

THE HOP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS DECEMBER 2013

Now Showing on the Web: Four Dozen Rabbit-Care Videos

Mary Cotter, House Rabbit Society’s education/outreach director, and Amy Sedaris, comedian and honorary HRS educator, recently collaborated on four dozen professional videos on rabbit care.

In the rabbit-care videos, Mary and Amy informally discuss a host of topics of interest to rabbit caretakers and anyone considering adoption. The free videos cover topics such as how to rabbit-proof your home, how to litter-train your rabbit, and how to tell when your rabbit is sick.

The videos can be viewed at:
<http://rabbit.org/category/video/>.

“There is a whole list of things that people should consider before acquiring a rabbit,” said Mary. “Unfortunately, far too often parents buy a bunny for their young child on impulse, not realizing how much care the pet requires, and after a couple of weeks they end up regretting their decision.”

“Some of the important things they should know,” she added, “are that an adult must be the primary caretaker, that adequate rabbit-proofed space for exercise is needed, that their pet cannot be left alone on weekends, and that rabbits



Mary, Netherland Dwarf and Amy.



Helen Chen’s rabbit, Kirby, on computer as Mary is seen in video.

need veterinary care, which can be more expensive than care for a dog or cat because rabbits are considered exotic animals.”

Mary has lived with and studied rabbits for over 30 years. She acquired her first rabbit in 1982 from the photo editor at

(Continued on page 2)

Ariel Gets Four Wheels: There’s No Stopping Her Now!

By Tracy Nuzzo

The journey of a disabled bunny can be fraught with ups and downs, but we are so fortunate. Ariel’s setbacks have been minor and her accomplishments have been life-changing!

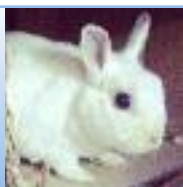
As you may remember, Ariel was found in a garden in Queens this summer and the nature of her injuries is unknown. After her rescue, Ariel was rushed to the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine, and X-rays were taken. No obvious injury was noted, but the trauma was evident. Ariel was clearly immobile and incontinent. Thankfully, Dr. Anthony Pilny had faith in this tiny, abandoned bunny and advocated on her behalf. She was quickly placed with us as a foster.

Through the generosity of Animal Medical Center and their program specially designed for shelter pets known as “AMC to the Rescue,” Ariel continues to thrive as she works to overcome her hind leg paresis and a back injury. Ariel began weekly physical therapy through “AMC to the Rescue” beginning in late

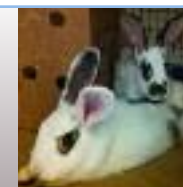
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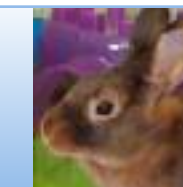
**Boogie Boards
And Swimming:
AMC’s Dr. Alvarez
Discusses Rehab**
Page 4



**When Caring
For Ivy Banana,
Rules Often
Didn’t Apply**
Pages 5-6



**A Volunteer’s
Special Poem,
Inspired by
Two Bunnies**
Page 10



**Loving Letters
From Our
Wonderful
Adopters**
Pages 20-22

Our masthead bunnies are Sally and Sandy, adopted from Long Island Rabbit Rescue by Mike Miranda and Vanessa Han. Mike and Vanessa are in the process of bonding the two rabbits. Photo and illustration by Mary Ann Maier.

Now Showing on the Web

(Continued from page 1)

People magazine, where she worked as a contributing photographer. She adopted her next two rabbits while working as a creative director at JMCT Advertising and completing her doctorate in education at Columbia University, Teachers College. “Rabbits helped me maintain my perspective and my sense of humor during times of intense stress at both work and graduate school,” she said. “Their engaging nature, hilarious antics, and readiness to forgive the many faults of their human caretakers make them wonderful companion animals for busy adults.”

After completing her doctorate, she volunteered at a private veterinary practice in New York, and began offering lectures and workshops on rabbit care and husbandry in the New York City area. Eventually, in order to broaden her ability to work with veterinary staff, she decided to obtain a license in veterinary technology. She earned her associate’s degree from LaGuardia Community College in 2004 and joined the veterinary technology faculty there as adjunct assistant professor immediately after receiving her New York State license.

Mary also serves as a vice president of House Rabbit Society, the largest rabbit rescue organization in the world, and is the founder and president of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, a licensed chapter of HRS.



Amy with plastic key rattle, a bunny favorite.

It was through House Rabbit Society that Howcast Media Inc. approached Mary, who suggested to the producer that Amy – who adopted a rabbit from her 11 years ago – be invited to team up with her.

“Amy has accumulated a wealth of knowledge over the past decade, and has been very active in educating other rabbit caretakers,” said Mary. “We have both wanted to do a series of rabbit-care videos for the past few years, so this was a perfect opportunity.”

The range of topics is broad: temperature-taking, getting a rabbit back in his cage, how to give a rabbit a pill, helping overweight rabbits, trimming nails, litter training and an exhaustive range of other subjects. Mary and Amy present each topic as a conversation, using rabbits as part of each demonstration.

The videos represent an up-to-date general review of current knowledge about rabbit care. For instance, the video “How to Handle a Rabbit” features Mary and Amy talking about the many ways to handle a rabbit, using an actual rabbit to go through all of the main points. Howcast wanted the rabbit-care videos to be easily understood by a wide audience. The idea was to make the videos interesting to total newbies as well as to those who just want to review key points on various topics.

Volunteers and adopters can choose a video to watch online, and then return later to look at another video on a different topic. The free videos are a resource that rabbit owners will use as needed, both as medical issues arise and as other topics come to mind.

Ariel Gets Four Wheels

(Continued from page 1)

August. In addition to becoming stronger, Ariel was growing in leaps and bounds. We estimate she was likely about 3 months old when found and we knew, on some level, she would grow into her HUGE ears. In the first few months, Ariel tripled in length and doubled in weight.

During her growth spurt in early October, I was giving Ariel a back massage, as

recommended by AMC. I noted a curvature in her spine that gave me pause. I brought her to her physical therapy session the very next day and nervously asked the therapists if her spine seemed different than it had been. The consensus was that something seemed amiss. Immediately, I scheduled an X-ray for the following day with Dr. Pilny.

Ariel’s X-ray showed a major compression at the top of her spine, near her shoulders. In other words, Ariel has a broken back

and it’s in one of the very worst places. We had always believed amputation might be something we could consider with Ariel’s weaker hind limb, but the discovery of the back injury eliminated many potential alternate plans for Ariel’s rehab. If this injury had been spotted the day she was rescued, there would have been no choice but to put her to sleep. I was able to view the X-ray myself and it was hard to take it all in.

(Continued on page 3)

Ariel Gets Four Wheels

(Continued from page 2)

This bun was doing so well in rehab, but what would this X-ray mean for Ariel's future?

Leilani Alvarez, who heads up the rehab department at AMC, was sent the X-ray. We love Dr. Alvarez, particularly for her down-to-earth nature, and she was very direct. She found the X-ray devastating and very upsetting. It took a day or two, but a decision was made by Dr. Alvarez. We would NOT allow one picture to negate what we knew to be true. As damning as the film was, it didn't tell the whole tale. Anyone looking at that X-ray would expect the bunny it depicted to be immobile and hopeless. Thanks to Ariel's progress in rehab, we knew we had reason to hope. AMC would, in fact, extend its generosity and continue to give Ariel weekly physical therapy sessions.

Ariel is improving with each rehab session, building muscle and working hard at mobility. Thanks to the exercises, Ariel no longer suffers from major urine scald, which had plagued her early on. Through her weekly sessions, Ariel has had the opportunity to meet many new people (and also pets who attend rehab) and she has become very socialized and sweet. She has been in a whirlpool and on a boogie board; she gets healing massage and cold lasers. The therapists introduce a variety of textures for Ariel to stand on, stimulating her senses and her nerve endings. Ariel's belly is placed on a skateboard and she tries to stand up and push off! AMC has pulled out all the stops and made every single piece of equipment available to help our girl.

The newest weapon in our arsenal is a wheelchair. AMC measured Ariel for her wheels, which we ordered from Doggon' Wheels in Hawaii. The two-wheeled cart was custom-made and quickly sent. We needed additional help adjusting the cart perfectly so Cindy Stutts and I took Ariel to Long Island. Mary Ann Maier of LIRRG is an expert at fitting bunnies in carts, and we were so lucky that she



Ariel with her new wheels.



Ariel with Tracy.

was able to make time for us in her very busy schedule.

Catnip & Carrots generously kept their office open late as our meeting place. As we tried to figure the best fit for Ariel, I mentioned that perhaps a quad cart would be a better idea for Ariel as our main goal is to keep Ariel's back in a neutral position. Mary Ann happened to have a spare quad cart and she generously loaned it to us, right on the spot!! Ariel left Long Island with a new four-wheeler and a whole new way to reclaim her independence.

If you want to see video of Ariel, racing around in her wheels, and daily updates on her exciting life, join us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/teamariel2013



Tracy adjusting Ariel's quad cart.

Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Beatrix, Mim, Leona, Lucy, Joey and Zoe, Rotini, Roolie, Hopper, Cappuccino and Cannoli, Belinda, Jack, Davey, Melanie, Leona, Samantha, Mel, December, Brandon, Flossie, Forest, Waabooz, Blanche, Oliver, Buster, Divina, Snuggles, Rachel.



Samantha in Cottontail Cottage.



Brandon and his new partner.

From Boogie Boards to Swimming: AMC's Dr. Alvarez Discusses Rehab for Rabbits

By Natalie L. Reeves

A tiny silver martin bunny without use of her hind legs – rescued by NYC Metro Rabbits and subsequently named Ariel after the Disney mermaid – inspired the first of a series of lectures sponsored by Rabbit Rescue & Rehab and Best Pet Rx (www.bestpetrx.com) on rabbit health and behavioral issues.

Ariel has been in foster care since late July, and since August she has been a rehab patient at Animal Medical Center, thanks to a grant that is covering the cost of her care. Her indomitable spirit and improvements in mobility have given hope to many other people whose rabbits have special needs.

On Nov. 10, Dr. Leilani Alvarez, head of Animal Medical Center's rehab department, gave a presentation on "Physical Rehabilitation for Rabbits" at a café on the Upper East Side. Ariel was also present with her foster mom, Tracy Nuzzo.

Dr. Alvarez helps rabbits who are elderly, injured or suffering post-op or neurologic problems – as well as rabbits who have had strokes or cancer. She implements a multimodal pain management program that may involve, among other things, acupuncture, tramadol, Adequan, Cosequin and Chinese herbal medicine. Just as important are the manual therapies, particularly massage, she offers.

Passive range of motion (PROM) exercises, which can be seen on AMC's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/AMCRehabFitness), can be particularly helpful. Dr. Alvarez spends about one minute working on each joint of the rabbit. She warns not to pull limbs away from the rabbit's body and to instead use the range of motion a rabbit would have if he were standing. Never force movements and make sure that the rabbit's back and limbs are in a neutral position.



Photos: Susan Lillo

Lecture attendees.

Bunny stretches can be helpful. Dr. Alvarez holds small treats, like a piece of a berry, above the rabbit's nose so that he must stretch his neck to reach the treat.

Dr. Alvarez spoke at length, and showed slides, about Ariel's treatment. At a mere 1.6 pounds when she was approximately 3 months old, Ariel was referred to Dr. Alvarez by Dr. Anthony Pilny. (Most patients of Dr. Alvarez must be referred to her by the animal's primary veterinarian to make sure that the rabbit's bloodwork is normal and the rabbit can tolerate rehab.) Ariel started with laser treatments, a light-energy treatment that can heal wounds and decrease inflammation and pain, and also received acupuncture on her toes.

Ariel's treatments progressed to therapy on boogie boards, wobble boards and skateboards. Dr. Alvarez was trying to teach Ariel to learn to walk, and little Ariel built muscle by learning to swim in very warm water. Dr. Alvarez wanted Ariel to walk on different types of textures and surfaces so that she would be presented with a variety of challenges.

While a rabbit can live happily for many years with an amputated limb, Dr. Alvarez cautioned that amputations should only be done as a last resort. Amputees experience trigger points in other areas of their bodies.

Many rabbit parents administer glucosamine products to help with arthritis or other mobility issues, but



Dr. Leilani Alvarez with Ariel.

Dr. Alvarez warned that the product isn't good for stasis-prone bunnies.

She ended her lecture by emphasizing how important flooring is for all rabbits. She advises guardians to provide rabbits with various flooring surfaces because the bunnies then can be exposed to different stimuli.

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's lecture series is the brainchild of Cindy Stutts, who is hoping that the knowledge imparted through the series will enrich the lives of rabbits in the New York City area and beyond. The second speaker in the lecture series was Dr. Anthony Pilny, who spoke on Dec. 8 about "Dental Abscesses in Rabbits."

Stay tuned for the next event in the continuing lecture series – a talk by Dr. Jennifer Saver titled "Why Diet?" Details will follow. For information, go to www.rabbitcare.org.

Caring for Ivy Banana – Rules Don’t Always Apply

By Erin McElhinney

Sometimes the scarcest resource at the shelter is not hay or craft paper or anything else. It’s our lack of time. The night I first met little Ivy (her name was spelled Ivey at the shelter, but I changed it), was one of those nights.

There were more than 30 rabbits in the cramped room in the midst of a coccidia outbreak, and makeshift cages were created out of guinea pig cages, small dog crates and a puppy pen. It was one of those nights as a volunteer when I walk in the room, open a cage at random, pick up a bun and cuddle him or her as I walk around, surveying the needy little faces all trying to get my attention. I grabbed Blanche (the volunteers’ favorite at the time) and did a quick assessment of the room, strategizing which cages to clean, prioritizing which rabbits to pay the most attention to. I ignored looking into the cages on the floor, to my great regret later. The cages that I did look into held rabbits needing an overwhelming amount of love, and it was a Thursday night and I was exhausted.

Because of the coccidia and because of the sheer number of rabbits in the room, the bun room smelled horrible and there was mushy poo everywhere. I decided I would just clean cages instead of bringing rabbits out for playtime, and I tucked Blanche back into her cage and I got to work. One by one, bun by bun, I cleaned their cages, spot cleaning when I could take a shortcut. (We had treated all buns in the room for coccidia whether or not they had symptoms.)

I saved the cages on the floor for last. And the very last cage I did was one that I had just spent the better part of nearly four hours using as my base, stacking other food and water bowls and cleaning supplies on top of it, as if it were a table. Most of the cage was pushed underneath a bank of other cages. I pulled the whole

cage out to see the bun inside and my heart just sank. Inside was a tiny, trembling, skinny little thing – her face covered in dried snot and telltale wetness on her front paws indicating an upper respiratory infection. Her cage card told a common story: found in a park. I immediately reached in to scoop her out and just held her frail, bony little body, feeling absolutely horrible about not doing her cage first.

I certainly had been warned about her condition. In Zhen Heinemann’s update a couple nights earlier, she wrote of Ivey “*Ivey 0979217 female – kinda rough shape. Red rimmed eyes. Found in park. Card says 1 year – if so it’s been a rough one. Wednesday folks, please give a look. Saw her eat right as I left.” – But Ivy’s specific details had gotten pushed out of my mind as I tried to wrap my head around the sheer volume of rabbits in the room, focusing on cleaning their cages so that they would present well for potential adopters. I let her loose for a bit and sat on the floor with her. She walked a little weirdly but was otherwise surprisingly sassy for a rabbit in such horrible condition!

I fired off my nightly update using a bold red font. “*Important* Next rabbit out of shelter in my opinion should be Ivey A0979217. She has severe URI. Tons of wetness on her paws, noisy sneezes and when in the cage she just kind of sits there and vibrates. She did LOVE the Agway hay Will brought up and she was rooting around in there and she was active in the pen but her fur coat is very dull, her eyes are dull and she just lacks vibrancy. I suspect dehydration and URI major factors. She needs to be in foster care in my opinion and sooner rather than later.” Cindy Stutts immediately emailed back that she was pulling Ivy out and taking her to the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine. Relief washed over me but I still had a twinge in my

Photos: Erin McElhinney



Ivy Banana eating kale.



Meeting Amelia, her pit bull housemate.

heart. There was definitely something wrong with this girl and she was so frail. I was not sure she would make it. She

(Continued on page 6)

Ivy Banana

(Continued from page 5)

didn't come up in conversation or emails for the next few days and I was afraid to ask about her fate. I shouldn't have been so afraid. As it turns out, we were fated to end up together.

Cindy called me a short time later to tell me that Dr. Anthony Pilny had seen Ivy and that he estimated she was at least 8 years old. She had a thymoma, a tumor of the thymus, which is a gland in the upper chest. The thymoma was too big, and Ivy was too old, to try to remove the tumor. I was given explicit instructions about how to best minimize Ivy's suffering and provide some good memories for her to literally take to her grave. Ivy, Cindy said, didn't have the body or health of a rabbit who had enjoyed much in the way of regular feedings or bunny dance parties. She needed special care. I was gushing as if I had just won a prestigious award, and I cut Cindy off to tell her I would love to take care of Ivy. I would do it. I was honored to do it.

I went to CAEM to pick Ivy up. Dr. Pilny brought her out and explained how to tell if the thymoma was starting to affect her quality of life. I learned to pay close attention to her eating as it is critical to notice early signs, such as taking a whole day to eat her pellets or greens rather than wolfing them all down at once. The importance of monitoring breathing is also critical in thymoma buns. Thymoma usually involves rabbits making the choice between eating and breathing because they can't always do both at the same time. They can starve to death, or alternatively choke to death while attempting to eat. I was instructed to take her to be euthanized immediately if I noticed open-mouthed breathing/panting or if she began to choose between eating and breathing. I looked at this tiny, helpless little girl and pictured her so vulnerable after she was abandoned, pathetically hopping around Central

Photo: Erin McElhinney



Ivy and Josh.

Park, just a few blocks from this world-class vet clinic where her quality of life was now, finally, priority No. 1. With a lump in my throat I solemnly promised to prevent as much suffering as possible. When asked how long I could expect her to live, I was told anywhere from two days to two weeks, or maybe even two months. As I set up her cage in my house, I put a shoebox atop her cage and lined it with a soft pillowcase. With such a short lifespan, I thought I better have her coffin ready.

At home, I promised her she would go out in style. Together, we would break every rule. A banana slice with breakfast, lunch and dinner? Ivy did it. Changing her name to Ivy Banana? Ivy did that, too. (Okay, maybe I did that for her!) Stiff-legged arthritic binkies all over the house? Check. Pooping wherever she darn well pleases and chinning a pit bull on the nose. Ivy's done it. Living beyond two months. Ivy Banana continues to amaze me. I recently formally adopted her as I didn't want her to die without a family. I know this is for me and not her, but once I gave her a middle name, she had to be all mine.

After recently attending the amazing rabbit lecture on physical rehabilitation for rabbits, I am considering alternative therapies and treatments for her arthritis.

I have since heard and read about rabbits that have lived for up to a year with thymoma. While I have cut back on her banana slices and put her on the same healthy hay, vegetable and minimal pellet diets that my other buns are on, I hope she still remembers her first few weeks with me, living recklessly, eating with abandon. The angry nip she gives my banana-less fingers from time to time tells me that she does remember her early days with me. The soft purring that she does when I rub her cheeks tells me she is content – and at those moments, I can almost forget her diagnosis. But then my eyes rest on the shoebox atop her cage and I am filled with dread.

Here are two YouTube videos I made of Ivy Banana:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6vaUkpk8mQ&feature=em-upload_owner

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB051FVrjMk&feature=em-upload_owner

(Editor's Postscript: Ivy Banana died on Nov. 30. She will be missed by all of us. Her last holiday, Thanksgiving, was spent joyfully with Erin at the home of another volunteer, Marcie Frishberg.)

Beatrix, My Foster Diva

By Sari Krieger

A spunky and beautiful baby Dutch bunny named Beatrix was my first long-term foster. She came home with me after being dumped at the Union Square Petco in August. Petco employees found her running loose in the store, and at the time our rescue group was all out of cage space – so she was stuck in a small cage on the floor. I couldn't bear to see her there for all the passing dogs to harass, so I agreed to foster her. She moved into a pen across my living room from my pair of Dutch-breed rescue bunnies, Aurora and Franklin.

A few weeks later I brought her with me to an adoption event in Union Square, and Beatrix's beauty and active personality

attracted lots of attention. A wonderful family who happened to be my neighbors in Queens decided that day to adopt her, even though she wouldn't be spayed and ready to go home with them for another couple of months. Right before the event I brought her to my wonderful vet, Jennifer Saver at Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital on Long Island, thinking Beatrix could be spayed and healed in time for the event. But Dr. Saver said Beatrix would have to wait until the end of October, meaning the rabbit would be my houseguest for a few months.

Franklin, being a very tough-guy bunny, wasn't pleased by the "intruder" and marked by Beatrix's pen every time he came out for exercise. But when Frankie



Beatrix with stuffed animals.

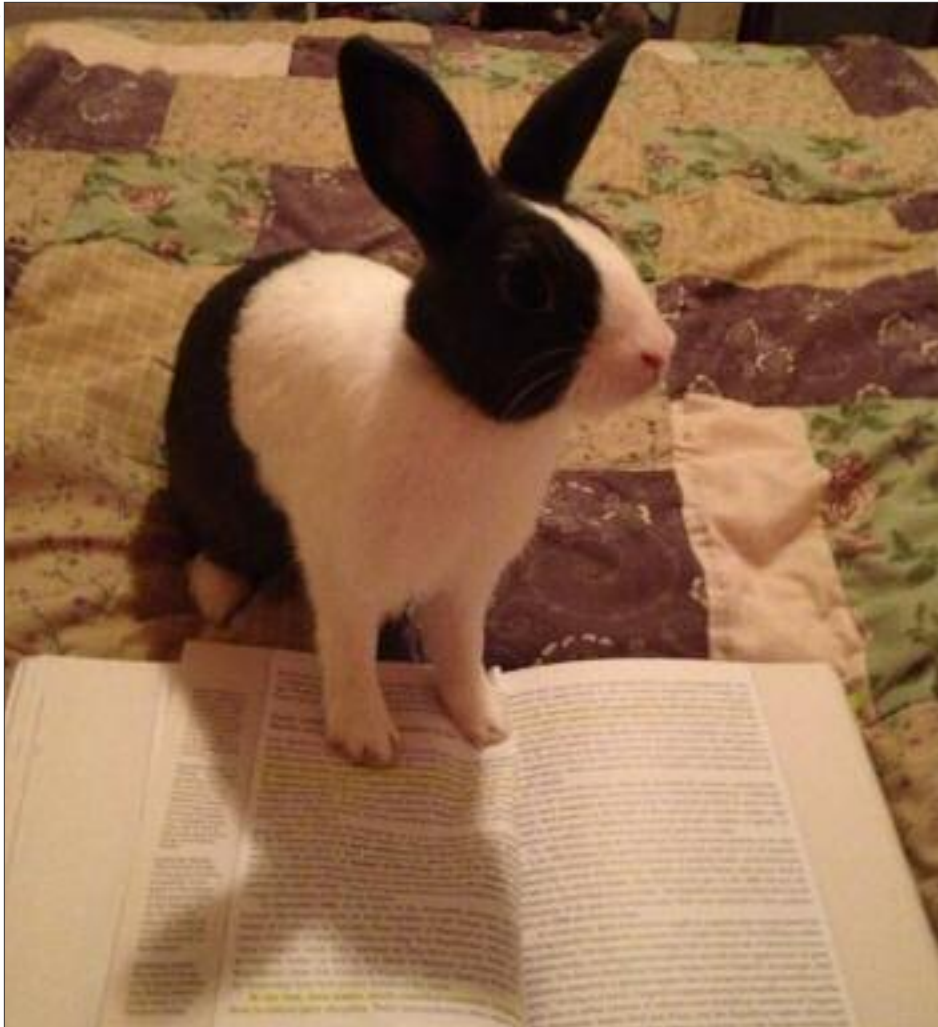
was out, grumpily marking his territory, Beatrix happily played behind the closed door of my bedroom. Her favorite pastime was hopping through a pile of stuffed animals on my floor. Sometimes Beatrix would seemingly disappear in the sea of inanimate rabbits, bears and various other stuffed animals. But soon enough she would pop her little head back up and it would appear as if one of my stuffed animals had come alive.

Beatrix surely lived up to the "Dutch Bunny Diva" status. When breakfast time came and she saw me preparing food for Aurora and Franklin, as well as my three rescue guinea pigs, Beatrix would thump loudly to let me know I shouldn't forget to feed her, too. Of course, I wouldn't forget the littlest bunny diva in my home at mealtime.

The weather grew colder and the date of Beatrix's spay soon approached. I dropped her off at Catnip & Carrots to be spayed. The day after her spay, in late October, I met her new family at the vet's office to facilitate the adoption. While we waited to see the doctor, her new family showed me pictures of the three-story habitat they had set up for Beatrix. It looked very roomy and engaging for a bunny. Dr. Saver generously took extra time to teach Beatrix's new family the basics of bunny care. Beatrix then left for her new home and she is reportedly doing well. As sad as I was to see her go, I was thrilled she found such a loving home. As for Franklin and Aurora, they have requested I not bring any more intruders into their home.

(Editor's postscript: Dearest Aurora died on Nov. 30.)

Beatrix studying.



Photos: Sari Krieger

Finding a Friend for Toby

By Helen Chen

Toby was my second bunny and has taught me many lessons about being a better rabbit owner. When I first met him, I didn't know any better and thought I could forge a friendship between any two bunnies and that all bunnies were as pleasant and easygoing as my first one, Kirby. Not only was Toby a feisty fire-cracker as a baby, but as a teenage bunny he was unapproachable, disagreeable and grew increasingly harder to please. He didn't like me or the other bunnies in the home. A year later, my husband and I gave up on the dream that he would ever be friends with Kirby.

Kirby later found love with a different bunny, and Toby remained a bachelor. Perhaps it was maturity or perhaps it was the change of scenery, but when we moved Toby out to the living room where he would be the only bunny, Toby slowly accepted me as his friend. He would sit near me just to watch my comings and goings when I was at home. Eventually he started to climb on

Toby, right, with other bunnies.



the couch to watch television with me where he would purr and relax if I petted him. As a rabbit owner, I felt like I finally succeeded in providing this rabbit with the safety, love and comfort of home, and it only took me two years!

After a time, we started to notice that Toby was looking for more companionship. When his humans weren't around, Toby would camp at the entrance to the bedroom where my other two bunnies live. The living room and the bedroom were divided by a baby gate and while the other buns preferred to ignore him, Toby enjoyed watching them through the gate. Sometimes the other buns would sleep with their bodies against the baby gate and Toby would sleep right next to them on the other side of the bars. I gave Toby and the other buns a shot at being a trio. Unfortunately, that was a miserable and disappointing experience as well. It became clear that Toby did not want to be friends with his old nemesis, and wasn't interested in the girlfriend. He only wanted to see what they were up to when he had nothing else to do.

Over the next couple of years we would try to bond Toby with other buns but despite our best efforts, all of his first dates were obvious mismatches. All the while, Toby became more attached to me. Toby craved a level of attention that as a human, I felt ill-equipped to give him. We very much wanted to give Toby the kind of relationship that our bonded pair had with each other, but Toby would not take a liking to anybun.

In July 2013, Marcie Frishberg, a volunteer of NYC Metro Rabbit, contacted me about fostering a female baby Dutch bunny. When Marcie introduced me to the gorgeous black-and-white Dutch named Annie, she told me that Annie was a doll and so special that Marcie almost considered keeping her for herself. Annie was the kind of rabbit who wanted hugs



Annie and Toby eating together.

from everyone she met and couldn't get enough attention. She wanted to touch and play with everything and everyone, and she was innocent to a fault. Annie just wanted to be everyone's friend.

My husband quickly fell in love with this little girl and as we approached the date of her spay surgery, he started to dread entertaining inquiries from potential adopters. As much as I wanted to keep Annie outright, I knew it would not be the ideal living situation for my existing bunnies, nor for Annie. We evaluated our options and decided that we could keep her if we could bond Toby with her. Knowing Toby's dating history, it was basically "Rabbit Mission: Impossible." But for a sweetheart like Annie, we had to try. Perhaps she could make a friend out of a grumpy bachelor like Toby and convince him to loosen up a little.

Once Annie was old enough, she was spayed and we waited the obligatory amount of time post-surgery before we set her up with Toby for a first date. Marcie came to my house to facilitate it. The fateful day was Oct. 6, 2013. Toby and Annie were set up in a large pen in my basement to meet face-to-face for the first time. Annie wanted to introduce herself right away and bounced over toward Toby. Toby was very nervous, but he didn't run away from her. He was tolerant of her hopping all around him and he watched her playfully run around their dating arena. He was focused on

(Continued on page 9)

Finding a Friend

(Continued from page 8)

everything she did but, more importantly, he didn't instantly feel repulsed by her presence. In almost all of his previous encounters with bunnies, Toby was immediately chasing, thumping or boxing the other buns. But with Annie, Toby seemed intrigued, not threatened. Much to my surprise, Marcie told me, "He likes this young lady." For all we knew, it could be a quick bond, but I'd have to be vigilant, she warned.

We started off slowly with very short sessions. They spent time together multiple times a day. Every date with Toby and Annie was positive. In the beginning, Annie wanted Toby to like her and she persistently lured him in to play with her, but Toby would politely decline. Often Annie would try to wedge her head under his head, his chest or his rump as a not-so-subtle request to be groomed. It was a show of dominance from her and Toby struggled with it from day to day. Sometimes he would lick her face or her ears, and sometimes he would just hop away from her advances. Annie was like the annoying little sister that Toby couldn't shake off, but she was young and didn't know any better, so he just let her have her way. For a bunny as stubborn as Toby, this was a huge concession. He really did "like this young lady!" Toby purred happily whenever she lay down near him.

Their dates eventually went on for hours at a time and they behaved similarly each day. Sometimes they'd sit next to each other and look like any happily bonded pair. It went on this way for almost a month. Toby showed progress in his willingness to approach her, and Annie appeared to have already decided that Toby was her friend.

I was a nervous wreck the first time I decided to leave them together overnight. They spent all day together and were so peaceful that I saw no reason to separate them. It went swimmingly well. They cohabitated in neutral territory for a



Toby and Annie at peace.

week straight before I felt that it was time for the ultimate test of their bond: I moved them into the space that was formerly solely Toby's. I worried that Toby would be defensive of his home and that Annie would upset him because of her wild tendency to race everywhere, chin everything, and mark up territory. To my surprise, Toby didn't mind at all. He was happy to be home and quickly settled into his little wooden box, his favorite spot for naptime. Annie hopped into it after him. He was surprised to see her there, but he didn't seem upset by her. He simply hopped out of the box and let her stay there. Toby seemed quite fine with letting her have whatever she wanted, and Annie was ecstatic to have a big new place to call home.

After that, Toby and Annie lived together at home as if they had been roommates forever. They figured out where they would each sleep. They figured out whose litter box was whose and that sharing food and space was okay. Annie still demanded grooming and Toby would still give her a bit of attitude, as if to say, "I'll groom you if I feel like it." It was a very peaceful coexistence, but it wasn't quite love. My husband and I were cautiously optimistic for several days but after that, we felt confident that they were bonded.

On an afternoon almost two weeks later, I came into their room and saw the

scene no rabbit owner wants to see. There was black and white fur all over the floor. Both bunnies had their ears perked up and sat on opposite ends of the pen. I checked both bunnies for injuries and thankfully there were none – just some hurt feelings and some lost fur. I debated whether I should separate them for the night and see how badly their relationship had gotten in the morning. I spent the evening refereeing to make sure they wouldn't hurt each other, but they seemed no worse off than before. They continued to eat together and do things as they did before. Before I went to bed, I even sat them together for petting and was met with happy tooth purrs, so I decided to take a chance and leave them together. The next morning, I saw no signs of fighting and by lunch time all of my buns were sleeping. I decided that they might have just had a squabble and moved on from it.

At 3 p.m. that day, I heard banging coming from their room. By the time I rushed there, there was fur all over the floor again, even more than the day before. Their fight resulted in injuries this time. Annie lost patches of fur and she had a small scratch near her eye. Toby lost more fur than she and his left ear was bleeding from a large strip of skin that was torn off. I picked him up and checked him all over again, looking for bite wounds around his belly and his

(Continued on page 10)

Finding a Friend

(Continued from page 9)

rump, but luckily the only place bleeding was his ear. Normally extremely uncooperative and unwilling to be held, Toby now clung to me for safety. I could tell how scared he was as he panted and sunk his little nails into my clothes, holding on tight.

I called our vet's office at Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital and luckily they said they were open and would see Toby as an emergency. Once there, the staff at Catnip was kind and professional and Toby went into an examination room to see Dr. Monica Shepherd. Toby was a good patient and fortunately there was no permanent damage to the structure of his ear. He would heal in one to two weeks. He took pain medication (unhappily) and was given a cream to aid in healing.

Today, Toby's ear is still healing and he doesn't let it bother him. We are all very sad and disappointed that the friendship between Toby and Annie came to an abrupt, though perhaps temporary, end. Annie is still very affectionate and craves attention more than ever from us humans, now that her buddy is not with her. The buns seem to know that there is a void where there used to be a bunny friend, but neither is terribly lonely from the separation. I am still unsure of what sparked the fights but I have learned from the experience. I plan on starting over and giving Toby and Annie another try at bonding once Toby fully recuperates because there was something unmistakably special between them. Bonding bunnies can be a very stressful process but the reward is so great if you are successful. Ultimately it is up to the bunnies, but I'm going to give it my best so Toby can finally have a bunny friend in his life. Until then, I guess Toby will just have to settle for me.

Askmewhy/Sayword

Abigail McCue, a rabbit volunteer, was inspired to write this poem on Nov. 22 after seeing two rabbits, Askmewhy and Sayword, at the shelter. Askmewhy, now called Nugget, and Sayword, renamed Nanette, are awaiting adoption.

Askmewhy.
you didn't love me
Askmewhy
you didn't care
and left me there
in sorrow there
with no one.
Askmewhy
you didn't feed me
why you would leave me
in starving sadness
Askmewhy
this callous madness
and ignorance
and human arrogance
is all I've ever known.

Sayword.
Say one word
that will excuse you
the abuse you
idly practiced every day
when you looked my way
and didn't see me.
Sayword
just one word
and tell me why
I might've died.
Because you were preoccupied?
Because you tried, oh you tried,
so hard, then pushed me aside.
Was it so hard to feed me?
At least
I had my brother with me
I had my sister with me.
Without him
Without her
no one would miss me.
Askmewhy, I didn't cry.
Sayword, I went unheard.
My silent misery
made easier
because I had my brother with me
and I had my sister with me.

Askmewhy
these people who don't know us
show us more love than anyone
ever has. Why they feed us



Photo: Zhen Heinenmann



Photo: Kiralen Olt

Askmewhy and Sayword at AC&C.

and never leave us
staring all alone.

The word is love
I see it in their eyes
when they cry
to see my bones
through my skin.
Sayword
The word is love
I feel it in their hands
when they stand
and hold me
and feel my bones
through my skin.

Now we are fed
we have a bed
and maybe someone
will come
and love us
like you never did.

— Abigail McCue

Holiday Gifts Come Early for Shelter Bunnies

By Mabel Casado

The Manhattan shelter volunteers were pleased to receive two bags full of toys and goodies from nonprofit volunteer group Pillows for Paws NYC in mid-November. Abigail McCue and I thought that it would be nice to send the group a few photos of the rabbits enjoying their donation.

Jen Halpern, Lindsay Bernal Freda and other volunteers from Pillows for Paws were grateful for the photos. They are eager to donate more items for the shelter bunnies, and at events like Whiskers in Wonderland.

Pillows for Paws NYC is a volunteer sewing and knitting/crocheting circle that creates handmade beds and toys for homeless, neglected and abused animals in New York's shelters. Here is a link to their FB page and website.

<https://www.facebook.com/PillowsforPawsNYC>

<http://www.pillowsforpaws.com/>

Photos: Mabel Casado



Leona.



December.



Flossie.

Angels Among Us

By Robert Kulka

Many of us love animals. We may have grown up with them in our homes. Some of us didn't have our first encounter with them until our adult lives. Whatever your personal experience, we all say our own animal partners are somehow special or different. And if your animal companion is a rabbit, you might just be right.

Through the ages, the human animal has built relationships and trust with the other creatures of the earth. We love them, care for them and, yes, we often talk to them. In turn, we believe that they love us, care for us and even talk to us (well, communicate anyway) in return. We attach feelings and mannerisms to their behavior that can be interpreted in our own limited experiences. The poet and anthropologist David M. Guss says, "It was, and still is in many places a widely held belief that the part of the animal we see is not the real part but only a disguise, an outfit it wears when it comes to visit our world. Once home again, it removes that costume and changes back into its true form – a form no different from that of humans."

In my humble opinion, that is an underestimation of what our little friends really are to us. In fact they are something like angels who touch our lives every day. They inspire us. They make us more compassionate and caring in our lives. They teach us things about ourselves, build our courage and even give us a spiritual connection to the world around us. They watch over us. They allow us our mistakes and do not judge us or punish us. They teach us lessons more simply and directly than almost any other relationships we have in life. They show us how to live in the present, move past our ego and explore commitment and love that we may not have been able to express previously. And rabbits, it seems to me, are more like little angels than almost any other creature. They are silent and don't ask much. They are



Photo: Robert Kulka

Skip.

curious and clever and social. They are affectionate – when they want to be. Most important, they are there bringing joy and delight to our sometimes difficult lives.

A little over 12 years ago I had my first experience with a rabbit who was dropped serendipitously into my life. He came along at a time that did not seem to be the best for me to inherit a furry companion. I had lost a friend of 25 years, lost my job, had a relationship on the rocks and had a fledgling business I was trying to launch. Money was an issue. Direction in my life was not clear. The stress, emotions and rough times seemed to be almost more than I could handle.

Yet every morning and every evening a little angel named Skip would make me giggle, laugh out loud and realize that

not everything was bad. Preparing meals for him, finding toys he liked and watching him for hours helped me beyond what I realized. And he was always there waiting for me to get home. Jumping, running and full of binkies to entertain. His lesson to me was to put all my cares aside and to relish the joys of the present. Skip was with me for over 10 years. We moved no less than four times and each time he adjusted to his new home and helped make it feel like a home for me. And when he left me I believe it was because he knew the right time and that I would be ready to handle it, thanks to his lessons.

More recently, a beautiful blue-eyed angel has come into my life. This time she was the one with difficult hurdles to manage.

(Continued on page 13)

Angels

(Continued from page 12)

Photos: Robert Kulka



Lara.

She had her front right leg amputated as a result of a very bad infection. Yet her resilience in the face of adversity, her ability to move past it and be in the present, were an inspiration. It was a lesson in putting ego aside and carrying on with what you have been given. Her affection and energy have been uplifting to me and a reminder through my own challenges that life is good. The joy and laughter she brings to my life cannot be measured in mere words.

These gentle creatures who look to us for their protection return so much more to us than we give them. They know when things are not right. They behave in ways that recognize those times and bestow special communications to us when it is most needed. My girl Lara seemed to understand that I lost my



Buster.



Flossie.

mother two weeks ago. She has come to me more often and sits quietly next to me for long periods of time letting me pet her. She somehow knows when I have sad moments and has come up on the sofa and crawls up on my chest. It is as if she is saying, I am here, I know your heart is sad and I love you. Caring for her and having her here with me has offered consolation and even some laughter.

You may not agree with my take on things, but no one will convince me there isn't something very special about our bunnies. They are sweet angel babies who give us so much for the little happiness we bring to them. Animals are the eyes to our souls. When you look at one of these little ones you see reflected who you are and who you can be. If that isn't the gift of an angel, then what would you call it?

Our Love Affair in Mexico: Blanca Stole Our Hearts

By Clara and Micah Williams

(Editor's Note: Clara and Micah first encountered Blanca in Mexico in early November. The bunny was for sale in a pet store, and she was severely dehydrated.)

Our bunny Elise has a new little sister, Blanca!

Micah and I met this little beauty while on a trip to Mexico City. It was love at first sight and we knew the rabbit had to be part of our family, one way or another. After many "The bunny lady is calling again" talks with airline officials and several "NOs" from their end, we knew this was not going to be an easy mission.

However, with a doctor's note in hand and after several hours in security, we got our baby home and our family welcomed her with open arms. On little Blanca's first day with us, Elise took to her immediately and they played all night!

Elise is such a proud sister, and little Blanca really looks up to her. It's so cute to watch our family's love grow. Blanca also is adored by our kitten, Juliet, a gentle girl found starving in a park.

To be honest, we are sooo lucky to have Elise and Blanca. They light up our lives. My mom calls them her grandbunnies!!

Photo: Micah Williams



Kitten Juliet keeps a benevolent eye on Elise and Blanca.

We Are Looking for Loving Homes

Written and compiled by Kirsten Ott

Jasper

Jasper is a medium-sized black and white lionhead lover boy. This gorgeous guy is very friendly and quite focused on getting the affection he wants. He makes a lot of eye contact to get your attention, and then hunkers right down for petting, shifting his body a bit to get into the most comfortable position possible. He is quite a handsome boy, with great lionhead whiskers (even on his ears!) and a dramatic black mask.

Milo

Milo is a medium-sized all-white bunny with shining pink eyes. He resembles a New Zealand White, but isn't quite large enough to fit that bill. He probably has New Zealand blood, though, because he has a very sweet, cozy, mellow disposition. Milo loves to be petted, and you'll love it just as much, because he has a very soft, fluffy coat.

Shorty

Shorty is a large male Himalayan mix and a total love sponge. This guy greets you at his cage door like a puppy, and searches for your hand by sticking his nose in the air. He loves it when you pet his nice round face and sturdy, strong body. Shorty displays just the slightest hints of Himalayan background – his ears and nose have a very light grey cast. This nice guy would make a good family bunny.

Chase

Chase is a young, medium-sized boy who was found on Seaview Avenue in Brooklyn. This cutie has a bright white coat with strawberry blond ears and markings, and an absolutely adorable little face. Chase has a sweet disposition, and is relatively mellow for a youngster. He makes friends quickly, and likes to be petted while he's hanging out in his litter box.



Milo.



Shorty.



Chase.



Snuggles.



Lucian.



Luna.

Snuggles

Snuggles is a giant chinchilla mix with the ears of a jack rabbit! This guy's beautiful chinchilla-gray coloring and oversized ears – over six inches long! – give him a very impressive look. Snuggles definitely lives up to his name. He loves snuggling and getting lots of cheek rubs. He would make a good family bunny.

Lucian

Lucian is a gorgeous medium-sized lionhead male who was discovered in a building. This guy may have been abandoned, but he's definitely lucky when it comes to looks and personality! Lucian has a beautiful cream-colored coat with deeper brown shading on his ears, muzzles, feet and tail. His nose is the darkest thing on his body – it's like a big Hershey kiss! His coloring brings to mind one of those old sepia photographs. In addition to being a looker, Lucian is a mensch: he's very friendly, easygoing and affectionate.

(Continued on page 15)

Looking for Loving Homes

(Continued from page 14)



Rocko.



Westbury.



Duchess.

Luna

Luna is a lovely large dark agouti female. This lady is pretty easygoing – she settles right down for cuddling when you approach her. As you pet Luna, she'll gradually lower her head till it's as flat as a buckwheat pancake. However, she will protest if you pet her back or butt, so be advised that those are no-go zones! Luna has a noble-looking face with a long, somewhat pointy nose.

Betsy

Betsy is a large Californian bunny who was found in Riverside Park around



Penelope.



Butter.

148th Street. This girl responds to new people and situations with caution; she likes to hide, smushing her face adorably into the corner of her cage or against her litter box. With the right approach, however, she'll become a true snuggle bunny, letting you pet her creamy coat and chocolate brown ears. Once she's decided she likes you, she'll wiggle her big brown nose like crazy every time she sees you. Betsy would benefit from a bunny partner.

Rocko

Rocko is a medium-sized boy with an unusual, beautiful coat of light brown and cream. This guy wasn't properly fed by his previous owner, because he needs to lose some weight. But other than that, he's in good health, and his behavior indicates that he's more than ready for his forever home. Rocko is very sweet-tempered and eager to make friends; he loves to have his little head stroked. This boy will need a proper diet and lots of room to run and play.

Westbury

Westbury is a super-friendly large male bunny who was found – guess where? – in Westbury. This guy is definitely a “people rabbit.” He's very excited to

receive kind visitors and will hop right over when you knock on his cage door. Westbury has one of the softest coats on record; it's mostly bright white with some orange and brown markings, including fun brown patches on either side of his nose. This jolly fellow would make a good family bunny.

Dutchess

Dutchess is a lovely medium-sized Dutch bunny who was found in Queens. Despite her name, Dutchess does not stand on ceremony – she'll come right up to greet you when you come to her door. She adores petting, and raises her nose into the air cutely as you stroke her head and ears. And no wimpy petting for this girl – she likes a strong, firm hand! Dutchess has a gorgeous coat of white and a shade of brown so yummy it'll make your mouth water.

Penelope

Penelope is a medium-sized all-brown bunny with both beauty and brains. This girl has a very intelligent face with glamorous dark eyes; when she cocks her head and looks at you, you can really see her thinking! Penelope is friendly, too – she'll come right up to you for affection, and loves to have her head and ears stroked. But her beauty is perhaps the most notable thing about Penelope: she's a real looker.

Butter

Butter is a medium-sized brown and white Dutch male who was found on Second Ave. and 107th St. This guy is the quintessential Energizer Bunny! He goes absolutely berserk when he gets a chance to run around and play, dashing around, binkying madly, and gleefully demolishing all obstacles in his path. This super-active guy will obviously need tons of space and stimulating stuff to play with. Butter will settle down for a bit of petting, but at this stage of his life exercise and play are clearly his top priorities.

Help Rescued Rabbits With Your Purchases

As you shop online this month – and throughout the year – remember that Rabbit Rescue & Rehab can benefit from your visits to the Web. There are several programs available to enable charitable giving, including iGive.com and Petfinder's Sponsor-A-Pet, and all it takes is an extra click or two to indicate that you want a portion of your purchase price to go to RR&R. The latest program is from Amazon, and here are the details.

AmazonSmile: At the end of October, Amazon launched a charity program that donates 0.5% of all eligible

purchases to organizations of your choice. How to start:

1. Go to <http://smile.amazon.com>.
2. Log in to your www.amazon.com account as normal.
3. Choose Rabbit Rescue and Rehab registered in New Fairfield, CT, as your organization to support. Once you choose a charity, it will pop up at the top of the <http://smile.amazon.com> page every time you go there to shop.
4. Remember that whenever you shop on Amazon, you must do it from

<http://smile.amazon.com> instead of www.amazon.com. Only purchases made from starting point <http://smile.amazon.com> will count toward donations.

There is no cap on the amount Amazon will donate, and almost every physical product sold by the company is eligible, which means tens of millions of items. Digital goods are not included, but that may come in the future, Amazon says.

Everything else about the Amazon online shopping experience stays the same, including the prices, shopping cart, wishlists and shipping options.

Photo: Amber Spradlin



This is Veronica, who celebrated her third adoptiversary on Nov. 27. Amber Spradlin says, "Adelmo and I, and Thumperino, are thankful to RR&R everyday for bringing this little angel puff into our lives! In December, she will be visiting a library in Westchester as part of a holiday reading program. She's a very busy lady." Amber used Veronica and Thumperino as inspiration for her books about the adventures of a house rabbit. For more information, go to www.hocksout.com.

New Rescue Website For Rabbit Lovers

By Will Leung

I have been working with others on an idea to help rescue animals, and I've started the process of creating a nonprofit organization. The main website is: <http://1charityaday.org/>, which will be registered as a nonprofit group with 501c status. The site isn't fully operational yet, but it should be launched soon.

The subsite is <http://1rescueaday.org/>, which is now live but without its full functioning capability. A Facebook link at the top of the page enables you to "like" the Facebook page.

The ultimate goal is to have a national system where people can donate to their local rescues, or in our case, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab/NYC House Rabbit Society.

As we continue to add to these websites, we are using them right now to help some of our rescued rabbits with immediate medical needs. Our pilot rabbit was Divina, and Ariel is now featured: <http://1rescueaday.org/?wpsdeals=rabbit>

(Continued on page 17)

CELEBRITY PHOTOS

Photo: Brooke Perrin



Louise (fka Pearl) and June (fka Opal).

Photo: Andrew Chen



Candy and Momo are very much in love.

Photo: Jill Salvatore



Stella.

Photo: Robert Kallka



Buster.

Photo: Kerstin Aumann



Snowball and Luna after Thanksgiving.

New Rescue Website *(Continued from page 16)*

We will find ways to set up a dedicated donation site for special-needs buns or injured buns in our foster-care system but not on Petfinder.

If other volunteers know of buns with special needs who need assistance in this way, please consider this as a new resource.

Please spread the word by posting the link elsewhere, and mention this new website to your fellow volunteers and adopters.

A Tale of Two Buns

By Tracy Nuzzo

To the casual observer, Tuxedo and Cleo had almost nothing in common.

Tuxedo, a small dwarf bunny with tiny ears, looked nothing like mini lop Cleo, whose long ears framed her face. I suspected Tuxedo's eyesight wasn't good. In her newly acquired wheels, she raced through the house and slammed into every object, inanimate or not, never once stopping to analyze the wreckage in her wake. Cleo, on the other hand, seemed as if she had seen too much in her lifetime. Her sad eyes betrayed a past no bunny should know. This summer, the lives of Tuxedo and Cleo intersected in ways I find both troubling and heartwarming.

First, in late July, Tuxedo was found, abandoned, in a New York City park by a Good Samaritan. She was brought to the shelter and was checked out by the volunteers, who determined she was in bad shape. She was rushed by Kirsten Ott to the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine.

I was initially unaware of Tuxedo's situation because I had my own new (and also abandoned) bunny, Ariel, to take care of. In early August, we brought Ariel to see Anthony Pilny at CAEM because we weren't successful in our battle against her urine scald. One of our favorite vet techs, Katie-Jo, told us about Tuxedo, who was also battling urine scald. Katie-Jo brought Tuxedo into our exam room and I was immediately taken with her sunny disposition and her constant kisses.

We met with Dr. Pilny and left the office armed with info and some new meds to help Ariel. I also left with the idea that maybe Tuxedo should come and stay with us, as a foster. Within a week, Tuxedo joined our family.

Early in her stay, we noticed Tuxedo had frequent loose stools and a terrible smell.

A quick trip back to CAEM with a fresh stool sample revealed Tuxedo had parasites. That was quickly cured with medicine. Another issue was that Tuxedo had hind-leg weakness. She never hopped; instead she seemed to walk. Sure, with every few steps, she would stumble and fall down, but she would get right back up without missing a beat. We wanted to help her so we ordered her some wheels from www.dogstogo.net and after they arrived, she took to them like a duck to water.

By late September, Cindy Stutts asked if we could take on another foster. Cleo had been at CAEM for quite some time. Found outside a Dunkin' Donuts shop on 119th Street and First Avenue, Cleo was brought to the shelter. Much like Tuxedo, she was examined by the shelter volunteers and determined to be in bad shape. Aside from urine scald and sore hocks, it was determined she also suffered from flystrike, an infestation by maggots.

Cleo had stayed at CAEM for more than two weeks and seemed to be past the worst of the flystrike by the time I brought her home. She settled in nicely to our then-empty Petwerks condo. The only residual malady I observed was her sore hocks, which limited her ability to jump in and out of her litter box. I gave her a shallow box and for a time, everything seemed all right again.

Tuxedo was the first of my new fosters to be spayed, and her surgery revealed that she was much older than we originally believed. The following week, Cleo went for her spay surgery. Post-spay, I limited Cleo to one level of the condo and when she didn't use even her low litter box, I felt maybe the surgery site was sore. When she urinated on herself, I simply bathed and dried her, as I had Ariel and Tuxxy so many times before. My goal, always, was to ensure her feet were dry at all times.

Photos: Tracy Nuzzo



Tuxedo.



Cleo.

With the week, I became aware of Cleo's new posture. For lack of a better description, she seemed "flat-footed." In a resting position, she splayed her legs to the side, avoiding putting any pressure on her feet. Almost overnight, she seemed to be losing weight.

Alarmed, I brought her to see Dr. Pilny and the diagnosis was devastating. Cleo had a systemic infection, due to her sore hocks. The infection now circulated in her bloodstream, throughout her body. Cleo needed injectable penicillin and Metacam, but we feared the infection was too widespread.

I brought Cleo home and nursed her around the clock. I held her constantly, as a means to ensure she would have no weight on her precious feet and suddenly, Cleo became a kissing bunny! I would hold her and massage her – trying to help her survive yet another terrible situation.

After five days, Cindy advised me that Nina Katzenstein, another volunteer, would be able to help out with Cleo's injections. Rather reluctantly, I turned Cleo over, knowing she would be getting excellent care, but finding it difficult to say goodbye. Before Cleo left the house, I gathered up all the bunnies and took a

(Continued on page 19)

Two Buns

(Continued from page 18)

picture of my household's other bunnies – Kelsey, Max, Ariel and Tuxedo – surrounding Cleo and cheering her on.

Reports from Nina were hopeful and pictures received showed Cleo eating and making friends with Nina's kittens. I dared to hope our girl would pull through. However, on Oct. 27, a week after Cleo left our home, I got the dreaded call. During the night, Cleo had suffered a seizure and she was gone. We had hoped and prayed, but it seemed that "all the king's horses and all the king's men" couldn't overcome the tragic way Cleo had been so cruelly dumped on a NYC street. It was a bitter and defeating loss that still stays with me.

Despite my incredible anguish, life for the other bunnies continued. Ariel had received a generous grant from Animal Medical Center so she had to go to weekly physical therapy. Tuxedo was still zooming all over the house on her wheels. Kelsey and Max, thankfully healthy, still needed me.

Halloween afternoon, Ariel had a rehab session so we got swept up in the Halloween spirit and decorated Ariel's carrier with spider webs and stuffed pumpkins. There was still a lot to celebrate, even while missing Cleo. Later that night, as was the usual routine, Tuxedo got her butt bath and it was always a routine she adored. Tuxxy loved being clean so the whole process of cleaning and drying elicited at least 800 kisses from her. Once clean, I put her back into the pen she shared with Kelsey and Max. Kelsey and Max have been bonded nearly two years, but they had a soft spot for Tuxxy – well, when she wasn't mowing them down with her cart! At night, I knew I could put her with the boys and they would groom her and watch over her.

After midnight, I heard a foreign sound from their pen. Max was growling.

Photo: Tracy Nuzzo



Circle of friends. Clockwise, from bottom: Ariel, Max, Kelsey, Tuxedo surround Cleo, center.

Irritated, I got out of bed and saw him lunging at Tuxedo. I had never witnessed this type of aggression from him so I scooped Tuxedo into my arms, reprimanded him, and headed back to bed with her. Just as I sat on the bed, Tuxedo exhaled audibly. I had been stroking her and then suddenly I realized she wasn't breathing! After that one long breath, she had just slipped away. That must have been why Max was agitated.

In denial, I was begging her to breathe. She hadn't been with me very long, but I just couldn't imagine life without Tuxedo. Sobbing, I held her tiny body as I rocked back and forth, wanting more time with her. My littlest ray of sunshine hadn't screamed or convulsed. She just left us, and I was devastated.

Cleo and Tuxedo were both abandoned in New York and left to die by those

who were supposed to adore and cherish them. Both girls suffered as a result of being dumped. Thankfully, they both were cared for by the amazing people at Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine. By some fluke, they both were assigned to my home, yet hopped into my heart on their own terms. Cleo and Tuxedo were both part of our crazy family of full-time and foster bunnies, but they were family to us. In their good times and bad, they were cuddled, snuggled, bathed, well-fed and adored. In the end, they both died in the same week, and they broke our hearts.

To the casual observer, Tuxedo and Cleo may have very little in common – but through fate, when it mattered, they had everything in common. We miss Cleo and Tuxedo desperately.

Letters From Adopters

Photos: Alysa Suero



Noodles.

I Honestly Thought to Myself, 'What Would Thump Do?'

I have been wanting to write to Thump/RR&R to thank you for giving me the courage to rescue an abandoned rabbit last year near my home here in Philadelphia.

On a hot August day I received a call from my building's doorman that there was a rabbit spotted in a dog park across the street. Having two rabbits of my own, I knew that the bunny's fate, if left unaided, was grim.

I honestly thought to myself, 'What would Thump do?' So I grabbed a pair of gloves and a laundry basket and set out to find and rescue the bunny.



Rootbeer and Schnitzel.

Long story short, I was successful! She was weak, had ear mites, head tilt, and scabs from dog bites. But she's fully recovered from all of her trauma and now happily resides with my mother and another bunny (indeed we are a bunny-loving family) and we all love her so much.

If it weren't for the stories of rescues in Thump, I would never have had the information or the courage to attempt her rescue.

Thank you for all you and your fellow volunteers do!

Your fan in Philadelphia,

Alysa Suero



Simpson.

P.S. Attached are photographs of our family's four honey bunnies. Noodles (we think she's an English Spot) is the bunny I rescued from the dog park near my home in Philly. She now resides in suburban Philadelphia with my mother and Simpson (he was adopted from the Delaware chapter of House Rabbit Society). My bonded pair (each adopted from local rabbit rescues) are Rootbeer (the white and brown bunny) and Schnitzel (the all-brown bunny). They reside with me in Philadelphia. All four are free-rein bunnies and are loved to the fullest! Without the inspiration and confidence I took from the rescue stories in Thump, Noodles wouldn't be with us today.

Photos: Rea Dabelic



Bunz and Trixie.

Bunz and Trixie

Rea Dabelic, who adopted Bunz and Trixie, gave us this great update in early October.

I am so happy to have adopted Bunz and Trixie! After fostering their brothers, Ben and Jerry (formerly Conrad and Ross), I was asked by Cindy Stutts whether I would like to foster these two adorable babies. Of course, I agreed.

When I brought them home, I immediately knew that I was going to adopt them. They are the sweetest couple of bunnies, with big personalities that have taken over my heart.

They love to explore new places and climb on everything they can. Trixie's favorite spot is the windowsill, where she can watch the world go by and munch on fresh herbs from the window garden. Bunz loves to cuddle and will get a little jealous if Trixie is receiving more attention, promptly running over to put his head under my hand so I will pet him, too. I look forward to their adorable antics every day, and hope to have them in my life for many more years to come.

Best regards,

Rea and
the CinnaBuns, Bunz and Trixie

(Continued on page 21)

Photo: Julia Rivera



Manny.

Manny

This is Manny's adoptive grandma. I wanted to update you on Manny. Well, he is adorable, friendly and very comfortable in his surroundings.

He sleeps in a huge C&C cage, although we are thinking of expanding it even more. He hops and explores the room outside his cage, always with supervision.

He loves his greens.

Julia Rivera

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(")_(")

This is Bunny. Copy and paste bunny into your signature to help him gain world domination.

Photo: Nais-An Perrier



Tootsie.

Tootsie

Tootsie, formerly known as LL Cool B (Puff), was adopted by Nais-An Perrier, who sent us this nice email in October.

We have named him Tootsie. We give him a lot of vegetables. He is very cute and fluffy. Tootsie loves his new home. My whole family cuddles him so he has a lot of attention and people to give him food. We give him one small piece of banana per day.

Tootsie was running and making a lot of noise. I started petting him. He lay down and started sleeping. I hope this means he is comfortable around me.

Nais-An

Photo: Brianna Husey



Bogie with Brianna's roommate, Kristian.

Bogie

Bogie was adopted by Brianna in October, and he is now happily enjoying his new home.

Bogie is wonderful. He was very frightened and cage protective when we first met him at Petco, and only two days later you'd think he was a completely different rabbit. It took him a while to come out of his crate, but now he is just flopping and binkying everywhere. My roommate, Kristian, who was hesitant at first, has now fallen in love... A photo of "the boys" is attached.

Brianna

Photo: Alisha Hawrylyzyn



Almond Apricot and Chocolate.

Almond Apricot and Chocolate

Almond Apricot was adopted in late September as a partner for Chocolate. Alisha reports that the two bunnies are getting along well.

Almond Apricot (formally known as Athena or Tippy) has made a wonderful addition to our bunny family.

Chocolate was adopted from an abusive home when he was about 3 months old and has been skittish and a bit unfriendly until he met the love of his life, Almond.

Chocolate and Almond took less than two weeks to bond and are as happy as can be. Each time I come into "their" room (also known as my bedroom), they greet me with love and affection unless, of course, they are busy grooming each other or tearing apart the New York Times I leave carelessly next to my bed.

Love is a powerful and wonderful tool that can bring happiness to even the smallest of beings on Mother Earth, which is evident through my bunnies. If you have a bunny who needs a friend, I

(Continued on page 22)

Letters (Continued from page 21)

urge you to adopt a second rabbit to truly experience the difference you can make in your bunny's life.

Alisha Hawrylyzyn

Photos: Caroline Tzelios



Lilly enjoys family time.

Lilly

Lilly, a former AC&C bunny, was adopted recently by Caroline Tzelios of Westchester, who wrote this letter about Lilly's new home.

After our 7-year-old bunny, Cinnamon, passed away in mid-September, we knew we wanted another bunny right away. Cinnamon had been a great pet and the house seemed empty without him. We heard that the Pets Alive Animal Shelter in Elmsford had some bunnies up for adoption, so we filled out all the forms and were delighted to hear back quickly that we had been approved to adopt.

The next day, my 14-year-old son and I headed over and met the bunnies. At the time, the shelter only had Opie and Lilly available for immediate adoption, so Peter played with both of them. Opie was adorable but did not seem eager to interact with Peter right away. On the other hand, Lilly was very curious about Peter and seemed intent on sniffing him thoroughly. She allowed herself to be petted and was very curious to see what

was in my purse. Although I knew right away that she was coming home with us, Peter thought about it a bit longer. I had fallen in love with her bright red eyes immediately. After we talked, we agreed to adopt her.

Lilly came home with us that same day. My 17-year-old daughter had prepped Cinnamon's old cage and set up a litter box for Lilly. I'm happy to say that Lilly seemed to approve of her new home right away. She explored Peter's whole room and happily jumped onto his bed and lay on the pillow. Since that first day, Lilly has been happy. She is very well litter-boxed trained and has a healthy appetite. She's been to the vet for a full checkup and got a clean bill of health. She starts every morning with a bowl of salad and then munches on Timothy hay all day. She has rabbit food, too, but only eats that when her favorite foods are all gone. She enjoys having the run of a large area enclosed by a play pen but she enjoys when she's let loose and gets to relax on the bed! Yes, Lilly is a bit spoiled – but happily so – by our family!

Caroline Tzelios

Pyunta

Pyunta was adopted by Carolyn Fleisher, who sent us this letter in October. She now lives on the West Coast.

It's hard to believe the little Pyunta is celebrating his fifth year here with me. I don't know how he does it, but every year gets even better.

This morning he gave me a little shiatsu massage in honor of his special day.

Though I say it every year, I can't thank you enough for answering all my questions back then. The little guy has made such a lovely difference in my life...and by his actions, I can tell the feelings are mutual.

Here's to the next five healthy great years.

Cheers,

Carolyn

Photo: Christy Bencosme



Kira.

Kira

Kira was adopted in early September by Christy and Omar. Christy sent us this recent email about Kira's adventures.

We just wanted to update you on how Kira is doing. She is progressing quite well, considering how skittish she was. She recognizes my smell and lets me pet her indefinitely. We still have to be careful in approaching her; a too-strong approach will send her running. But otherwise, she eats treats from our hands, is confident in our room, and enjoys exploring new stimuli. Her eating habits are healthy and so is her waste.

We got her a wood plank from Petland that she has chewed up, but now she has lost interest in it. We are currently brainstorming on DIY toys. We have already provided her with boxes with shredded newspaper inside which she LOVES.

Hope all is well,

Omar, Christy and Kira

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.

Long Island:

Jennifer Saver, DVM

Laura George, DVM

Kristen Miller, DVM

Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital
2056 Jericho Turnpike, New Hyde Park,
NY 11040 • (516) 877-7080

Heidi Hoefler, 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

Manhattan:

Becky Campbell, DVM

Deborah Levison, DVM

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

Katherine Quesenberry, DVM

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

Alexandra Wilson, DVM

Anthony Pilny, DVM

Cynthia J. Brown, DVM

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

Shachar Malka, DVM

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

Westchester County:

Gil Stanzione, DVM

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

Laurie Hess, DVM

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

Licensed HRS Representatives

Mary Cotter, HRS Licensed Educator,
Chapter Manager, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab,
mec@cloud9.net, (914) 337-6146, rabbitcare.org

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

Cindy Stutts, HRS Licensed Educator,
Manager NYC Metro Rabbit Program,
bygolyoly@yahoo.com, (646) 319-4766,
nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com

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

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

Kerstin Aumann, HRS Licensed Educator,
NYC/AC&C Volunteer,
nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com, nycacc.org

Gabrielle LaManna, HRS Educator-in-
training at large, New Fairfield, CT,
gabbysbunnies@yahoo.com, (203) 746-7548

Jennifer Saver, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

Laura George, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

THUMP December 2013

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

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them. Mailing address for contributions to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab: Gabrielle LaManna, 7 Carriage Lane, New Fairfield, CT 06812. For contributions to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to www.longislandrabbittrescue.org.

ADOPTABLE RABBITS

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

To adopt a rabbit in **New York City**, contact Cindy Stutts at bygolyoly@yahoo.com or call her at 646-319-4766. On **Long Island**, contact Nancy Schreiber at nschreibmd@aol.com or at 516-510-3637 (www.longislandrabbittrescue.org), and in **Westchester** contact Mary Cotter at mec@cloud9.net or 914-337-6146 (www.rabbitcare.org).

The rabbit volunteers' email address in New York City is nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

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

You can also visit Animal Care & Control of NYC (AC&C) at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues.

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

Bunny speed dates can be arranged by appointment only on weekend afternoons either at Columbus Square or Union Square. Please contact Cindy Stutts at bygolyoly@yahoo.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 Mary Cotter at mec@cloud9.net or Cindy Stutts at nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com.

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