

THE CARROT CONNECTION



Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue

June - August 2002

Mission Statement

Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue

We are the only local rescue group dedicated solely to caring for abused, abandoned and unwanted domestic rabbits. We are a nonprofit 501(c)(3), all volunteer run, no-kill shelter, housing approximately 80 rabbits at any time.

Since 1986, we have placed over 1,050 rabbits with caring, adoptive parents...103 last year alone. We work together with county agencies to check on abuse situations, offer humane traps to the general public to capture stray rabbits, and teach rabbit care classes at Arizona Humane Society.

Hopline (480) 443-3990

**Visit our NEW Website:
www.BHRabbitRescue.org**

In This Issue

Two's Company, Three's a Party	1
To Bond or Not to Bond	2
Event Calender	3
Special Summer Edition BunnyLuv Connection	4 & 5
Special Thanks to NAVS	6
Kash for Bunnies	6
Foster Homes Needed	6
Volunteer Information	6

Two's Company, Three's a Party

by Emmitt D. Bunny

I arrived into this world friendless and alone. I struggled to survive, surmounting every obstacle which came my way. Somehow, I made my way to a nice suburban home filled with the most spoiled bunnies I had ever known and a bunch of humans whose sole purpose in life was to make those bunnies happy.

Problem was, none of those bunnies liked me. I tried everything. Bribed them with raisins, carrots, bananas. They took the food but rejected me anyway. I resigned myself to a solitary existence in my penthouse suite overlooking their enclosure.

I watched them play and cuddle. Watched them groom each other endlessly. I watched them eat from the same

dish, drink from the same water bottle, even poop in the same humongous litterboxes. (These bunnies have huge butts...they need litterboxes practically the size of a wading pool...and that's on a skinny day!). They seemed so happy together. My humans would let them outside and they'd chase each other around the yard, hop and binky and play. She'd send me out alone and I'd just sit on the porch. No one to play with. Nothing to do but sit and feel sad and lonely. Poor Emmitt.

I put out a singles ad once. Nothing came of it. Dated one blonde lippy bunny named Penelope for a few minutes. She wasn't really into dating. She had just lost her mate and didn't really want another bunny trying to take his place. So she told me to get lost. Alone again, naturally.

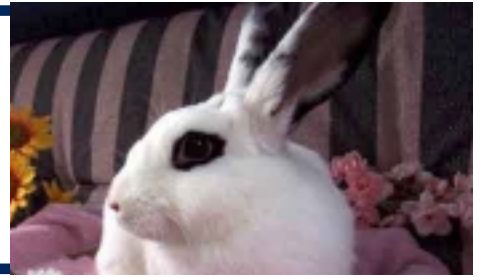


There's nothing like a little snuggle bunny fest. Snuggle, snuggle.

See *Two's Company* on page 6

To Bond or not to Bond... What was the Question?

by Rhonda Miller and Stacey Shirer



Is your one and only bunny lonely, pining for a companion? In this issue of The Carrot Connection we discuss bonding two rabbits.

Many rabbit owners and groups use the term “bonding” to indicate the pairing of two rabbits for companionship. This isn’t the same as mating, because as responsible animal caregivers, your charges have already been neutered or spayed. Additionally, same sex animals can be bonded. If you are wondering why bond your rabbit, consider that a rabbit is a social animal. In nature rabbits are generally surrounded by other rabbits in their warrens and also by the great outdoors teeming with life. In the domestic situation, if you’re not there, who is to keep your rabbit from getting lonely? A lonely rabbit is a bored rabbit. And a bored rabbit can be a mischievous rabbit.

Now that you’ve been convinced to bond your rabbit, the following is a list of items you will need: (1) a second rabbit, and (2) nerves of steel (just kidding.) The first step is to select a suitable bondee (or allow your rabbit to bunny-date and select their own companion). The most successful bonded pair seems to be a spayed female and a neutered male. Two females tend to be territorial, but may work out their differences. Two males are not an impossible bonding, but be prepared for conflict.

Once the second rabbit has been chosen, the next step is the introduction. You will need patience, followed by clothing that can get furry, a neutral introductory territory and did I mention patience?

Neutral territory is critical. You are trying to eliminate the “hey strange rabbit, you’re invading my home turf” sense which your bunny may have. Start with a car ride. If you are bringing bunnies home together put them in the same carrier for the car ride home. At the end of this article you will find some follow-up bonding session tips.

During the introduction one of three things could happen: They could fall in love at first sight, snuggle and groom each other; chase each other and

A lonely rabbit is a bored rabbit. And a bored rabbit can be a mischievous rabbit.

demonstrate mounting behavior for amorous reasons and/or to establish dominance (not a bad scenario and probably the most likely) or, act like commando rabbits and roll on the floor ripping fur and tearing flesh. This is where the nerves of steel and tons of patience come into play. If a loud, high-pitched squeal is enough to distract them and break up the altercation, great. If not, please intervene before one or both are injured. Separate and try again a little later. This type of behavior does not mean all hope is lost, but the introduction period is going to take longer and require more constant supervision to ensure the safety of your rabbits.

Work with your bunnies for about 20 minutes a day, increasing their time together as they adjust to one another. Even successful relationships are somewhat stressful and an “easy does it”

approach is usually best. Continue to watch them and keep their initial time together short. Increase the time each day and do not leave them completely unsupervised until you are certain they have settled into a routine.

Rabbit introductions require time and perseverance, but bunny bliss is well worth the effort.

Tips:

Once you have arrived home from the bunny date and car ride (in the carrier together), allow the **new** rabbit (we’ll call this rabbit #2) to explore the other rabbit’s (we’ll call this rabbit #1) territory alone. This will help scent the area in the hopes that rabbit #1 will be more likely to allow a new rabbit in its territory. Then secure rabbit #2 in its cage/pen, and allow rabbit #1 to explore all of the new scenting.

- ♥ Set up a neutral territory bonding session area. This could be a closed off bathroom, a hallway; somewhere that bunny #1 hasn’t been in before. Make it a small area and only large enough to fit you and the two rabbits snuggly. We like to use a puppy exercise pen that can be made as small or as large as you like.
- ♥ It is a good idea to start each bonding session with a carrier ride together. You can either take them for a drive in the car, turn on a washer or dryer and place the carrier on top or simply walk around with them in the carrier. It’s always nice to start a bonding session when they’ve had some snuggle time first.
- ♥ Once a small neutral territory has been established, sit in the territory

See *Bonding* on page 4

with the two rabbits. We like to be “dominant bunny” initially, by lightly placing our hands on the shoulders of the two rabbits, holding them side-by-side lengthwise so that their bodies are touching. Our hands on their shoulders is a sign of dominance. Once you feel their bodies settle down you may release your hands. The rabbits may immediately separate and ignore each other. Ignoring is okay! Allow them a couple minutes of ignoring each other or chasing bunny butts, then push them together again; they relax and we release. Repeat the hold and release often. If during the release part of these “hold and release” situations they haven’t gone into a bunny death roll, you may be able to stand up and stand outside of the pen area. This will just give them a little more space but not too much space too fast. Once you’ve stepped out of the area to allow them more space you may see some bunny butt chasing and bunny butt fur pulling; this is okay because it’s part of the dominance dance. Just be sure it doesn’t turn in to a bunny fight/death roll — the head-on, face to face and rolling type of fighting — this can get very dangerous very quickly and you’ll need to immediately separate (squeal and scoop). You can do as many of these bonding sessions each day as you want. Starting at 20 minutes and working into longer time periods. Once you see that they are behaving themselves with you standing outside of the small area, you can begin to increase the size of the bonding area. You can see this by reading their language: casual lying together or apart, grooming themselves or each other — these are good signs. A slightly more tense language would be a rabbit lying in a darting-type stance ready hunched up, not relaxed, tail up and ready for flight — this is a rabbit not quite ready

to accept change, it’s still on guard and more time (patience) is needed. ♥ Another tip is to switch out their living quarters. Each night switch rabbits to the other’s cage/pen area. Not their litterboxes, food bowls or toys — just the rabbits. This will help

in adjusting to each other’s scent. You may be very happy to wake up some morning to see that they’re snuggling up together side-by-side in their respective cage/pen areas.

See Bonding on page 6

Event Calendar

June 15 & 16:
Saturday & Sunday

Adoption Day at PETsMART

Location: NE corner of Tatum & Shea, Phoenix
Time: 10am - 3pm

June 29:
Saturday

Adoption Day at PETsMART

Location: NE corner of Tatum & Shea, Phoenix
Time: 10am - 3pm

July 6:
Saturday

Adoption Day at PETsMART

Location: NE corner of Tatum & Shea, Phoenix
Time: 10am - 3pm

July 20 & 21
Saturday & Sunday

Adoption Day at PETsMART

Location: NE corner of Tatum & Shea, Phoenix
Time: 10am - 3pm

August 3:
Saturday

Adoption Day at PETsMART

Location: NE corner of Tatum & Shea, Phoenix
Time: 10am - 3pm

August 17 & 18
Saturday & Sunday

Adoption Day at PETsMART

Location: NE corner of Tatum & Shea, Phoenix
Time: 10am - 3pm

August 31:
Saturday

Adoption Day at PETsMART

Location: NE corner of Tatum & Shea, Phoenix
Time: 10am - 3pm

September 7:
Saturday

Adoption Day at PETsMART

Location: NE corner of Tatum & Shea, Phoenix
Time: 10am - 3pm

BunnyLuv Connection

Summer Special Adoption Fee \$50 per pair June, July & August.



Barnie & Opie: Barnie and Opie are 3 year old neutered brothers. Opie is a white Florida White and Barnie is a white & black Hotot mix. Very friendly bunny boys. Would make a great addition to any family. Can be a bit on the shy side - but gentle dispositions.



Bella & Luna: Bella & Lana are 6 month old spayed female Mini Lop mixes. Friendly, outgoing, inquisitive, lots of energy. Cuuuute! (sisters to Leo & Gonzo). They have been hand-raised.



Leo & Gonzo: Leo & Gonzo are 6 month old neutered male Mini Lop mixes. Friendly, outgoing, inquisitive, lots of energy. Cuuuute! (brothers to Bella & Lana). They have been hand-raised.



Virginia & Skipper: Virginia & Skipper are 5 year mini lops. Sweet and gentle pair. A bit on the shy side, but friendly personality.



Greta & Gatsby: Greta and Gatsby are 1.5 year old neutered male, spayed female gray agouti Mini Lops and weigh 5 lbs. This pair is still a bit on the shy side, but totally devoted to each other. Friendly rabbits, and will warm up to any family if given some time and attention. Gorgeous rabbits - must see to appreciate.

Visit our Most Wanted list at <http://www.bhrabbitrescue.org/wanted.htm>

BunnyLuv Connection

Summer Special Adoption Fee \$50 per pair June, July & August.



Cicely & Roslyn: Cicely & Roslyn are young adult mixed breed rabbits. Recently caught from an after Easter dump (first week of June 2002). These two are still quite skittish and frightened from their ordeal. Expect with some TLC they will warm up very quickly. They are not aggressive in nature, just shy.



Sylvester & Tweetie: Sylvers & Tweetie are 2 year old mixed New Zealand Whites. Sylvester is Siamese colored. Both are neutered males and are very sweet and inquisitive bunny boys. They came from a 60-bunny abuse situation. These bunnies really deserve a loving home.



Mufasa & Sarabi:

Mufasa & Sarabi are 1 Year old neutered and spayed pair. Mufasa is gray/brown/white and Sarabi is a castor Rex. Both are petite bunnies and playful. Mufasa (the male) is especially loving, while Sarabi is a bit more reserved.



Christopher & Jackie:

Christopher and Jackie are 2.5 year old spayed female and neutered male. Gentle natured and friendly rabbits. Very overweight, will need a lot of extra play time to help them trim to a healthy weight.

We have many more adorable pairs available for this special adoption rate.
Please visit our website for more information.

Alice & Thumper
Bogie & Bacall
Bunny & Clyde
Captain & Tenille

Kisses & Cocoa
Ipsy & Dipsy
Oliver & Pandora

Pistol & Roxanne
Sissy & Jody
Sugar & Honey

Tara & Willow
Tori & Tuffy
Willie & Pete

Visit our Most Wanted list at <http://www.bhrabbitrescue.org/wanted.htm>

♥ When you've graduated to the largest size of neutral territories and there are no fights breaking out then you may be ready for them to be living together 24/7. Your first attempt would be to let them out in their "usual" play area together (not the neutral territory). If all goes very well in this "unneutral" territory, they're ready to move in together.

Tips not recommended for bonding.

♥(1) No bathtubs. Should the towels slip out from underneath them, there can be some ligament damage or they can break a leg, especially in flight or fright. (2) No spray

bottles. Rabbits have very sensitive noses and sinus cavities and spraying in the face with a spray bottle may cause an upper respiratory infection or possibly an eye infection from the water. (3) Never just put two rabbits together to work things out. A rabbit can do great bodily harm to another rabbit in a very short period of time; they will usually go for the stomach and eyes. Rabbits have very definite likes and dislikes of other rabbits; a date is always best, followed by bonding sessions to allow them to adjust to each other.

HAPPY BONDING. 🥕

Two's Company cont. from page 1

Then the unthinkable happened. My humans paid attention to my lonely condition and did something about it. They brought home two bunnies just for me! Matrix and Shea. At first they were loony tunes and I despaired of ever feeling comfortable with them. Very soon though, we became the best of friends.

Now when I am outside, I'm out with them. We run all over the yard, we investigate the plants, I dig in the dirt. It's so

much fun having other bunnies to play with! Penelope is jealous, naturally. She's our next-door neighbor now and she throws poop bombs at us every single day. It's her own fault. She had her chance to be with Emmitt the Stud. She blew it. Now she's alone. Actually, I think she likes it that way. She gets to spend all day doing whatever she wants...which is mostly just trying to mess with us. So I guess even Penelope really isn't alone after all." 🥕

"KASH FOR BUNNIES"

Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue needs your used laser and ink jet printer cartridges. Earn extra dollars ... for the bunnies' medical bills, food, toys, or whatever these furkids may need.

Turn your printer trash into "KASH FOR BUNNIES"

(480) 844-7855

ask for Terry or email:

tmcbride@radiantlaser.com



A very special thanks
to NAVS (National
Anti-vivisection Society
(www.navs.org)
for their spy and
neuter donation.

FOSTER HOMES NEEDED!!

Foster homes are needed. The cages, food, supplies and vet care (if necessary) will be provided by Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue. A requirement for fostering a bunny is to bring the foster bunny to one or two of our adoption days each month. If you can open your home to fostering a bunny while it's waiting for a permanent home, or if you would like additional information, please contact Stacey Shirer by phone (602-225-0934 - evenings) or email at stacey@bhrabbitrescue.com

Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue Wants You!

Volunteers and fosterers are always welcome and needed at Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue.

For more information contact
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email: stacey@bhrabbitrescue.com

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