Three’s Company: 
Introducing a Third Rabbit to an Established Pair

The Sacramento HRS often gets queries about whether we know of people who have successfully bonded not just two rabbits, but three. Here are two such stories from local members – Olivia Huff introduced a boy bunny to her duo, and Brandon Chee successfully added a girl bunny to his happy pair. Neither introduction was without pitfalls and perils, but these HRS members have shown it can be done, to the benefit of all parties involved!

Arlecchino, Columbina and Latte

When we got Columbina, we told ourselves it was so our 8-year old rabbit, Sequoia, would have a companion. But we knew we really were getting her as our companion to help us make the transition when our beloved friend eventually passed on. Sequoia seemed to enjoy the company of his new friend (who he picked out himself, with the help of the House Rabbit Society). But unlike Sequoia, Columbina would have nothing to do with us. We tried and tried to befriend her, but she always ran away!

When, as life dictated, we became a single bunny family again, we held off on getting a companion for Columbina, hoping she would finally bond with us. Ha! After about two months of everyone being lonely, we succumbed. When Jan Gasber from the HRS called us and said she thought she had the perfect companion for Columbina, we were thrilled. Arlecchino liked people, didn’t mind being held, and seemed to like Columbina (more importantly, Columbina seemed to like him!). So we took Arlecchino home, and right from the start they got along…until about two weeks later, when all of a sudden they didn’t. We were in constant contact with the HRS – what should we do? What happened? They were very supportive in prescribing “bathtub therapy” and sightseeing from the back of a car. Finally, after months of tentative tests, we put the rabbits back together, and they didn’t fight. Hooray! We were a family again!

But of course, familyhood has its perils. We quickly learned their roles. Arlecchino would try something new, while Columbina (who knew the rules) nervously kept lookout. We

continued on page 2
Bunnysitters
The SHRS keeps a list of local people who are interested in bunnysitting for a fee or for a sitting exchange arrangement. Rates and experience vary, so please make sure you are personally comfortable with your bunnysitter, and ask for references. The SHRS provides this list as a service, and holds no liability for bunnysitters. If you would like to have your name added to this list, contact us at (916) 863-9690.

Bunnysitter Exchange
Karen Blaine...........726-4637
Danny Popp............966-7805
Stevi Lynn
Saunders...............344-8917

Sacto Bunnysitters
Animeals..............646-4663
Dawn Dacy.............852-8233
Christine John .......722-5301
Bonni McMurray ..451-6389

Folsom to Foothill Bunnysitters
Brian Barry ... (530) 644-7387
Ravilla Irvin , (530) 676-2273
Cathy Shoeman ....933-0895
Charlene Welty .....933-0530

Elk Grove Area Bunnysitters
Wanda Turner ..........(209) 933-0895

Davis Bunnysitters
Rebecca Buchen ........(530) 753-3337

When we took them home, the three bunnies happily set off in three different directions. I remember suddenly reeling at the thought of having to keep track of multiple hopping adventurers all at one time!

Now, having three bunnies does have its downside. There is the matter of marking – this never seemed to be a problem with only two bunnies. Even though they are all friends, they seem to want to let each other know where they have been by leaving little "presents." Sometimes they also forget their manners and mark with urine, which is frustrating when they’re indoors! And there is the matter of rules again. Latte, the former outdoor rabbit, earned his learner’s permit in Adventuring at the preschool. Now that he’s a house bunny, he pays no attention to our rules. When he’s in the yard, he jumps over fences we have erected to protect our flower gardens. He gets behind the shed (something the other two simply never knew about). He is the first to dash out doors that are absentmindedly left open. He explores open cabinets and closets, and he boldly goes where no bunny has gone before. Thankfully, Columbina still worries about her friends, so we always know when we see her furrowed bunny brow that we’d better start a search immediately.

Several months ago, we had another bout of Arlecchino and Latte not getting along. One day for no apparent reason, Arlecchino wouldn’t stop stamping, and when I came home, fur was all over the house. Again, for months, we had to separate the boys, making sure each had alone time with Columbina (who didn’t seem to mind who she was with). Bathubs and car rides were again part of our daily routine. And then one day, just as suddenly as it had begun, the spat was over.

The other rabbits soon discovered the newcomer and expressed a strong desire to become acquainted with him.
I f a pair of rabbits is wonderful, then a third or fourth would be even better. And if a pair seems a little too cozy, then they can use some excitement, right? Those were my thoughts as I debated introducing a third rabbit to my happily bonded pair, Jon and Abby. They were so trouble-free, calm, and well-behaved. I thought another rabbit would add to the bliss.

At one adoption day, a little Himalayan, Ceebee, took an instant attraction to me. She had a friendly, outgoing, inquisitive personality, and so we introduced her to Jon and Abby. At first, all got along with a minimum of flying fur. Jill Walker, Ceebee’s foster mom, even managed to get the trio to lie down together by the end of the first four-hour encounter. I was convinced enough to give it a try, and so Ceebee (now renamed Cece) went home with us.

Getting them acquainted on the pair’s turf was another matter. When I first got them all home, Jon and Abby began chasing the hapless interloper. I quickly learned that the tricky thing about introducing a trio is that you need a second pair of hands to separate aggressive bunnies.

Five days after the adoption event, I got up from the floor for a moment, and the girls got into it. Abby lost a small chunk of flesh from her neck, warranting a trip to the emergency room. I kept the girls separated for a few days while Abby healed and I rethought my approach.

One week after bringing Cece home, I had Jill come over to help supervise a reintroduction session. Jill emphasized that bonding sessions should be kept short and end on a high note, since separating the rabbits after a conflict would leave them with negative impressions of each other. Keeping this in mind, I kept putting them together day after day. But Cece definitely was insecure around other bunnies; every time Abby approached her, Cece would run. She often sought out boxes and other barriers in the room to hide behind. I let her do this, and took turns letting her spend time with Jon and Abby individually, since she seemed to be less afraid of Jon. Even so, she would sometimes run from him, too (and Jon’s attempts to sniff and mount her did not help matters). Often I was happy when they just ignored each other or took turns munching hay from a common litterbox.

The breakthrough occurred two weeks after Cece joined us, when Jon hopped over to nuzzle and groom her. For the first time, Cece didn’t run, but it still took her a long time to learn to reciprocate. Jon would groom her, then present himself as if to say, “Well?! It’s my turn!” She would lick the back of my hand readily enough, continued on page 4

Life has been “normal” ever since. My husband and I often wonder what life would be like if we had only two rabbits again. Who would we be willing to give up? The “Princess,” the “Goof” or “Fuzz-butt”? The truth is, we can’t imagine life without the unique personalities of each of our pals.

—Olivia Huff

Jon, Abby and Cece

continued on page 4
Brandon’s 13 Steps to Introducing a Newcomer to a Pair

1. Introduce at Adoption Day (neutral territory).
2. Closely supervise introduction at home, letting the rabbits view each other through an exercise pen.
3. Separate the couple, allowing each one a short mingling session with the newcomer in a partitioned exercise pen. Get help from the newcomer’s foster parent if needed.
4. Allow the pair and the new bunny to exercise in separate areas.
5. Start longer, supervised mingling sessions in a part of the house that is foreign to all the rabbits. Have toys, buffer boxes, cardboard partitions, and a box for the newcomer to retreat to.
6. Keep the newcomer in her cage while the couple plays in her area, but do not allow the newbie to play outside the couple’s cage (they’ll get upset if the interloper is in their ‘core’ area).
7. Determine which half of the couple is the more accepting rabbit, and nurture his (or her) relationship with the newcomer.
8. Continue to try to get the more hostile half of the couple to accept the new bunny by repeating step 5.
9. Mingle again at a completely neutral place; another Adoption Day works well.
10. Remove yourself from their mutual play area after hostility has ended, and allow them all time spent in a common area until you’re sure that they won’t fight.
11. Let them spend the night together in a common area.
12. Keep them together in a large cage. Be around to supervise.
13. Move their cage to their permanent area.
Rabbits Available for Adoption

see page 7 for adoption event details

Sonora is a very calm, sweet girl who loves attention (from people and other rabbits) and morning treats!

Radar is a young Californian. She is big but gentle and would love to have her own family to dote on her.

Spencer is a special needs bunny with a delightful personality. He was born in March 2001 with a severe leg deformity which resulted in the amputation of his right rear leg. He is currently learning how to get around as best he can, and will be available for adoption in the next few months.

Ruby is a friendly girl who loves attention. She is a big, sweet, mellow bunny with a sunny personality.

Beatrix is a fun-loving, easy-going bunny who loves to spend time with her human friends.

Zorro is a young boy who loves to be petted. He is very friendly, extremely curious about everything, and too busy to be held for long!

Sophie is a beautiful 7 lb. girl who can be quite a character. She may be afraid of dogs and needs time to adjust to new places.

Spot is an adorable and curious young boy who likes attention from people. He doesn’t mind being picked up and petted.

Forester is an affectionate boy dwarf mix who loves to play and burrow under his hay.

Kona is a friendly boy who loves to snuggle and kiss you. He is very affectionate and likes attention.

Cindy has a friendly, charming and gentle disposition. A good lap bunny, she likes attention, cuddling and lots of love. Cindy is an accomplished toy tosser.

Star is an active, friendly young girl with a gentle demeanor. She likes being held in your lap.

Paloma is a beautiful large Dutch bunny, who is spunky and smart. A real delight for experienced bunny parents!

Recent Adoptions

Sideways Sammy was adopted by Anne and David Miller as a friend for their bunny, Emily

Ro-cocoa (now Che) was adopted by Tim Smith and Tracy Milner as a companion for their bunny, Alma

Paddy was adopted by the Haarmeyer family

Percy was adopted by Linda Thomas

Heather was adopted by the Ruiz family

Tristan (now Brownie) was adopted by the Iveys as a friend for their bunny, Cupcake

Miss Ashley was adopted by Joy and Kirk Walker as a companion for their rabbit, Gatsby
FAQ ("Frequently Asked Questions") About Long-Haired Lagomorphs
Tips to keep your angora, or angora mix, comfortable all year round

If you have a short-haired bunny, consider yourself lucky in the grooming department! If you own a brush, you probably only use it sporadically (because your rabbit enjoys it, not because he needs it!).

If, however, your rabbit has long fur, you know only too well the perils of not keeping him groomed. Long fur tends to mat, and if it’s neglected, it can turn into a nightmare. The Sacramento HRS recently began offering fur trims and de-tangling sessions at the monthly Adoption Days (please call the hotline, (916) 863-9690, or e-mail Kmacinty@yahoo.com ahead of time to make sure a “groomer” will be there when you are!). But there are things you can do at home to ward off a tangled mess. Here we’ve compiled a list of Frequently Asked Questions from bunny owners who are concerned about their rabbits’ long fur.

1. **What does a mat look like?** These fur knots accumulate around long-haired rabbits’ necks, underside (especially in the "armpits") and in the genital area or around the base of the tail. They may be hard to see if they’re close to the skin, but you can always feel them if you run your hands along your rabbit’s body. Some bunnies even get mats on the tops of their feet – many of the black rabbits that were adopted out through the Sacramento SPCA after the 1999 Fair Oaks rescue have these unusual-looking fuzzy feet (SHRS member Rebecca Buchen, who has a Fair Oaks bunny, refers to these as “moonboots”).

2. **Why can’t my rabbit get the mat out himself?** Rabbits do groom themselves, but sometimes they need help, especially in those hard-to-reach areas. If a mat is neglected for too long, it will spread in size and become hard to the touch. Mats like this need to be taken care of for two reasons: Mats hold in body heat and make it hard for the rabbit to cool down in the summertime, and they can pull on the skin and actually become physically uncomfortable for the rabbit (tangles around the neck are especially notorious for this; a really stubborn mat can prevent a rabbit from turning his head).

3. **How do I remove a mat?** Most small- to medium-sized mats can actually be teased out using just your fingers. If you do it correctly, the bunny won’t mind (domestic angoras were bred to sit quietly in their owners’ laps while being plucked for grooming; this isn’t much different). Cuddle the rabbit in your arms and talk softly to him to calm him while gently pulling the mat apart with a gentle side-to-side tug, almost like peeling a banana. Don’t pull the mat straight out from the rabbit’s body; if you’re yanking skin, you aren’t doing it right. If you’re not sure how to do it, stop by an adoption day and ask an HRS volunteer to show you the technique. You can also work a tiny bit of corn starch into the mat as you pluck it apart – this helps break it up, too. But don’t ever try to wash a matted rabbit! This will make the hairs “lock” into each other, and you’ll have an even bigger mess on your hands.

4. **What if “teasing” doesn’t work?** If your bunny has big mats on his underside, around his neck or in his genital area, don’t bother trying to tease them out. Even the most patient rabbit will get fidgety after a while. You can purchase a professional mat splitter (a grooming tool) at a pet supply store, or invest in a Pocket Pro trimmer from Wahl. These little clippers
cost about $20 and are easy to order online (many pet supply stores also carry them). They are hand-held, battery-operated and quiet enough to not frighten most bunnies. They’re much safer to use than scissors, and can get under the mat and lift it off without too much difficulty. Bald spots aren’t beautiful, but they don’t last long.

5. I’m worried about cutting my rabbit’s skin with the clippers. Clippers (including the Pocket Pro) have a safety on them so you won’t cut the rabbit. But be careful as you pluck at the mats; it’s easy to accidentally rip delicate skin, especially around the genitals. As you clear off the mats, check to make sure the skin underneath is healthy. Mats can hide injuries, bug bites, live fleas and flea eggs, and skin infections. If you see anything out of the ordinary, take your bunny to the vet.

6. How do I prevent mats from happening? Once your bunny’s coat is under control, it’s important to maintain it. Buy a small wire brush and get used to grooming your bunny for at least 15 minutes per week. Most rabbits don’t mind the feel of the brush along their backs. You may have to get a towel and wrap him in a “bunny burrito” for some of the more hard-to-reach areas, but a little preventative maintenance will help ward off big messes later.

—Kirsten Macintyre

Making a Clean Sweep: Tools to Help You Keep a Fur-Free Home

When you tell people how many house rabbits you have, do you include the dust bunnies in that number? It’s enough work to keep a house clean, and all that swirling fur from your shedding rabbit companions can make it more challenging. I have found some cleaning appliances that are indespensible aids in keeping your fur-chasing time to a minimum. The House Rabbit Society does not promote or endorse any of these products – this list comes from my own personal experience.

Super Suction

I had a wonderful hand-me-down vacuum for a long time. It was a battered old Hoover, but it was lightweight and sturdy. Plus, it took a long time for those bags to fill up – what a money saver! Then Deb Glassman turned me on to Hoover’s newest offering – the “Wind Tunnel.” I took the plunge and retired my old machine for a new one. One sweep through my small house and the bag was filled solid. This machine got out the fur and hay that the other machine simply glided over – and my carpet was truly clean, for the first time in a frighteningly long time!

So, if you’ve been hanging onto a vacuum simply because it has served you well for years and years, consider putting it into retirement and getting a machine that will really get the job done – and make the time you spend vacuuming worthwhile.

Even with my new vacuum, I have found a hand vac to still be a necessary appliance to have. I have the Dirt Devil Hand Vac, which is very portable, far stronger than a DustBuster, and does a better job at cleaning upholstery and small spaces than the regular vacuum attachments. The reason is that it has a beater brush and doesn’t rely on suction power alone. Rabbit fur is very fine and although lightweight, it can be very tenacious when it has landed on nubby or rough textiles. A hand vac is a quick way to thoroughly clean those difficult areas.

Sweeping Technology

Brooms haven’t changed much in the past 2,000 years. But now electric versions exist alongside their straw cousins, and these are made with flying fur in mind. If your bunnies spend time in the kitchen, you know how frustrating it is to try to sweep up the fur before it swirls itself under the fridge to join its fuzzy brethren. Dirt Devil makes the Broom Vac, a rechargeable broom that does a great job of sucking up the fur before it can flee. The suction is not strong enough to pick up big chunks of hay or even rabbit poop, but it can be used to gather everything it doesn’t suck up into a manageable pile that can be quickly dispatched with a handbroom and dustpan.

Cleaning the Deep Dirt

For do-it-yourself deep carpet cleaning, I heartily recommend renting a good ol’ Rug Doctor once or twice a year. They are easy to use and stronger than most of the consumer rug shampooers you can purchase today (and if you have a small house like I do, you don’t have to figure out where to store the darned thing!). For in-between cleaning of problem spots, Bissell makes a small rechargeable cleaner called the Spot Lifter. It’s just the right size to clean one or two spots quickly and easily. It has decent suction power, especially if you not only pull it back slowly along the carpet as recommended, but push it forward into the carpet (this probably voids the warranty, but it really works!).

Trying to keep the level of fur in your house to what is currently attached to your rabbit can be quite a task, but having the right tools can make it much less burdensome. I mentioned the brands I use to help you if you are in the market for such appliances, but be sure to comparison shop and find the tools that are right for you. If you know of an appliance that is a fur-gobbling marvel, send me an email and we’ll spread the word.

—Jill Walker
Murray the dog and Cupcake the rabbit (right) make sure their new friend Brownie finishes his treats.

Sent by The Ivey Family

Vincent Fago is a cartoonist, writer and illustrator of children's books. Formerly editor of Marvel Comics, he wrote and illustrated the Peter Rabbit comic strip for the New York Herald Tribune Syndicate. Thanks to Barbara Koenigsmark, he heard about the Sacramento House Rabbit Society and sent a tribute to us. Thanks, Vincent!

Upcoming Events

Adoption and Information Clinics

Are you thinking about adding a bunny to your household? Or are you just looking to learn more about the one you've already got? Regardless of whether you've had a rabbit for years or if you're new to the joys of rabbit companionship, you'll have a great time at our monthly Adoption and Information Clinics. Come ask us questions about bunny behavior, care, grooming, nutrition, or anything else you can think of. We have free printed information on a variety of topics, and, of course, we also have our fabulous fosters on hand, waiting for just the right family to come along! The adoption donation is $50 ($75 for two), and includes a copy of The House Rabbit Handbook.

If you already have a bunny, you're welcome to bring him or her to the Clinic in a secure carrier. Our experienced "rabbit wranglers" can trim your rabbit's nails for a $5 donation. We've recently added a new service as well – de-tangling matted bunny fur. If your rabbit has stubborn knots that you just can't get out, call our bunny line in advance (916-863-9690) and make arrangements to bring him to the Clinic for a makeover. We have clippers, combs, and lots of patience. Donations of $10 are appreciated!

June 9
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Fair Oaks PetCo
8840 Madison Avenue

July 14
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Arden PetCo
1878 Arden Way

August 11
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Folsom PetCo
879 East Bidwell

September 8
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Fair Oaks PetCo
8840 Madison Avenue
Miss Ashley has settled in to her new home well, and enjoys some cozy time with Foxy the cat.  
Sent by Joy and Kirk Walker

Seven month-old Donnie already knows to pat his furry “brother” Wiley gently on his head. Wiley is quite happy to have Donnie around!  
Sent by Don Sherman and Rita Kwong

T-Shirts and Totes

SHRS t-shirts are back with a new front design featuring delightful illustrations by SHRS member Shannon Hawkins (see below), and accompanied by canvas totebags as well! The t-shirts are available in natural (navy is sold out!), and the totes (measuring 19 x 14.5 x 5 inches) are natural with navy straps and bottom gusset. Come by our monthly clinics to see them in person, or use the handy form (right) to order by mail. T-shirts: $15 (available in sizes M, L, XL) Totebags: $25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>COLOR</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

shipping & handling*:

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please mail completed form with check or money order (payable to Sacramento House Rabbit Society) to:
Sacramento House Rabbit Society, P.O. Box 13371, Sacramento, CA 95813-0371

email: KMacinty@yahoo.com hareline@pacbell.net
Website: www.allearssac.org

*SAVE on shipping & handling charges when buying in quantity!
1-3 items ordered is $4.00 s&h  4-6 items ordered is $8.00 s&h, etc.
allow 2-3 weeks for delivery
Keep in Touch!

Time to renew your membership? New to the House Rabbit Society? The annual membership to the House Rabbit Society is $18. This includes a subscription to the quarterly *House Rabbit Journal*. The annual membership fee for the Sacramento Chapter, which includes the quarterly *All Ears in Sacramento*, is $15. The House Rabbit Society is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. All membership fees are tax-deductible and go towards care expenses for the rabbits and for providing educational materials, such as these newsletters.

☐ Please sign me up for the National Membership, $18
☐ Please sign me up for the Sacramento Membership, $15
☐ Please sign me up for both for $30
☐ I have enclosed an additional donation of $___________
☐ I would like to volunteer with SHRS (see choices to the right)

Name: 
Phone: 
Address: 

email address: 

Return with check payable to House Rabbit Society to:
Sacramento House Rabbit Society, P.O. Box 13371, Sacramento, CA 95813-0371

Volunteer!

Would you like to help local rabbits and bunny-lovers? We could use volunteers in the following areas:

☐ Public Events (staffing education tables)
☐ Fundraising Events
☐ Distributing Literature
☐ Working with Shelters
☐ Transporting rabbits to the National Headquarters in Richmond
☐ Fostering
Sacramento House Rabbit Society
P.O. Box 13371
Sacramento, CA 95813-0371

Keep in Touch!

Time to renew your membership? New to the House Rabbit Society? The annual membership to the House Rabbit Society is $18. This includes a subscription to the quarterly House Rabbit Journal. The annual membership fee for the Sacramento Chapter, which includes the quarterly All Ears in Sacramento, is $15. The House Rabbit Society is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. All membership fees are tax-deductible and go towards care expenses for the rabbits and for providing educational materials, such as these newsletters.

☐ Please sign me up for the National Membership, $18
☐ Please sign me up for the Sacramento Membership, $15
☐ Please sign me up for both for $30
☐ I have enclosed an additional donation of $___________
☐ I would like to volunteer with SHRS (see choices to the right)

Name:

Phone:

Address:

email address:

Return with check payable to House Rabbit Society to:
Sacramento House Rabbit Society, P.O. Box 13371, Sacramento, CA 95813-0371

Volunteer!

Would you like to help local rabbits and bunny-lovers? We could use volunteers in the following areas:

☐ Public Events (staffing education tables)
☐ Fundraising Events
☐ Distributing Literature
☐ Working with Shelters
☐ Transporting rabbits to the National Headquarters in Richmond
☐ Fostering

Complimentary Copy

Sacramento House Rabbit Society depends on donations to keep running. Please fill out the form below to keep receiving All Ears in Sacramento, and to support local rabbits in need!