

# THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS AUGUST 2016

## Helping to Clear The Shelter, One Bunny at a Time

By Nancy Womack

I nearly didn't go to the Manhattan Animal Care Center on July 23. I knew it was annual "Clear the Shelters" Saturday nationwide, and I had toyed with going to Manhattan ACC to adopt a bunny, but didn't really make a plan to go. I woke up Saturday with the thought of specifically going and looking for an elderly bunny, but then there seemed to be too much on my to-do list for the day. About noon I thought: Just go. An elderly bunny must be waiting.

Photo: Shannon Cail



Photo: Molly Proffes

Calvin, at left, and Suki, right, came to the Manhattan shelter in May as Robert and Rosey, but they weren't a bonded pair. These two English Angoras found loving homes in eastern Massachusetts, about 45 minutes away from each other. To read more about how Calvin and Suki are doing, turn to **page 2**.

Photo: ACC



Alley and her adopter, Nancy Womack, at ACC.

I jumped in a cab and when I arrived there was a line in front of the shelter on East 110th Street. All adoptions were free for the day, and there had been a lot of publicity about the many homeless animals available for adoption. I took an application and got at the back of the line. I stopped one of the workers and told him I was interested in adopting a bunny. I was sent to the front of the line.

The rabbit volunteers were on duty to help, and I met my old friend, Cindy Stutts, who introduced me to Alley. I already have two bunnies, an older boy named Fred and a girl bunny, Velvet.

(Cindy said later, "Nancy came to adopt an older special-needs bunny and I introduced her to Alley. It was love at first sight." Just 15 minutes before Nancy

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# Calvin, fka Robert, Helped My Heart to Heal

By Shannon Cail

On June 4, two of my friends and I drove more than four hours from Massachusetts to meet Robert the bunny at the Manhattan Animal Care Center. I had lost my beloved Angora rabbit Duncan in February, and was ready to open my heart again to another furry bunny in need. I also had been in communication with volunteer Amy Odum for about three to four weeks leading up to my visit.

Robert was a cutie, with his newly buzzed fur-cut (which I'm told was desperately

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Photo: Shannon Cail



Apple Pie and Calvin.

# When Wally Met Suki

Molly Prottas

I never really understood what it meant to be “bonded” to a bunny until Wally entered my life. Although he was my third rabbit, my previous two (who were with me at different times) didn't exactly cherish my friendship. But they cherished lots of other things, like my wooden shelves, the deliciously chewable texture of my bed linens, and the cords that enabled wireless connection for my two roommates and me. While feeling unloved by my bunnies wasn't exactly a self-esteem booster, I still loved them with all my heart. And any of my coworkers at the

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# Clear the Shelter

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arrived, Cindy had taken Alley down to medical to give her a butt bath, and to de-mat and clean her. “I promised Alley I would find her a forever home. Just after I brought Alley upstairs, Nancy appeared,” Cindy said.)

Alley came home with me, and she is absolutely the sweetest. I love this little girl, and apparently so does Fred. I wasn't going to try to introduce her to Fred until I had her checked out with the vet and I knew what was going on. But two days after I adopted her, Alley got out of her enclosure during the night and I found Alley and Fred the next morning sleeping next to each other, with Fred's exercise pen between them. It really made me smile.

**Editor's Note:** Another bunny, Sayaka, was also adopted on the same day that Nancy found Alley. A Brooklyn couple plans to rename Sayaka as S'mores because of her brown markings. There was a great group of rabbit volunteers who helped with the event. Along with Cindy, there were Zhen Heinemann, Krystina Busacco, Norma Chen Rhee, Amy Odum, Erin McElhinney, Neil

Photo: Telemundo



Screen grab from the Telemundo story as it aired. Volunteers Norma Chen Rhee, at left, and Cindy Stutts with the rabbits.

Schaier, Felecia Kelly-Applewhite, Cathie Rekis and Dave Orna. (Volunteers at the Brooklyn shelter were Nadine Heidinger and Cathy Zelonis). Cathie thanked all the volunteers for braving the scorching heat to help with the crowds of potential adopters. Along with the two rabbits, ACC did 39 adoptions of dogs/puppies and 49 cats/kittens – and also gave out more than 150 vouchers for potential adopters who came but didn't find a pet. As a result, a

third bunny, Emolga, found a home the following weekend with an adopter using a voucher. The second annual national “Clear the Shelters” event was sponsored by NBCUniversal-Owned Television Stations, with an additional grant from the ASPCA. Animal Care Centers of NYC worked with NBC 4 New York/WNBC and Telemundo 47/WNJU. Telemundo's coverage of the event is on YouTube:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUK8\\_Nopskc&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUK8_Nopskc&feature=youtu.be)

## Calvin

*(Continued from page 2)*

needed because his Angora fur was a matted mess). Robert had one flopped ear and one up ear, and a front right “flipper” leg that stuck out to one side. He let me cradle him in my arms for quite a while. (Robert had been surrendered at the shelter with a girl bunny, Rosey.)

I'm pretty sure that was just the first step in his ploy for me to adopt him. After spending a good amount of time at the shelter with Robert and the other bunnies, I went back to my hotel to think about things. I still wasn't sure. My heart wasn't sure.

The next morning I awoke about 5:30 a.m. because I couldn't sleep, still unsure about adopting Robert. I turned on the television and the newscaster's last name was Duncan. I said to myself, “OK, Duncan, I will adopt Robert.” At that moment, I knew that Robert would be coming back home with me that day. My decision had been made right then and there.

Robert was adopted on June 5, and in the coming weeks I learned that adopting him was just what my heart needed to heal from the loss of Duncan.

Robert went for a “well bunny check” a week after adoption, and we found out about a few of his medical issues. He has partial facial paralysis on the right side. Due to this, his right ear droops (no control) and his right eye only closes about 80%, although no drops are needed at this point. Radiographs showed a torn (already healed?)/elongated (born that way?) ligament in his right leg, which would account for his “flipper” (the leg sticking out to the side). Because of the partial paralysis, the teeth on one side are a bit longer than the other, so we will monitor those for tooth grinding in the future. The cause of the paralysis was very probably trauma. However, this does NOT slow Robert down. He runs bunny 500s and binkies like no tomorrow.

Photo: Shannon Cail



Calvin keeping Harvey company during fireworks. Harvey is frightened by fireworks and thunderstorms and he usually hides in a bathroom.

After a few weeks in our home, Robert became “Calvin” and he quickly got along with our two dogs (coincidentally, both from Manhattan ACC adopted via AmsterDog Rescue, NY). Calvin has no fear of the dogs, Harvey and Apple Pie, and goes right up to them.

Calvin's litter-box habits improved to 100% within a week and he's a very curious bunny. He runs through the house with no hesitation on the hardwood or tiled floors. He has recently discovered how much fun the carpeted stairs up to the master bedroom are, but hasn't made it all the way up yet. He also discovered the central A/C floor vents and knows that if he's warm, he can lie right over them to cool off.

Calvin has his own room, with an X-pen for his own safety, as he and the dogs are never left alone together. He has perfected the “dead bunny flops” and LOVES to be petted. He would hunker down for hours if your hand could pet him for that long. He got his first fur-cut a few weeks ago, but was not a fan of the electric clippers. We will work on getting him used to them. But for now, we just use the scissors and he's a very good boy for tolerating that.

Adopting Calvin has brought much joy to my heart and a tiny bit more craziness to our home, but my husband, Jason, and I wouldn't change it for the world. Calvin is such a happy little bunny and whatever happened in his “previous life” has long since been forgotten. Our furkids ARE our kids, and we couldn't imagine life without them.

## Suki

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time could undeniably back that statement.

Although I wasn't expecting to be kindred spirits with my new bunny, I immediately sensed something different in Wally. He was more sensitive and responsive to my presence than my previous rabbits. Although he refused to even look at me when I first brought him home, I was intrigued by how seemingly purposeful this behavior was. When I walked into the room, he would decisively turn his body or head away from me. Sometimes, he would stare at the wall, his nose nearly squished up against it, until I left the room. To say this didn't hurt my feelings would be a lie, but I was impressed with his attunement to my presence and his communication strategies. His message was clear: I was going to have to earn his friendship. I actually began to worry that I'd fail at meeting his standards. Humbled, I remember saying to him, “I hope you decide to be my friend, little bunny.”

I'm honored to declare that Wally did accept my friendship and we developed

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Photo: Molly Proffers



Wally.

## Suki

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a strong mutual connection. I think it's this element of mutuality that I had not experienced with my previous rabbits. I have the capacity to love and adore any rabbit, regardless of whether I perceive this love and adoration to be reciprocated. But with Wally, I sensed that my presence and actions really mattered to him. It feels different to comfort a frightened bunny who remains anxious versus comforting a frightened bunny who is then visibly soothed. It can feel more meaningful to leave the room and return to a bunny who has been waiting for you at the door rather than a bunny who appears indifferent. So my relationship with Wally felt special because he mattered so much to me, but I also sensed that I mattered to him. When I returned to work after grad school, it became increasingly difficult to imagine Wally all alone in an empty room for the entire day, and I worried about the impact of my absence. I knew I wanted to find Wally a friend, and the timing was finally right for me this May.

And so began my search for Wally's future best friend. I spent the first week browsing Petfinder, learning about the adoptable rabbits, and researching the complexities of rabbit bonding (this would be my very first bonding experience). When I found a beautiful black female Rex close in age to Wally, I contacted a shelter here in Massachusetts to schedule a visit. Awaiting a reply, and with plans to visit my sister in New York City, on a whim, I broadened my search to include shelters in NYC. I scrolled through dozens of adorable bunnies ... and then, I saw them: two beautiful, billowing puffs of gray Angora wool. They were unbonded brother and sister English Angoras whose photos had been posted just the previous day. I shared the link with my sister, and we both marveled at how big and cute their noses were. (Suki's nose is endearingly big compared to Wally's, and I have always loved this about her.) It was never

Photo: Molly Proffers



Wally with Suki.

my specific intention to pair Wally with another Angora, but I was delighted at the thought of four fluffy ears bouncing around my room. I contacted the shelter and scheduled a visit the following Sunday, May 15.

Suki (who was known as Rosey when she and her brother, Robert, were surrendered at the shelter) was the sweetest, most irresistibly precious little bunny. She looked like a poodle puppy with her recently clipped wool. She and her brother had arrived at the shelter with severe matting, which can cause skin pain and restrict mobility. Suki was very thin and her muscles were weak. She had likely been confined to a cage for the majority of her life. Compared to Wally, she was so tiny and fragile. Her legs splayed out to the sides as she galloped around like a giddy baby lamb. I was immediately certain that I had found Wally's best friend.

Our first bonding session took place in Suki's room. Here was Wally, a bunny encountering another bunny for the first time since he was a baby. He had come face to face with his own species, and, for a moment, I had this sort of pseudo-realization that my Wally was a real bunny. We had such a close relationship and he did so well existing in my human world that I secretly imagined him snubbing this bunny relationship in favor of continuing the human high life with me. But my fantasy was disbanded by the familiar words Wally so proudly announces on Instagram echoing in my head: "I'm a BUNNY!"

Throughout the first bonding session, Suki was terrified, and Wally – my poised and majestic superbunny – seemed emotionally confused and behaviorally disorganized. I imagined him thinking, "Am I supposed to be ferocious? Hospitable? Should I display my lion swagger? Proceed cautiously like a tortoise?" Suki made these initial sessions very easy for Wally. She simply froze in place as if to disguise herself as a mundane, inanimate object. I imagined her thinking, "If I don't move, maybe I'll wake up to realize this is all a terrible nightmare."

And then, one of the most shocking and memorable moments of Wally and Suki's bonding adventure: Wally countered his uncertainty with a very bold decision.

Centimeters from Suki's face, he turned his back to her, and with swift precision, he lifted his tail...and peed. Still petrified, Suki was immobilized as a puddle formed around her on the hardwood floor. I was so embarrassed by Wally's disgraceful manners. That's not how I taught him to welcome guests! "Wally! Are you serious?" I wanted to say. But obviously he was very serious. This was bunny bonding! I ended the session shortly after, because poor Suki wasn't wearing her bathing suit and needed to be dried off.

By the end of their first week, Wally and Suki had been peacefully coexisting during their bonding sessions for several consecutive days. When Wally lay down next to Suki for the first time, I wondered if perhaps I was witnessing a fairytale bonding story. But when we began sessions in my room, Wally was no prince charming. He would growl/grunt as he chased Suki around the room trying to nip her. Thankfully, the hardwood floor areas were her "safe" zones because Wally was not brave enough to run on them. Eventually, he would stop chasing her and lounge in the middle of the room, monitoring her like a hawk. When she approached him, he would dart out his nose to scare her. Sometimes it

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## Suki

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looked like he was gesturing a bite, and he'd chomp the air like a crocodile. This always made me laugh, and I called him my "dragon-bunny" because he looked like an evil dragon exhaling fire to threaten his enemy.

In the beginning, Suki would tip-toe over to Wally. She looked so nervous and shy, yet so eager to be friends with him. She'd startle herself and dart away if she got too close. Or Wally would turn his head, and she'd run for her life as if she had discovered a hungry bear. It was very funny. She'd work so hard building the courage to reach him, and then when she finally arrived, she'd instantly retreat in fear. Wally was absolutely trying to play it cool at first – as if he didn't want to be seen as anything other than an independent bunny who didn't need her to be happy. But then I'd see him sneak his head under her chin, or inch his way closer to her. It was like those cliché movie scenes where the boy yawns and stretches and then "accidentally" puts his arm around the girl. I would pretend I didn't see so that Wally wasn't embarrassed.

At first, Suki was only granted permission to use Wally's litter box when he was not in there. When he was, her efforts to gain entrance were so admirable that you would have thought "sharing a litter box with Wally" was the very first thing on her birthday wish list. If she was in it

alone, as soon as Wally decided it was his turn, merely approaching the box signaled Suki's mandatory exit. At the speed of lightning, just before his nose reached the box, she would spring up and over his head, leaping into the air like the cow who jumped over the moon. It was flawlessly choreographed. And then, in classic Wally fashion, he'd nonchalantly claim occupancy of her box whenever he had the chance, leisurely sitting like a king in his throne as he gleefully ate up all of her hay.

Throughout the bonding process, I relied a lot on Wally's ability and willingness to listen to me and respond to my guidance. For example, when he was agitated and eager to fight, he would contain himself when I said "no" and prevented him from lunging. If I pet him and spoke to him in a gentle voice, he calmed down and was able to tolerate Suki's sniffing without becoming "dragon-bunny." I often thought about how difficult it would have been had both bunnies been new to me.

When I took Suki to her first vet appointment, I spoke to my vet about her muscle weakness and, to my untrained eye, what looked like head-tilt in her brother. To be safe, my vet recommended that Suki be tested for *E. cuniculi* and that I separate her from Wally to prevent the risk of continued exposure until her results came back. I only later learned that Suki's brother's symptoms were determined by his vet to be paralysis due

to trauma, and were likely not neurological in nature. Suki's results were negative and she and Wally were reunited after 10 days apart.

But disaster struck! I don't fully understand why the break was so detrimental to their relationship, but Wally was enraged by her return. His new behaviors made "dragon-bunny" look warmhearted. They experienced their first serious fight, complete with flying tufts of wool and minor bite cuts on bellies. It was very scary when these fights ensued, and although my goal was to prevent them, I wasn't always successful. Separating fighting bunnies is a challenge! Wally and Suki became fused into one twirling, tangled, tumultuous bunny-ball. If I had to intervene, I protected my arms with a pair of knee-high pink rain boots; Wally perceived anything that approached him as a threat, impulsively attacking. But when separated from Suki, the Wally we all know and love instantly sprung back to life.

I began having "warm-up" sessions in the kitchen from which I'd directly transition the bunnies to sessions in my room. Two weeks after their fateful reunification, they had re-established their peaceful relationship, though Wally did continue to exile Suki from the bed.

Prior to Suki's arrival, Wally often spent much of the night on my bed, flopping next to my pillow or standing guard like an owl at the foot of the bed. But because Suki is passionate about marking my bed, neither bunny has nighttime access. It would be different if Suki was willing to wash the sheets every morning, but she's not. And until there's a device that can determine a bunny's identity via paw-scan, there's no way to only grant Wally access. But the benefits of Wally's new companionship are significantly more important than my midnight bunny snuggles. And now, I have the privilege of snuggling between two bunnies on the floor. I'm pretty lucky, because there's nothing more magical than being at the center of a Wally and Suki bunny-sandwich.

Wally and Suki.



Photo: Mally Proffers

## The 'Baldwin Harbor Five': Two Still Looking for a Home!

By Denise Bertolotti

Just a few hours before we left for a quick weekend in the Poconos in March 2015, I received an email from a woman named Jacquie who lives on a dead-end street in Baldwin Harbor, Long Island. She was contacting us at Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group about some rabbits that were put into a bag and thrown away.

At the end of Jacquie's street, there is a fence and a locked gate; on the other side is a wooded preserve, maintained by the town. Jacquie and a neighbor noticed a car pull up and toss a bag over the fence. They didn't pay too much attention to it because, sadly, many people toss garbage over that fence. But what hopped out of the bag got the attention of all of the neighbors.

Four small white rabbits and one larger brown rabbit were in the bag, tossed away like trash into the woods. Jacquie and the neighbors put some lettuce, pieces of carrots and bowls of water out for the rabbits. They kept in good touch with me while LIRRG coordinated a foster space and a team to catch the rabbits. Jacquie captured some great video of the brown rabbit, whom she nicknamed "Momma Bun" because she was caring for the smaller abandoned bunnies.

I had sworn I was going to stay off my phone during my trip, as we would be away for less than two days. Surely, I could give myself a break from rescue work! Well, I instead spent the majority of my time texting and coordinating what turned out to be a memorable rescue for our Long Island team.

As soon as a foster space was secured, an outstanding team of rescuers made their way to Baldwin Harbor. Lauren Eddings, one of our most adept catchers, took the lead and was accompanied by volunteers Mary O'Brien, Julie Zukoff and Stefanie Norris. This catch would not be an easy one, as the wooded area was vast and, of course, the gate at the dead end was locked! But the team made it happen and brought three little white rabbits and the bigger brown rabbit to safety in under an hour. Two days later, Jacquie spotted the fourth white rabbit, whom Lauren was able to scoop up and reunite with the rest of the family.

Despite the perceived maternal behavior, "Momma Bun" turned out to be a male! Lauren named him Rupert. He was adopted in August 2015 by a dear friend

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Photo: Julie Zukoff



Volunteer Lauren Eddings with two of the four white rabbits brought to safety.

Photo: Mary O'Brien



Lauren Eddings getting close to Rupert.

## Baldwin Harbor Five

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of mine. The four white rabbits, very young at the time of rescue, stayed together until they matured. Piper, named by Stefanie, and Mason, named by Mary, were adopted on the same day to two great families in September 2015. Chloe, named by Julie, and Portia, named by me (although I wasn't physically present for the rescue, I got to name the 5th bunny, in honor of my coordinating), stayed bonded and are still looking for a home, well over a year after their rescue.

Chloe and Portia are in a wonderful foster home where they are getting lots of love. They are about nine pounds each. We get many more adoption inquiries for dwarf-sized rabbits than we do inquiries for larger rabbits. They are a bonded pair, and rarely do we hear from potential adopters seeking a pair. They are ruby-eyed whites, and you all know how that goes.

Photo: IRR



This photo of the rabbits was taken within the first weeks after their rescue.

I was at their foster home just two days ago. I sat on the floor outside of their pen for over an hour, transfixed by their beauty, trying to tell them apart (which

I still cannot do!) and marveling at their bond. They are majestic to watch, charming to interact with and ever-so deserving of a forever home.

Photo: Foster mother and volunteer April Overholser



Chloe and Portia in their foster home.

## Long Island Rabbit Rescue Honored at Two Events

By Denise Bertolotti

Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group founders Dr. Nancy Schreiber and Mary Ann Maier were honored at Nassau County's Women of Distinction ceremony on March 10. Nancy and Mary Ann were nominated separately by volunteer Lanette Raymond and adopter Cathy Falcone; both nominations lauded the inspiring efforts both women have put forth over the past decade, making a positive difference for the rabbit community on Long Island.

The event at which Nancy and Mary Ann were honored was part of the Just Desserts fundraiser for the Nassau County SPCA. Mary Ann, Nancy and other local women were honored at this event, hosted by County Executive Ed Mangano and his wife, Linda.

### Still Partners

It's not every day that you see bunnies in a bar! On Saturday March 19, Maurice, a ruby-eyed white rabbit, and Edith, a Lionhead rabbit born with a splayed leg, spent the afternoon hopping around their pens at Still Partners, a gastropub in Sea Cliff.

This marked the second year that the Sea Cliff community came out in support of the Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group. The event gave the community a chance to interact with Maurice and Edith under the supervision of LIRRG volunteers and to learn about the care and responsibilities that come along with house rabbit ownership.

LIRRG raised over \$1,500 at this event. The much needed donations go directly to the care and veterinary bills of foster and sanctuary rabbits. LIRRG thanks Mark Hagen, Heidi Beck and Shane Dommin for coordinating the event with the support of Sea Cliff Mayor Bruce Kennedy and the Still Partners management and staff.

Photo: Robert Nolan



LIRRG volunteers attended the Just Desserts fundraiser for the Nassau County SPCA on March 10, where LIRRG founders Nancy Schreiber and Mary Ann Maier were honored as Nassau County Women of Distinction. Left side of the table, front to back: Mary O'Brien, Lauren Marchant and Lanette Raymond. Right side, front to back: Nicole Weiss, Nancy Schreiber, Mary Ann Maier and Denise Bertolotti.

Photo: Denise Bertolotti



Program from Just Desserts fundraiser, which included photos of Nancy Schreiber and Mary Ann Maier.

Photo: Robert Nolan



LIRRG volunteers and supporters modeling 'My bunny is my boss' fundraiser T-shirts at the Still Partners event on March 19. From left, Lauren Marchant, Denise Bertolotti, Heidi Beck, Mary Ann Maier and Nicole Weiss.



# Luigi, the Paisano Bunny

By Shane York

I was meeting friends for dinner. I arrived about 20 minutes early so I decided to kill a little time in a nearby pet shop. Looking at the sad and hopeful puppies waiting for their chance at a forever home, I thought perhaps this wasn't the best way to spend time (unless I could distract the staff and spring everyone in a heroic jail break).

On the way out, I noticed a small baby bunny in an aquarium with a guinea pig. The guinea pig was chasing the bunny around in circles and it was clear that the bunny was frightened and distressed. When I pointed this out to the manager, I was told, "If you care so much about the bunny, you should buy him." Ha! What a shyster! I was outraged he used this tactic for sales, but even more disturbing was he wasn't moving the rabbit.

I left the store fuming, got to the corner ...and broke into tears. "Give me the damn rabbit," I said to the manager as I walked back into his miserable little store. Later, in a cab crowded with rabbit food, toys, a puppy pen, 10 pounds of hay and a bag of other "must haves," for bunnies, I felt like crying again.

This was not my day. I never had or even wanted a rabbit. What did I know about rabbits? I thought I must be the biggest sap in the world. Had I thought this through even slightly, I would have been enjoying a Margarita with my friends right then. But when I heard the tiny scratching sound coming from the little cardboard box on my lap, I knew this bunny was now dependent on me, and somehow I was going to make it work.

After we arrived home and everything was sorted, I scoured the Internet for help. It turned out the multicolored pellets the store sold me were all wrong, but I found good alfalfa pellets and much better hay online. Also the House Rabbit Society website [rabbit.org](http://rabbit.org) was a lifesaver! I found a good vet and most

Photo: Shane York



Luigi.

everything I needed to know for the bunny's good health – along with the realization that I should have adopted from a shelter or rabbit rescue instead of Mr. Creepy at the pet store.

I named him Luigi, my little paisano. He had a little "mustache" on one side that reminded me of Super Mario, and the way he immediately took ownership of the apartment made me think, "Though he be but little, he is fierce." If a little bunny has ever pushed you around, you know what I'm talking about.

He was about four months old and only three pounds, but it was like he was spring-loaded. After letting him spend a little time in his new pen, I let him out into the living room for the first time. It was glorious! He ran, he jumped, he binkied. He was ecstatic to finally run free for the first time. It was nonstop.

Not long after watching him bounce off the walls, it occurred to me, "Holy crow, how do I get him back into the pen?" I finally understood what the "energizer rabbit" really means. It took a while for things to come to a steady state with

litter-box training and carving out a daily routine, but with my new bunny communication skills, we were having a blast!

Like all good Italian boys, Luigi loved to eat. I named his multivitamin biscuit "veal parm." The Craisins were called "meatballs" and the apple pellets were "cannoli." Friends would be amazed when I shouted out, "Who wants a veal parm?" and Luigi would come bounding out of the bedroom looking like he hadn't eaten in a week. Sometimes I'd slowly ask, "You want meatballs or cannoli," and he'd give a little jump when I said the right one. Sometimes he'd try to shake me down for both.

Often the biggest delights in life are unexpected, and what seems like an initial mistake can turn out to be of the best things ever. Pets and the love they bring to our lives are gifts that clever people never squander. Even as our darlings pass away, we can take solace that we've given them the best life we could – and that's all we can do. Luigi came into my life years ago, and I am so glad we found each other.

# Charlie Grieved for His Beloved Mate But Then Hopped Back Into Dating Game

By Diana Kronenberg

Bonding a pair of rabbits can sometimes be a frustrating and unfamiliar process, but it actually has a lot in common with something a bit more familiar: human dating. I recently discovered this myself while trying to bond a pair of rabbits. Time and compatibility are big factors if you want to end up “happily ever after” in either species.

A short while after losing one of my rabbits last fall, I began the search for a new companion for her mate, now a widower. I learned that it is sometimes better not to wait too long before getting a rabbit back on the dating scene. My Charlie only needed a few weeks to grieve before he was ready. Bachelorhood was not an option for a bun accustomed to having a bunny-wife take care of him.

I headed straight for bunny speed-dating with Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group’s current adoptables. I knew that Charlie would be the one to pick out his new mate. Humans similarly tend to be in

charge when they are looking for a spouse. Arranged marriages are the norm in some cultures, but for rabbits they often just do not work out. Dating for at least a short period of time is also very important because it is always a good idea to try a few different prospects before settling down.

We looked at few different bunnies before noticing one that I thought Charlie might like to meet. It may not always be love at first sight, especially with rabbits. Bunnies can play hard-to-get just like people. Charlie was a little bit aloof with his date, Piper, but he was definitely interested. Piper was very flirty, sniffing him a lot and following him around the bonding pen.

Piper seemed like she might be “the one” for Charlie, so we brought her home and the bonding process continued. I set up a pen for her just a few inches away from Charlie’s, so they could get used to one another’s company. They certainly were not ready to live together

yet, but simply being in the same room most of the day would help them get more comfortable with their new potential mate.

After a few days of mini-dates at home, they had their first fight. Piper snuck into Charlie’s pen and chased him around a little. He needed medical treatment, but I think he was more upset than harmed. He certainly didn’t expect her to invade his personal space after only a few dates.

I paused the bonding for a little while and let them both calm down. Humans often get their egos tangled up in fights, but fortunately Charlie and Piper didn’t seem to hold a grudge against each another. The feelings they had for one another were strong enough to overcome their conflict and we resumed the bonding.

Every day I would round up Charlie and Piper for their “dates,” which were often two-minute sessions. Charlie never likes to go in his carrier, but didn’t seem to mind as much when he knew he was about to spend time with Piper. Being with your sweetheart – rabbit or human – really can make unpleasant things more tolerable.

They began showing affection more and more through grooming and licks on the head. Charlie definitely was not shy about “kissing” his new girlfriend, but she was a little slow to reciprocate. Before she would give him a kiss back, she had to establish her dominance in the relationship. Occasionally she gave him a little lick back – enough to let him know that she would only be his girlfriend if she got to be the boss.

To help speed up the bonding process, I started sending them on dinner-dates. This type of date usually can help humans get to know one another better, and it can help rabbits, too. For both species, eating is a social activity. The

*(Continued on page 11)*

Photo: Diana Kronenberg



Charlie and Piper.

## What Should I Feed My Bunny?

By Dana Krempels

The House Rabbit Society stresses that rabbits should live indoors, and have at least four hours of quality running/playing time per day. This, in conjunction with a proper diet, will help keep your rabbit happy, healthy and affectionate for a lifetime. Perhaps the most important items in the rabbit diet that ensure good intestinal health are (1) adequate oral hydration and (2) adequate crude long fiber, which helps push hair and food through the intestines, and keeps the intestinal muscles well-toned and moving quickly. This is essential to the rabbit's maintenance of a balanced flora (bacteria and yeast) in the cecum. Improper diet can quickly lead to intestinal problems, often originating with cecal dysbiosis, an imbalance of the natural "ecosystem" of the cecum.

Here are the most important items that you should be sure to include in your rabbit's diet.

### Hay!

Perhaps the single most important item in the rabbit diet is grass HAY, and it



Greyson.

should be fed in unlimited quantities to both adults and baby rabbits. A rabbit fed only commercial rabbit pellets does not get enough long fiber to keep the intestines in good working order. The long fibers in the hay push things through the gut and keep the intestinal muscles in good tone. In addition to keeping the intestinal contents moving at the rate at which nature intended, hay may also help prevent intestinal impactions caused by ingested hair or other indigestible items. (For more

information on problems associated with slowed intestinal function, please see <http://www.bio.miami.edu/hare/ileus.html>)

Alfalfa or clover hays, although tasty for the rabbit, are too rich in protein and calcium to be fed ad libitum. Instead, offer fresh grass hays such as timothy, oat, coastal, brome, Bahia or wheat. If you can't find good quality hay locally, you may wish to mail-order hay from Oxbow Animal Health, American Pet Diner or other suppliers. The coarser "first cut" Timothy hay is higher in fiber than the softer, more fragrant "second cut." Some rabbits who refuse to eat the (putatively healthier) high-fiber first cut will often eagerly accept second cut hay. Less fiber is better than none at all!

### Pellets

A high-quality commercial rabbit pellet provides trace nutrients, vitamins and minerals that a rabbit might not get if fed only hay and fresh foods. However, very little pelleted food is required for good health. Many experienced rabbit veterinarians are now recommending no

*(Continued on page 12)*

## Dating Game

*(Continued from page 10)*

dates became longer as Charlie and Piper got to know each other better and enjoyed one another's company. Eventually the two rabbits were spending almost the entire day together, and they seemed very much in love.

The next step for them – also true for many humans – was moving in together. Since their shared living space was originally Charlie's bachelor pad, Piper had to change a few things to make it a home for the both of them. She moved some of his furniture, commandeered his toys, and took over his favorite napping spots. He may not have liked

it, but he let her do what she wanted because he loved her so much.

Charlie and Piper have now been bonded and happily married for several months. They still have some personal time apart, as is healthy for any relationship. In their case, he needs to be separate from her so she does not eat all of his food, and it makes them that much happier to see one another again. They also still have the occasional argument over who gets the last piece of dandelion and who gets groomed when, but they always "go to bed" happy and snuggling.

I have learned that bonding any two rabbits is much easier if you start with two compatible mates. Just as with

people, it helps to have a little spark at the beginning of the relationship before you strengthen the bond. My only other bonding experience was with Charlie and his previous mate, Bella Leche, and they had fallen in love right away. Charlie and Piper have that same level of bond today, but it took a bit more work to get there.

Whether you are a rabbit or human, a relationship with a good foundation is always going to be stronger. Neither is always an easy feat, but time and patience usually help. The next time you think twice about bonding a pair of rabbits, keep at it. With your help, they have a better chance of success than even some human couples do!

## What Should I Feed?

*(Continued from page 11)*

more than 1/4 cup of quality pellets per five pounds of rabbit per day, and some even consider commercial pellets a “treat food” that can promote obesity in spayed/neutered adult rabbits. A rabbit fed too many pellets will sometimes ignore hay, to the detriment of the intestinal system!



Olivia.

A good quality rabbit pellet DOES NOT contain dried fruit, seeds, nuts, colored crunchy things or other things that are attractive to our human eyes, but very unhealthy to a rabbit. Rabbits are strict herbivores, and in nature they rarely get fruit, nuts or other such fatty, starchy foods. The complex flora of the cecum can quickly become dangerously imbalanced if too much simple, digestible carbohydrate is consumed – especially if the diet is generally low in fiber. The result is often “poopy butt syndrome,” in which mushy fecal matter cakes onto the rabbit’s behind. This a sign of cecal dysbiosis, which can foment much more serious health problems.

A good quality rabbit pellet should have at least 22% crude fiber, no more than approximately 14% protein, about 1% fat and about 1.0% calcium. Check the label on the rabbit pellets before you buy. Most commercial pellets are alfalfa-based, which means they’re higher in

calories and lower in fiber than Timothy-based pellets.

Baby rabbits may be fed unlimited pellets, as their bones and muscles need plenty of protein and calcium for proper growth. However, the calories and nutrients of commercial pellets fed ad libitum exceed the needs of a healthy adult rabbit, and will not only promote obesity, but discourage the rabbit from consuming enough hay to ensure good intestinal health.

The wise “bunny parent” will begin to gradually taper the quantity of pellets once the rabbit is about eight to twelve months old, and feed no more than 1/4 cup per day for every five pounds of rabbit (you can give a little bit more if the pellets are Timothy-based). Some rabbit caregivers complain that their rabbits won’t eat their hay. If the problem is not medical in nature (e.g., molar spurs and other dental problems are a common problem responsible for “picky eating”), then it may be that the rabbit is eating too many pellets, isn’t hungry, and so doesn’t eat the hay so vital to his/her health. Take the tough love approach! Cut back the pellets until you are sure your rabbit is eating enough hay.

## Fresh Vegetables

You may have heard it from a breeder, pet store owner, or even a veterinarian who is not as familiar with recent rabbit health information as one might hope: Fresh vegetables will give your rabbit “diarrhea.” Nothing could be further from the truth than this old myth. In fact, fresh greens help keep intestinal contents hydrated, which makes them easier for the bunny to pass. Trace nutrients, fiber, and just plain old tastiness are other benefits of fresh greens. After all, what do you suppose wild rabbits eat?

Fresh, moist greens are about as important as hay in maintaining a healthy intestine. Try broccoli, dark leaf lettuces, kale, parsley, carrot tops, endive, escarole, dill, basil, mint, cilantro, spinach. Almost any green, leafy vegetable that’s good for



Sugarplum and Pineapple.



Baldwin Harbor Five (pages 6-7) baby bunnies eating fresh greens.

you (including fresh-grown garden herbs such as tarragon and various mints, with the exception of Pennyroyal) are good for a rabbit. Experiment and see which types your rabbit likes best! Rabbits love fresh, fragrant herbs from the garden.

Give starchy vegetables (e.g., carrots) in moderation, and use bits of fruit only in very, very small quantities, as special treats. Too much sugar and starch can cause cecal dysbiosis, and all its associated problems.

Baby rabbits may start receiving greens very gradually at the age of about two months. Add one item at a time, in small amounts, and if you see no intestinal

*(Continued on page 13)*

## What Should I Feed?

(Continued from page 12)

upset, add another. Carrots, romaine lettuce and kale are good starters. A five-pound adult rabbit should receive at least four heaping cups of fresh, varied (at least three different kinds each day) vegetables per day. Be sure to wash everything thoroughly to remove pesticide and fertilizer residues as much as possible. Even organic produce should be washed well to remove potentially harmful bacteria, such as *E. coli*.

Serve the vegetables wet, as this will help increase your rabbit's intake of liquid. This helps keep the intestinal contents moving well, and the bunny healthy.

Please don't make the mistake of serving less-than-fresh vegetables to your rabbit. A rabbit is even more sensitive to spoiled food than a human is. If the vegetables smell stale or are "on the fringe," they could make your bunny sick. Follow the Emerald Rule of Freshness when feeding your rabbit friend: "Don't Feed It to Your Bunny if You Wouldn't Eat It Yourself."



Vanessa at Petco Union Square.

## Water

The importance of adequate water intake cannot be overstated. A rabbit who does not drink sufficient water will gradually begin to suffer desiccation of the intestinal contents. Skin tenting, a common method used by veterinarians to gauge the state of hydration in many animals, is not a good gauge of hydration in rabbits. It seems that even when the tissues of the rabbit appear to be well

hydrated, the intestinal contents may not be, perhaps because the rabbit is so efficient at sequestering necessary fluids from its own intestine. When this happens, the ingested food in the stomach and intestine becomes dry and difficult for the normal muscular motions to push through. This can start a downhill cascade into a condition known as ileus, which can be life-threatening if not recognized and treated.

A rabbit will usually drink more water from a clean, heavy crock than from a sipper bottle. The rabbit caregiver may wish to provide both, but it's important to be sure that the crock, if porcelain, is lead-free, and that the water is changed daily and the crock washed thoroughly with hot water and detergent to prevent bacterial growth in the water source.

## Fresh Fruits?

These are considered treats, and, if offered at all, should be limited to very small quantities. Safe choices are apple, apricot, banana, cherries, mango, peach, plum, papaya, pineapple, apricot, berries....just about any fruit you would like is okay for your bunny. Be very careful not to overdo these treat foods, as they may promote cecal dysbiosis, other intestinal problems and create a desire in the bunny to eat treats instead of his/her normal, healthy foods.

## Don't Feed Potentially Harmful 'Treats'

Remember: a rabbit is a lagomorph, not a rodent or a primate. The rabbit digestive tract is physiologically more similar to that of a horse than to that of a rodent or primate, and the intestine and related organs can suffer from an overindulgence in starchy, fatty foods.

NEVER feed your rabbit commercial "gourmet" or "treat" mixes filled with dried fruit, nuts and seeds. These may be safe for a bird or hamster – BUT THEY ARE NOT PROPER FOOD FOR A RABBIT. The sole function of

"rabbit gourmet treats" is to lighten your wallet. If the manufacturers of "gourmet rabbit treats" truly cared about your rabbit's health and longevity, they would not market such products.

Don't feed your rabbit cookies, crackers, nuts, seeds, breakfast cereals (including oatmeal) or "high fiber" cereals. They may be high-fiber for you, but not for your herbivorous rabbit, who's far better able to completely digest cellulose ("dietary fiber") than you are. Fed to a rabbit, the high fat and simple carbohydrate content of "naughty foods" may contribute to fatty liver disease, cecal dysbiosis and obesity.

## A Special Note About Corn and Other Seeds

Some types of seeds (especially things like "Canadian peas" and corn kernels) have hulls that are indigestible to a rabbit, and can cause life-threatening intestinal impactions/blockages.

Corn, fresh or dried, is NOT safe for rabbits. The hull of corn kernels is composed of a complex polysaccharide (not cellulose and pectin, of which plant cell walls are more commonly composed, and which a rabbit can digest) that rabbits cannot digest. We know of more than one rabbit who suffered intestinal impactions because of the indigestible corn hulls. After emergency medical treatment, when the poor rabbits finally passed the corn, their fecal pellets were nearly solid corn hulls! Those rabbits were lucky.

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*Copyright – Dana Krempels, Ph.D.  
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Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Department of Biology,  
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## When Air Conditioning Isn't Enough, Frozen Water Bottles Help

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Conrad.



Emma.



Juliet.



Hardy, with a frozen water bottle wrapped in a pillow case.

## We Are Looking for Loving Homes:

### These Rabbits Are Available At Manhattan and Brooklyn Animal Care Centers (NYC ACC)

By Kirsten Ott

#### Irina

Irina is a large Californian female who was surrendered with ten family members. She is curious, and will approach you for a sniff or two, but will retreat when you offer affection. She'll need a bunny-savvy home where she can get the love she needs. Irina is a real beauty, with a cute dewlap.



Irina.

#### Cicely

Cicely is a small- to medium-sized tan girl with a sweet, sort of clingy personality. She'll watch you intently with her beautiful dark eyes as you go about your business, patiently waiting for your attention. She seems almost starved for affection; though she comes across as a little nervous or introverted, she adores being petted, and it seems to make her feel more secure. Cicely would do best in a quiet home with very attentive people.



Cicely.

#### Amalie

Amalie is a small agouti girl with a bit of a nervous personality. She's quite jumpy in reaction to noises and sudden movements. This is probably due in part to her current (shelter) circumstances. The good news is that she's very open to affection, and it calms her down a good deal. She loves to have her small head cupped in your hand. Suffice it to say that Amalie will do best in a quiet home with no small kids. Her coat is a warm, reddish-brown agouti and she has a cute little dewlap.



Amalie.

#### Barbero

Barbero is a very large orange bun who was found in a park. This poor guy appears to have been attacked by an animal at some point, because he has healed wounds on his ears. He doesn't seem traumatized, though – he has a very sweet, gentlemanly disposition. Barbero is a bit private,



Barbero.



Skip.



Bandit.

preferring to be petted in a secluded area of his cage. He loves head and cheek rubs. This nice big boy would probably do well as a bunny partner.

#### Skip

Skip is a very good-looking medium-sized Californian. This guy has a gorgeous, super soft, creamy white coat, a perfect chocolate nose and ears, and dainty red eyes. His feet have the light brown cast typical of Californians, but it looks like he's wearing a mitten on his right front foot. Skip is rather small for a Californian, but is on the young side so will probably

get somewhat bigger. He's unlikely to get very large, though. Skip has a marvelously sweet personality, and adores affection. He would make a good choice for a first-time bunny owner.

#### Bandit

Bandit is a young, medium-sized bunny with a wonderful personality. This guy is very high-spirited and friendly, and his youthful enthusiasm will instantly cheer anybody up. Even though he's very curious and active, Bandit loves affection, and will actually sit still for a while as you stroke his head and ears. Speaking of those ears, they're quite large for his body, so though he's medium-sized now, he's likely to get bigger. Bandit's lean, athletic physique and dark coat give him a very elegant look.

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## Looking for Loving Homes

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### Inky

Inky is a young medium-sized New Zealand White female. This girl has a delicate face with small pink eyes, but she's got wonderfully oversized ears that she still needs to grow into! Her coat has a thick, plush texture, which is unusual for a New Zealand, and she also has a bit of grayish fur on her face – so perhaps she's got a bit of ancestral Himmy or other blood? Whatever her background, Inky has a lovely disposition and loves affection. She is likely to get larger as she finishes maturing.

### Blinky

Blinky is a medium-large, young New Zealand White male. This guy is full of energy and ready for action! He climbs his cage bars like a monkey, trying to get your attention for affection or play. But as you stroke his head, he calms right down and goes into a delicious bunny trance. Blinky has a very lean face and body and huge ears, so he will likely fill out and get somewhat larger in the near term. He would be a good choice for someone who wants a high-energy, high-maintenance young bun.

### Heloise

Heloise is a small- to medium-sized brown bunny with a sweet, slightly shy personality. This girl seems to enjoy her privacy – she likes to be petted in a secluded corner of her cage. She prefers that you do the approaching (as long as it's gentle). But she's always game for affection, and adores nose and cheek rubs. Heloise's coat is a rich dark brown, and the fur on her face has a kind of marbled look to it. She would do best in a quiet home.

### Lora

Lora is a gorgeous medium-large New Zealand White. This girl has a super soft coat, wonderfully fluffy cheeks, and impressive big ears. Best of all, she is a total love. She has the polite sweetness



Inky.



Blinky.



Heloise.

characteristic of many New Zealand bunnies, and she absolutely adores affection. She'll flatten or stretch out



Lora.



Buttersnap.

while having her head stroked, and she's clearly disappointed when the session is over. Lora would make a good choice for a first-time bunny owner.

### Buttersnap

Buttersnap is a large, handsome white bunny with jet black ears, dramatic black eye makeup, and a black racing stripe that travels down his back. This guy has truly dashing, rakish looks, and high energy to boot. He will strike you as a real handful at first, but underneath all that liveliness and charisma he's actually a snuggle bunny – well socialized and affection-loving.

## These Rabbits Are in Foster Care



Pippi.

### Pippi

Pippi is a young, petite and uniquely beautiful female rabbit who our rescue took in from the shelter. This little lady with mild head tilt has quite a dramatic back story, and at one point we weren't sure if she would make it. But with the help of several of our rabbit-savvy vets and extended supportive care and rehab in foster care, Pippi is now healthy and super active. She's very pretty – her coat

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## ADOPT US!

### Looking for Loving Homes

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is white with calico-like markings – and is also a real snuggler. Her foster mom reports that Pippi is the complete package of cuteness who will not stop kissing you, ever! She would make a great partner bun for another EC rabbit as well. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Pippi, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Marco

Marco is a small- to medium-sized male black and white Dutch mix. This guy is super friendly and really smart. He's high-energy and will do everything he can think of to get your attention, including climbing on his cage or pen apertures and sticking as much of his face through the bars as possible. When he finally gets you to come and pet him, it seems as though he can't really believe it – he sort of freezes in place. Marco has the earmarks of Dutch heritage – vestiges of a Dutch triangle on his face and a bib that cutely doesn't make it all the way around his shoulders. He has a very mild case of head tilt, but it's clearly not an impediment in any way. Marco has been neutered and is currently in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Marco, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Dutchess

Dutchess is a medium-sized brown and white female Dutch. She is very energetic, and will need lots of exercise time and a big carpet to run and binky on. Once she has tired herself out, she settles down for petting and does the cutest dramatic side flops. Dutchess adores petting, and raises her nose into the air cutely as you stroke her head and ears. She has a great appetite for hay and loves her daily salad of fresh greens. She has been spayed and is currently living in foster care. If interested in adopting Dutchess, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Marco.



Dutchess.

#### Carly

Carly is a small- to medium-sized black bunny with a white dot on the tip of her little nose. This darling girl is bouncy and full of fun. She's also very friendly in a gentle way, and eagerly communicates her desire for attention; she loves to have her head stroked. Sweet Carly is very curious, too – she periscopes a lot and is quite the jumper! She has been spayed. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Carly, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Iggy and Mona

Iggy and Mona are a bonded pair currently in foster care. Iggy is a small, gray Jersey Woolly and Mona is a large New Zealand White. Mona is easygoing and very approachable, and an all-around sweet girl. Iggy is sweet but very shy and should be approached gently –



Carly.



Mona and Iggy.

but when he's with Mona he's a little more outgoing. They'll flourish as a couple in the right home. Iggy has been neutered and Mona has been spayed. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Iggy and Mona, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Sergei and Dani

Sergei and Dani are a bonded male-female pair and must be adopted together. Sergei is the Californian guy and Dani is the black female. They are in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Sergei and Dani, please email: [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Pineapple and Sugarplum

Pineapple and Sugarplum are beautiful sisters. They are large Lionheads who

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## Looking for Loving Homes

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Sergei and Dani.



Pineapple and Sugarplum.

were born in the shelter last year as part of a litter of five babies, before we took the whole young family into our rescue. Their mother, two sisters and brother have all been adopted and now it's their turn. Pineapple is a stunning black and white, while Sugarplum is a sleek black. Both ladies have amazing manes of hair that they keep groomed nicely! These girls have tons of energy and are a joy to watch while they exercise, as they run and binky with reckless abandon! They have been spayed and are living in foster care. If you are interested in adopting Pineapple and Sugarplum, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

## Forever Homes Found!



Stuart in his new home.

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include:

Universal, Crackers, Isla, Apollo, Stuart, Ira, Lila, Oreo, McFly, Weldon, Brittany, Buddy, Nunu, Michaelangel, Alley, Sayaka, Jessie, Isabelle, Emolga, Athens, Muffin, Trina, Elliot, Wonder, Owen, Jerry, Polka Dot, Jackie, Dustin, Pierre, Buster, Wampa, Theon, Cookie, Cuddles, Twist, Cadwell, Bunnacula, Lisette, Charlotte, Tamara, Kaylee, Igor, Munchkin and Bailey.

# Letters From Adopters

## Meg and Jack

*Hafina Allen and her family adopted Meg (fka Ashley) in May, and adopted Jack (fka Peter Rabbit) as a partner bunny a short time later. Here is an update on the duo.*

For years I've wanted a house rabbit. But my husband's unfortunate childhood experience with an ill-tempered Giant Flemish Hare resulted in a bun-free home. In May we made the difficult decision to help our last and very old guinea pig find rest. Seeing how sad the void made me, my husband popped the question... "Would you like a rabbit?"

After some emails with our vet and a bun-savvy friend, we set off to Manhattan ACC. Volunteer Nadine Heidinger was great. She spent a long time making sure that I had plenty of floor time with the buns I was interested in and gave us lots of information, such as the need to have carpets over our hardwood floors.

And so it was that we brought home a beautiful, petite, blue-gray girl named Ashley. She quickly took over our hearts, but we'd already been told that rabbits are social and do best in bonded pairs. Nadine put us in touch with Amy Odum, the matchmaking, speed-dating guru.

A week and half after we brought Ashley home, we took her back to ACC for an afternoon of "The Dating Game." We'd told Amy that Ashley had chased one of our chinchillas out of her cage and Amy worried that she might be territorial, so she decided to try some laid-back boys.

Bachelor #1 was a boy I'd considered when we'd adopted Ashley the previous week. He seemed like an OK option, showing great interest in Ashley, and she tolerated his presence but kept her distance. In came Bachelor #2, a timid boy who sat in the hay box while Ashley lay down and contemplated a nap. We were told that both boys could work and Amy asked if we wanted a third option. So in came Bachelor #3, a sweet boy who was interested in her and



Jack.



Meg.

whom she seemed to like. I wished Ashley could have told us which one she wanted.

So Amy suggested second dates with Bachelors #2 and #3. This time Ashley lay down and closed her eyes, clearly bored by #2. Bachelor #3 came back in. They sat next to each other and he bowed his head down, asking her to groom him. With a little encouragement from Amy, Ashley obliged by licking his head for a good long time before grooming herself, and then went back to grooming him. Without words Ashley told us that Peter Rabbit was her Boy.

Back at home, both buns got new names. They became Meg and Jack. It seemed the honeymoon was soon over and at home dates have been harder than we anticipated, based on their initial "love at first sight" responses. But we're in this

for the long haul. They apartment swap daily. They are close to each other all day and seem to like this. I keep telling them that the sooner they bond, the sooner they can move into a deluxe mansion, not to mention double their play time when they can be out together.

I'm never amazed by how very different their personalities are. Meg remains a very dainty girl with impeccable manners. However, over the past month she has become increasingly adventurous and now hops on furniture just to see what's up there. She has also learned to stand her ground with our cat Inky. While we still keep a close eye on them, she no longer runs from him and he shows less interest in her. When he does get too close to her, she lets him know and chases him off. Meanwhile, Jack is a crazy boy who seems to be training for the Indy 500 as he charges around the house. When he's not charging around, he's climbing on everything in sight. But he also has a sweet and loving heart and loves being with us. Once he burns off some energy he just wants to hang out with us. From day one he has head butted us to request "head mashes." He follows us around to see what we're up to and loves to jump on the couch and sit with us.

Meg is head-over-tail in love with Jack and wants nothing more in life than to lick his head. Jack has a zest for life and loves having his head rubbed. Now we need to work on Jack understanding that Meg would like to be the one "mushing" on his head. I'm hopeful that we're on our way as Jack seems to have stopped marking all corners of our home at the start of each play time. Regardless of how the bonding goes, these two have worked their way into our hearts. It's only been a short time, but I can't imagine life without them.

Hafina Allen

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Spirit and Luna

*Frances and Edwin Lopez adopted Luna last year as a partner for Spirit. The two bunnies are getting along really well.*

Our rabbits have bonded completely and nicely. Patience, space, and our strategy of just letting them be, definitely paid off.

Spirit (aka Michael Jackson) is so good with Luna. We adopted her at the East 110th Street shelter with the help of Cindy Stutts, who supervised a speed date last summer.

Luna, originally named Poe, is now one year and four months old. She is definitely the dominant one, even though she is almost three years younger than Spirit.



Luna and Spirit.

Spirit is always licking Luna, and she nudges him quite often. She has licked him, too. At times they eat from the same plate, munch on hay together, and have shared a parsley stem between their mouths. How romantic!

Frances and Edwin from the Bronx

## Chequer and Chunk

*Kayla Ratikan recently adopted Chequer as a partner for Chunk, fka Leo, who was adopted last fall. The two rabbits are having a lot of fun together.*

Photos: Kayla Ratikan



Chunk and Chequer.



Chequer and Chunk.

Things have been a mixture of excitement and chaos with our new addition but everything is calming down now! The bunny bonding process was very

overwhelming in the beginning but I would have to say that I had an ideal bonding experience.

We never experienced any fighting and within two weeks, the bunnies were snuggling and grooming each other.

Chunk is absolutely in love with his new friend; he cannot get enough of her. He follows her around and loves her kisses.

Chequer is more interested in exploring her new environment and getting herself into sticky situations. She is the rabbit version of Houdini, which is both entertaining and terrifying. She escaped her pen while I was at work and got herself into trouble, and ingested a lot of carpeting and cardboard which resulted in stasis, a vet visit and a long week of around-the-clock meds and feedings by syringe.

She's back to herself and has earned herself the title "Chequer the Wrecker." Her personality is so happy, curious, adventurous and loving. She is very entertaining to watch, constantly doing binkies and running around like super-bunny at lightning speed. I am so happy



Rudy and Rusty (in litter box) with Puddles.

## Our Crazy Trio

*Lisa is the loving adopter of Puddles, Rudy and Rusty.*

I was just sitting here watching the crazy trio play chase with each other and got all sentimental thinking how there isn't a bone in me that has ever wanted children, but how funny that such sweet lil bunnies can be so loving to the point that like a parent you can get emotional for a moment when you think of all the terrible outcomes that could have happened if you (RR&R) hadn't found them and we hadn't found each other in 2014.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Epps

to see her enjoying her new home and to be able to give her the loving home she deserves.

Chunk and Chequer are so lucky to have each other and I am so happy for them. They press their heads together quite often, and it is almost too cute to handle! You can follow their adorable tactics on Instagram @chunkandchequer!

Best,  
Kayla

(Continued on page 21)

## Lucy and Leonard

*Courtney Farruggia and Michael Bachmann adopted Lucy as a partner bun for Leonard in 2013. This is their happy update.*

We have been meaning to send in an update for a while now. We first adopted Leonard in August 2011 and then Lucy (formerly Leona) in fall 2013.

Leonard “grew up” with us at college and had a good two years to himself before we decided to give him a partner.

He met Lucy (aka Goose) at a speed-date session at Petco and we brought her home that day to begin the bonding.

It certainly wasn't an easy process but after some long nights and frustrating moments, these two are inseparable.

They have full run of our apartment. Parsley and Timothy biscuits are their

Photo: Michael Bachmann



Leonard and Lucy.

favorite treats, and they love their cardboard cottage and maze.

They've become best friends and we've gotten to see how great it is to have bunnies in pairs. Lucy is much more mischievous and youthful, while Leonard is calm and easygoing.

They are like children to us and bring us so much happiness. Thank you to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab for all of your wonderful work and for bringing these two into our lives!

Michael & Courtney

Photos: Tiffany Park



Zoro.

## Zoro

*Tiffany adopted Zoro, fka Bruno, nearly two years ago. He is doing great.*

I wanted to say thank you for another wonderful issue of Thump. I really



Tiffany and Zoro.

enjoy reading it. Adoption stories always melt my heart.

I adopted my bun, Zoro (formerly Bruno), from Manhattan ACC and July 20 was our two-year anniversary since the adoption.



Zoro's "Adopt Me!" photo on Facebook.

It actually feels as if I have had him for a lot longer than that. He is my first rabbit and it has been a wonderful experience.

Zoro is my superstar and a playful jokester who makes me laugh every day.

I really want to thank all the rescue places and volunteers for giving me a chance to meet such an awesome companion. I will definitely adopt again, and I'm glad I did. Hope you have a wonderbun day!

Thanks,  
Tiffany

(Continued on page 22)

Photos: Sylvie Jensen



Martin and Jasminda.

### Jasminda and Martin

*Sylvie adopted Jasminda, formerly known as Ms. Einstein, and Martin last fall. Here is an update on the duo from Sylvie, who volunteers with RR&R.*

Jasminda and her brother, Martin, joined my household this past September and November, respectively.

I waited a while before beginning the bonding process with them, but for the

past six months or so they've been developing their rapport.

It was the height of excitement a few weeks ago when they signaled their readiness to live together full-time.

They've become the sweetest partners – exploring together, teasing one another, snuggling extensively. Their personalities are really well suited to each other and they are blossoming as a pair.



A special thank you to Marcie Frishberg, who guided me through tricky stages in getting these two together, and who carried out the adoptions with me in the first place!

I love these rabbits so much and am so happy I found Rabbit Rescue & Rehab.

Sylvie Jensen

**Acrobatic Buddies:**

Flossie (top left) and Freddie (bottom left corner) entertain visitors at the 86th Street Petco with nonstop binkies, flops, spins, jumps and bunny 500s.





Alfie.



Pelham.



Buttercup.



Ira.



Abraham.



Emma.



Ikea.



## Rabbit-Savvy Veterinarians

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

### Manhattan:

**Becky Campbell, DVM**  
**Deborah Levison, DVM**  
Symphony Veterinary Center  
170 West 96th Street, New York, NY 10025  
(212) 866-8000

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

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

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

### Westchester County:

**Gil Stanzione, DVM**  
Dakota Veterinary Center  
381 Dobbs Ferry Road, White Plains,  
NY 10607 (914) 421-0020

### Westchester County (cont.):

**Laurie Hess, DVM**  
Veterinary Center for Birds and Exotics  
709 Bedford Road, Bedford Hills, NY 10507  
(914) 864-1414

### Long Island:

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**  
**Laura George, DVM**  
**Kristen Miller, DVM**  
Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital  
2056 Jericho Turnpike, New Hyde Park,  
NY 11040 • (516) 877-7080

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

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

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

## Adoptable Rabbits

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

To adopt a rabbit in **New York City** or **Westchester**, contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com). On **Long Island**, contact Nancy Schreiber at [nshreibmd@aol.com](mailto:nshreibmd@aol.com) or at 516-510-3637 ([www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org)).

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

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

In addition, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab rabbits are at the Petland Discounts store on West 72nd Street.

You can also visit Manhattan Animal Care Center (NYC ACC) at 326 East 110th St.,

between First and Second avenues. Rabbits for adoption can be found by going to: <http://www.nycacc.org/> and doing an adoption search. Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

Bunny speed dates can be arranged by appointment only on weekend afternoons at Union Square. Please contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com) to make arrangements.

Many of our rabbits are living in foster homes and you can meet them as well. You also can arrange to foster a rabbit until he or she finds a permanent home. Contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

For basic information about rabbits as pets, go to [www.rabbitcare.org](http://www.rabbitcare.org), [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org) and the House Rabbit Society main site, [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

## Licensed HRS Educators

### NYC/Westchester:

**M.C. Basile, Esq.**, President, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, [BunnyTorts@gmail.com](mailto:BunnyTorts@gmail.com)

**Mary Cotter**, Founder, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, Chapter Manager, NYC House Rabbit Society, Adviser to Thump, [mec@cloud9.net](mailto:mec@cloud9.net), (914) 337-6146, [rabbitcare.org](http://rabbitcare.org)

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

**Mary Harnett**, [mmharnett@optonline.net](mailto:mmharnett@optonline.net), (914) 948-7976

**Marcie Frishberg**, [mfrish57bun@yahoo.com](mailto:mfrish57bun@yahoo.com), (718) 724-4105

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

**Kerstin Aumann**

**Monica Shepherd, DVM**

### Long Island:

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

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

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

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**

**Laura George, DVM**

## THUMP August 2016

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

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them. Mailing address for contributions: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab/NYC Metro Rabbit, 333 Mamaroneck Ave, PMB 363, White Plains NY 10605. To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).