

## NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS JUNE/JULY 2020

### Talulah's Amazing Recovery

We're excited to share an update about Talulah, the rabbit who came to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab in need of surgery for a large ear base abscess. Since our last issue of Thump, Talulah has had surgery and made a fantastic recovery.

We had first attempted to reduce the size of the abscess with antibiotics in preparation for surgery, and though it was initially successful, several weeks into treatment the abscess suddenly started getting worse. Even in the few short days between Talulah's final pre-surgery exam and the surgery day itself, the abscess became noticeably larger and she started to refuse food from the pain and discomfort. We scheduled surgery for the soonest day possible.

Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Talulah, fully healed with fur already grown back in.

Talulah's surgery involved an ear canal ablation and bulla osteotomy. Antibiotic

*(Continued on page 2)*

### RHDV2 Outbreak In the U.S.: An Update on the Deadly Disease

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) is a highly infectious, fatal disease that affects rabbits, caused by several calicivirus strains. In March of 2020, RHD2 was confirmed at a veterinary hospital in New York City. Three rabbits in Washington state tested positive in January. The ongoing outbreak in the southwestern U.S. now has cases reported in Utah, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and Texas in both domestic and wild rabbits.

The USDA has created an interactive map on all cases that can be viewed at this link:

<https://usda-aphis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=37791da88ef4cd8404a5794aa0b63>

The new strain, RHDV2, is the first of the rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus strains to affect both domestic and North American wild rabbit and hare species. RHDV has an extremely high death rate and a very short incubation period. As many as 70% to 100% of

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Babies Mark Their First Birthday

Skye's five babies celebrated their first birthday on May 28.

The babies were born to Skye shortly after she was rescued by a passerby who spotted her in Central Park. Rabbit Rescue & Rehab took in the family, had them all seen by a vet, and moved them into a foster home.

The babies have grown into beautiful rabbits, all with lovable personalities.

Blue and Purple bonded and now live happily as a brother-sister pair, with Blue very attentive to Purple's needs,

*(Continued on page 2)*



**A Tale About The Unbonding And Rebonding Of Two Lionheads**  
Pages 5-6



**Long Island Bunny Is Rescued on Mother's Day**  
Page 9



**Longtime Local Rabbit Volunteer Dies Of Coronavirus**  
Pages 12-13

## Babies *(Continued from page 1)*

Photos: Alex Mcle



Blue and Purple.

grooming her constantly and always letting her have pellets first.

Pink is still as sweet as ever and takes his daily naps draped over his foster parents' feet and legs – he turned out to look the most like mom Skye.

Orange is still an unstoppable ball of energy; running huge laps around the house is an important part of his daily routine!

We're very happy to say that Green has continued to show improvement from the issue that caused her to stand up and fall backwards as a baby, and she remains always happy and playful.



Orange.

Meanwhile, mom Skye has been enjoying some much deserved baby-free time and lots of love and one-on-one attention from her foster family.



Pink.



Green.

## Talulah *(Continued from page 1)*

impregnated beads were implanted during surgery and she is also receiving a new oral antibiotic and pain medication while she heals.

Hardly a couple hours after surgery was complete, Talulah was awake, moving around, and ready to eat on her own faster than anyone could believe! The surgery went extremely well, and soon she was on her way back to her foster home to rest and recover. She came right out of the carrier with her characteristic confidence – even while still a little sleepy from her whole ordeal – and began to eat hay almost immediately. It was such an amazing and encouraging sight!

Talulah has shown incredible improvement in her overall comfort. Her appetite

Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Talulah on the day she came home from surgery, still sleepy but already moving around and eating.

has returned tenfold, and she has new energy and enthusiasm for toys and

playtime activities. She is now comfortable with hands near her face and head, which she had become very nervous about as the abscess, and therefore the pain around that area, worsened. Now she enjoys long sessions of cheek and head rubs from her foster parents as part of her daily routine. Talulah is certainly feeling tremendous relief from the discomfort she was feeling before surgery and is well on her way to a full recovery. She soon will be ready to find her forever home.

We are filled with gratitude to everyone who donated towards Talulah's surgery and sent such lovely messages and well wishes for her. Thank you so much to our wonderful supporters for your kindness and for thinking of Talulah and helping to support her ongoing care.

## RHDV2 *(Continued from page 1)*

rabbits exposed to the virus will die within 48 hours to 10 days after exposure. Rabbits who survive are carriers and can infect other rabbits for at least 42 days or longer as they continue to shed the virus. There is no known cure for RHDV.

RHDV causes lesions in internal organs and tissues, resulting in bleeding. RHDV kills quickly and with very little warning, and some rabbits may die without showing any symptoms.

Symptoms Include:

- Appetite loss
- Lethargy
- High fever
- Spasms
- Bleeding from nose, mouth or rectum
- Difficulty breathing
- Sudden death

RHDV is extremely hardy and easily spread through direct contact with an infected rabbit, the urine or feces of an infected rabbit, and contact with inanimate objects contaminated by the virus. It can survive on the bodies and fur of both live and deceased animals, as well as in food, water, and on other contaminated materials, including hands, clothing and shoes.

Other animals including insects, cats and dogs, birds, rodents and wild predators, though not susceptible to the disease themselves, are known to act as hosts or fomites and spread the virus.

RHDV is resistant to extreme temperatures, including freezing, and is known to survive on materials shipped to other parts of the country and the world. RHDV remains viable on surfaces and in the environment for long periods of

time: 105 days at room temperature, and 225 days at 39 degrees Fahrenheit. It can resist temperatures of 122 degrees Fahrenheit for an hour.

As the outbreak has grown, the availability of a vaccine has become an important topic of discussion. An RHDV2 vaccine hasn't been previously available in the U.S., though it has been in countries where the disease is endemic. Veterinarians are now working to import European vaccines to the areas that have been affected by the outbreak, though only certain RHDV2 vaccines are eligible for import to the U.S. There is thorough and important information about vaccine availability, effectiveness, and manufacture on the House Rabbit Society website at [rabbit.org/rhdv/](http://rabbit.org/rhdv/). Particularly if you are in an area affected by the Southwest outbreak – but even if you are not – we encourage visiting [rabbit.org/rhdv/](http://rabbit.org/rhdv/) and familiarizing yourself with the information compiled there about RHDV2 vaccines.

There is also information available at [rabbit.org/rhdv/](http://rabbit.org/rhdv/) on what actions federal and state governments have been taking; we recommend watching that space for new information and developments as well.

Most importantly, remember that preventative biosecurity measures are essential to protecting rabbits during an outbreak.

- As always, keep house rabbits indoors and do not take rabbits out into public spaces for any reason other than essential trips (to the vet). Never take your rabbit to socialize with other rabbits or to “play” outdoors.
- Wash your hands thoroughly upon entering your home.
- Remove shoes before entering your home. To disinfect shoes, put them into a foot bath for at least 10 minutes with

one of the recommended disinfectants (see list at [rabbitcare.org](http://rabbitcare.org)). Spraying them is insufficient; they must remain in contact with active (wet) disinfectant for the full 10 minutes.

- Change clothes upon returning home, particularly from areas where you may have come into contact with rabbits, or with other people who have rabbits.
- Disinfect objects and surfaces (again, check list at [rabbitcare.org](http://rabbitcare.org) for recommended disinfectants).
- Avoid purchasing hay or other foods farmed in areas that have been affected by RHDV, and check the websites of companies you order hay from to learn what measures they are taking to prevent against spread of RHDV2.
- Prevent flies and other insects from entering your home with window and door screens, and eliminate any that enter your home.

If you know you have come into contact with other rabbits or been around other people who have rabbits (you are a shelter volunteer, etc.), take extreme care to wash shoes and clothes twice thoroughly with hot water, wash hands thoroughly, and disinfect any objects or surfaces that were exposed to areas with other rabbits. If you know that you will be entering an environment with other rabbits, consider additional precautions such as shoe covers and gloves.

Any sudden or suspicious death should be immediately reported to a veterinarian as a possible case of RHDV. This is especially important in the event of multiple deaths in close proximity and within a short period of time. Do not bury the body or remove the rabbit from the home; wait for instructions about proper handling procedures.



# Foster Homes Needed



RABBIT  
RESCUE  
& REHAB

Every day we receive requests to help rabbits in need, but we can only help as many as there are foster spaces available for. By fostering, you are helping to save the life of a bunny who has nowhere else to go and giving them the opportunity for a better future. To learn more about fostering, email us at [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

# On Unbonding and Rebonding: A Tale of Two Lionheads

By Megan Hilands

A little over four years ago, I adopted a bonded pair of two Lionhead sisters I named Simba and Nala. I had just lost my bunny Baby to kidney disease, and while I was still grieving I was very much missing everything about having a bunny in my day-to-day life.

After I brought them home, Simba and Nala settled into their new space very quickly. I was enamored by the way my new pair cuddled and played with each other. They really seemed to love me as well as each other. Then about a year ago we entered what my fiancé Nick and I half-jokingly refer to as the “dark times” – when, you guessed it, Simba and Nala decided to break their bond.

Conceptually I was aware that rabbits could “unbond,” but our bunnies? They’d been together practically since birth. They cuddled each other constantly. What could go wrong?

## Settings for a Perfect Storm

In hindsight, a few different factors likely contributed to Simba and Nala’s

fallout, or “trial separation” as a few online forums I found like to call it. Right before the “dark times” there were a couple of changes that could have led to more stress for Simba and Nala. First I switched out their litter box for a slightly bigger and deeper one, figuring when we went away for vacation the following week they would have plenty of hay between the sitter’s visits.

Then, there was an annual vet appointment, where I recall having to sit longer than usual in the waiting room with several other humans and animals. (I think there might have been an emergency visit and do not blame the vet at all! I only mention it because the situation likely caused Simba and Nala to be more stressed at the vet than usual.)

Shortly after we came home, Nick and I let in a sitter to show them the bunnies’ routine, and then started packing to leave for our vacation in a few days. Simba and Nala always seem to get a bit anxious when I pack for a trip, which unluckily for them I do quite a bit for work. Either they see the bags and think

they too might be going somewhere, or pick up on my stress, since packing gives me a bit of anxiety.

## The Storm, or ‘Bunny Tornado’

Bunnies, like any couple, will sometimes have little tiffs where they chase each other around the room. Initially when Simba and Nala started their big fight I thought it was the same thing. But this time, they did not relent. I thought I would give them a treat to calm them down, but Simba just grunted at Nala and tried to steal her treat. Then Simba started to act like she was stalking Nala. I noticed Nala was hiding under a piece of furniture while Simba was thumping and trying to find her.

At first I was in denial and thought they just needed a little space. Unfortunately, Simba found Nala and started chasing her really aggressively, leading to grunts and the feared bunny tornado (where bunnies run in circles chasing each other such that it appears injury is imminent). It’s at this point that experts recommend you separate the rabbits to avoid injury and/or permanent damage to the relationship.

## The Fallout

That night I used my spare X-pen and litter box to create a temporary bunny space, and then bought additional supplies the next morning so that both girls could have more room. I put the second pen about six inches from the first so the bunnies could see each other but couldn’t reach to bite. The new set-up consumed a lot of our living space. I’ll confess I had some anxiety the bunnies would be unbonded permanently, and the rest of our lives in this apartment would be spent navigating X-pens.

As we were leaving in a few days for a vacation at this point, I thought it would be best to keep the bunnies separate and start the rebonding process when we were back home. I worked from home for the remaining few days

*(Continued on page 6)*



Photo: Megan Hilands

Nala and Simba.

# A Day in the Life of Our Rabbit Woofle

Photo: Cornelia Cooley



Woofle.

As interpreted by Ciaran  
(aka “Loud One”)  
And Cricket Cooley (“Food Lady”)

5 a.m.: Chewing time. I love to hide in the Loud One’s dollhouse and chew the front door. This makes her mad, but she isn’t awake, so we are all good. Then I switch to my chewy toy. I love that one. The Loud One, asleep above me, groans loudly.

7 a.m.: Ah! They finally figured out when to change my litter box. Once a day, folks. It’s not hard. Hay is fine and all, but I could do with some parsley as a snack. I think it would be best to wake the Loud One up. I know! Chewing. My box is the loudest, so here we go.

7:10 a.m.: Yea!!!!!!! She is awake! She tries to climb out of her tower bed (I wonder what chewables are up there), and I am so excited I try to circle her feet before she even gets down. Oh no. She is trying with the love again. Why do the Big Ones always like to put their mouths on me? A good pet or chin scratch is always preferable. It’s all about grooming, people. Not kisses. Ugh.

8:11 a.m.: The door to the other room opens! Life is good!! The Food Lady seems awake, too. Binkies!! More binkies! It is time for my rounds.

8:12 a.m.: Rounds went well today. I chinned the usual shoe (mine), the tunnel

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Unbonding, Rebonding

*(Continued from page 5)*

before vacation so I could monitor them. Both bunnies seemed content enough in their separate pens. I swapped their living areas and litter boxes every day so they didn’t get territorial about the spaces and stayed used to each other’s scent.

### The Relationship Rebuild

While traveling I read quite a bit about bonding (and rebonding) bunnies from the House Rabbit Society website and various bunny blogs. Some bunny parents had reported luck with “stress” bonding but I felt really uncomfortable with the idea (It’s also not recommended by experts.). So, we started at bunny bonding basics – the speed date.

We took a separate X-pen to a neutral space and put both bunnies inside, both Nick and I nervous about their reactions. Nala clearly remembered Simba had chased her, and she thumped several times the first time they were in the same space. I sat between the bunnies in case I needed to break up any fights. At first, both bunnies would approach me but not each other. I thought they were acting very much like my sister and I might have when we had a fight growing

up. Some behaviors transcend species, I suppose.

For the next few weeks, speed dates were our nightly routine. Both bunnies would sit in the same pen with me for about 15 minutes unless they started something akin to a bunny tornado, in which case we’d separate them immediately. Fortunately, such an event was rare. Gradually they became more comfortable with each other. The speed dates gradually became longer, and Simba and Nala were starting to groom each other again. The thumps and grunts decreased day by day.

### The Bonding Renewal

After nearly a month of rebonding, Simba and Nala had several successful hours-long dates. We started to give them freer rein in their apartment again, but we were still nervous about a complete reintroduction.

Finally, after both bunnies started to go freely into each other’s litter boxes without issue, we decided it was time. The first full day back together was a Saturday so we could monitor them for the next 48 hours. Fortunately (luckily?) there were no further tiffs and Simba and Nala were reunited.

## Happily Ever After (At Least for Now)

Since the “dark times,” Simba and Nala have – thankfully – stayed bonded. I will admit I was a bit frustrated with how long the rebonding took (six weeks in total) considering the bunnies were together for years before without previous issues. Not speaking “bunny” I can only speculate they had some crazy falling out the night after the vet, and it took a long time for them to forgive and forget.

I sincerely hope that was the last fight the bunnies will have, and in the future I am certainly going to be a little more careful about managing the bunnies’ stress. At least Nick and I have the confidence and experience with rebonding in case the need ever arises.

Photo: Megan Hillands



Simba and Nala.

## Woofle (Continued from page 6)

(mine), music stand (mine), couch (mine), cozy chair (mine), cardboard duplex (mine), and leaped up to the couch and assumed the I Am Ready for Breakfast Position. Sometimes it takes them a while to see this. People, I am ready! I am a good boy! Good boys like parsley.

8:14 a.m.: The Food Lady is taking her time today, doing endless things with water and machines and the food box.

8:15 a.m.: Finally! The colander is traveling to my mat by the window. She doesn't seem to appreciate how quickly I got there, running through her legs. Got a slight lift by one of her feet, but we are all good. I got a head pat out of it. I deign to lick her to let her know all is forgiven.

8:15 a.m.: Chew! Chew chew. Parsley AND romaine. I think binkies.

8:20 a.m.: Stretch, yawn. Time for a nap. I assume my spot under the cozy chair. They have a hard time getting to me with their kisses. Ugh.

9 a.m.: PELLET HOUR!! PELLET HOUR!!!!!! IT IS PELLET HOUR!!! WHERE WILL THE PELLETS BE? HOW MANY PELLETS WILL I GET? WILL THEY ALL BE AT ONCE? WILL THEY BE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE DAY? Today the pellets are on the back of the Loud One. Sometimes they put them in my maze, or in the shoe. I don't like that, because my nose gets stuck. CRUNCH CRUNCH. Yawn, stretch, flop. Time for my longer nap.

11:03 a.m.: NOOOO!!!! I have been rudely awakened by the Loud One.

11:04 a.m.: The Loud One is making a weird noise. Shhhhhh child, sleep time. Oh yes! A pellet! Oh look it's inside my huge lockable cage. They don't know how much they spoil me. Heh. Oh no! Why is the door shutting?! No! Come back! I'll lick!!! At least I have my pellet to comfort me. Wait. It's gone! Now I'm stuck with Lamby. Ugh. When I try to lick her, she doesn't even try to lick back! Rude!

Photo: Cornelia Cooley



Woofle.

2 p.m.: I think something is wrong with these people! They never sleep!

2:30 p.m.: The Food Lady had the nerve to scoop me up when I chewed on the chest. That is what wood is FOR. She did give me a stick, though, my favorite kind. I grab it and hop away. Sticks are not for sharing.

3 p.m.: NOOOOO! The THING! THE GREEN THING THEY BRUSH ME WITH! I bow to their pressure. At least I get a pellet or two out of it. I should hold out for carrots.

3:20 p.m.: Ha! They left the Green Thing on the floor. Unattended. Unprotected. Punishment time! I neatly chew my way around two circles of the sticky-outie things. So satisfying. This Thing shall not rise again. The only grooming my fur needs can be more easily accomplished by ME, people. That is what my tongue is for. The Loud One starts yelling, you guessed it, loudly. She seems upset. She and the Food Lady talk all loud and fast and now the bigger one is talking into something in her hand. Now, they are staring at me. For a really long time.

3:20 p.m.: My tummy hurts. I'd best retreat into the dollhouse.

4 p.m.: OK, better. I wake up; they are still staring at me. They put some romaine down, and OH IS THAT APPLE???

Yep, that's better. I think I... Oh, hay! I feel like... BINKY BINKY BINKY

5:30 p.m.: They may be loud and annoying, but I do love them. The Loud One pets my ears. Licks for her. Lots of cooing noises.

6 p.m.: My shoe has moved. That is not cool. Now I have to re-chin it. I think they need to understand who is in charge here. I know – up on the couch! Ah, relief. Who needs a litter box?

6:01 p.m.: I am in disgrace again. Back to the other room.

7:30 p.m.: Yay they let me out!!!!!! The Loud One looks sorry. She is saying something. I think it's either bring out the pellets or hello my little dude! I think we all know which one I hope it is! Ooh! Wait! They put the food mat down! FOOD MAT!!!! FOOD MAT!!!! My baby! I circle it, and circle it and circle it! They find a corner of the mat where I am not and put down my parsley and... and... CILANTROOOOOO!!!!!! I would binky, but... FOOD! Let's just drag this cilantro over here! I know I'm not supposed to, but... FOOD!! Who cares about the rules if there is food in the question. Or answer! I like food.

8 p.m.: I retreat to my litter box. Since when is there this much hay? Does it really matter? I mean I've been mowing down my pile today. It could have something to do with that mysterious bag on the window sill... I am a happy bunny!

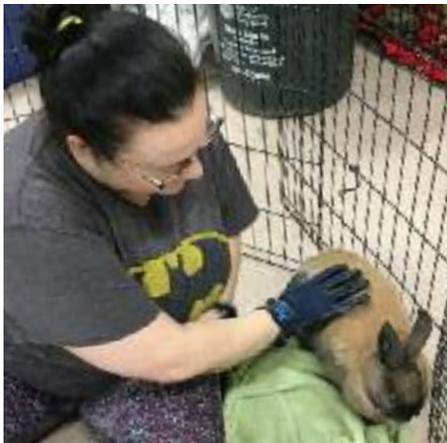
8:45 p.m.: Another pellet, (or pelleeeeeeeeeeeet as I like to call it) has appeared! It is going into the smaller room! I know not to follow but it's a pelleeeeeeeeeeeeeeeet!!! Oh no, I'm stuck in here again... Don't they get that nighttime is for fun? I chew on my hay. I try and nose my way out of the door and I don't succeed. Sigh. I'll have to wait till morning for fun.

## 'Oh, You Spicy Bun!'

By Krystin Koerner

In the last Thump issue, April Overholser wrote about a rescue case of 18 rabbits together in a hutch and how they were cared for by a team of Long Island volunteers. I was one of the volunteers who helped with the care of the rabbits (the total grew to 28 after two rabbits had babies). These rabbits came from a horrible situation, and for the most part almost all of them responded incredibly well to human interaction.

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Krystin Koerner grooms Muffin, using the glove method.



Cinnabun gets cheek rubs after a pedicure.

On my first day, I walked into the room we had for them and it was overwhelming. We had to make lots of changes to give each rabbit some space, make room for supplies and still leave an area for rabbits to exercise while we cleaned cages. I looked to my right, and the first rabbit I met was named Muffin. I went over and tried to greet her, and well, it was not well received. She bit me. Then I met Cinnabun and she grunted and boxed at the cage door. I joked and said, "These two have something extra spicy." They were given the nickname "the spice girls."

The first month, Muffin and Cinnabun did not want to be touched. We used special gloves to move each girl out of her space to a pen for exercise time. These "spice girls" would honk, lounge, attack and bite when a volunteer tried to move anything in their space or attempted to touch them.

This really upset me because I just wanted to give them the attention they deserved. These two buns generated a lot of anxiety and caution because of their extra "spice." Eventually we were able to rearrange the cages and found them a spot where the two girls did not have to be picked up. By just placing the X-pen in front of the open door of each cage, they came out on their own. They were actually very happy buns when they were out for exercise. Muffin would binky like crazy and catch some serious airtime, and Cinnabun was a queen at zoomies.

Once they were spayed, we began to see that they were becoming less aggressive. I observed less of a problem when you opened their cage doors, and knew it was time to build upon their socialization skills. This was not easy because both of them had bitten me.

I would come in before the Brookhaven shelter was open, so the dogs were not as loud and there were fewer visitors. I played acoustic '90s music for the rabbits.

As a future educator, I have an understanding of how an environment can affect learning and emotions. I would spend over 30 minutes with each of the rabbits. In the beginning, all I would do was just sit there and allow one of the "spice girls" to interact with me. If they sniffed, nudged or interacted with me in any way, I would stay still. By staying still, I allowed them to see that they were in control. After a while, they began climbing over me. When they started to do this, I introduced greens like parsley and cilantro. I would place the greens on my lap or legs and let them come to me. Observing their behavior, I started holding the greens in my hands. Now they had to come even closer to me to grab the greens.

Other volunteers began to join in with the socialization when I was not there and saw the improvements in their behavior, saying, "Oh, the spice girls are not as spicy." One of the volunteers was actually able to hold each girl in her lap and groom them. Eventually, I was able to pet them, and even place Muffin in my lap for pets. Amid the coronavirus crisis, all of the rescued rabbits had to leave the shelter because no volunteers were able to visit and help. Both Cinnabun and Muffin have been taken into the care of Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group and their names have been changed.

To some volunteers, the term "spicy bun" had a negative meaning. But I called them the spice girls because of the names they originally were given – baked treats with lots of flavor. Once other volunteers began to work with the girls, they understood the spiciness. These two buns have had lots of improvement and their social skills have improved.

My personal opinion, not just about these two rabbits but all rabbits, is that rescued animals have been through an experience that has had a major impact

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Mother's Day Rescue

By Alyssa Eisenberg

In early May, my mom told me that there was a bunny spotted at Sunken Meadow State Park in Suffolk County, but that there were no details available. She said that we might have to go help with the rescue if we heard more about it.

Fast forward to Mother's Day, when my mom, Christine Roche, told me that some of the volunteers at Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group were going to go to the park to see if they could spot the bunny. I said that I wanted to go help because the first rescue I did, for a rabbit named Paisley, had gone so well.

My mom and I gathered a pen and a banana for the bunny, and then we were on our way. Once we got to the park we

saw some of the volunteers on the side of the road and we asked them for an update about the mysterious rabbit. They said that they saw the bunny but that it had disappeared into the bushes and trees.

Denise Bertolotti of LIRRG had told us that we had received permission to look for the rabbit. Other volunteers who took part in the rescue were Katie Kane, Matt Moran, Mary Harms and Rich DuMola. We hiked into an area of prickly, leafy bushes and finally got a glimpse of the bunny. We tried to enclose it with the help of a few X-pens.

The rabbit kept escaping because the branches and underbrush made it impossible for us to get the pens securely around her. After we made a few tries

and received many cuts and bruises, we found her lying down in an open area. We quickly surrounded her with the pens. My mom was able to grab the bunny and put her into a carrier.

We left the thorny bushes and trees and returned to the open area alongside the parkway. Once Denise arrived, she told us that one of the park managers had arranged for a foster home prior to the rescue.

I was really grateful to have taken part in another successful rescue effort. The volunteers all worked together to help this little white bunny and get her safely out of the woods. Her foster mom has named her Hopper!

Photos: Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group



Volunteers Alyssa Eisenberg and Katie Kane.



In the carrier.



Rescued bunny with her foster parent, Nikki.

## Spicy Bun

*(Continued from page 8)*

on them. As humans, we also have experiences that change us personally. I never place blame on a rabbit for having a "spicy nature," but instead I try to develop an understanding of the behavior. With any rabbit, we need to create a bond. Some rabbits are extremely social, and some just want to do their own thing, and you know what? That is perfectly okay! That does not mean that they are

not adoptable; it just means that they need a home that fits each personality. These two rabbits, in particular, would do better in a home with no children or other pets. In a quiet space you can fully appreciate their personalities. I am incredibly proud of the socialization improvement in these spicy girls, and believe it's okay to have that extra sass!

These "spicy buns" have taught me a lesson during the time they were at the shelter. Every rabbit has quirks. Some

are sweet, some are shy and timid, and some have that spice! It is the volunteer or a rabbit parent that can make the difference. If you put in the time to allow rabbits to adjust to what it is like being around people who want to show them love, they will embrace it. You can't be "spicy" yourself and get frustrated with them. Remember that before they met you, someone gave up on them. Open your heart and open your mind to the experience and embrace the spice!

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



Ashton.

### Ashton

He is a medium-sized dark chocolate Rex who is as soft as he is fabulous! Ashton is a super-friendly, young boy



Carmela.

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

### Carmela

Carmela is a young medium-sized Rex rabbit. Her beautiful coat is mostly white with tan and black spots. She is a

sweet rabbit who loves to have her soft nose petted. She also likes to explore her house, but her favorite thing is to relax with a nice soft blanket. Carmela is shy and would likely do best in an adult-only home. She would also likely make a good partner for another rabbit. She has been spayed and is in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Carmela, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Ernie

Ernie is a handsome, medium-sized young bunny who was in bad shape upon being rescued, apparently because he was left outdoors. We got him the vet care and TLC he needed, and now he is looking for a forever home. Ernie has a great appetite for pellets and greens, but still will not eat any hay, so about every three months he must have his molar spurs filed down by a rabbit-savvy vet. This is a relatively quick procedure, and he has always started eating immediately

*(Continued on page 11)*



Ernie.



Ernie.

## Rabbits in Foster Care

*(Continued from page 10)*

afterward. Ernie is an active and curious rabbit, but still very shy and not much interested in humans (other than when you offer food, of course!), so we think he would be best off as a partner rabbit. He has been neutered and has very good litter-box skills. If interested in fostering or adopting this resilient, hunky bunny, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Li'l Britches

Li'l Britches is a big personality in a small package. This brown female Lionhead is feisty, friendly and never afraid to tell you if she doesn't like something. She has thick furry cheeks and loves deep cheek rubs and pets. She had a bout of head tilt when she was young and has some residual balance issues. She may plop to one side while grooming but the main concern is when she stands just on her hind legs to reach



Li'l Britches.

up. If she goes too far straight up, she will freeze and fall backwards, so her adopter must be extremely careful not to have her stand up on her back legs

for treats or to reach things in her habitat. Her entire habitat and exercise area must be covered with carpet and soft surfaces to help her balance. If interested in adopting this beauty, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Marshmallow and Carmine

Marshmallow and Carmine are a perfect pair of bonded rabbits looking for the loving forever home that they deserve. Marshmallow is a white and brown female English Spot mix and Carmine is a white and brown male Dutch and Lionhead mix. This sweet and spunky pair of buns hope to find humans who will love them as much as they love each other. They would do best in a home with lots of attention and time to exercise. They are both fixed and litter-box trained. If interested in adopting Marshmallow and Carmine, please contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Marshmallow and Carmine.

## Loraine Kopf, a Longtime Rabbit Rescuer and Fosterer, Dies of Coronavirus

Loraine Kopf died April 21 at the age of 77 of coronavirus.

Loraine was an early volunteer with Rabbit Rescue & Rehab. She took part in adoption activities all over Manhattan, and loved sharing stories about her own rabbits. Loraine kept in touch with many of our adopters, answering questions and checking on how the rabbits were adjusting.

In August 2010, Natalie Reeves wrote a story for Thump about Loraine's volunteer work with the Animal Medical Center Pet Outreach Program. Loraine made monthly visits to Coler-Goldwater Hospital on Roosevelt Island, and she brought along three of her four rabbits to teach patients about rabbit breeds and to answer questions. At the time, she had a Hotot mix,

Loraine with foster bunnies Gilderoy and Remus in 2014.



Photo: Natalie Reeves

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Lavender, Abbie and Ariel.

Abbie; an Angora bunny, Stuart, and a Rex bunny, Ariel. Loraine's fourth rabbit, Lavender, didn't take part in the program because she liked to nip.

Loraine would save Stuart's discarded fur to spin. A few months after his death in late 2011, she wrote: "I first saw Stuart,



Stuart.

an English Angora, four years ago at the Manhattan shelter. I was going to foster him, but he was adopted before I could do so. When he was returned, I simply had to bring him home. It was meant to be. Because I spin, I collected his hair when I groomed him three times a week. He liked to be groomed, and he would sit patiently on my lap, not moving, until I finished."

Loraine volunteered for years at the Manhattan shelter, and her reports were filled with joy. Each rabbit was a distinct individual to her. Here is part of her shelter report from early April 2007:

"Today was exciting at the shelter. When I arrived, Melissa told me that a bun was loose in the room, since the people who cleaned the room couldn't get it back in its cage. And who was it? Bartley, of course! But he was good and didn't even try to bite me when I returned him to his cage... And then surprise of all surprises... The last bun to have his cage cleaned was Thaddeus, and I took him out, noticing that his belly was unusually fat. After putting him into the puppy pen to clean out his cage, I noticed a load of lop hair piled in the cage, and all the paper shredded up. I tried to pull the entire mess forward to the front of the cage, and suddenly felt something

*(Continued on page 13)*

## Love and Loss During the Pandemic

By Amanda Puitiza

This pandemic has affected the entire world in so many different ways. People have experienced unexpected tragedies and heartache almost daily. Our companion animals have been our “light in dark places.” So when I unexpectedly lost my boy Jack, it was a dark moment in a dark situation. Having my Athena to take care of and to get her through her loss was actually the best coping strategy I could find.

With the limited options available at the moment, it has been like a miracle to bond Athena to a new boy called Martin. It was enlightening to see that out of tragedy can come new joy. Soon after they fully bonded, Athena was binkying in the mornings again. Her new relationship is different but equally good. And we have worked on rehabilitating Martin, who may have suffered abuse and trauma in his past.

I wasn't ready for a new rabbit. It is still painful to think about not seeing Jack ever again. I am glad Athena wasn't

Photo: Amanda Puitiza



Athena and Martin.

alone long and that she is happy again. Mourning is difficult and personal for everyone, and I couldn't say exactly how Athena went about it. But we had each

other throughout the good times and sadness. We will always have Jack in our hearts.

### Loraine *(Continued from page 12)*

move. Well, Thaddeus is really Thelma and had given birth to at least seven teeny naked buns!!! All were carefully covered with the hair she had torn out of her fur, so I could tell see exactly how many there were. But since Thelma was still pretty round, I can imagine that by tomorrow there might even more! I called up Jennifer Saver. She told me to just leave the babies in the cage with their mother and not move them. She instructed me to put up a sign telling everyone not to touch them, but only to make sure that they have lots of new hay, pellets, and water. Melissa printed out a large orange sign which we clipped to the clipboard on Thelma's cage, and Marla (who is off from school) put up

some brown paper on the front of the cage, so they will have privacy and not be disturbed. I pulled out only the small pieces of brown paper that I could reach and didn't disturb the nest. So whoever is there tomorrow, please make sure they have greens (I came in the car and could not park anywhere near a store!), and check to see that the babies are OK.

Here is one of Loraine's emails from May 2008:

“Last night Natalie Reeves and I were invited to see Goldie and Queenie (Mocha's long-haired girls) at their adoptive parents' apartment. They looked absolutely gorgeous, larger than when they left me and fatter with wonderfully groomed coats! Natalie took lots of photos, and once I receive them, I'll forward them to everyone.

We're still seriously thinking about a family reunion with at least their one brother, Robin, and their parents, Mocha and Thaddeus. P.S. Whoever thinks that buns forget their foster parents would be mistaken. Both girls jumped in my lap and sniffed me up and down, probably remembering not only my scent, but that of my 3 buns! Plus there was the interesting scent of Annabell, my new dog, which seemed to fascinate them.”

Loraine lived on the Upper West Side and was a Manhattan resident for many years. She spoke fluent French and German. In recent years, Loraine was in poor health, but she continued to foster rabbits and to speak out on their behalf. Her passion and love inspired all of us.

# Letters From Adopters

## Martin

*Martin, formerly known as Hopsy, was adopted by Gillinda James in December. He is enjoying life with his tiny partner, Theodosia (fka Greenpoint).*

Hopsy's name is Martin now and we had a long road of potty training, bonding and getting him to trust all of us. We also needed to work on him not freaking out over food and making sure we weren't under/overfeeding him. We had some issues with aggression and lashing out as he was getting settled in and he was figuring out that we were not there to hurt him and that his territory is also our territory.

I'm happy to say that he's doing well and has integrated very nicely into our home. We've gotten Theodosia and Martin to respect each other's food, which has greatly improved mealtimes. They both had a wellness checkup in February and the vet was happy with how they were doing. Martin's food excitement is a personality trait and not a dietary problem.

Theodosia is not the most affectionate of rabbits and very much enjoys her space, which was a challenge because Martin was having none of that. Now, I think she's gotten used to his snuggles and will even groom his eyes when they get runny or his face when he has something stuck to it. She's a bit of a neat freak and he is very messy, so it's been quite the change in the house. I have put a number of obstacles around my bed so that Martin can't get up there because he's only recently potty trained and he likes to bring hay up there or chew the bed frame. But he and Theodosia get around the obstacles every night, and I wake up to him staring right at me, and Theodosia lying in my hair most likely. I guess it's time to give up on that.

I think the best way to describe Martin is overwhelming excitement. When I change the water in his bowl in the morning and before bed, he runs and gulps like he's never had water before. When it's eating time, he acts as if he's never eaten in his life. When I walk



Theodosia and Martin.

through the door, it's as if I've been gone for six months. When he sees Theodosia again after I separate them to clip their nails, it's as if his long-lost lover has returned from war. He just has a lot of emotions and is not afraid to show them.

Best,  
Gillinda

## Lilith

*Lilianne Ortiz adopted Lilith, formerly known as Noir, in February. Here is her wonderful update.*

Lilith is the best thing to have happened to me, especially because I adopted her before the quarantine situation.

She has lifted my spirits a lot; since I lost my dog I was looking for that bond that I had with my previous pet and I was so surprised by her personality.

She is a little dog in a rabbit body! She is so active and so nurturing. She loves to come over at night and make herself a place under my blankets to sleep. She follows me all over the place and likes to be included in anything that's happening.

I am so lucky that I was able to find her and take her home. She is truly special to me and from the bottom of my heart

Photo: Lilianne Ortiz



Lilith.

I would like to thank you guys for rescuing her. That's my little baby!

Lilianne Ortiz

## Penny

*Amy Liao sent another great update about Penny, formerly known as Lola, who was adopted in early January.*

Although the world around us seems to be falling apart, things at home have been pretty great!

Penny is doing very well, and I have been able to spend a lot more time with her because I am working from home full-time.

She recently completed her seasonal molting. For about three weeks, I was basically swimming in her fur.

Penny has put on a little weight! I am very excited about this because she was underweight when we first got her six months ago.

Love,  
Amy

CELEBRITIES IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Star.



Rosie.



Bunbun.



Sherlock.



Kiki.



Remington.

## 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](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com). On **Long Island**, contact Nancy Schreiber at [nschreibmd@gmail.com](mailto:nschreibmd@gmail.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 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](mailto:adopt@nycacc.org)). Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

Bunny speed dates can be arranged by appointment only 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 [rabbitcare.org](http://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**, Chapter Manager,  
NYC House Rabbit Society

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

**Jeanine Callace**, [Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net](mailto:Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net)  
**Alex Mcle**, [alexlmcie@gmail.com](mailto:alexlmcie@gmail.com)

**Marcie Frishberg**

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

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

**Monica Shepherd, DVM**

### Long Island:

**Nancy Schreiber**, President, Long Island  
Rabbit Rescue Group,  
[nschreibmd@gmail.com](mailto:nschreibmd@gmail.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 JUNE/JULY 2020

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

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

Masthead Logo Designer: Mary Ann Maier

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

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them by sending contributions to: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab/NYC Metro Rabbit, 333 Mamaroneck Ave, #363, White Plains, NY 10605 or [rabbitcare.org/donate](http://rabbitcare.org/donate).

To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).