

THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS AUGUST 2020

Car Rides With Your Bunny: Tips and Tricks for a Cool Summer Drive

By Megan Hilands

As the city has slowly started to reopen in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, I have noticed an increasing number of friends and coworkers relying on cars to get from place to place.

Depending on your individual circumstances, you may or may not feel comfortable starting to venture out more. After being confined to a one-bedroom apartment for most of the past four months, though, my fiancé and I have taken a few trips to see family members (quarantining before and after to ensure everyone's

safety). Between the Covid-19 pandemic and RHDV epidemic, our household and many others are faced with unique challenges in bunny care. While we once would have felt very comfortable enlisting a pet sitter or rabbit-savvy friend to drop in for a few days, the risks of exposure to Covid-19 for us and RHDV for the bunnies are enough to give us pause. So we've decided to take our buns with us.

With parents who are a six-hour drive away from New York City, I fortunately

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Photo: Megan Hilands



Simba enjoys a rest stop break.



Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

The New York City Chapter of the House Rabbit Society

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Visit the New Rabbit Rescue & Rehab Website

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab has a new website. Visit us at <https://www.rabbitrescueandrehab.org> to view adoptable rabbits, read about rabbit care, and find information on how to help rabbits and get involved with Rabbit Rescue & Rehab! You will also find rabbit news – including crucial updates about the spread of RHDV2 – and information about upcoming events, as well as the full catalog of Thump issues dating back to 2001.

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Our masthead bunny, Juno, was part of a rescue this summer that proved to be one of the more complicated cases in recent Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group history, taking weeks and countless hours of volunteer time. Though he was likely born outside, Juno adapted to indoor life pretty quickly. He now spends his time being spoiled by his foster mom, and he showers her with bunny kisses. Masthead illustration: Mary Ann Maier. Photo: Katie Scarr.

Car Rides *(Continued from page 1)*

have a lot of experience traveling around with my bunnies. Here are some useful tips to keep you and your buns safe and comfy should you choose to take them on a car trip of a few hours or longer.

Expect the Best, Prepare for the Worst

Whenever I travel with my bunnies, I bring along a small first-aid kit for them that includes simethicone, Metacam, syringes and nail clippers. These items might not be easy to find away from home, especially when you need them quickly in an emergency. Although I have never needed them (paws crossed), I like to find out the names of rabbit-savvy and emergency vets that are near to my destination. This information gives me peace of mind because I know what to do when a rabbit shows signs of illness while away.

Know What to Expect

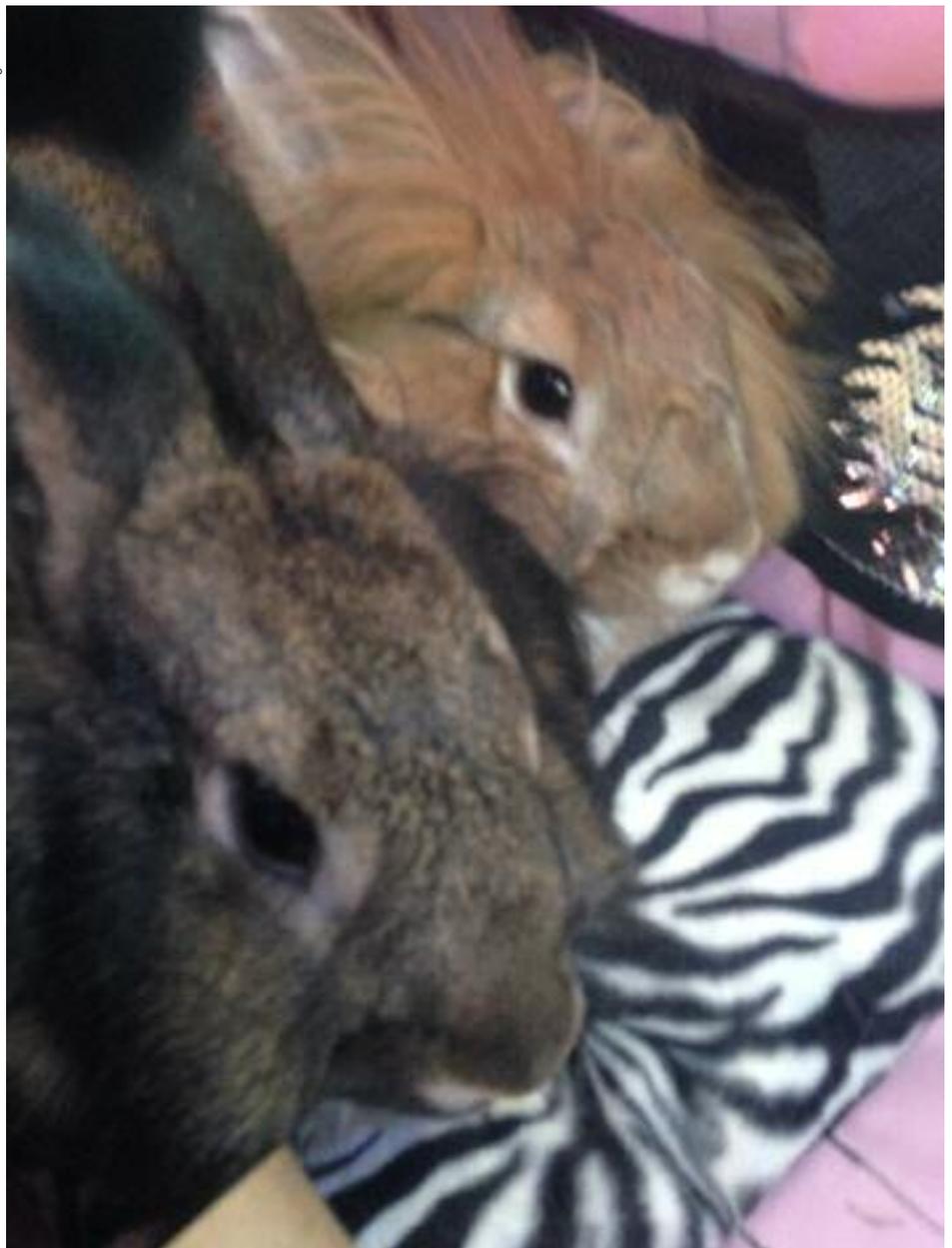
A car ride can, understandably, be a stressful situation for rabbits. Riding in a high-speed vehicle with turns and sometimes sudden stops is not something for which evolution prepared them. I have found all bunnies I have encountered are at least a little uncomfortable entering a vehicle. If your rabbits are not used to the car they may also associate it with unpleasant situations such as a trip to the vet.

That said, you want to make the car as pleasant an environment as possible for your bunny. If you have not already, invest in a large carrier with a solid bottom that has enough room for your bunny to move around a bit. Add your bun's favorite chew toys and anything that makes her comfortable, such as a small stuffed animal. Bonded bunnies should always be kept in the same carrier because they can comfort each other during the trip.

Know Your Setup

I will adjust my bunnies' car setup quite a bit depending on the length of the

Photo: Megan Hillands



Simba and Nala settle in for the drive.

journey. If the ride is under two hours I will generally keep the bunnies in their carrier. To me it doesn't seem worth the trouble of getting them out of the carrier and adjusting them to another space within this relatively short amount of time.

For a longer ride, if you have another person traveling with you, you might consider giving your bunny a bit more space. (I would not recommend taking your bunny out of the carrier if you are driving alone, though. The last thing you want is your bunny getting stuck under a car seat or tossed around during sudden stops.)

If you do have a second person to serve as a bunny supervisor and enough room in your car, a large laundry basket can offer a nice space for your bunny to move around a little more – there's a solid bottom, and even room for a small litter box. One Christmas I traveled with my parents in their minivan, and had my bunnies in a basket next to me on the floor of the car. This was probably the best setup I could provide for them. They were secure enough that they went into bread loaf position within

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Hot Weather Poses Dangers

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

The summer months present a host of considerations for your bunny's health and safety, and one of the biggest summer concerns is heat. As temperatures have been rising to over 100 degrees, you must make sure your rabbits are cool. Remember that a rabbit's core body temperature runs from 101-103 degrees Fahrenheit (much higher than ours!), they are wearing a fur coat, and they can't sweat or pant to cool down. An overheated rabbit is at risk for serious health complications and even death, and heat exhaustion is a serious emergency.

Rabbits are most comfortable between 50 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Familiarize yourself with the following tips to mitigate the dangers of high temperatures:

- Keep the air conditioner on wherever your rabbit is located in your home (whether you are home or not).
- Keep shades down or curtains closed to block the sun. Sun coming in through a closed window can add a lot of heat to a room.
- Use fans in air-conditioned rooms to circulate the cool air (and don't forget to bunny-proof the cords). A fan alone is not effective and will merely circulate the already warm air in the room.
- Place large frozen water bottles near your bunny. Keep extra frozen bottles in the freezer so you can swap them out frequently, and always have a cold one ready to go. Some rabbits will lie against a frozen bottle, but many won't. If your

rabbit is not "using" the ice bottle, it is not helping him cool down.

- Keep the drinking water cold and fresh.
- Give your rabbit cold ceramic/marble tiles that have been in the freezer as a cool surface to lie on.
- Feed very wet greens to help keep your rabbit hydrated (this is a great way to keep your rabbit hydrated even when it's not warm/hot, so this should be done always).
- Make sure your rabbit is eating as much as he/she usually does. A rabbit that is uncomfortable from the heat will be lazy and not want to do anything, including eat. This adds another level of danger, so offer food by hand if necessary.

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Car Rides *(Continued from page 2)*

a few minutes and napped for much of the ride.

Keep the Temperature Down

We all know how hot the inside of a vehicle can be when it's been sitting outside during the summer. For the first few minutes of any summer car ride, our car feels like it must be over 100 degrees until the A/C cools it down enough. If possible, I would advise completely packing up the car and cooling it down before you bring in the bunnies.

House Rabbit Society's website advises that some rabbits may not like drafts, so keep that in mind when positioning your bunny and the A/C vents. I have personally found that my bonded pair seem to like air flow, though (they will sit in direct line of the fan at home!), and so adjust accordingly.

If your bunny is used to a frozen water bottle or cool piece of tile, these can be a big help. Just be sure that the bottle does not leak or "sweat" against your

bunny's fur. Getting wet can be dangerous for rabbits.

Drive Carefully, And Stop Often

As mentioned above, rabbits are not used to the fast motions of a car, so they will appreciate it if you take sharp turns a little more slowly than usual and avoid tailgating (to reduce the need to stop suddenly).

You should plan to stop more than you think is necessary when traveling with rabbits, which is similar to driving with small children. This is a great opportunity to check on your bunny, particular if you are the only human in the car and need to focus on the road. During rest stops, offer your rabbit both food and water, and also visits to the litter box.

While a rabbit who is not eating nor using the litter box is always a cause for concern, I have found that my rabbits will often not have much interest in food on the road. My bonded pair will typically have a bit of hay and possibly a piece of cilantro or two while in transit,

but I had another bunny who rarely would eat during the actual car ride (though he would always eat voraciously when we arrived!).

Comfort Your Bunnies

As your rabbit's human, you are his protector and can be a major source of comfort to him. If you are stressed, he might be wondering what's wrong. I found that talking to my bunnies and petting them gently (if I'm not driving!) really helps them adjust to the car when we start our trip.

Last In, First Out

Since the car can be a bit stressful for rabbits, I try to minimize the time my bunnies are in the vehicle. Just as I aim to put my bunnies in the car last, after it has cooled down, I also will take them out first and set up their pen and litter box before I do anything else after arriving (including unloading the car). As mine are used to traveling now, they will usually inspect their new surroundings and start munching on hay within a few seconds.

Hot Weather *(Continued from page 3)*

- Moisten the furred part (not the inside) of your rabbit's ears with cool water to cool them down. Do not soak them, but keep the fur damp.
- Keep your rabbit well groomed. Keeping loose shedding fur off of your rabbits is always important to prevent them from ingesting it. When it is warm, excess fur will exacerbate their discomfort. For fuzzy rabbits, maintain shorter "puppy" haircuts for the summer.

Some rabbits are more sensitive to heat than others. If you have multiple rabbits, consider them all individually. Keep the temperature cool enough so that the most heat-sensitive rabbit is comfortable. Fuzzy rabbits, lops, old and young rabbits, overweight rabbits, and those with other special health concerns are at particular risk. There is no risk of a healthy rabbit becoming cold. The cooler the temperature, the more comfortable your rabbit is. Following all of the above tips should keep your rabbits safe from the problems caused by heat and they will be grateful for your efforts.

We also encourage you to have a plan in place should a problem arise that leaves you unable to cool your home. (The recent storm left many throughout the New York metro area without power, some for as long as a week or more. During outages, those living in homes without generators capable of running the A/C may find themselves needing to relocate their rabbits should the outside temperatures reach highs of 90-plus degrees as they did during the recent widespread outage.) Contact your trusted rabbit sitters to find out ahead of time whether they will be able to continue to run A/C in an outage, and discuss their ability to take in rabbits from homes without power in case of emergency. Some sitters maintain a list of medically high-risk animals for whom they will reserve space.

In addition to the heat-beating tips listed above, during a power outage battery-operated fans can be used to reduce air

temperature by directing them to blow across ice. Always have spare frozen bottles ready in your freezer, and familiarize yourself with how long your refrigerator and freezer will maintain temperature if unopened. Typically, an unopened refrigerator will stay cold for four hours, and an unopened freezer as long as 48 hours. After those initial four hours, be prepared to relocate any medications that must stay refrigerated – either to cooler boxes with ice, or to outside the

home. If your rabbits rely on any power-dependent medical devices (nebulizers, etc.), be sure to have a plan for those as well.

If you suspect heat stroke, dampen your rabbit's ears with cool water, and do NOT submerge him in water, which can place the rabbit in shock. Get your rabbit to a rabbit-savvy veterinarian immediately.

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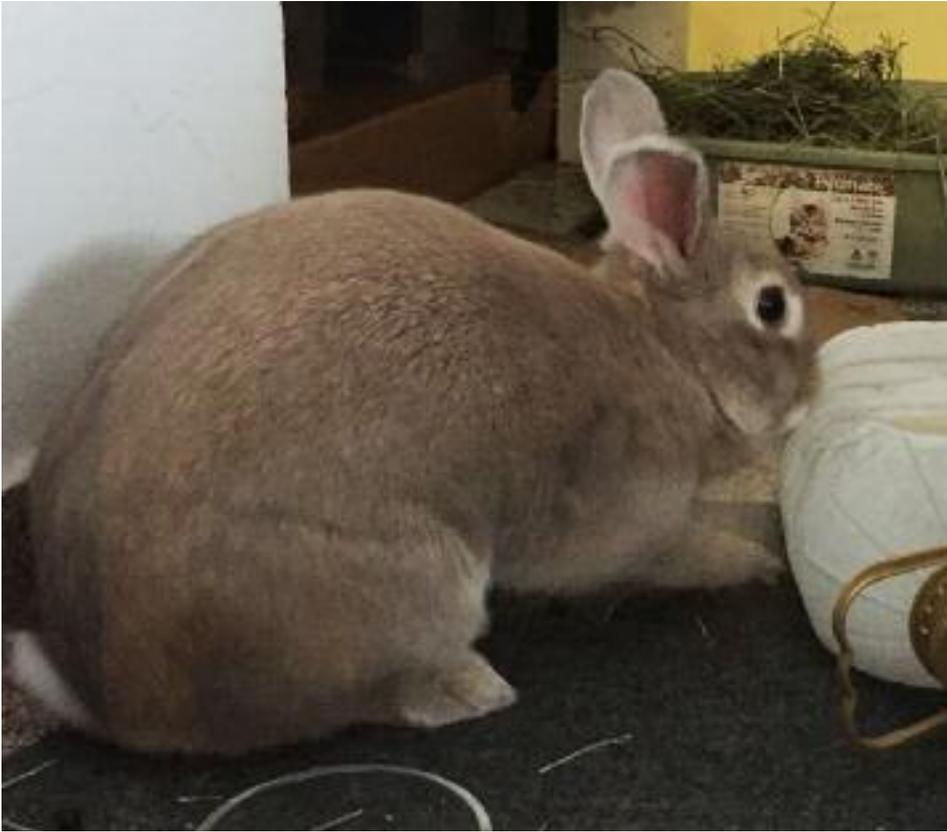


Blaze rests against a frozen water bottle. Blaze's frozen bottle is wrapped in a pillowcase to give him more comfort to lean against the bottle as a "bolster," and to prevent him from chewing on the bottle cap, which he finds particularly enticing.



Wally relaxes on his ceramic tile. As a lop, Wally is particularly susceptible to overheating since his ears, a vital part of a rabbit's temperature regulation, prevent heat from dissipating as effectively as with his up-eared counterparts. Because Wally is a more senior rabbit, a tile with some texture was chosen to provide as much traction as possible.

Hot Weather *(Continued from page 4)*



Conrad with his frozen water bottle.



Emma cools off.



Juliet escapes the summer heat.



Wet greens help keep Tobias hydrated.

This Is Not About a Bunny. It Is About Us All.

By Amelia Wilson

I grieved the way many do, oscillating between disbelief and blankness. How could Butter have been there a day before, a week before, a month before – boundlessly happy and chaotic, an orb of mischief, hilarity and light – and then, nothing? The moment she entered my life it was as though she had always been there. Even now, a year later, I walk by her room and feel a flash of incomprehension that it's empty.

This feeling is now a familiar, dread companion. We think the world around us is permanent – the trees, buildings and birds of our neighborhood, the rhythm of work, holidays and travel that define the calendar year, even the passing of seasons. But they're not. As a species we are in the grip of two crises that will indelibly alter both our figurative "world," and literal "planet." As the tsunami of Covid-19 sweeps away our loved ones, jobs, homes, sense of safety and security – so does the warming climate wipe entire species off the planet before we even understand them.

Lagomorphs (rabbits, hares and pikas) are native to every continent except Antarctica. A quarter of all lagomorph species are already listed as threatened, and 13 species are endangered or critically endangered, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. A study out of Queen's University Belfast predicts that rising temperatures around the earth will affect two-thirds of rabbits world-wide, with many species of rabbits going extinct by 2100. Ecologist Katie Leach states that "[r]abbits, hares and pikas could become this century's new climate migrants – with up to two-thirds of species forced to relocate." In one particularly graphic prediction, conservation biologist and lagomorph expert Neil Reid warns that pikas in the high mountains of the Himalayas and

Rockies "will likely be pushed off the top of the mountains, literally, with total extinction the most probable outcome."

Wildlife ecologist Eveline Larrucea and her fellow researchers warn that pygmy rabbits, who inhabit desert areas of the Nevada Great Basin and consume mostly sagebrush, are particularly vulnerable. Sagebrush is on the decline as wildfires become more common with rising temperatures. Cheatgrass moves in, edging out other plants critical for the rabbits' survival. Pines and juniper trees also move in, creating perches for apex predators such as hawks and owls. Less snowpack means the pygmy cannot tunnel or hide from these same predators.

Photo: Nadine Heidinger



A contemplative and melancholy Pippi.

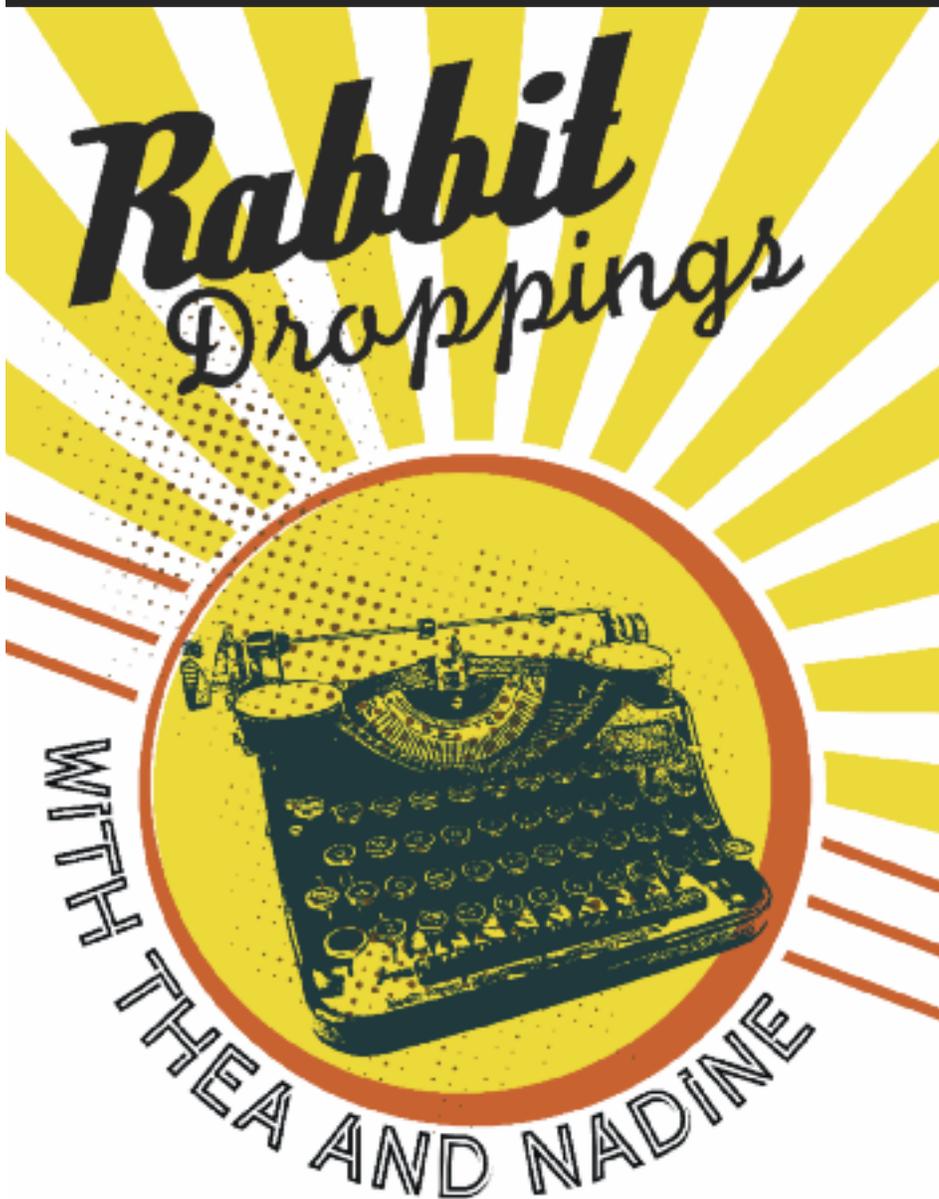
Already, Larrucea and her team found that the pygmy rabbit had completely disappeared from lower elevations in the basin.

I was listening to a radio program the other day about a biologist who has dedicated his life to finding and preserving old recordings of songs by birds that are now extinct. He played some of the songs and imitated others. They were alien and beautiful, and I mourned their absence in our world. Naturalist Daniel Large uses the word "ecolegiac," which combines "ecology" with "elegiac," or a lament for the dead. He says he feels it each time he seeing migrating birds, and wonders if he is witnessing an earthly treasure that humanity is about to lose. Katharine Duckett talks of "winter smell," which encompasses "all the smells of winter we are losing, that metallic scent of cold, the smell of snow, the smell of certain foods... and who knows if anyone will understand after a while what that means."

I imagine a planet without rabbits – or without many other plants, insects and animals – and feel profound sorrow. It is like a room I walk past where I expect to see a profusion of life and levity, but find only blankness. And I feel a now familiar incomprehension as to how this could have possibly happened. Where did it go?

Perhaps this pandemic – which has taken so much from so many – can grant us the gift of introspection. Perhaps we will rethink our relationship with the natural world. Maybe it will serve as an opportunity to quell our perverse and gluttonous appetite for resources.

The future does not have to be a void. The pygmy rabbit does not have to be seen only in old recordings. We can know the smell of winter. But we have to act collectively, swiftly and immediately.



This month in Rabbit Droppings, Thea and Nadine address a conundrum facing one of Thea's friends. This friend (we will call her "Vermey," short for "vermiculture") was recently lamenting that Covid-19 had shut down many city services – including curbside compost pickup – which was her friend's principal manner of disposing of her bunnies' poop and spent hay. Someone offered to take the hay off her hands... "for a price." Vermey asked Thea whether this was fair.

Thea and Nadine debated the question one night over a FaceTime wine-and-cheese session and came down on very different sides of the debate. Here is their "point/counterpoint" on the matter.

Thea:

"Pay the man. Composting is hard work!"

Vermey should pay to have her bunny compost removed. The way I look at it, this guy is doing her a huge service. She is a highly conscientious person and feels terrible throwing her bunny hay and droppings in the trash. For one thing, she hates using plastic trash bags, and for another, she abhors the idea of her nutrient-rich rabbit waste ending up in a city dump where it may take hundreds of years to decompose. This way, the poop benefits someone right away.

We pay for other waste-removal services – why not pay for this? After all, composting is no easy task. It's not as though you toss everything in a pile and come back 30 days later to find rich humus. Nope. The decomposition process is aerobic, meaning it needs oxygen. Ever cranked a compost turner? It's a real workout! Plus, you need the right balance of aerobic and anaerobic microorganisms – and then build the ideal living conditions for them. That means careful consideration of heat, moisture and air flow. Most of all, you need time. And lots of it.

So I say pay up! These days, in particular, we need to support those willing to get their hands dirty.

Nadine:

"Pay him? He should pay HER!"

Give me a break. That stuff is gold, and he should be paying Vermey for the privilege of picking it up. Everyone knows the power of rabbit poo – gardeners, especially (see [Thump, October 2018, pages 5-6](#)), "[Love Song to Bunny Poop: A Gardener's Gratitude](#)"). And how do we actually know he intends to compost it? Urine-soaked hay is an excellent pest repellent when placed directly at a plant's base, while the hay itself acts as a weed suppressant. Put another way, bunny leavings are a gardener's best friend. I think I've even seen rabbit poo for sale on Etsy!

As for your argument concerning the challenges and difficulties of composting, I say "phooey." Bunny poop and hay (which we all know is just grass) are an essential part of the "soil food web." Both help regulate different bug populations, and the hay traps heat, which in turn makes for faster organic breakdown.

My two cents? I wouldn't pay him a red penny.

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There and Back Again: A Tale of Rebonding Rabbits

By Amanda Puitiza

Athena and Martin were only bonded a few weeks before their relationship was put to a test. Martin stopped eating with his usual vigor, and I scrambled to find him a vet who would see him at such short notice during the pandemic. We got him to our usual vet, but with the new regulations, even I couldn't go in with him. So Athena was left at home while Martin spent the next two days at the vet as a precaution. Luckily, despite a high temperature, he appeared to be recovering from whatever was ailing him on his own.

We brought him home after two days, and the two rabbits were like strangers.

I had heard about bonds breaking and rabbits never being able to live together again. Honestly, I don't think I believed that this could be permanent. But seeing how Athena reacted to Martin upon his arrival home was quite disturbing.

So I started again. Habitats were split up. Additional furniture was brought out again. The barriers were back in place.

I was faced with the issue of territory. After they had bonded, I had introduced them to basically all available areas of the house. Where would I find neutral territory, one of the key principles of bonding?

Well it took about a week to resolve. At first, we were back to square one. I figured

Martin's hospital smell might be one of the leading causes for this sudden "stranger" situation. I prioritized cleaning their main living areas and mixing their scents together. I held short dinner sessions in a small room they had never been in before. And by the end of the week, he was grooming her in her favorite spot and she had stopped nipping him. They were rebonded.

I do believe their relationship has changed from that of before Martin's hospital stay, though. Just from observing their behavior, I can see there is more equality

in grooming; before, Athena typically expected more of it. They both are also definitely more territorial and developed their own special hangout spots. Although we are still getting Martin to relax further with us, Athena is able to use her grooming techniques to totally relax him.

I hope this story lets others see that even though a relationship can change, it does not necessarily mean that the bond is fragmented forever. There is always hope that the bunnies can find their way back to a stable place, even if the old social dynamics have changed.

Photo: Amanda Puitiza



Athena and Martin.

VOLUNTEERS

Droppings

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What do you all do, kind and faithful readers, with YOUR bunny waste during the pandemic? Write in and let us know! (See our email address below.) We'd love to hear your thoughts as we navigate these challenging times. Stay safe, everyone.

—Thea & Nadine

ABOUT RABBIT DROPPINGS:

We are not veterinarians or veterinary technicians, and claim no expertise in rhetoric, political maneuvering, comedy, or math. We are, however, curious, dedicated, long-time rabbit owners, fosterers, shelter volunteers, rescue advocates, and litter-box cleaners. As volunteers in a busy shelter like Animal Care Centers of NYC, we see, hear and

chat a lot about rabbits – and we are excited to share all those little droppings. Please email us at askrabbitdroppings@gmail.com if you have any questions or comments. Sometimes we embellish and combine questions we hear frequently in order to present common themes in an entertaining way.

We look forward to hearing from you ... until then, *Cheers, Buns!*

A Pandemic Memory to Cherish: Our Rescue of the Mill Neck Nine

By Lauren Schulz

Ten years down the road from now, when people think about Covid-19, they will think about fear, changes to normalcy, masked faces, loneliness, frustration, sadness. These memories will be vivid in all of our minds. For each of these times where I have felt down, I try to stay busy and immerse myself in the positive to come of this challenging time. Thus far, this hasn't proven to be particularly difficult. I've worked through this pandemic at my "day job" as the center director at Long Island's busiest wildlife hospital. At night, I come home to a busy house, my wonderful husband, my pets and my foster rabbits. They are as cute as they are time-consuming to care for, a blessing in these times when we could all use a distraction.

On July 9, I was answering the hotline at work on one of the hottest days of the summer thus far. The caller, who lived in Mill Neck, a minute from my office, reported returning from a trip and finding six domestic rabbits on her lawn. The rabbits were discovered in an interesting spot, right along my commute in a very wooded and affluent area adjacent to a lake. I asked the caller to send pictures and I sent "my people," Denise Bertolotti, Mary Ann Maier and Katie Scarr, the heart and soul of Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, a message: "Six dumped lops in Mill Neck, a minute from my office." They know me and

they knew the unspoken meaning of my text. I was getting these rabbits come hell or high water. Denise replied quickly, "Ummmm go get 'em and we'll figure it out. Vet is standing by."

I ran up to the attic and grabbed four carriers and two nets, came downstairs and told my colleague Alicia, "I need you for a domestic rescue down the road." She nodded. She and I have worked together for seven years. We have rescued hundreds of wild animals together. Our brains work the same way on these rescues. We work efficiently, with speed, in silence. If there was any way I was going to catch six rabbits in the woods without my usual X-pens for help, it was with Alicia.

We arrived at the house, which was under construction and surrounded by dirt. The rabbits were scattered everywhere. It was 10 a.m. and the temperature was already 90 degrees. The first few rabbits were at the front of the home, all trying desperately to stay out of the heat. The first was behind a slate slab propped against the home, the next under a porch, and one more, a baby, behind an air-conditioning compressor. All were lying flat out, breathing rapidly and making no attempt to resist capture. After rounding up the bunnies at the front of the home, we moved to the woods. I was most worried about these rabbits and the predatory dangers they would face if they dispersed. We secured

two more in the brush. However, the homeowner told us she had seen a different one in that area. We kept searching, and cowered down low to the ground I stumbled upon rabbit number six. This one was a baby, very skinny and dehydrated. Having rounded up all of the "woods bunnies," we headed to the back of the house because the homeowner said there was another she saw back there. There we found two additional babies cowering behind another A/C compressor. Sweat rolling down our faces, mud on our shoes, I looked at Alicia and smiled: "Eight lives saved in twenty five minutes. Not bad."

The Mill Neck eight were transported back to our wildlife hospital where we got them into air conditioning and gave them all water and greens. They were breathing hard, exhausted. They just lay in their carriers without moving much, conserving what little energy they had. They stayed at work with me for the day. I called my husband on the way home: "We have eight additional house guests tonight but don't worry. I promise they aren't all staying."

At home that night, we organized the staging area. We emptied the carriers and I sexed each rabbit. In total, we had four adults and four babies with an even split of genders. I separated them: two adult boys, two adult girls and the babies all together. All received Revolution

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Photo: Lauren Schulz



Nine in a row: Emerald, Topaz, Jasper, Garnet, Citrine, Sapphire, Peridot, Diamond and Aquamarine.

Mill Neck Nine

(Continued from page 9)

treatments for mites, delicious salads and time to relax. On that day, their world changed drastically.

The next morning, we received word from the original caller that another rabbit was caught overnight. We arranged for the rabbit to be dropped off at my house on Saturday. Friday was spent allowing the bunnies to have a day of rest while we organized the foster homes and raised preliminary funds to support

their care. Saturday morning, with all transports and foster homes lined up, the bunnies were brought to their new fosterers, their next stop on the way to adoption! The adult females, Citrine and Sapphire, who seemed quite attached to one another, headed off to our main foster home in Great Neck. Next, Volunteer Erica Lanzarone came to pick up Diamond, bunny number nine, for foster care at her home. Along with Diamond, Erica transported the baby boys Jasper and Topaz to their foster home with April Overholser, at "Satellite

Two," another large foster home for LIRRG rabbits. Lastly, the remaining four, the pair of adult boys, Garnet and Peridot, and the two baby girls, Aquamarine and Emerald, had the opportunity to really sprawl out in their foster home with my husband and me at our foster home, "LIRRG Satellite One."

At the time of this issue of Thump, I have just completed the adoption of Citrine and Sapphire to a wonderful family, and the remaining adults are neutered and spayed and ready for adoption! The babies still have some time before they will be large enough for fixing, but there is no doubt they will not be on the market for long! Today, I'm smiling but I can't help but think about how different the outcomes could have been that day. I'll remember this July years from now, not just for Covid, but for all the good we accomplished together despite challenging circumstances. From the LIRRG coordinators who jumped up with me to save these lives, to the fosterers who willingly opened their homes, and the supporters who generously opened their pockets at the most difficult time in our lifetime, this incredible rescue would not have been possible without the joint effort.

Here's to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group for giving me an outlet for my energy, a diversion from the uncertain times, a tremendous purpose and a sense of hope for the future. Here's to the Mill Neck Nine, my true gems of this pandemic!

Photos: Lauren Schulz



Peridot and Garnet.



Emerald and Aquamarine, the baby girls.



Diamond wants to play!

Long Island Rabbit Rescue and Its Formula for Success

By Christina Berner

They have an extensive easy-to-use website but, who are they? Where are they? The volunteers themselves sometimes get a glimpse, kind of like seeing a corner of the Mona Lisa. This article will provide you with what I hope is a broad view of an incredibly successful rescue organization that spans the entirety of Nassau and Suffolk County.

There is no physical shelter building. The rabbits are fostered in individual volunteers' homes. Currently there are over 25, with this number varying all the time. When an adopter completes the preliminary adoption process, arrangements are made to meet potential adoptees. This can be for first-time bunny adopters, or to find companions for a bunny you already have. They even arrange for several "meetings" and a bonding session to ensure your bunny will be happy with his/her new mate. These meetings typically happen at the main foster home and have been a challenge during the quarantine.

Right from the start they make everything simple, clear and easy, while being extremely thorough. Education is their primary focus. As many of you know, bringing a rabbit into your home and family can be daunting. LIRRG navigates the twists and turns with each adopter without hesitation. Their patience is unending.

Saying that they are a community of volunteers would not begin to describe them. They have a Facebook page, Friends of LIRRG, that is well monitored and enjoyed by over 800 members. Questions are quickly answered by the group at large. Rabbit concerns are addressed without hesitation, and along the way there are numerous exciting, fun and educational stories. You can read about volunteers going out to rescue abandoned rabbits. You'll read follow-up stories and see videos about these rabbits as well as foster rabbits, adopted rabbits and rabbits available for adoption. There are volunteer opportunities all the time.

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Denise Bertolotti and Mary Ann Maier in February.

Members become "Bunny Ubers," driving buns to vet visits or fosterers. Most members post videos or fun photos on days like Bunny Butt Friday. You'll also see buns that have issues like sore hocks or some other medical concern. This allows all of the members to become more intimately aware of common and uncommon bunny issues. I cannot say enough wonderful things about this page. If you haven't been for a visit, it is a must!



Alyssa Eisenberg and Katie Kane helped with the recent Mother's Day rescue at Sunken Meadow Park.



Nancy Schreiber at Bunny Spa Day this year.

But how did Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group come to be? How did it get to be so fabulous? Well, in 1998, Mary Ann Maier came upon a domestic rabbit in her neighborhood. Finding the idea of leaving such a delicate creature outside in a hutch to be preposterous, she did some research. Mary Ann found Mary Cotter, from the New York City chapter of House Rabbit Society, who guided Mary Ann in creating an indoor setup. Mary referred her to a rabbit-savvy vet, Jennifer Saver, now of Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital, who did not even have her own practice yet. Mary Ann began volunteering for Mary. For seven years she commuted every weekend to Bronxville to help out and learn. Mary Ann participated in educational events at various shelters such as the North Shore Animal League as well as several schools, New York City street fairs, pet expos and veterinary conferences. Her fierce commitment still prevails and is infectious.

As the internet grew in popularity and more people gained access to it, Mary Ann saw more and more cases of rabbits in need cropping up on Long Island. She began focusing all of her energies on Long Island. Donna Sheridan soon adopted a rabbit from Mary Ann. Donna

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Long Island Rabbit Rescue

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saw the need, too, and decided to jump in, and the two began running the Long Island branch of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab. Then, Nancy Schreiber adopted a rabbit from them and she wanted to help as well! The three joined forces. They incorporated and officially became Long Island Rabbit Rescue.

By their definition on their webpage they are, “an all-volunteer organization based on Long Island, New York. Our mission is to rescue abused, neglected or abandoned rabbits; have them medically treated and spayed/neutered; and place them in loving, indoor homes. We educate the public on the special care and health needs of domestic rabbits, and are sustained by your donations.”

To know them is to want to help them. To quote Denise Bertolotti, “Everyone who is active in this group is supportive, kind, and generous with their time and resources. Friends of LIRRG is truly a community.”

Let’s look at some of the lives they’ve saved and families they’ve helped complete. With over 1,000 domestic rabbits rescued and enjoying new indoor lives, this article could fill a very heavy tome. Here are just a few highlights from some of our volunteers:

“I’m so happy to be part of this group... all they did and keep doing for these babies is unbelievable and I’m so thankful to know them and learn from the best!”
– Caro Z.

“I love seeing how many other families LIRRG has helped make happier by fostering and adopting.” – Ashley R.

“My involvement inspired me to switch my graduate studies to help in the animal welfare field.” – Taylor K.

“Each rabbit needs to be rescued without judgment or negativity. It was all about love. That’s how LIRRG is – loving and selfless. I’m so honored to call these incredible volunteers of LIRRG, friends.”
– Cheyanne B.

Photo: Mary Ann Maier



Audrey, Gary and April Overholser with Jasper and Lola as they celebrated Lola’s Gotcha Day.

“Their hearts bring tears to my eyes! Thankful is an understatement....there really aren’t words meaningful enough to describe what they do!” – Nicole M.

“They take the time to make sure they [the rabbits] are placed in the right forever home.” – Danielle P.

“The most genuine human beings I’ve ever met.” – Cassidy K.

“Truly amazing and a prime example of how giving of yourself and your time can transform the lives of others.” – Jill V.

“Thank you for the foresight, fortitude and determination to keep people educated, supported and involved at the center of the LIRRG mission.” – Lanette R.

“They constantly restore my hope in the world. They have saved so many lives, lives that most people would think of as disposable.” –Sana A.

“They are the indefatigable standard-bearers of rabbit world!!” – Nancy K. M.

“My grandma always said that people are known for the way they treat animals, and personally I can say that the founders of LIRRG are angels on earth and that many rabbits have a second chance in life thanks to them.” – Zulia B.

“I can never be grateful enough... Long Island wouldn’t be the same if they didn’t do what they do. Thank you!”
– Denise H.

“Not all superheroes wear capes.”
– Shahira A.

“These ladies have the biggest heart of anyone I’ve ever known. This rescue has made such an impact on my life!”
– Gina M.

“Words cannot express how much I appreciate the kindness and selfless willingness to help.” – Cara M.E.

There are so many more and I apologize to the many I left out! The founders of LIRRG have such an infectious selflessness. They find themselves surrounded by volunteers and still there are never enough. You cannot help but want to jump in and do what you can to be a part of it.

Volunteer April Overholser currently runs the foster home referred to as “Satellite Two.” April has been a volunteer for over six years now. When April’s daughter’s rabbit, Jasper, jumped off a chair, leading to a spinal injury and back leg paralysis in 2014, April searched for help for Jasper and came across Mary Ann Maier

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Long Island Rabbit Rescue

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on the LIRRG website. Mary Ann directed April to the rabbit-savvy vets at Catnip & Carrots. Mary Ann also invited April over and taught her how to care for a disabled rabbit. This led to April helping out by transporting rabbits to vet visits and adoptions. Then April started fostering. Then she began helping with educational events and rescues, fundraising events, home visits, teaching and support for other bunny owners, as well as political advocating for rabbits. April didn't stop there. She built a relationship with Brookhaven Animal Shelter as a way to expand her ability to help rabbits in need. She now fosters an average of seven to nine rabbits in her own home. April has also initiated a new project that is a Zoom support group, Tears on the Rainbow Bridge, for people who are grieving over the loss of a loved bunny. LIRRG rabbits who have crossed the rainbow bridge are never forgotten. You will find them on [LIRRG's memorial page](#) on the website.

Lauren Schulz Eddings joined the movement. She and her husband are experts in rescue techniques and generously

teach these techniques to LIRRG volunteers. They began partnering with LIRRG in 2013. Early on they realized the No. 1 limiting factor to helping these rabbits was having foster space. Having extra space themselves, they began fostering. Since 2014, they have fostered over 50 rabbits. Currently, they have a larger load of 11, which includes six babies. "Fostering this volume of rabbits is a large commitment and a tremendous amount of work but it is work I find tremendous joy in," she says.

Katie Scarr joined the movement. Katie helps maintain the chaos. Katie exudes joy. She is a great educator, photographer, web designer, graphic designer and organizer. I asked Katie why she joined LIRRG: "You make time for something you love! I look forward to all of the work I do for LIRRG so that's how I spend most of my free time. I couldn't imagine not having time for the bunnies!" When Katie inquired about becoming a volunteer, Denise encouraged her to help at LIRRG's Sanctuary for Special Need Rabbits. Some of these bunnies are fosters and some will spend the rest of their lives in comfort at the sanctuary. They are cared for with incredible



Learn about bonding at LIRRG's Facebook Page.



Celebrating her fifth Gotcha Day is Zulia's bun Valerie, who has a husband, Chad.

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Four old men: a bonded quad cared for by Kelly.

dedication by Mary Ann and some wonderful volunteers including Katie.

Katie hopes that with the strong education efforts she helps LIRRG put forth, that there will be less of a need to rescue abandoned and abused rabbits in the future. She hopes that fewer rabbits will get abandoned and left outside to fend for themselves after humans that purchased them didn't know any better. Katie hopes that "we see a future where people make more informed decisions when it comes to adding a rabbit to their family," and hopes to see a decrease in families needing to re-home their rabbits. She imagines a day when "we don't need a rescue and LIRRG's mission could shift toward supporting house rabbit owners on Long Island."

Danielle Carbone joined the movement. She's typically out doing rescues and

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Long Island Rabbit Rescue

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home visits but, right now because of the quarantine, you'll find Danielle behind the scenes as one of the admins helping out in the FB group, assisting with fundraisers or anything else that Denise, Katie or Mary Ann ask her to help with, including the Amazon wish lists for the four main foster homes. (Have you checked out the wish lists yet?)

Danielle steps in wherever she is needed without hesitation. As to why she volunteers: "It makes me happy. Animals have always brought me joy and a sense of peace since I was a child, especially rabbits. Just knowing how abused, abandoned and neglected so many of them are, I felt that I needed to take part in helping them. Rabbits are so underrated and rarely talked about, which is really upsetting since they are the third most popular domestic pet. I volunteer so that I can help save their lives because rabbits have saved mine in so many ways."

The founders of LIRRG all have demanding full-time professions: a doctor, an advertising and interior designer, as well as a full-time educator. How do they find the time for LIRRG?

Nancy Schreiber will be there for most adoptions. You'll find her making big salads for her foster buns daily. It's safe to say Nancy is the backbone of the organization and definitely too busy on most days.

Mary Ann was asked how she found time for rescue work. "It's challenging," she says. When she started, she had an advertising career in New York City and a long daily commute. "My development as a rabbit rescuer paralleled the technology revolution in that I first got a cell phone because of rescue, and then I got a computer at home because of rescue. Online forums (most notably, Etherbun) became a means to reach out and help more people and rabbits in need and to learn."

That Rabbit Sanctuary I mentioned earlier is Mary Ann's home. Her fosters,

An Ode to the Long Island Rabbit Rescue



They've noticed buns abandoned, unhealthy and unloved
They stepped up to the challenge and properly educated us.



"Bunnies can't live in cages, outside or without love,
They usually don't like to be picked up
for your kisses or your hugs"



Bring your bunny for their checkups.

Make sure they eat and poop.

Your bunny demands attention with a little nosey boop.

The work may seem endless, overwhelming and just too much,

But the bunnies they save are thankful

to know compassion and gentle touch

They work with the grumpy buns, the spunky and the scared.

To show not every human is negligent,

Some of us can care.

So thank you to the founders, the volunteers and the friends,

It's because of you our bunny families have

"happy tales" in the end.



The Campbell Family

- Gabrielle, Safiya, Marshmallow & Ebony

6.18.2020

many of whom are special-needs, live in her kitchen, dining room and TV room. She is always interacting with them and caring for them before and after work. "I don't reserve specific times for rabbit work. At the office, I sometimes have downtime for email correspondence, designing flyers and other visual communications, and returning a call or two. It's a constant juggle." Mary Ann says, "LIRRG was only able to grow because of the volunteer support team that enables it. Practically speaking, I hope our volunteers keep their passion and know they will nurture future rescuers. The way that Denise Bertolotti and

Katie Scarr have harnessed technology and social media to cultivate our community of enlightened owners, adopters and volunteers continually astounds me. However, my dream would be to have everyone so enlightened that we'd never have to rescue another rabbit ever again."

Denise Bertolotti joined this movement shortly after becoming a rabbit owner and realizing she had "no idea what I was doing." Denise, like so many, turned to LIRRG. Denise found the group through a Facebook search. They were

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Long Island Rabbit Rescue

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holding an education event at a Petco near her, so she went. There she met volunteer Jean Mellano and Jean's rabbit Budge, and signed up to volunteer that day. That was in February 2012. Denise will tell you she hears her story all too often. Dozens if not hundreds of rabbits every week are looking to be adopted or rehomed. Now all the volunteers at LIRRG get to know Denise Bertolotti. Denise has become the voice of LIRRG. She is the central hub through which all volunteers are dispatched on endless missions.

Denise's passion for the care of rabbits is extraordinary. Ask her Lionhead, Peanut. He'll tell you. She owns her own company, studies extensively daily and teaches full-time. How does she find time to volunteer? "LIRRG is my priority – my life's purpose. I am a master at organizing and managing activity, so I have systems in place that allow me to dedicate focused time daily to LIRRG. Those systems and some amazing fellow volunteers make this all manageable," she says.

"I have a cork board hanging on the wall above the desk where I sit writing this, where I sit and coordinate LIRRG emails, volunteers, education, adoptions,

and events," Denise says. "At the center of that cork board, there is a card that reads: Domestic rabbits are safe and protected. I look at that every single day. I keep that mission at the center of all I do. The future for LIRRG: making that sentence a reality for all rabbits on Long Island...and then the whole world."

So many other volunteers are out there all the time, transporting, fostering, rescuing, educating, doing in-home visits for potential adopters, training, fundraising, and helping out at the main house, the LIRRG Sanctuary and "Satellite One" and "Satellite Two." We see each other sometimes in passing. Often, we utilize mailboxes and stoops to transfer donated items. LIRRG is always grateful for donations of food, pens, cages, toys, etc. None of it goes to waste. There are wish lists on Amazon updated by the volunteers so that anyone can easily donate.

For the dedicated volunteers, it is a fulfilling life charged by the joy of Katie, the kindness of Denise, the fierce dedication of Mary Ann and Nancy and many of their fellow volunteers, sharing strong bonds and the love of the rabbits.

The No. 1 priority is the bunnies. The bunnies they help along the way become part of the community. The volunteers,



Christina's bun Bruce, a feisty dwarf, celebrates his second Gotcha Day. His secret identity is Balbun (a nighttime vigilante saving buns all across Gotham).

the adopters and the bunnies are LIRRG. Rabbits are never adopted and forgotten about. They're seen regularly. Our fosterers post the buns' antics and trials and tribulations. Denise posts each adopted bunny's Gotcha Day annually! We wake up every morning to a wonderful reminder of the rabbits that were adopted on that date a year ago, or five years ago or more. Each and every one of the bunnies are celebrated. Once adopted, each of our new adopters are encouraged to post photos and videos of how their bun is doing. They're also encouraged to use the Friends of LIRRG Facebook page. Post questions, post experiences, learn about the daily concerns of bringing a bun into the family. You'll find so many amazing ways to keep your bun safe, happy and comfortable.

As one of the volunteers I cannot possibly include all of the incredible actions of this organization. But you can see it now, right? You can see the immense scope of what they do and how it all works with just volunteers, bunnies and a tremendous amount of commitment.

How can you adopt a LIRRG bun? Click: "[Start the Adoption Process](#)" on the LIRRG website.

How can you donate to this amazing organization? Click the "[Donate](#)" button on the website.

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Eileen Hagerman, Justin Eddings and Lauren Schulz Eddings at a Jericho rescue in April.

We Are Looking for Loving Homes:

These Rabbits Are in Foster Care



Carmela.

Carmela

Carmela is a young medium-sized Rex rabbit. Her beautiful coat is mostly white with tan and black spots. She is a sweet rabbit who loves to have her soft nose petted. She also likes to explore her house, but her favorite thing is to relax with a nice soft blanket. Carmela is shy and would likely do best in an adult-only home. She would also likely make a good partner for another rabbit. She has been spayed and is in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Carmela, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

Ashton

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

JoJo

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



Ashton.



JoJo.

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



Skye.

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

Skye

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

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Winning Over a Shy Bunny

By Dana Krempels, Ph.D.

One of the most common misconceptions people have about rabbits is that they like to be held and cuddled. This is probably because they look like plush toys. Unfortunately, many people buy rabbits without realizing the true nature of rabbits, and that's one of the main reasons these lovely, intelligent creatures are "dumped" shortly after they reach sexual maturity and begin to assert their strong personalities.

You are distressed that the bunny does not like to be held. Consider for a moment, however, the natural history of the rabbit. This is a ground-dwelling animal that is

a prey item for many predators. It is completely against the nature of the rabbit to be held far above the ground where it cannot control its own motions and activities. When you force her to be held against her will, you reinforce her instinctive notion that you are a predator who is trying to restrain her. Holding her while she struggles and kicks is not only dangerous for you and the children (You may have noticed her sharp claws by now!), but also for the rabbit. I wish I didn't know how many young rabbits come into our vet's office with broken legs, necks and spines because people insisted on carrying them around and

handling them against their will. If you love your bunny, you won't do this.

Think about it: If your dog or cat didn't like to be carried around, you probably would not force the issue. Why treat your bunny any differently, simply because of her superficially "toylike" appearance? To understand rabbit behavior, you have to begin to think like a rabbit.

First, buy yourself a copy of "The House Rabbit Handbook" by Marinell Harriman. It's the most accurate book about rabbits available today.

Second, remember that a rabbit, unlike a dog or cat, evolved as a prey species.

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ADOPTIONS

Rabbits in Foster Care

(Continued from page 16)

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

Pineapple and Sugarplum

Pineapple and Sugarplum are a beautiful pair of large Lionhead sisters who were born in the shelter as part of a litter of five babies, before we took the whole

young family into our rescue. Their mother, two sisters and brother have all been adopted and now it's their turn. Pineapple is black and white, while Sugarplum is all black – and both have amazing manes of hair! These girls are shy at first but have tons of energy and

are a joy to watch as they exercise – running and binkying with reckless abandon! They have been spayed and are living in foster care. If you are interested in adopting Pineapple and Sugarplum, please email nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.



Sugarplum and Pineapple.

Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Hops, Reggie and Dora.

Shy Bunny *(Continued from page 17)*

Dogs and cats are predators, and most do not have a natural fear of being held. Reinforcing this natural tendency, breeders have selected generation upon generation of domestic dogs and cats so that their descendants have a short “flight distance.” This means that domestic dogs and cats are generally not afraid of humans.

Domestic rabbits are very different in this respect. For centuries, rabbits have been bred primarily for meat, fur and physical characteristics. That means that when you adopt a rabbit, you adopt a beautiful animal with domesticated physical features – and the heart and spirit of a wild animal. It is much more challenging to win the trust of this kind of sensitive, intelligent creature than it is to win the heart of a puppy or kitten that has been bred to trust you from birth.

Most rabbits are naturally shy. It is up to you, the flexible human, to compromise and alter your behavior so that the bunny understands that you are a friend.

The following are a few steps you can take to win your shy rabbit's trust.

1. You and bunny should be together in a private, quiet room. No other pets. No distractions.
2. Have a little treat, such as a carrot or a tiny piece of apple, banana or a little pinch of oats in your hand. (These foods are only for small treats. Rabbits fed a diet with too much digestible carbohydrate are excellent candidates for serious gastrointestinal disorders.)
3. Lie on your tummy on the floor and let the bunny out of his “safe haven” (hutch). It's quite crucial that this hutch have a door that is accessible to the rabbit so that you don't have to lift him when you take him out or put him back in. The bunny should have absolute freedom to choose when he comes out. Don't force the issue. The bunny's natural curiosity will bring him to you.
4. Don't expect your bunny to approach you right away. Remain quiet and patient, even if it takes an hour or more. Rabbits are naturally curious, and eventually he will come over to sniff you.

5. Resist the temptation to reach out and pat the bunny. Instead, let him sniff you, hop on you and just get to know your smell. This will teach him that you are not a threat.

6. If the bunny finds the treat you have, hold it while he nibbles.

7. Do this every day. Gradually, you can start to touch the bunny by giving him a gentle “scrunch” on the forehead (bunnies love this). Never force anything, and never chase the bunny. This will only undo all the patient sitting you have done to gain his trust. A rabbit does not generally like to play “chase” with an animal that is 30 times his size. It is simply not natural behavior for him, and it is not a sign of low intelligence.

8. As the bunny gradually becomes less shy, you can become more familiar with him, stroking his back, letting him lie with his side pressed against your arm... whatever feels comfortable and natural to both of you. Many rabbits seem to find a face less threatening than a hand. Your bunny may gladly allow you to give him a warm “nose nuzzle” (especially if you hum very low and softly; this is the way rabbits sometimes communicate among themselves), even if he won't let your hand come close.

9. Once the bunny learns that you are a friend, he will bond very strongly to you. It's important to have him neutered (or her spayed, if it's a girl) once she/he reaches sexual maturity, because otherwise the bunny will want to make love to everything, including you – whatever appendages happen to be within reach. Spay/neuter will stop this behavior, and it will eliminate the very real risk of reproductive tract cancers in females. Spay/neuter will also make litter-box training easier and more reliable. Be sure you have this done by a veterinarian who is very experienced with rabbits. If you do not know of an experienced rabbit vet near you, please check the House Rabbit Society Veterinary Referral Center.

In implementing the steps above, remember to imagine what the world looks like to this little, furry stranger. She's surrounded by a new environment,

and there's a big, odd-smelling animal that's always looming over her. She has no idea you're trying to be friendly. Her “hard wiring” says: “AAAAA!!! It's going to EAT MEEEE!!!!” So it's up to you, the new bunny parent, to provide her with quiet, safe space where she can learn to feel secure. (Be sure all electrical wires and phone cords are out of the bunny's reach.)

Try to see the world through your bunny's eyes. Put yourself in her place. No one speaks her “language,” she has been taken from her family and perhaps the only home she has ever known, and she has no idea whether you plan to love her, cage her forever, or eat her. You need to gradually and patiently earn her trust. It can take days, weeks or months, and depends on the personality of the individual rabbit.

One complaint we often hear from people who bought a bunny for their children who turns out to be shy is that the rabbit is “not turning out to be the sort of pet we wanted for our kids.” Try to banish this kind of thinking.

Rather than being disappointed that the rabbit is not what you expected (it is quite possible that she will never learn to like to be held), take this opportunity to teach your children respect for an animal who is different from them, who has different needs, perceptions and behaviors than a dog or cat, and who is NOT a casual plaything. If the children really want something to carry around, they need a stuffed toy – not a live rabbit.

Finally, remember that the ultimate responsibility for the rabbit's welfare belongs to the adults in the household – not the children. Most human children are pretty well into their late teens before they truly understand the necessity of constant, devoted care to another sentient life form. This can be your opportunity to get an early start in teaching them that all-important life lesson.

Your rabbit is a highly intelligent, potentially loving, loyal creature who can become a member of the family, if you allow her to be what she is – a rabbit. If you and all your family can do that, you are in for the most delightful companionship imaginable.



JoJo.



Oliver.



Blaze.



Noelle.



Angie and Puffin.

Rabbit-Savvy Veterinarians

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

Manhattan:

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

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

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

Westchester County:

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

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

Long Island:

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

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

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

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

Adoptable Rabbits

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

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

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

Adoptable Rabbit Rescue & Rehab rabbits are at Petco's Union Square location. Rabbit volunteers are present at these stores on Saturday and Sunday afternoons to answer questions.

You can also visit Manhattan Animal Care Center at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues, and the Brooklyn Animal Care Center at 2336 Linden Boulevard.

Rabbits for adoption in Manhattan and Brooklyn can be found by going to:

<http://www.nycacc.org/> and doing an adoption search (for ACC inquiries about adoption/bunny dates, email adopt@nycacc.org). Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

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

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

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

Licensed HRS Educators

NYC/Westchester:

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

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

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

Marcie Frishberg

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

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

Monica Shepherd, DVM

Long Island:

Nancy Schreiber, President, Long Island
Rabbit Rescue Group,
nschreibmd@gmail.com, (516) 510-3637,
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

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

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

Jennifer Saver, DVM

Laura George, DVM

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Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS
rabbitrescueandrehab.org

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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 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.