

THE JUMP



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Reflections on a Life With Rabbits: Gratitude

By Robert Kulka

Many of us who have been around rabbits – whether it be as a volunteer, fosterer or adopter – know there is something very special about these silent, gentle beings. Observing them and their personality quirks makes it very clear that, like people, they are all individuals. Beyond that superficial observation, however, there seems to be more than meets the eye. Being at a point in my life where I re-evaluate and reflect on my life with a deeper insight, that insight has brought me a fresh look at how each rabbit in my life touched me in his or her own way. Going beyond the experiences at the time, I see they were providing lessons along the way and often carried me through the ups and downs of my life.

For me, it has been a journey of almost 25 years of life with rabbits. It began with an unexpected and unplanned encounter with a rabbit who was left with me while a forever home was being sought. Initially I had mixed feelings about having a rabbit in my life, even temporarily. I had never thought of a rabbit beyond being a soft fluffy “thing” that was a stuffed animal or Easter Bunny.

Photo: Robert Kulka.



Skip.

My limited knowledge gave me an entirely wrong impression of what the life of a rabbit was about. In fact, all I knew was that they ate carrots and were very cute in cartoons.

My indifference and lack of knowledge changed after the first 24 hours I was in the company of a “bunny rabbit.” It took just about that long to realize something special was happening and that this rabbit had found its forever home with me. As if possessed, I read, did research and gathered every bit of information I could find. Within a couple of days, the rabbit who was now in my care was moved out of the rusty
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A New Year’s Resolution to Help Your Rabbit (and You!)

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

Most of our readers and supporters understand the basic concept of what a rescue organization is:

A nonprofit group that saves abandoned, abused or stray animals, provides care, and if appropriate, finds them safe, permanent adoptive homes. Quite often, rescue groups care for animals for their entire lives.

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab is, and always has been, an all-volunteer organization,
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Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Sailor.

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cage with a wire floor he was delivered in, to an open area with space to run around and with softer flooring. This little guy very quickly was being fed properly, was given places to sleep and hide as he required and found me as a companion several hours each day. I didn't realize it at the time, but I believe he showed up in my life to be my teacher and to get me started on a life with rabbits for many years to come. That little fella's name was Skip.

Skip, as it turned out, was very patient with me and over the 10 years we had together he set me up with a wealth of knowledge and best practices in caring for a rabbit. It was as if something was guiding me and placing information in my mind without me even knowing why. It became clear to me the kind of habitat a rabbit needed to enjoy life, proper diet, including lots of quality hay, and the toys to entertain him. We napped together and I often read out loud while he sat at the top of his castle, so he was at eye level with me. For some reason I even seemed to immediately know that I had to find a veterinarian with the knowledge to care for a rabbit. I knew instinctively it was important to have him examined to make sure he was healthy and to get more information on his care. And how serendipitous it was that the vet was located no more than five minutes from where I lived. In other words, looking back at the series of events, it is very clear that Skip chose me because he would be the one to open my world to the joy of living with a rabbit and make sure I quickly learned everything I would need to know. People who knew me were surprised to see how I adapted to life with a bunny, right down to not caring when he once peed on me. I felt honored somehow. Skip and I moved around in those 10 years together from Massachusetts to Connecticut to New York. He gave me a feeling of home even as we adjusted to our new surroundings. We seemed to be in sync

Photos: Robert Kulla.



Lara.



Beautiful Garbo.

as well. For instance, there was the time I had eye surgery and the very same week Skip needed to have a tear duct cleared. Skip became my best friend. When he passed, I was devastated but looking back I now see it was one of the last lessons for me. The pain and silence he left me with was very quickly filled by another rabbit. Lara found me for my next life lessons.

Lara was a big, beautiful girl with ice-blue eyes. She immediately showed herself to be a very strong rabbit who easily adapted to any hardship that came her way. Once again, I was being taken care of and taught by Lara. About a week after she came home with me, Superstorm Sandy blew through New York. It was so violent a storm it blew down a big tree in my backyard that sounded like a bomb exploding as it hit the side of the building. That night Lara let me sleep next to her under a blanket. I was terrified. She was a calming presence.

Lara had full run of my home once it was rabbit-proofed. She had boundaries because she would not step onto hardwood or tile floors. In the mornings I would sit at the edge of my bed with a cup of coffee and write in my journal. She always jumped up onto the bed and sat with me, content to be petted from time to time as she stretched out.

Lara had trouble with her right front leg, which eventually had to be removed. She was calm about everything and recovered quickly as though nothing had happened. I was a wreck before, during and after the operation. As I watched her, I realize now she taught me a lesson on meeting challenges head on and not giving in or giving up. For her it was something she managed and accepted. To see her run and jump you would need to look closely to know she was missing a leg. It didn't stop her. I think of that lesson frequently and use her example these days to help me deal with difficult times. Lara was a very special girl who unfortunately was not with me long enough.

During the years that Lara and I were together we opened our home and hearts to several different rabbits as we either babysat or fostered them. A precious angel that we took care of for a while, was the most handsome little prince with a huge and magical personality. He would command attention and although he was a tiny guy, he always gave the impression that he was bigger than he was. It always seemed that he watched over the three of us but would give you a look of disdain if you did something he didn't quite approve of you doing.

The three of us soon had a fourth addition to our team. He was a perfect and good-looking little guy who had a very difficult time and a lot of medical issues over his short life. No matter what was done for him he was not expected to last too much longer. When we took him in, we wanted to give him love and comfort for whatever time he had left after all he had been through. Love and

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New Year's Resolution

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relying entirely on private donations to support the rabbits in our care. We have never received nor been offered municipal or governmental funding of any kind.

Over time, it has become increasingly clear that there is a widespread misconception that we are municipally funded or somehow a government agency. Many people believe we are paid employees who are required to immediately respond to every request. The reality could not be more different.

We are regular people who are deeply passionate about rabbits, devastated by their suffering, and driven by a strong desire to help. Usually, rescue organizations begin with just one person who cannot stand by while animals suffer, so the person does something. If they are fortunate, others step up to help, forming a small core group of volunteers who understand the mission and are willing to give up their time, energy and heart.

Like many rescue groups, RRR is entirely volunteer-run. We donate not only our time, but our personal resources and emotional well-being to help rabbits in need. We rely on private donations to cover veterinary bills and purchase all necessary supplies. Unfortunately, like most rescue groups, we constantly struggle financially, because expenses often exceed donations. Caring for the rabbits is always our top priority, so we frequently reach deep into our own pockets to make ends meet.

Many groups like ours do not have a facility or physical building capable of housing large numbers of rabbits. Even if we did, we would not have enough human resources needed to provide proper care. One of the hardest realities we face is not being able to help every rabbit that needs a soft place to land.

The public would be shocked by the volume and nature of the communications we receive. We hear about heartbreaking situations daily. We receive requests for immediate action, financial assistance,

and demands that we take in unwanted rabbits. We are also inundated with adoption inquiries from people seeking a “cute toy,” often for their children. While we would never adopt a rabbit to such individuals, we still spend significant time educating them on proper rabbit care because we know they will get a rabbit somewhere.

Advocacy for rabbits and public education are at the core of what RRR does. We wish we could take them all, pay for everything, and do it all but we are mere mortals, just like everyone reading this. To say that this stress takes a toll is an understatement.

We do the best we can. We educate as many people as possible and provide solid, reliable information to everyone else. This may not be a pleasant realization, but it is important for the community to understand that, much to our regret, we have no legal authority or the magical powers that we wish we had.

Sometimes physical and emotional difficulties incapacitate us, which is why our rabbit-loving community is critical to our mission.

How the Community Can Help

There are many ways the community can help rabbits in need:

- Share accurate, responsible information
- Refer people to RRR and LIRRG for education and care advice
- Advocate for rabbits – whether with family, neighbors or on social media
- If a situation requires law enforcement, make the call, follow up, and stay involved until there is a resolution
- Be sure that you always have the resources necessary to care for your rabbit.

Always try to help a rabbit in need. Chances are, someone once helped yours. We are all in this together.

Our Recommended New Year's Resolution

By now, most of you are aware that rabbit veterinary care is expensive. A late-night emergency, for something as common as a gas bubble that won't pass, can easily cost \$1,000 at a minimum and far more if hospitalization is required. Doing

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Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Paddington and Pigeon.

New Year's Resolution

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nothing can lead to immense suffering or death. Surgeries often cost many thousands of dollars. Many illnesses can become chronic, requiring months or years of veterinary care. We could go on, but we know you get the point.

A Critical Side Note

Please never rely on social-media groups for veterinary advice unless they are run by a bona fide rescue organization, and even then, advice is no substitute for a rabbit-savvy veterinarian. Groups with "official-sounding" names are often misleading. These individuals are not experts and should never attempt to diagnose or provide treatment instructions.

If your rabbit refuses food, never syringe-feed anything, including Critical Care, until your rabbit has been seen by a rabbit-savvy veterinarian. Critical Care is food, not medicine. Syringe-feeding anything to a rabbit that may be hypothermic or that has a blockage can cause severe suffering and even death.

If you do not know how to take your rabbit's temperature, please learn. It is easy, painless and can save your rabbit's life.

Even after a veterinary visit, syringe feeding may not be necessary. Every case is different, and the least stressful option should always be used first.

Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Purple in a well-chewed willow tent.

Rabbit Health Insurance

We are constantly asked to help pay veterinary bills or to take in sick rabbits who require immediate care. This is overwhelming, and often impossible.

If you do one thing in 2026, we are pleading with you to get and maintain rabbit health insurance. It is the single best thing you can do, for both you and your rabbit.

At this time, Nationwide is the only insurance company that covers rabbits: <https://www.petinsurance.com/exotics/>

They do not give much information on the website. They encourage interested parents to call them at 800-872-7387 for details and a premium quote.

Here are some important points about the coverage Nationwide offers:

In New York state, they have two coverage tiers, described below. (There may be more coverage options for Connecticut, New Jersey and other states.)

- A lower-cost plan covering 50% of your total bill
- A slightly higher-cost plan covering 70%
- They both have a \$250 annual deductible.
- Neither plan covers spays and neuters (if you adopt, your rescue group covers that cost).
- The policies do not cover wellness exams or pre-existing conditions.
- If you *think* your rabbit is having a problem and the veterinarian gives

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Gratitude

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attention helped him rally and he was with us for two years. Watching him come through and be a happy and playful boy for that time was quite another lesson for me. Hope and love are the strongest of medicine. He went through all his trials, hung on and had a wonderful life for those two years.

Both boys offered comfort and seemed to support me through the loss of Lara. I can see now in retrospect that it was not that I rescued or saved them. They were put in my life to rescue and take

care of me. In fact, all the rabbits in my life, whether the ones that I lived with or the ones I met through volunteer work, gave me gifts I may not have seen at the time. Only now that things are winding down am I clearly seeing that an accidental introduction to Skip some 25 years ago would lead to life lessons. Those lessons were about strength, hope, acceptance and unconditional love. I now foster two rabbits who are most likely the last I will have in my life. I look at them differently and with open eyes and heart to understand the lessons they bring now. I see that the small part I played in the life of these rabbits was

nothing in comparison to all they gave me. They came with the gifts I needed during my life. I realize that in all my life these were the most precious times and helped me see things I may have missed.

All these beautiful angels allowed me to be a part of their world in return for very little from me. We may not be able to see their wings, and they may seem to be silent observers, but don't let that fool you. In my case, they each provided lessons that in hindsight were reflections of their personalities and exactly what I needed to gain my own insight into life's challenges and rewards.

'Raising Hare: A Memoir' by Chloe Dalton

Reviewed by Jane O'Wyatt

It is a thawing January day during the Covid lockdown, and Chloe Dalton, a self-confessed workaholic, whose career focuses on "international crises involving people," has been living and working remotely in her house in the English countryside. At the sound of a dog barking, she pulls on her coat and steps outside to investigate, and, seeing nothing unusual, goes for a walk. In her book, "Raising Hare: A Memoir," she writes:

"I crested the skyline, deep in my thoughts, and began to walk down a slight slope towards the lane, when I was brought up short by a tiny creature facing me on the grass strip running down the track's centre. I stopped abruptly. Leveret. The word surfaced in my mind, even though I had never seen a young hare before. The animal, no longer than the width of my palm, lay on its stomach with its eyes open and its short, silky ears held tightly against its back. ... The leveret had no protection against earth-dwelling or sky-borne killers. However, I knew that human interference could cause more harm than good, so I decided to let nature take its course.

"When I returned, four hours later, I had almost forgotten about the leveret. But there it was, on the open track, exactly as I had left it. It lay without a scrap of cover, with buzzards wheeling in the sky above."

Cognizant of the caveats of wildlife professionals, Dalton hesitates to rescue and attempt to nurture this wild animal, but her heart prevails and she takes the leveret home. She then consults a local conservationist who says that her wish to care for the baby European Hare is quixotic, that he knows of no one who has ever succeeded in raising a leveret and that hares cannot be domesticated. Disheartened by this advice but undeterred, she begins to foster the leveret until "it" can return to "its" wild life outdoors. (She uses the pronouns "it" and "its" until the hare gives birth to young.) As

she learns how to nurture the leveret, she receives practical support from her mother and sister, both of whom live nearby. Because Dalton has no desire to own or tame the hare, whom she refuses to name but comes to love, she avoids touching her unnecessarily. She does, however, sing quietly as she attends to the foundling's needs, and, despite receiving only vocal caresses, the hare initiates physical contact:

"It would often tuck its muzzle into the space between my arm and my body, possibly liking the darkness and the relative constriction, or simply the warmth."

Dalton, who adapted her house to allow the hare to leave and enter it at will, frequently worries that their tender relationship may lessen the hare's hyper-vigilance or blunt her field smarts – thus

compromising her ability to survive outdoors among her own kind. The dangers Dalton cites are many: dogs, foxes, stoats, birds of prey, guns, farm machinery. During the three-year period in which "Raising Hare" is set, the wild hare thrives and gives birth to several litters. She spends increasing amounts of time in her natural habitat but also continues to trust two human beings: Dalton and her mother.

"She has taught me patience. ... She did not change, I did. I have not tamed the hare, but in many ways the hare has stilled me."

"Raising Hare" is the rescue story of a not-too-distant relative (*Lepus europaeus*) of the wild rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), who is a not-too-distant relative of the

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A European Hare (*Lepus europaeus*).



Board Game Bunny

By Samantha Rowan

We are a board game family, and most nights end up with a complex game with too many pieces at the table. And most nights, our adopted harlequin lop, Truman, makes it his business to sit with us as we play.

Truman, who came to us through the New York City shelter, was understandably slow to warm up but quick to take a place around the table when the board gaming began. I noticed him creep quietly next to my chair one night and dutifully ignored him as he sniffed around my feet and then got up on his hind legs to try to figure out what we were doing.

As Truman is very small and the table is very high, he didn't see anything, but it didn't mean he stopped trying to figure out what we were doing. As the days progressed, Truman eventually started letting me pat his head as I waited for my turn and, before too long, he started to visit each one of us for a few minutes while we were playing. It was sweet, but it was – and is – also a chance to delay making a decision on a particularly complex game.

“What's taking you so long to make your move?” my son will say.

“I'm petting the rabbit,” I'll reply. “I have to pet him or else he'll think we don't love him.”

“He knows we love him. You're just delaying,” my husband will say.

“But he's just a little bunny!” I'll say. “He needs pets!”

Variations of this conversation happen almost every night, with every single one of us insisting Truman needs to be petted more than anything at particularly tense moments in a game.

The other thing that happens almost every night is that Truman has continued to try and see what's going on at the table, putting a paw on someone's leg and tilting his head up several times during the course of the evening. That is why I shouldn't have been surprised at what happened one morning when we left a long game out on the table overnight. We'd played half (it was Nucleum, for those of you who game) and left the rest for the next morning.

I was having a coffee when I suddenly heard a scrape of paws and the unmistakable sound of meeples hitting the floor. I looked up to see Truman standing on the table in the middle of the game, sniffing the board and shoving around

Photo: Samantha Rowan



Truman.

the pieces we'd so carefully put out over an hour the evening before.

“Truman, what are you doing? Get down!”

Truman did not look impressed with me or the game. A few more snuffles and then Truman jumped down the way he came, stepping onto a chair and then down onto the floor. I was left with the aftermath of the chaos and the understanding the game was not salvageable. I probably would have been more upset, but I probably wasn't going to win at that point anyway. I picked up the pieces (Truman helped, of course) and then put the game away. While he hasn't jumped up on the table again, Truman continues to visit with us when we play. He's definitely a board game bunny.

'Raising Hare'

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house rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus domesticus*) whose rescue stories appear so often in “Thump.”

Dalton cares for the hare until she is ready to return to the wild; house rabbit rescuers find homes for bunnies who have been domesticated beyond their ability to survive outside. As dissimilar as hares and house rabbits may be, however, one of the hare's behaviors is familiar to anyone who has had to learn the art of bunny-proofing:

“As I stood holding the severed ends of the router cable, I experienced a rare moment of exasperation with the hare. I looked at her as she sat nearby, licking

her muzzle and inspecting her front paws, a picture of calm unconcern. The gnawed edges of the copper wiring were needle-sharp beneath my fingertips. What harm will it have done to her gums? I thought. My gaze wandered across the room and settled upon the opposite wall. I sighed. She had snipped through the TV cable as well.”

We smile in recognition as we read the lines above, because house rabbits are also excellent cable-snippers. They, like hares, are bark-strippers and hay-eaters who ingest their cecotropes. Mothers of both species assume an upright posture to feed their young. Both species are crepuscular. But perhaps the most spectacular and endearing similarity lies

in the prey-animal athleticism of hares' and bunnies' binkies and zoomies.

“By now, the leveret had discovered the springs in its legs and strength in its stride. It would jink around the patch of lawn in the inner garden, a miniature bucking bronco, all four paws clear off the ground and pointing down like pogo sticks, shaking its head so that its ears twirled.”

House-rabbit-loving readers of “Raising Hare” will be struck by how unusual and well-suited to her rescue and nurture operation Dalton's character and circumstances were. And despite its eloquence, zoological precision and emotional reserve, the book has an almost magical folk-tale quality.

The Most Important Word in Bonding: P-A-T-I-E-N-C-E!

By Mary Cotter

Ed. note: Mary Cotter is the founder of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab.

She has taught many volunteers and rabbit caretakers to bond rabbits using methods that avoid the use of force and that minimize stress, and she offers these tips to give rabbit owners a better understanding of the process.

Illustration: Michelle Numnelly



Pick partners carefully.

Abandon all expectations.

Time sessions religiously.

Interaction does not equal proximity.

Evaluate interactions frequently.

Neutral territory matters!

Cautious rather than risk!

End sessions promptly.

PICK potential partner rabbits carefully.

There is tremendous variability in how rabbits get along with each other upon first meeting. A few seem to genuinely like each other and seek out each other's company; many seem to "squabble" and bicker until it becomes clear that the other rabbit is not a threat; and a few seem to want to demolish each other. Many people, out of ignorance, make the mistake of acquiring baby rabbits who get along just fine – at first, because they are juveniles, and subsequently because male/female pairs want to breed. Once the rabbits reach sexual maturity and are spayed/neutered, however, things may change. The smoothest bondings are typically those in which the rabbits have meaningful input in the process. The rabbit caretaker's choice of a partner rabbit (based on size, breed, color, etc.) may differ dramatically from the rabbit's own choice, and attempts to force a rabbit to accept another rabbit may end sadly.

In the early nineties, when I joined the first rabbit Internet listservs, I was struck

by how many humans seemed to be trying to "threaten" rabbits into a bond. I remember one rescuer in particular who claimed to be able to bond any pair of rabbits, regardless of whether they "liked" each other. This was very impressive to me, until I learned how many bondings created this way subsequently fell apart. Pick the rabbit who gets along best with your own rabbit; you will have a much easier time, and you will increase the chances for a solid, long-term bond.

ABANDON all expectations. Owner expectations of how a bonding "should" proceed are almost always different from how it actually does proceed, and attempting to force rabbits to live up to expectations almost always leads to disappointment.

Some years ago, an owner complained that her rabbits "just weren't bonding," although they had lived together peacefully for many months. She was not aware that some bonds seem to be "love" bonds, with constant mutual grooming, while others may seem more "platonic." Either type of bond is just fine; let the rabbits decide the degree of closeness that works for them, and accept their decision without pressuring them toward further "closeness."

That said, when rabbits are housed in side-by-side cages or puppy exercise pens (as they are in many rescue situations, because those of us who foster often

have little choice), the initial arousal caused by being so close to an unfamiliar rabbit often gradually gives way to indifference toward, or even acceptance of, the presence of another rabbit. I shared this information with our early volunteers, and we began to use this setup as a first step toward producing a peaceful bond. Rabbits who are given the opportunity to live peacefully near another rabbit, and who can see, hear and smell the other rabbit, are subsequently much easier to introduce outside their cages.

A note about "living peacefully": pens or cages should be placed side-by-side with enough space between them (usually around 3 inches) so that the rabbits cannot press their noses through the spaces between the bars to touch (or bite!) each other. If necessary, place an object (such as a water bottle on its side) between the pens, to prevent the rabbits from pushing the pens closer. If one rabbit is getting out-of-cage exercise time, it should be in an area well away from the other rabbit's pen. These two considerations are key to keeping the peace.

Occasionally, rabbits will bond on their own without any special efforts on the part of their humans. In one instance, a fosterer housed two unrelated female rabbits in an extra bedroom for almost a year, and reported that she was getting the feeling that these rabbits "liked" each other, although they had never been

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Bonding

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introduced. She was right: we introduced those rabbits and they bonded immediately. Was this “love at first sight”? Or was it the long-term effect of living peacefully in the same room? Hard to tell, and we may never know. But it certainly was not anyone’s expectation!

TIME all bonding sessions religiously. In their eagerness to get the job done, many rabbit caretakers unknowingly slow down the bonding process by pushing for too much, too soon. Resist the temptation to extend bonding sessions “because the rabbits are doing so well!”

The best bonding sessions are short, and *always* end on a successful note. Set a timer for one minute at first, and separate the rabbits after that time, ***no matter what they are doing.***

Several very short, very peaceful bonding sessions per day will go much farther in creating a solid bond than longer sessions where the rabbits become hostile toward one another and need to be separated. After several, peaceful, one-minute sessions, increase the time to 90 seconds, and then two minutes. As you continue with bonding sessions, you will develop a good sense of how long the rabbits can be together successfully. As long as you do not exceed this time, you will not lose ground.

It is much easier to be patient if you remind yourself that a single incident of significant rabbit-to-rabbit aggression caused by owner impatience can set the whole process back days or weeks...or in some instances, months.

INTERACTION does not equal physical proximity. Interaction is *anything the rabbits do* while in the same space with another rabbit. Physical proximity is not the sole, or even the most important, criterion, for “interaction.” In other words, rabbits can be interacting regardless of whether they are physically close to each other. A rabbit who systematically moves to increase distance from another rabbit

Illustrations: Michelle Nunnally



is interacting in a very clear way that should be respected.

Think of the New York City subway system: if, say, a woman enters a subway car at night where there is only one other rider – a man, sitting by himself, the woman is likely to choose a seat on the other end of the car from the man. Her choosing that distance is not a failure to interact; it *is* an interaction.

In nature, rabbits have virtually unlimited space to use as part of their communication when they meet other rabbits, but when we introduce them in our homes, the space we offer them is typically much more limited, so their ability to communicate using space (creating distance) may be impaired.

Nevertheless, when bonding rabbits in a limited space, many rabbit caretakers worry that the rabbits are “not interacting” when they choose to stay distant from one another, and these caretakers repeatedly move the rabbits closer in a misguided effort to “get them to bond.”

EVALUATE interactions frequently during each session. Do not let the rabbits’ apparently compatible behavior at the outset lull you into complacency. Things can change quickly, and a session that started out peacefully can turn sour with one backwards hump or head-to-tail chase! If you are not thoroughly familiar with normal rabbit behavior,

ask someone who is to help you evaluate what you are observing.

NEUTRAL territory matters! Introducing rabbits in “neutral territory” can make a big difference in their ability to get along. If either rabbit “owns” the territory, the bonding process can be significantly more difficult, since the “owner-rabbit” will almost always want to remove the other rabbit from his/her turf, by whatever means possible. If your own rabbit is free-range and “owns” the whole house, consider doing the introduction and bonding in the basement or in a friend’s home. In apartment buildings that have carpeted hallways and friendly neighbors, it is often possible to use a public hallway for short periods of time. The bottom

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Bonding

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line: doing your best to find a space that is not “owned” by either rabbit will make the bonding process easier on both you and the rabbits.

CAUTION rather than risk! Serious, but completely avoidable, injuries have occurred during the bonding process simply because the humans involved took unnecessary risks. Have a friend or assistant help you with the bonding, if possible, and intervene swiftly and skillfully to prevent any sort of aggressive or dangerous behavior (e.g., lunging, ears laid back, head-to-tail circular chasing, jumping directly over the other rabbit, backwards mounting). Wearing a pair of soft-soled shoes or potholder mitts on your hands will allow you to intervene safely and will prevent injury both to you and to the rabbits. Simply plunge

your protected hands into any sudden fray or unexpected confrontation between the rabbits, in a manner that allows them to redirect their aggression onto your hands. If necessary, you can firmly and snugly “straddle” one rabbit’s body with your protected hands, while a friend or assistant removes the other rabbit, or blocks off his access to your rabbit.

If you are fairly new to rabbits, and are not sure what a particular behavioral

display means, or if you even think one rabbit is becoming agitated or exhibiting aggressive behavior toward the other, err on the side of caution and separate the rabbits. If you wonder if the bonding session has gone on too long, err on the side of caution and terminate the session. Exercising caution may mean the bonding process will take a bit longer, but the process will be safer and more peaceful for both you and the rabbits.

END encounters promptly, and end on a successful note; do not be tempted to extend bonding sessions early on, simply because you feel that “the rabbits are doing so well!” Bondings are almost always much easier and more peaceful when they are short and frequent. Failure to end a session after a short time can lead to escalating stress, arousal and aggression on the part of the rabbits.



Illustration: Michelle Nunnely

New Year’s Resolution

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your bunny a clean bill of health, that appointment WOULD still be covered.

- Each coverage option has a \$10,000 annual limit.
- Premiums are determined by your rabbit’s age. The older the rabbit, the higher the premium. For purposes of this article, we received a quote for a 4-year-old bunny. We were quoted \$52/month for the better, 70% plan. For the lesser, 50% plan, for the same rabbit, the premium would be \$40.51/month.
- These quotes were given for Westchester County, N.Y. Your specific premium would be marginally higher or lower based on your ZIP Code.

If you can manage it, please choose the 70% coverage. The difference in monthly cost is minimal, and you will be grateful you did when your rabbit becomes ill. Notice that we said “when,” not “if.” That’s because rabbits are incredibly fragile companions.

Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Cortlandt.

Nationwide previously offered a 90% coverage option, but discontinued it after realizing that rabbits fall into the “high-risk” category and their care is EXPENSIVE.

Do not wait until your rabbit becomes ill, develops chronic issues or gets older before getting the insurance. Do it urgently.

For a rescue group, there is nothing more devastating than being contacted about a rabbit that is sick or injured and needs veterinary care, but the human caretaker cannot afford it or doesn’t want to pay for it. An innocent rabbit should never be in this situation. Yet, it happens all the time.

Our supporters generously donate for the rabbits we have rescued and have in our care. Those donations are not intended to cover veterinary costs for rabbits who already have guardians. Since we are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we are required to use donations carefully and appropriately in order to maintain our status as a charity.

We hope you take this advice to heart. Our very best wishes to all of you in this new year.

Spokesbunnies at the Library

By Michelle Zeman

We had a great time representing Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group at the Scales and Tails Fair at Middle Country Public Library in November.

Lafayette and Eliza were super spokesbunnies and got lots of love. Huge thanks to Michelle Montalbano for bringing them.

Also tremendous thanks to Amy Moffett and her daughter Amanda for bringing the supplies and great PowerPoint of our adoptables. And thank you to Diane Visek, Linda Pekrul Harrison, Erica Marie and Nancy DiFranco Haman for all your help.

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Amy and Amanda.



Michelle Zeman and Lafayette.



Lafayette.



Eliza.



Amanda and Michelle Montalbano.

Linda, a Brave Head-Tilt Bunny, Is Making Wonderful Progress

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Linda was adopted through our rescue group in August 2020, just weeks after her rescue. She is now 6.5 years old.

This past November, her owner brought her to a local emergency veterinary hospital to be euthanized. Linda had developed a head tilt and the owner did not want to pursue any treatment.

Vet Declines to Euthanize Her

The doctor, however, wanted to give Linda a chance and asked that the owner surrender her. The doctor then contacted us, explained Linda's situation, and we quickly got on board to take her back into our care.

We wish the owner had first contacted us, as we would have provided immediate support. We maintain a lifelong commitment to the welfare of every rabbit we rescue, and we are dedicated to extending that same level of care and support to our adopters.

Linda ended up staying at the hospital for seven days, where she was doted on by the exotics and emergency-care teams.

Post-op Care

After her hospitalization, she had to be given water by hand, and medications three times daily, and she needed grooming and cleaning multiple times daily.

As of early January, this brave girl is hopping around and is rarely rolling. She's now eating and drinking on her own.

Her head tilt has improved slightly and – one of our favorite updates of all – she's started coming to her foster mom for treats. She's using her litter box more and more, and is almost completely weaned off her medications.

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Linda.

Exploring and Socializing

Linda's play space has grown, and she's now enjoying exploring her foster mom's living room. Best of all, she's interacting more with the humans in the house and soaking up the love she so deserves.

We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of love, support and donations we've received so far to help Linda. Your kindness is making a real difference in her recovery.

The Vet Bill

When she was hospitalized in the fall, the bill for her initial care and treatment came to \$2,584. She will need continued follow-up appointments and medications.

If you are interested in donating, visit our [website](#). Every contribution helps us continue caring for rabbits with special needs.

Thank you for cheering Linda on every step of the way. Every day, Linda reminds us how resilient these little souls truly are.



Linda, crowned.

Happy Gotcha Day, Daniel

By Lauren Lourenco

Seven years ago, I had no idea what I was in for. I had gotten chronically ill and went to adopt a bunny as a companion animal.

I had no idea of the bond and the love that could grow between myself and a rabbit. Sure, I knew going into adoption that I would get a bit attached to whatever bunny I picked but I had no idea that the love could be so strong that I would literally consider Daniel my baby.

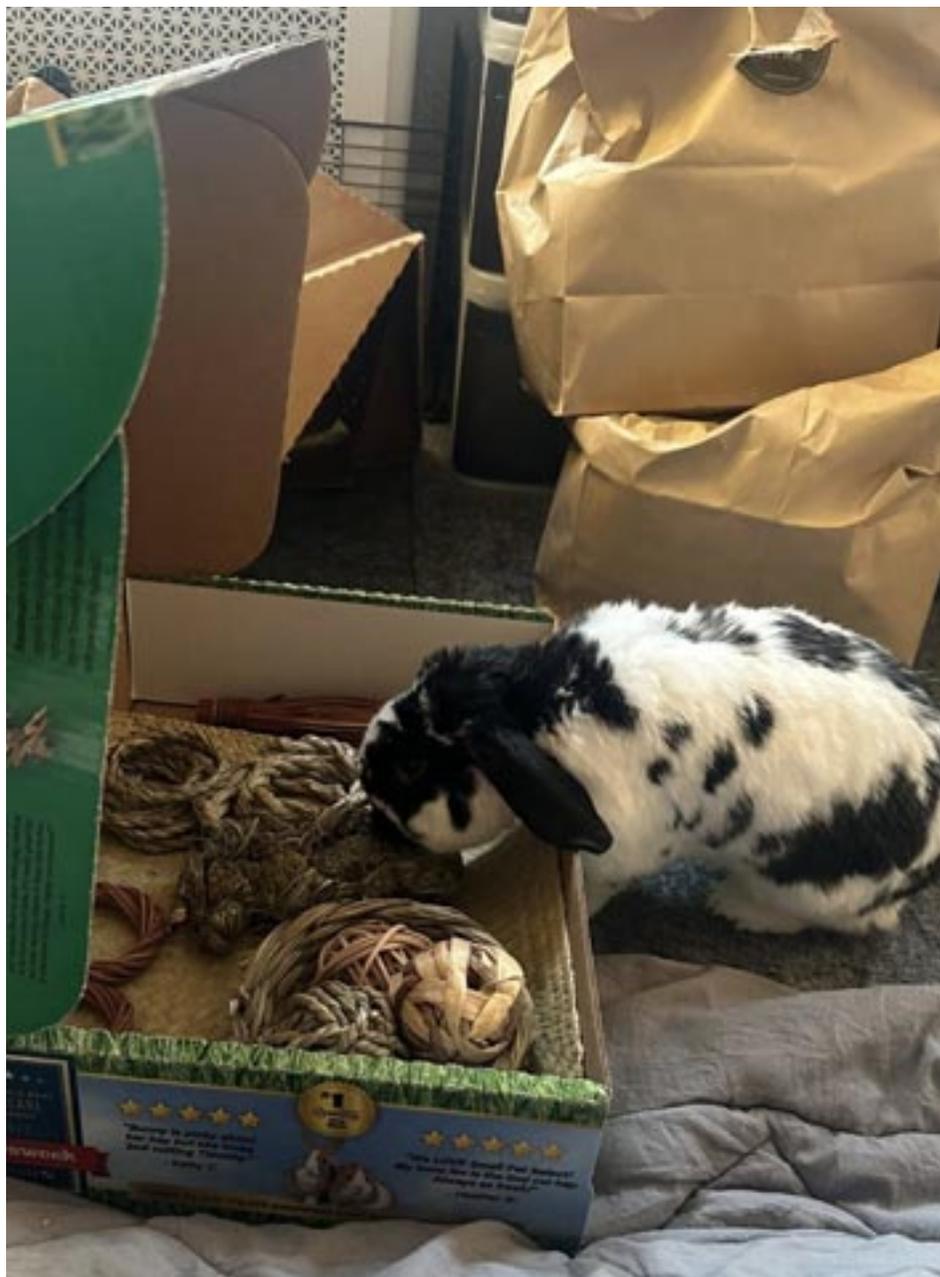
Photos: Lauren Lourenco



Daniel.

Daniel has taught me life lessons that I now use and carry with me as a mom to a human baby as well. It prepared me in a way to become a mother to my son. It's a feeling of unconditional love that is greater than yourself. It is the type of love that is so selfless it sometimes makes you sick because you worry about them so much and the thought of life without them is unbearable. Sometimes love that is this strong can feel challenging, but you learn to see the beauty in it and understand that you are lucky enough to ever experience it.

I remember people not understanding how I could love a rabbit so much. I would hear things like "A rabbit? Just wait until you have kids. That will change." Well, now I have a son, a beautiful full-of-life 1-year-old and I would literally die for him.



Daniel with his toys.

But guess what? Nothing has changed with Daniel. I still love him just as I did before having my son. Our lives have changed. I'd be lying if I said they haven't. But the love? No, that part has not changed. It's only grown stronger after having Daniel by my side during the new seasons of life I go through.

Daniel is so special to me and honestly deserves to be celebrated every single day, but today (Dec. 1) I will try to make

it extra special for him. I got him all his favorite toys from Small Pet Select and we will sing to Daniel over some banana later. Our son will celebrate with us.

Daniel, no matter how much life changes, I promise to always keep you a part of it. I promise to love you forever, like the vow I made seven years ago when I first took you home. Happy gotcha day, with many more to come.

Reflections on Percy

By Erica Leong

It's been a month since my furbaby Percy crossed the rainbow bridge. I can't help but still look for him under the table or in the back of his X-pen area in passing, thinking I'll see him in loaf form or looking back at me with a good stretch.

I remember first bringing him home and how he was so skittish the first three to four weeks. He'd run to the back and hide under the wooden TV stand that was part of his X-pen area anytime there was noise or a human in the room.

Sitting with him nightly and offering him his favorite banana for a snack helped bridge the newness for us both. I tried giving him strawberry sometime in that first month and was quickly met with a retreat and thump, letting me know it was simply not acceptable – not when he knew banana existed. In time, the rustling of a plastic bag no longer caused him to dash away, but instead he would sprint forward in the anticipation of breakfast/dinner.

Roughly four years after bringing him home, we moved to Manhattan. I remember how he'd greet me in the chilly mornings by having his fleece up around him. His favorite thing to do was wait until I was out of the room, jump on the bed, and then head straight to the window curtains to get in a good chew before my return – at which point we'd lock eyes and he'd binky away from the curtains with mischief successfully completed. I remember bringing the curtains to the tailor to fix and the lady was shocked to hear it was a rabbit that'd done the chewing, and not a dog. I would chide and shoo Percy away from the curtains often, but it was an endearing "game" that I'm so happy to have been able to play with him.

I recall the first time my building super came in to put in the air-conditioner bracket; Percy got so scared that he

zoomed in circles around his pen, spilling water and pellets everywhere. I'd never seen him do that before and it was then that I realized how much he'd grown to trust me. By this point he was loafing and flopping freely, binkying every night around 11 p.m. (and 1 a.m. if I was awake then), and he knew our daily routine.

When Covid happened, Percy brought joy and peace to me during a turbulent period. I'm not sure I can say the same for him, unfortunately, since it meant that suddenly I was home all the time and he no longer had the entire room to himself for his daytime naps and rabbit reveries. Every Friday morning I'd show him on my work team's morning check-in, and his simple online presence brought my team members peace, too, just by being his adorable rabbit self.

When we moved to Brooklyn (still during Covid), I registered for online Zumba classes from the safety of my room. I remember one of the sessions vividly: I was stepping left and right and swinging my arms around wildly above Percy. I looked down next to me, and he was flopped out as calm and unbothered as could be, ears unperked, and eyes watching me with amused judgment. He must've been thinking: "Hoomin just doing more weird hoomin things." He was so relaxed! Meanwhile, there I was, flailing around in front of him trying to do cardio. It was then that without a doubt, I realized how much he truly trusted and felt safe with me: from running at every sound, to being perfectly comfortable near me while I erratically fluttered from one side of the room to the other.

I am so so lucky and privileged to have had such a wonderful bunson for the last nine years through so many of life's ups and downs. No matter what happened or what I was going through, Percy was there at the start of my day and at the

Photos: Erica Leong



Percy.

end. I didn't anticipate how much happiness his presence would bring to my life, but gosh, I can't imagine the last decade without him. Percy has forever affected my world for the better, and I'm so grateful for those that make Long Island Rabbit Rescue happen.

Thank you especially to Dr. Saver (C&C), Dr. Campbell (C&C), Nancy, Mary Ann, Denise and Katie! Thank you to the many other hands and hearts that allow us to have the furbabies of our dreams, and also to those that make this such a wonderful rabbit community.

Forever Homes Found!

We are happy to report that Carson, Trish, Harmony, Salem, Travis, Hickory, Talia and Mina were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!



Adoption #1 of the New Year: Talia! (All of Trixie's babies have now found their forever homes.)



Salem.



Travis.



Mina.



Trish.



Harmony.



Carson, on the left.



Hickory, on the right.

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

For Information on Adopting Any of Our Rabbits, Contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com

Dove

Unfortunately, the summer of 2023 was a record year for outdoor rabbit abandonments. We were called to a neighborhood where several rabbits were seen trying to survive. During week two, little Dove appeared on the scene. She was very young and quite fearful; it took a few days to convince her that we were there to bring her to safety.

She is a beautifully elegant 7- to 8-month-old sable seal point, tipping the scales at 3.5 pounds.

Dove is a very sweet little girl. She is rather demure, with a cautious approach to the world. She is an active girl and loves to run and does fantastic binkies! Her binky game is no surprise because she has the legs of a supermodel! Dove is spayed and would thrive in a calm, adult home. If you are interested in adopting Dove, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Pink

Pink is a sweet Himalayan boy with an affectionate demeanor. He does have a big energetic streak and likes to get in his exercise by running big laps and fluffing up his blankets before settling in for a nap on his IKEA doll bed. He's particularly fond of toys that can be tossed around, and loves all of his pellets, greens and hay. Pink is neutered and ready for adoption. If you are interested in adopting Pink, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Skye

Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit. 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



Dove.



Pink.



Skye.

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 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.

(Continued on page 16)

RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 15)

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.



Indigo.

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.



Lucy.

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-



Carmela.

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.

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

Anderson

Anderson was more than ready for his rescue. On a sweltering summer day, he found his way to a yard and caught the attention of a homeowner. Anderson stayed put for days, as though expecting help to arrive soon. After just five minutes on the scene, our volunteers penned him and got him to safety. Care couldn't have come soon enough; Anderson wasn't able to put much weight on his left leg, which was slightly splayed. Catnip & Carrots veterinarians discovered a metatarsal fracture in his back paw and got him on the road to recovery with cage rest, pain medication, and anti-inflammatories. More than just lucky, this handsome rabbit is bright, resilient, and gradually overcoming his shyness. Anderson will be sure to thrive in a calm home with patient humans.

Arthur

You'd never guess Arthur's rough start! Found abandoned in a nightstand, this resilient bunny is incredibly social and sweet, adoring playtime and gentle pets. Arthur has a charmingly assertive side, though. He appreciates his space during meals and litter-box time, so a respectful approach is key. This delightful fellow will thrive in a home with an experienced rabbit owner who will cherish his outgoing and unique personality.

Freya

Adventurous and brimming with curiosity, Freya has a zest for life and a desire to explore every nook and cranny! This spirited bun came to us as part of an unexpected litter and has been a cherished member of our family ever since.

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Anderson.

While Freya has experienced some tummy troubles in the past (haven't we all?), she's now thriving and ready for her next great adventure. She's looking for a human companion who understands the joys and nuances of living with rabbits. While she's happy to be around children, she'd do best with kids aged 6 and up. Born on April 8, 2020, Freya is a very active and playful girl with an independent spirit. She's also known to get along well with both dogs and cats. If you have previous rabbit experience and are ready to welcome a bold and adventurous bunny into your life, Freya might just be the perfect match for you!

Rebecca

Rebecca is an opinionated rabbit who enjoys the simple pleasures in life. Though she may start off a little shy and reserved, with patience she'll warm up to you and show her true, loving side. She loves being petted once she feels comfortable and trusts you. Her favorite treats include sticks, banana, and the occasional Timothy hay lollipop – but really, she's a fan of food in general! When she's not enjoying a tasty snack, you'll find Rebecca lounging under the bed, couch, or in her cozy bunny hut. She's an independent spirit who loves to roam around the house, but she feels safest when everything is calm and quiet.



Arthur



Freya.



Rebecca.

Rebecca is easily startled by sudden noises or movements, so she thrives in a peaceful environment. She'll often relax and lie down when the house is at rest, taking in her surroundings. If you're looking for a gentle, sweet companion who enjoys a quiet life and some extra love once she's comfortable, Rebecca just might be the perfect match!

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

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



Cinnamon.



Jupiter.



Gingerbread.



Emma.



Twixiehop, Sugar Bunny, Bundrop, Bunny Bear, Tootsiehop.



Bunny Bear.



Sugar Bunny.



Twixiehop.



Bundrop.

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



Blizzard.



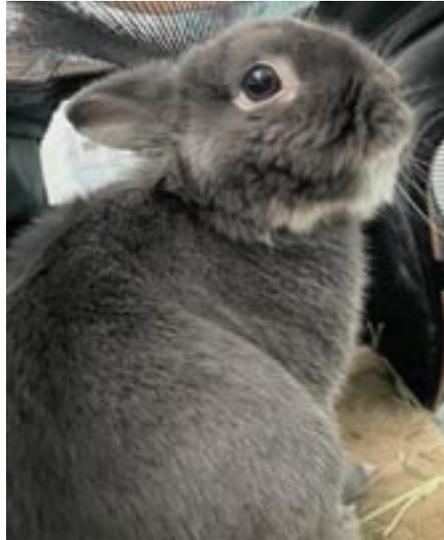
Rainbow.



Nivens.



Eevee.



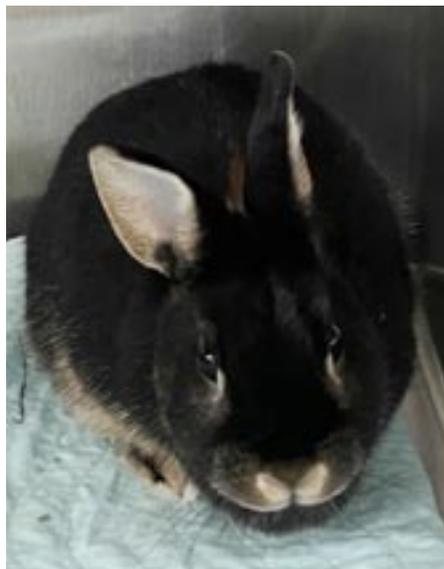
Storm.



Carroll.



Cloud.



Niko.



Fifi.

(Continued on page 20)

ADOPTIONS

Rabbits at Queens (NYC ACC)

(Continued from page 19)



Pearl.



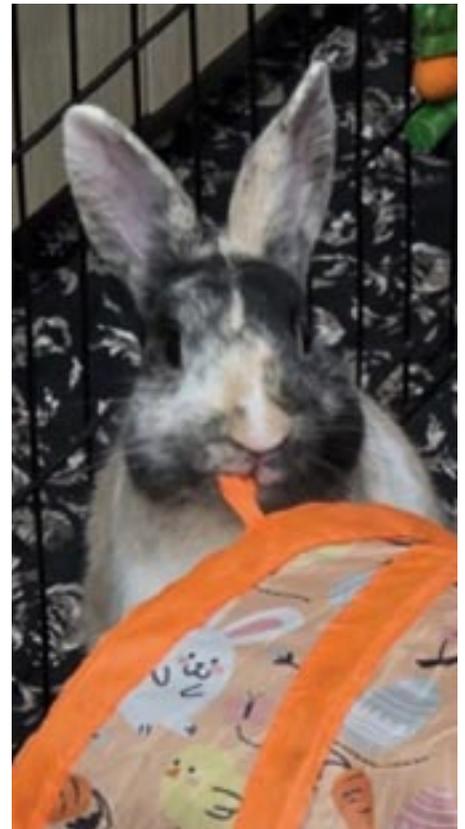
Pikachu.



Cottontail.



Rollie.



Christmas Cookie.

Gastrointestinal Stasis, the Silent Killer

By Dana M. Krempels, Ph.D.

University of Miami Biology Department
House Rabbit Society of Miami

It's an all too familiar story. "My bunny stopped eating, and then she just died."

When we ask for details, we often learn that not only did the bunny stop eating, but she had been producing extremely small or even no fecal droppings, or showed symptoms of "runny stool." True diarrhea (unformed, liquid fecal matter) is uncommon in rabbits. The runny stool sometimes misidentified as "diarrhea" in rabbits is more often composed of unformed, almost-liquid cecotropes.

Rabbits produce two types of pellets: fecal pellets (left in the litter box) and cecotropes (soft, pungent, normally shaped like a cluster of grapes and reingested by the rabbit to obtain essential nutrients). Liquid or mushy cecotropes can result from an imbalance of the normal bacterial and fungal flora of the cecum (the bunny's intestinal "fermentation vat"). The floral imbalance can be caused by a number of factors, such as the wrong antibiotic (oral penicillins and lincosamide antibiotics can be very dangerous to rabbits for this reason) or a diet too rich in digestible carbohydrates and too low in crude fiber. Often, however, it is caused by a slowing of the normal peristaltic muscular contractions that push food and liquids through the intestines. The slowdown or cessation of peristalsis of the intestine is known as gastrointestinal (GI) stasis or ileus.

What Causes GI Stasis?

A rabbit's intestine can become static for a variety of reasons, including (1) stress, (2) dehydration, (3) pain from another underlying disorder or illness (such as gas, dental problems, infections, or

urinary tract disorders) (4) an intestinal blockage or, (5) insufficient dietary crude fiber. Left untreated, the slowdown or complete cessation of normal intestinal movement (peristalsis) can result in a painful death, in a relatively short period of time. If your rabbit stops eating or producing feces for 12 hours or more, you should consider the condition an emergency. Get your bunny to a rabbit-savvy veterinarian immediately.

An intestinal slowdown can cause ingested hair and food to lodge anywhere along the GI tract, creating a potential blockage. Also, because the cecum is not emptying quickly enough, harmful bacteria such as *Clostridium species* (related to the ones that cause botulism and tetanus) can proliferate, their numbers overwhelming those of the normal, beneficial bacteria and fungi in the cecum. Once this overgrowth occurs, gas emitted by the bacteria can cause extreme pain. Some *Clostridium species* also produce potentially deadly toxins. It is the liver's job to detoxify these poisons, at a high cost to that all-important organ. Damage to the liver can be a serious – even life-threatening – side effect of GI stasis.

How Can GI Stasis Be Detected?

Symptoms of GI stasis include very small (or no) fecal pellets, sometimes clinging to the bunny's bottom. In some cases, very small fecal pellets will be encased in clear or yellowish mucus. This potentially serious problem (enteritis, an inflammation of the intestinal lining) should be treated as an emergency.

With GI stasis, the normal, quiet gurgling of the healthy intestine may be replaced either by very loud, violent gurgles (gas moving around painfully) or silence.

Photos: Christie Taylor



Normal fecal pellets.



Normal cecotrope.

The bunny may become lethargic, have no appetite and may hunch in a ball, loudly crunching his teeth in pain.

GI Stasis and the "Hairball" Myth

Sometimes, a rabbit suffering from GI stasis is diagnosed as having a "hairball." In reality, an apparent hairball usually is a result of GI stasis – not the cause. A vet who has not palpated many rabbit abdomens may be unfamiliar with the normal, sometimes "doughy" feel of the healthy rabbit stomach. A "doughy" stomach is usually cause for concern only when accompanied by an empty lower GI and symptoms of abdominal discomfort.

Like those of most herbivores, the stomach and intestines of a healthy rabbit are never empty. A rabbit may eat relatively normal amounts of food,

(Continued on page 22)

Silent Killer *(Continued from page 21)*

almost up to the time the GI tract shuts down. Because of this, the stomach may contain a large bolus of food when stasis occurs. Unlike the typical cat hairball, which usually consists entirely of hair, a mass misidentified as a “hairball” in a rabbit is usually composed mostly of food held together by hair and mucus. Such a bolus, even if it is dehydrated and unable to pass out of the stomach when initially found, usually can be broken down slowly with plenty of oral fluids and even enzyme supplements, if the vet deems them necessary. However, if the mass is there as a result of chronic GI stasis, simply treating the mass without addressing the GI stasis will be unproductive in the long term.

If you suspect that your bunny is experiencing GI stasis, you must take him/her to your rabbit-experienced veterinarian without delay. Tell the vet your suspicions. S/he will probably listen for normal intestinal sounds and palpate the bunny’s abdomen. The vet also may wish to take radiographs (X-rays)

to see whether the various parts of the digestive tract contain normal ingested matter, feces or foreign objects – or are empty and gassy. The appearance of the digestive tract will help the vet determine whether there is an obstruction and, if so, where it is located.

If a true intestinal obstruction (almost always accompanied by severe bloating and acute pain) is present, the use of intestinal motility drugs could make the situation worse by pushing the blockage into a narrow area where it completely obstructs the intestine. However, if the mass is not causing an acute, complete blockage, medical alternatives to surgery should be considered first. A gastrotomy – surgical opening of the stomach – may be performed to remove a gastric obstruction, but rabbits who undergo this procedure have an abysmally low survival rate. Those who survive the surgery itself often succumb a few days later to peritonitis or other complications, even when under the care of the most practiced, skillful rabbit surgeon. Surgery on the rabbit GI tract should be considered only as a last resort.

Can GI Stasis Be Successfully Treated?

If your vet has determined that there is no intestinal obstruction, there are several treatments s/he may wish to use to help your bunny in distress. As always, do not perform any of these procedures or try to administer any of these medications without the supervision of a veterinarian experienced with rabbit disorders and treatments.

Treatments and protocols for stasis are subject to constant revision and improvement as new information becomes available. As a result, it is important to use the [rabbit.org link](http://rabbit.org) on the House Rabbit Society website to access the most recent, updated version of the treatment information provided for stasis. When you scroll down, you will find treatment information under the following topics: Mechanical Treatments, Nonprescription Supportive Measures, Prescription/Veterinary Treatments, Pain Relief, The Road to Recovery, Backtracking to the Cause, and Prevention.



You Can Help!

We desperately need help driving our rabbits to and from the veterinarian, between foster homes, etc. Having to worry about how the rabbits will get to the vet or back home is adding a huge amount of stress on top of our already difficult mission.

Most of our foster rabbits are quite far from their veterinarian. Unfortunately, many trips can be last-minute due to an emergency.

If you are based close to Westchester County, are a safe driver with a clean driver’s license, and want to help the rabbits in a huge way, we’d love to hear from you! Thank you!

NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com

THE MECHANICS OF DIGESTION

1 Swallowed plant food is passed to the STOMACH from the PHARYNX through the ESOPHAGUS.

2 Muscular contractions squeeze and churn the food in a circular path, separating food particles and mixing them with the gastric fluid of the stomach.

The stomach has two regions. The FUNDIC REGION is lined with layers that are nonsecretory. Secretions from glands in the lining of the PYLORIC REGION include hydrochloric acid, digestive enzymes and mucus. "The stomach serves as a storage organ metering ingesta into the small intestine." (Cheeke 1987)

3 As the food particles exit the stomach, enzymes produced in the PANCREAS and bile produced by the LIVER are secreted into the SMALL INTESTINE at the DUODENUM.

4 The major part of digestion takes place during passage through the small intestine. Fructose, most starches, and up to 90% of all protein are absorbed, while cellulose is not efficiently digested.

The lining of the SMALL INTESTINE has numerous tiny projections called villi which greatly increase the surface area for absorption. The small intestine has three functional areas:

The DUODENUM is the primary area for neutralizing stomach acids and mixing of digesta. It receives pancreatic enzymes, involved in carbohydrate, protein and fat digestion and liver bile acids, important in vitamin and fat absorption. The JEJUNUM is the major site of digestion and absorption. The ILEUM is the remaining portion and is characterized by lymph nodules in the submucosa. (McLaughlin 1990)

5 Fiber is separated into large and small particles. Larger particles are eliminated; smaller particles are sent to the CECUM for fermentation.

Ingesta is discharged fairly uniformly from the ILEO-CECOCOLONIC JUNCTION, at the end of the ILEUM. Fine particulate materials are selectively channeled to the cecum by HAUSTRAE. Circular muscle fibers "move material in a retrograde manner

- ➡ Digestible nutrients
- ➡ Small fiber particles
- ⊕ Unformed cecal material
- ⊕ Cecotropes
- ➡ Undigestible large fiber
- ⊕ Dry, hard fecal pellets

to the cecum," (Cheeke 1987) while "larger particulate material is passed through the large intestine as fecal pellets." (Percy 1993).

6 Bacteria digest cellulose (small particles), most sugars, excess starch, and any remaining protein not digested in the small intestine; B-complex vitamins are produced along with volatile fatty acids, which are absorbed directly into the bloodstream. (Evans 1991)

The CECUM is the blind end of the COLON, with a capacity of two to three times that of the stomach. Continuously in motion, it mixes its contents by rapid contractions back and forth along its length. "There is a continual flux of material between the cecum and PROXIMAL COLON." (Cheeke 1987) "The cecum contains symbiotic microorganisms that produce cellulase to break down the cellulose walls of plant cells." (McLaughlin 1990)

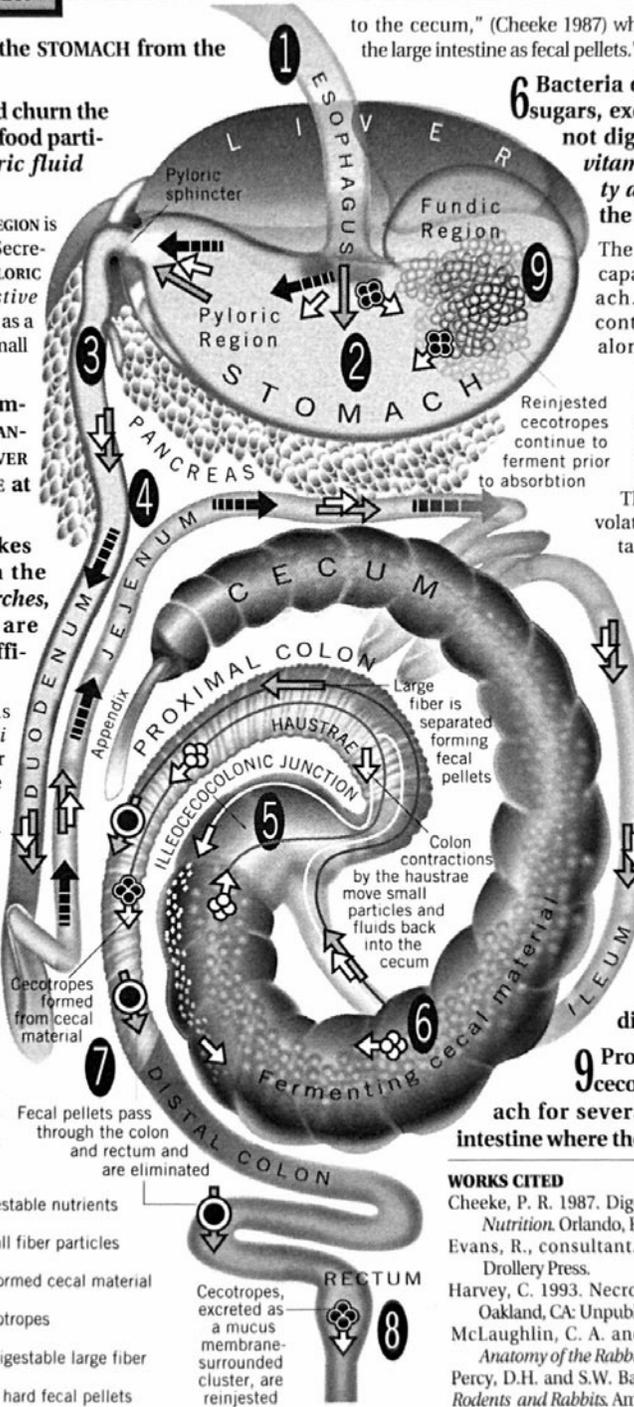
The APPENDIX secretes an alkaline fluid buffer to volatile fatty acids produced during cecal fermentation. (Cheeke 1987)

7 Undigested fiber and waste (hard fecal pellets) pass through the LARGE INTESTINE along with vitamin-rich CECOTROPEs (soft cecal pellets), which are formed from fermented cecal material. Cecotropes are higher in protein and water and lower in fiber than fecal pellets. (Cheeke 1987)

COLON/LARGE INTESTINE. The PROXIMAL COLON winds forward toward the stomach. Segmental contractions separate the digesta into fecal pellets. The DISTAL COLON, at the level of the stomach, loops caudally to the short straight RECTUM. (McLaughlin 1990)

8 Cecotropes are consumed directly from the anus and returned to the digestive system (cecotrophy).

9 Protected in mucus membrane packages, cecotropes continue to ferment in the stomach for several hours, until they pass to the small intestine where the nutrients are absorbed. (Cheeke 1987) □



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 Percy, D.H. and S.W. Barthold. 1993. Pp. 179-80 in *Pathology of Laboratory Rodents and Rabbits*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.

Adoptable Rabbits

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

To adopt a rabbit in **New York City** or **Westchester**, contact nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

On **Long Island**, contact information@longislandrabbitrescue.org.

You can also visit Manhattan Animal Care Center at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues, and the Queens Animal Care Center at 1906 Flushing Ave. in Ridgewood..

Rabbits for adoption in Manhattan and Queens 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. 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.

If interested in volunteering for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Leo.

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.

THUMP JANUARY 2026

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.org

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

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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. 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
Davia Kot, 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
Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital
2056 Jericho Turnpike
New Hyde Park
(516) 877-7080
catnipandcarrots.com

Meredith Davis, DVM, MS
Island Exotic Veterinary Care
591 East Jericho Turnpike
Huntington, NY
(631) 424-0300
islandexoticvet.com

Long Island (continued):

Perri Wiggin, DVM
Long Island Veterinary Specialists
163 S Service Rd.
Plainview, NY 11803
(516) 501-1700
livs.org

Ellen Leonhardt, DVM
Animal General of East Norwich
6320 Northern Blvd.
East Norwich, NY 11732
(516) 624-7500
vcahospitals.com/animal-general-east-norwich

Marilyn Olds, DVM
Rocky Point Animal Hospital
526A Route 25A
Rocky Point, NY 11778
(631) 849-8638
rockypointanimalhospital.com

Brian Rose, DVM
Jeff Rose, DVM
Jefferson Animal Hospital
606 NY-112
Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776
(631) 473-0415
portjeffersonanimalhospital.com

Elena Buenrostro, DVM, Registrar
(Exotic Companion Mammal)
VMCLI (Veterinary Medical Center of
Long Island)
75 Sunrise Hwy North Service Rd.
West Islip, NY 11795
(631) 587-0800
vmcli.com

FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY

If your rabbit is a client of Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital, they have explicit instruction to call the vet.
Veterinary Emergency Group, 204 B Glen Cove Road, Carle Place, NY 11514
(516) 693-8859
veterinaryemergencygroup.com

Licensed HRS Educators

NYC/Westchester:

Alex McIe
Chapter Manager,
NYC House Rabbit Society
alexlmcie@gmail.com

M.C. Basile

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

Jeanine Callace
Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net

Marcie Frishberg

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