabbit has perfectly aligned incisors (front teeth), it is wise for you to ask your rabbit-experienced veterinarian to do regular dental checkups as part of your bunny's wellness exam. Undetected dental problems in rabbits are a major cause of more serious illnesses that develop due to the pain and stress of sore teeth and jaw.

### Healthy Rabbit Teeth

Rabbits are hypsodonts, meaning their teeth grow continually throughout life. In a normal rabbit, the teeth are aligned so that they wear against each other as the rabbit chews. This maintains even, relatively flat surfaces (with some sharp edges on top) on the molars and relatively short, chisel-shaped incisors. The incisors are used only for cutting the food into manageable pieces. The molars do the grinding into fine "mash" that is swallowed and sent down the GI tract for further processing.

### Dental Disease

Dental malocclusion in rabbits is not uncommon, especially in the short-faced breeds produced via generation upon generation of inbreeding. This often causes harmful, recessive genetic traits to be expressed, and one of these is misalignment of the teeth because of abnormal bone structure in the skull.

Because it is primarily the wearing of the teeth (incisors and molars) against each other – not against items being chewed – that maintains their normal length and shape, neither chew toys nor hard foods will cure this problem. In many cases, a veterinarian will need to anesthetize the bunny to gain access to the spurs with tools designed specifically to cut off spurs and smooth the teeth.

### Incisor Malocclusion

If the teeth do not line up correctly, incisors quickly overgrow and can become unmanageable "tusks" that either snaggle up out of the mouth or curl back into the mouth, making eating nearly impossible. Although some veterinarians will be willing to regularly trim the teeth, this is stressful for the rabbit. Also, clipping the teeth rather than filing or grinding them down can be dangerous, since micro-fractures of the tooth from clipping can travel below the gum line, inviting bacterial infection that can ultimately be life-threatening.

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Your first sign of trouble might be something as subtle as a change in eating habits.

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Molar spurs.

Many rabbit vets believe that the best way to treat maloccluded incisors is to extract them. This is a surgical procedure that must be done very carefully and patiently by your rabbit-experienced veterinarian, to ensure complete, permanent removal. The rabbit will probably need to be on pain medication for a day or two after surgery, but once

the patient has recovered, the only adjustment the rabbit "parent" needs to make is to cut up fresh food into bite-sized pieces, since the cutting teeth (incisors) will be gone. Pellets and hay can be handled as before, without problems.

### Molar (Cheek Tooth) Problems

Many rabbits who have maloccluded incisors, and even many who have perfectly aligned incisors, still develop molar spurs. These are sharp points on the edges of the molars that result from uneven wear. Spurs that form on the lower molar arcade point inward toward the tongue, and are known as lingual ("tongue") spurs. Spurs that form on the upper arcade poke outward into the cheek, and are called buccal ("mouth") spurs.

These points can stab and abrade the tongue and cheek. Rabbits, being prey animals, do not readily show signs of pain. Your first sign of trouble might be something as subtle as a change in eating habits, and the nature of this change is unpredictable and idiosyncratic (unique to the individual).

In some extreme cases, molar spurs can actually grow into the tongue or cheek, causing extreme pain. There have been cases of a molar spur going undetected for so long that it formed a bridge over the tongue, preventing the bunny from eating properly.

Left unattended, the pain of dental disease can trigger a potentially life-threatening condition known as ileus: <http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/ileus.html>. Before this happens, you surely want to get your bunny to a rabbit-savvy vet for examination and treatment.

### Dental Disease and Elder Buns

Dental disease can also develop as a rabbit ages. With advancing years,

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Dental Disease

(Continued from page 19)

rabbits (like all of us) tend to lose bone density. When this happens in the already-delicate bones of the skull, the teeth can become ever-so-slightly looser in their sockets, and this can cause uneven wear.

Rabbit teeth do not have true roots, but the bases of the teeth can become infected when the teeth are loose, as bacteria from the mouth travel downwards along the gum lines. Swelling almost anywhere along the mandible (lower jaw) or maxilla (upper bones of mouth) can signal an infection that requires at least antibiotic treatment, and possibly surgical treatment.

The base of the rabbit tooth is the location of the constantly dividing tissue that gives rise to the teeth. In some cases, the bases of the molars and/or incisors begin to extend farther into the jaw bone than normal (this is far more common in older rabbits). These “rogue roots” may begin to impinge on the tear ducts, causing epiphora (runny eyes) (<http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/weepy.pdf>). Sometimes, such “overgrown” molar bases may even puncture the sinuses or the eye orbit, allowing intrusion of mouth bacteria into areas meant to remain sterile. Abscesses can result.

If you have an elderly bunny with any signs of dental disease, ask your veterinarian to do a complete oral exam including head radiographs to detect the extent of the problem and the appropriate course of treatment.

## Treating Dental Disease

Molar spurs can be filed smooth by your veterinarian, who may use anything from a Dremel tool to a blunt-tipped diamond file. The procedure ordinarily requires anesthesia (e.g., isoflurane or sevoflurane gas), but usually can be done relatively quickly.

Check for these signs that something could be wrong:

- Drooling.
- Runny eyes.
- Eagerly going to food, but then acting unwilling to actually take it into the mouth.
- Gradual (or sudden) change in dietary habits (e.g., refusing to eat pellets, but happy to eat hay – or the other way around!).
- Unusual eating habits, such as a willingness to eat only one or two food items, and rejecting other types.

– Excessive drinking (this also can be a sign of renal disease, but rabbits with sore mouths will sometimes drink constantly in an attempt to soothe the soreness).

If your bunny is showing any of the above signs, then it’s time to get him/her to a veterinarian who is very familiar with rabbit dental disease. If your bunny does turn out to have dental problems, you’ll be amazed at his relief once the teeth are properly filed and in the right shape. Make a dental checkup a regular part of your bunny’s well-bun exam!

## I AM NOT AN EASTER TOY

**My name is Brooks**, and I was left alone in a park because someone didn’t want me anymore. I was very lucky to have been found and rescued in time. After Easter every year, thousands of rabbits just like me are abandoned to overcrowded shelters or are left to die outside.

I am not a novelty. I live for 10+ years and deserve a lifetime commitment!



Rabbits are fragile animals and do not like to be picked up. They require a spacious indoor home, a special diet, and vet care from a rabbit-savvy vet, so are seldom suitable for children and absolutely never as a “starter pet.” **Rabbits are NOT low-maintenance companions.**

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

rabbitcare.org  
nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com

## 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 [information@longislandrabbitrescue.org](mailto:information@longislandrabbitrescue.org).

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. 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 [rabbitrescueandrehab.org](http://rabbitrescueandrehab.org), [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org) and the House Rabbit Society main site, [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

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

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Cher.

## Donations

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](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).

## THUMP MARCH 2023

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS  
[rabbitrescueandrehab.org](http://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.

## 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) 643-0515. 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 Street,  
New York, NY 10065  
(212) 838-7053, (212) 329-8622

**Alexandra Wilson, DVM**  
The Center for Avian and  
Exotic Medicine  
568 Columbus Avenue,  
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**  
**Erica Campbell, 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

**Ellen Leonhardt, DVM**  
Animal General of East Norwich  
6320 Northern Blvd  
East Norwich, NY 11732  
(516) 624-7500

**Maggie Camilleri, DVM**  
Paumanok Veterinary Hospital  
639 Route 112  
Patchogue, NY 11772  
(631) 475-1312

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

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

## Licensed HRS Educators

### NYC/Westchester:

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

**Mary Cotter**  
Founder, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab,  
Adviser to Thump,  
mcotter64@gmail.com,  
(914) 643-0515

**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

**Laura George, 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**