



NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS OCTOBER 2014

The Poof's Thymoma Success Story

By Donna Sheridan

After having rabbit companions for over 25 years, and experiencing the normal highs and lows that come along with routine rabbit health issues and cures, I experienced something in 2014 that was upsetting, draining, exhausting and, in the end, joyous. My 8-year-old female spayed rabbit, She-Poof, also known as the Poof, was diagnosed with a very large thymoma at the beginning of January 2014. The Poof had in the past suffered from bouts of sneezing that were kept in check with an occasional course of Orbax. This past January, the Orbax did not work and, in fact, her breathing seemed to be getting worse.

Dr. Kristen Miller of Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital examined the Poof and suggested an X-ray, which revealed



Photo: Donna Sheridan

Poof today, looking pretty good.

the large thymoma pushing the Poof's heart all the way to the side of her chest. A thymoma is a tumor in the thymus which can take over the chest cavity, squeezing the heart and lungs out of the way as it grows. It is often a death sentence for rabbits, and thymoma is a word that rabbit owners fear like no other. A veterinary huddle ensued and, on the recommendations of the team of vets at

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Team Margot

By Tracy Nuzzo

I hate summertime, although it's practically blasphemous to admit that in New York! In truth, I love the longer days, sunshine and late sunsets, but summer months are the cruelest for rescue bunnies. Count 90 days past Easter, and you find people dumping well-intentioned "gifts" in the city's parks – with terrible results. As someone who fosters rabbits, I brace for impact and dread the hot summer months.

In mid-July, I heard about a very injured and park-abandoned bunny that I anticipated fostering. In fact, 10 days later, I went to pick up this bunny, named Margot, at the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine. My heart broke as I entered CAEM and was told Margot couldn't be taken for

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Road Trip to L.A.: Taking Our Menagerie With Us

By Sarah Willson

My first thought when it became clear we were moving from New York to Los Angeles: What about the rabbits? Assuming long-distance travel was safe for Juno and Owney, they would need to make the 2,700-mile trip with us.

They were healthy, stable and extremely bonded (mother and son), so we figured they'd be up to the challenge. Two months before moving day, the research began.

Our first decision was to choose between flying or renting a car, and the Internet seemed to slightly favor air travel for

rabbits – only when absolutely necessary, of course. But we have rodents as well, and since they aren't allowed in an airplane cabin, we decided to take the whole menagerie on a summer road trip. I worried that the rabbits would get

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Our masthead bunny, fastidiously clean Harold, was rescued from the street in Wantagh, and had been so neglected that he was suffering from maggots. Thankfully, we got him in time, and he was treated at Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital and recovered. He is now the healthy, handsome guy you see here. Available for adoption to a loving home through Long Island Rabbit Rescue (information@longislandrabbitrescue.org).

Photo illustration by Mary Ann Maier with photos by Mike Miranda.

Thymoma (Continued from page 1)

Catnip & Carrots, led by Dr. Jennifer Saver, the Poof and I set off to the Animal Medical Center for an evaluation. Dr. Katherine Quesenberry recommended a CT scan and additional tests to determine if the thymoma could be aspirated and possibly drained to the point where the Poof could be reasonably comfortable.

The thymoma could not be aspirated, and I was then presented with options for treatment. Opening her chest for surgery left little chance for survival. Radiation treatment seemed to offer her the best chance for a cure with the fewest side effects. Different types of radiation were offered, with Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) being the most accurate one, and also the most costly. IMRT offered advance planning and multiple beams of radiation contoured to the tumor to give an accurate dose of radiation with minimal damage to healthy surrounding tissue.

The Poof had been with me literally since birth. She was born at ACC in Brooklyn when I organized the rabbit adoption program there from 2004 to 2008, and I took her and her mommy and siblings home to nurse and grow up. She has been with me ever since. It only seemed fair that I give her the best chance to live that I could offer, after all our years together. She was not a young rabbit by any means, but I felt we had many more years left together, and I would not be discouraged by the cost. I also chose not to be discouraged by her prognosis, which was six to nine months of life, depending on the success of the treatments.

After telephone consultations with AMC's Radiation Oncology vet, Dr. Rachel St-Vincent, I signed on for IMRT radiation. The first week was very difficult as the Poof was sedated for a long time for the initial planning necessary to ensure accurate placement of the radiation to follow. She came home in a daze, and stumbled into her fuzzy hidey-house and didn't move for a long time. That proved to be the worst side effect that would occur.

After that, the Poof breezed through six radiation sessions during January and February, with no major ill effects. Dr. St-Vincent adjusted the Poof's arrival time at AMC each week so that the Poof was able to spend the smallest amount of time in the company of dogs and cats also awaiting radiation. During the course of treatments, the Poof did lose some weight, and I coaxed her to eat alfalfa, oats, pignoli nuts and other fattening treats that are normally off-limits to my healthy rabbits.

Approximately two months after the end of treatments, the Poof went back to AMC for a re-check. The new image showed that the thymoma was "significantly reduced" to the point that she could be "considered cured," something that I didn't think was possible. She was released from AMC's care and is back under the wonderful care of the Catnip & Carrots vets.

Over the summer, the Poof continued to improve, albeit slowly. Her urine had a slightly toxic smell that finally began to dissipate in early summer. I had shaved a patch of fur on her back when she had required some shots back in January, and it remained bare for at least seven months, due to her struggling immune system. In July, that patch suddenly sprouted and grew a beautiful coat of gleaming orange fur quickly, like seedlings in spring.

Still, her appetite remained slightly below normal, and I continued with the oats, pignolis and other treats. One of the strangest side effects of her condition or treatment was that she lost her taste for pellets, and it was very hard to make up for those lost calories in a healthy way. By accident, I discovered that if I sprinkled a tiny bit of water on her pellets, she would eat them, even though she never liked Critical Care. After that, I watered her pellets daily, and she ate them.

In mid-September, the Poof decided that the time was right for her to start eating her pellets in the normal dry manner again. I still give her extra pignolis anyway, because she has come to expect them. Her weight is holding steady at 3 pounds, 10 ounces.

As time went on, I realized at some point that I was no longer in a state of



Poof with diploma after last radiation session.

constant worry over the Poof. The Poof requires regular grooming and clipping, and for the longest time I was afraid to do it, and I depended on the kindness of Dr. Saver and Dr. Laura George, who gently tended to her thick coat during Poof weigh-ins. I am now finally able to groom her again without fear of stressing her out. I also no longer fear the nine-month mark or any other mark. I have stopped looking at the months pass on the calendar and worrying how long she will live, and if she will survive past a certain point. I guess I can say that we are both cured of the thymoma. The Poof had a checkup on Sept. 25 with Dr. Saver, who said she's still in great health.

Obviously this may not be the outcome for everyone, but should any of you be unfortunate enough to receive a thymoma diagnosis, I urge you not to lose hope. I recommend you consult with the vets at Catnip & Carrots, to whom I owe much gratitude, and Dr. St-Vincent at AMC. Apart from the first week, the Poof suffered no discomfort and bounced out of her carrier upon returning home each week after treatment.

I must confess that this course of treatment came at great cost. From the first exam at Catnip, through the radiation, and to the final images that proclaimed the thymoma was gone, the cost was over \$8,000. I do not regret spending that money at all, because the Poof may have a normal life expectancy. As I type this, I can hear her eating hay nearby. My wallet may currently resemble the thymoma (significantly reduced...) but my heart is very full.

Road Trip (Continued from page 1)

overheated, refuse to eat, or somehow chew through their carrier and escape at the first rest stop, but our vet reassured me with his own story of a multi-animal cross-country trip. I knew Juno and Owney – surely they were resilient enough to get through four long days on the road.

With all the obscure information on the Web, you'd expect there to be more tales of rabbit road trips, but the closest thing I found was the occasional story of an all-day drive to a rabbit show. So I gathered all my knowledge about rabbits and decided to improvise. I stocked up on supplies: Pedialyte, baby thermometer, a variety of nonperishable food options, and a travel carrier big enough for both rabbits to stretch out in. Online sources were split on what kind of carrier to use: traditional plastic crate or sturdy wire cage? I ended up choosing a cat-sized crate with a second door on the top, which can make it easier to handle a pet.

We didn't own a family car, so we couldn't take them on practice trips in their carrier, as rabbit experts recommend. Instead, we set up the carrier near their pen so they'd have a few weeks to get used to it before the trip. Leaving a handful of pellets inside piqued their interest, and Juno even started taking naps in the crate on occasion. Success!

When moving day arrived, we packed the car full of supplies: litter box, Carefresh, plenty of hay, clean towels and blankets, and a cooler full of greens and treats. Finally, we loaded up the animals and said goodbye to our old home.

I'd read that rabbits can be terrified by the sound of the radio or the car starting, so we tried our best to avoid strange noises, but we knew it might be scary for them no matter what. They stayed silent in their carrier through smooth highways, rainstorms, road construction, and showed no change in behavior when we eventually got bored and turned on the radio on day three. We initially

Photos: Sarah Willson



Juno in a bathroom in Omaha.



Juno and Owney in a hotel room in Colorado.



Juno on the carrier in its new location.

planned to stop and check on them every two hours, as Internet sources suggested, but since they didn't seem inclined to eat or drink at rest stops anyway (at least on the first day), we took less frequent breaks and made sure to leave fresh greens in their carrier for moisture. Sure enough, occasionally during a quiet moment we'd hear one of them crunching ever-so-gently on a lettuce leaf. Classic prey animals.

I kept expecting some kind of fiasco, but thankfully there was none. Owney scared us by refusing to drink any water on the first day, but he got more comfortable by the next morning, and both rabbits adjusted to the routine by day two. On the first night, we stayed with friends in Indiana, and the rabbits were understandably nervous about the scent of the cats and dogs in the house. But we spent the next two nights in pet-friendly hotels, where Juno and Owney made themselves right at home. We'd planned to put fresh towels in their carrier every day, assuming they wouldn't be interested in using their litter box at a gas station, but we must have underestimated how well-trained they were. Every day of the trip, the towels were surprisingly clean, which was a bit concerning until we saw them heartily making full use of their litter box at night, munching on hay as if nothing were out of the ordinary.

In Omaha, we let them explore the hotel room for a couple hours and then confined them to their crate during the night, which they were perfectly happy about. On the last night, in Colorado, we gave them more space by fencing off the area by the sink, which seemed like a good idea until I woke up at 4 a.m. to the sound of ripping paper: the rabbits were excitedly shredding the bill that had just appeared under our door.

In the end, all that planning paid off, and the trip was a huge success. The rabbits were grateful to be out of the car when we reached our destination – Juno slept like a log for hours. We didn't get to do any sightseeing during our trip, since we didn't want the animals to get overheated or stressed a minute longer than they had to be. But their antics were enough to make it a memorable journey, and we have a newfound respect for their bravery and resilience. Juno and Owney now have a souvenir of their time on the road: their travel carrier (minus the door) is now a permanent fixture in their pen, and they love sleeping in it all day like a makeshift burrow, which leads us to believe the trip wasn't too traumatic for them after all.

Margot (Continued from page 1)

fostering. In fact, she was in such rough shape that it was unclear if she would survive.

I was in tears as I sent a text message to Cindy Stutts, head of NYC Metro Rabbits. I explained I had gone to collect Margot and was informed she might not make it through the night. Cindy's response had me intrigued: "Don't count Margot out just yet."

My "Rest in Peace" mind-set changed immediately to, "You can do it, Margot!" It was a mantra I silently repeated all day and night (and then endlessly, in the weeks to come). I found myself already invested in a bunny I hadn't yet seen.

Margot didn't die the day I had gone to get her. She didn't die the next day either. Almost a week later, I was asked to pick Margot up, and this time I knew she would be leaving with me. Margot was making the most of her terrible situation and although she wasn't out of the woods, by any stretch, this girl bunny was fighting for another day.

Aug 3: I arrived at CAEM to take Margot home. I was handed a super-skinny bunny with severe head tilt, and her entire hind end was covered in bandages. I instantly felt like we'd been friends for years. I'd loved and respected her since before we'd met. I finally had the courage to ask – what happened to sweet Margot?

July 16: Margot was in Orchard Beach, part of Pelham Bay Park. She was mercilessly attacked by a pack of dogs. Park rangers said they heard loud noises, and they rushed to free Margot and then transported her to the Manhattan shelter. Animal Care & Control felt Margot was too far gone. They did report, however, that she was a fighter – and Cindy Stutts championed this bunny who had no one else in her corner. Margot was sent to CAEM at Cindy's direction.

Aside from Margot's open wounds from dog bites, Margot was emaciated, had

Photo: Tracy Nuzzo



Margot.

poor blood test results, and was suffering from a devastating case of fly-strike. Margot also had very severe head tilt. Her hind end was covered in bandages, resembling a diaper. She had undergone surgery, but there just wasn't enough skin to close her wounds.

I brought the broken bunny home and admired how hard Margot was fighting to survive, even if it was for just one more day. I spent that first night sleeping inside her ex-pen. There were two choices – either join Margot's team or get the heck out of her way!

I had never fostered a head-tilt bunny so I reached out to Thea Harting, one of our stellar volunteers who has a lot of

experience with head-tilt fosters. I was unnerved by the fact Margot rolled and tumbled, trying to get her balance, but Thea talked me through it all.

Despite Margot's jarring appearance, I was most surprised by the "normalcy" with which Margot lived her life. She had a ferocious appetite and was easily able to gain the weight her frame, and low iron count, desperately needed. Margot also was playful; she began running the bunny 500 inside her ex-pen. She was able to change direction whenever she chose. Some head-tilt bunnies seem to chase their own tails, circling. Margot went wherever she

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Margot (Continued from page 4)

pleased. I lined the pen with some fluffy stuffed animals that she sometimes groomed. There was no reason to feel sorry for this bunny, because there wasn't an inkling of sadness within Margot.

The original catchphrase that I said before I ever met this girl was repeated constantly: "You can do it, Margot." Initially, it was a plea. Once I saw Margot in action, it was a statement of fact.

Bringing Margot home with me meant committing to a lot of vet visits. Margot would need to return to CAEM every three to four days for wound care and dressing changes. The conservative estimate, when I began fostering Margot, was that she would need three to four months to fully heal. I didn't care if it took three or 30 months to rehab Margot; I made sure that this bunny would be at every appointment. Her very life depended on it and without a doubt, I was #TeamMargot.

As tragic as Margot's initial circumstances were, luck was smiling upon our girl. She had Cindy Stutts in her corner (a force to be reckoned with), and there was this happy coincidence: the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine had just received a cold laser that they planned to offer their patients, to assist in wound care and other uses. Very generously, CAEM began using their newest technology to help Margot. We scheduled bandage changes so that Lorelei Tibbetts, nurse and practice manager at CAEM, could use the cold laser on Margot's open wounds. The results were nothing short of amazing.

One month from the day I began fostering Margot, her bandages were removed, far ahead of the schedule I anticipated. At first, I was afraid of what was beneath, but when Margot was handed to me in the lobby, I had nothing to fear. All that was left of Margot's terrible injuries was a wound smaller than my pinky finger. What a transformation! I'd be lying if I didn't say that the entire staff of CAEM wasn't also highly impressed with Margot's progress. The combination

of new technology and a bunny who just wouldn't give up left us all amazed.

Within a week, the smallest of Margot's wounds healed, and I called CAEM to schedule Margot's spay surgery – the last stumbling block for any foster before she can be adopted. Margot was spayed in mid-September. As I picked her up from surgery, I saw several vet techs who had helped with Margot's wound care – including one who hadn't seen Margot since her early days at CAEM, when it was feared she wouldn't survive. It was a happy reunion of the many professionals who had helped us along the way, all duly impressed with Miss Margot and her will to live.

Lorelei and I have marveled over Margot's healing process and I think she said it best: "Margot is the miracle bunny of summer 2014." Initially, no one expected Margot to make it, but she received lots of support, good nutrition and the help of modern technology. Margot is now looking for her best forever home. You can do it, Margot! Of course you can!

Lasers: Q&A with Lorelei Tibbetts

By Tracy Nuzzo

Cold lasers really helped Margot so I asked Lorelei Tibbetts, nurse and practice manager at the Center for Avian and Exotics, to break it down for us.

Q: Is laser therapy new?

A: The beneficial effects of laser light on tissue were first recognized almost 40 years ago. Since then, there have been thousands of studies documenting the positive effects that laser light has on different types of cells, tissue and disorders. Recent advances in technology and manufacturing have made it possible to have this exciting modality available and affordable for clinicians.

Q: Are laser treatments painful for rabbits?

A: No.

Photo: CAEM



Dr. Cynthia Brown with bunny getting cold-laser treatment.

Q: What's involved with treating my rabbit?

A: The laser light is delivered through a noninvasive hand piece to treat the affected area. Fur is not clipped.

Your bunny will wear protective goggles. Your pet will feel a gentle and soothing warmth. As the laser is administered, many pets will relax, much like you would when experiencing a good massage. The almost immediate relief of pain will allow your pet to be comfortable, and any anxiety that your pet initially experienced will dissipate.

Q: Are there any side effects?

A: No, there are no known side effects.

Q: What can I expect when my rabbit comes home after treatment?

A: You might see a change in activity when your bunny comes home. For some it might be increased activity, while others may be more relaxed. This is due to the pain relief and reduction in inflammation.

Q: Specifically, are there conditions which benefit from use of lasers?

A: Every kind of inflammatory process such as wound care (sore hocks) and also arthritis. Lasers can be used for acute pain OR chronic. Laser treatment helps with not just pain and inflammation – it helps with heal time.

Three Loves

By Jane O'Wyatt

As the months go by, and a foster bunny returns to my place after yet another adoption event or speed date, I sometimes ask, "Are you my bunny?" Why is this rabbit still living with me? Am I so enamored of her or him that I unthinkingly undermine the process of finding a permanent home? Could this rabbit be so attached to me that she or he underperforms in the presence of would-be adopters? Could this bunny be unadoptable?

Luigi

Shy Luigi flops in his pen, relieved to be back after a noisy, scary afternoon at Petco Union Square. A gorgeous Californian who appeals to few potential adopters because of his size and timidity, Luigi seems content at my place despite the condescension of his bunny neighbor, Charlene aka Charlie Girl. The indifference of cats Virginia and Amelia O'Feral does not seem to bother him either. Yet I believe that Luigi deserves and is (possibly) destined for adoption as a partner bunny.

Months later, Luigi has a speed date at Petco, and he is less skittish than before. When he is peacefully nose to nose with Grace, a recently widowed, cocoa-colored lionhead, I am so proud of him! Maybe Grace is The One! But Grace meets and appears to prefer the next male candidate. Although speed date savant Amy Odum says that either the front-runner or Luigi would be a good partner for Grace, it looks as though Luigi will be going home with me again. I am crushed because Grace's person is Kitty Pizzo, with whom I used to volunteer in AC&C's rabbit room. She would have given Luigi a great home.

"When did Luigi come to live with you?" Kitty suddenly asks. "Just before Hurricane Sandy," I say. "Hmmm. That's eight or nine months ago." Gesturing toward Grace's first choice, Kitty asks,



Luigi at Jane's.



Second choice, best choice. Luigi and Grace, bonded.



Luigi and Grace, speed date.

"What about this little guy?" "He has been in the system for a couple of weeks." "OK, that's it," Kitty says. "Luigi deserves a break. Gracie, Luigi is coming home with us!"

Kitty subsequently reports: "I thought you would like to know that FINALLY, after weeks of waiting, it's happened. Grace and Luigi have been having a power struggle over who was going to groom whom first, and Gracie just gave up the battle and groomed Luigi's whole face. I can't stop laughing. Who would've thought Luigi would be the dominant one of the pair? LOL."

Charlene aka Charlie Girl

Charlene aka Charlie Girl comes home with me from AC&C during the post-Hurricane-Sandy blackout of downtown Manhattan. Abandoned on an Upper East Side street and freaked out at the shelter, Charlie Girl desperately needs a calm, stable environment. Although she remains hand shy, she recovers sufficiently so that, following more than a year as my foster, she is adopted as a partner

for a bunny named George after an auspicious speed date supervised by Marcie Frishberg.

Charlie Girl's nascent partnership with George dissolves after an unsupervised nocturnal fight. According to her adopter, "There was a malfunction with the clips on Charlie's cage. She busted out and hopped a box into George's cage. ... She has a small bite on her shoulder ... and a scratch on her ear that the vet said to just leave alone. However, George is pretty roughed up. ... I was wondering if it would be possible to surrender Charlie back to Metro-Rabbit/Jane?"

After living in Connecticut for about five weeks, Charlie Girl seems ambivalent about being back in the city: she's comfortable in her old digs, but also a little bewildered. However, she quickly readjusts to our household routine and resumes her supercilious treatment of Luigi, her bunny neighbor. As before, she responds cheerfully when I speak to her, nudges me and allows grooming – and ducks away when I try to pet her.

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Three Loves (Continued from page 6)

Photo: Tai Shimizu



Charlie Girl aka at Petco Union Square.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Charlie Girl and George, speed date.

Photo: Tai Shimizu



Charlie Girl and Bramble, speed date.

Therefore it comes as a terrific surprise when, a week following her return, Charlie Girl assumes the classic pancake pose and invites me to scratch her forehead. Hallelujah! Incredibly moved, I caress this newly pettable rabbit who closes her eyes and grinds her teeth. "Are you my bunny?" I ask. Has Charlie Girl spontaneously changed her mind after 15 months of "touch me not?" Did she learn about petting's pleasures while she was out of town? Whatever the etiology, her request for petting is not a one-of-a-kind occurrence: now she luxuriates in being stroked, scritch'd and massaged! I find myself forgiving the adopter whom I held responsible for the battle of the unbonded bunnies: I am grateful to her for helping Charlie Girl overcome her fear of human touch. (I am also indebted to her for giving up on Charlie Girl and returning her to me.)

About a year and a half after she came home with me, Charlie Girl gets lucky. In a harmonious speed date at Union Square Petco, supervised by Amy, Charlie Girl teams up with a Brooklyn boy named Bramble and his patient, doting parents.

Her adopters report: "Charlene has grown so much on us! The more she comes out of her shell the more we love her big goofy personality ... the bonding process is going pretty well! ... we have found that petting them both when they're sniffing each other works the best. They both will settle down right next to each other and sir bun [Bramble] will continue to sniff her head (he is almost grooming her!)"

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Amelia O'Feral and Greyson at Jane's.

Greyson

After Greyson is surrendered at AC&C in January, Cathe Rekis and I spend weeks trimming and combing away the dense, massive mats that make him look like a sumo version of a Jersey Woolly/Angora/Dutch mix. Consequently, we advise all who contemplate adopting Greyson that they must keep his coat in good shape: never again should his coat be neglected! To hear us ranting about the grooming issue, you'd think Greyson is a special-needs bunny – and he is. Greyson is also Mr. Personality: friendly, gentle, inquisitive, energetic, not easily intimidated. Possessing lots of cuddly charisma, he climbs into strangers' laps and lets them pet him. But many potential adopters are put off by the grooming caveat.

Like other rabbits in foster care, a cleaned-up Greyson starts going on speed dates. His first date is with lop-eared Trixie at the Columbus Square Petco. Under Cindy Stutts' supervision, Trixie meets four or five male rabbits, most of whom leave her cold. She is so nonchalant and undemonstrative that I wonder if she wants a partner. At any rate, it will take more than Greyson's amiable good manners – no chasing, no humping – to engage Trixie's affections. Introduced to her last suitor, she perks up; for her own mysterious reasons, Trixie chooses a little black dwarf named Scribble.

(Continued on page 8)

Three Loves (Continued from page 7)

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Trixie and Greyson, speed date.

Greyson and I are preparing to schlep back downtown when a young guy with a bonded pair – a Holland lop named Diva and a Flemish giant named Dumbo – asks Cindy to try a speed date with Greyson. Yikes! That Flemish giant is huge! But Cindy is willing, and Greyson is game. I hold my breath as Cindy sits down in the bonding pen with the three bunnies. Diva remains ensconced in a litter box, Dumbo stretches out on the matting, and Greyson hops around introducing himself to both. “This could work,” Cindy says. Unfamiliar with the protocols of bonding a third bunny with an established pair and alarmed at the worst-case scenario that pops into my mind, I fear for Greyson in this ménage.

A cell phone rings, and it's the young man's boyfriend, who says he wants to meet Greyson before they adopt him. I invite the two men over to my place to hang out with Greyson the following day. The outcome: the BF does not succumb to Greyson's charm. To my relief, he will be staying with me.

September's Adoptapalooza is in full swing. Greyson is now a veteran speed dater, and he has been at Petco Union Square so much that he is bombproof. We wait near the bonding pen until it's Greyson's turn to be introduced to an agouti lop named Tula. Amy is supervising vigilantly, skillfully scooping up contenders who make horndog moves on Tula, who only seems interested in being groomed. By the time Greyson enters



Cindy with Greyson, Dumbo and Diva, speed date.



▲ Greyson and Diva. ▼ Greyson and Dumbo.



Greyson and Tula, speed date.

the pen, Tula has met three aggressive males who won't comply with her request for grooming. Will Greyson behave like a gentleman? I have never seen him try to hump a female during a speed date – but you never know. He doesn't try to force himself on Tula, who is sitting in a litter box. He sniffs her casually and hops away to the opposite side of the pen where he grooms himself. She starts to groom herself. Looking away from her, he lies down, keeping his distance. She lies down in her litter box. He comes over to visit, and she puts her head down for him to groom her – and he seems oblivious. But she doesn't seem to hold it against him. Almost nothing “happens” – boring for onlookers, promising for this pair. Romeo and Juliet they are not, but they tolerate each other very well. Amy gives her blessing.

Greyson's adopters seem very familiar, and I remember handling their adoption of Tula, their first rabbit, at AC&C over three years ago. Their love for Tula and their commitment to educating themselves about rabbits impressed me then. Now they have four rabbits, bonding experience and enough space in their home for a proper bonding setup.

They report: “Greyson has been settling in nicely and we all have fallen in love with him! ... He is definitely an explorer – if we turn our backs to him, he can be halfway across the room before we notice! We've started doing very short bonding sessions with Tula which have gone pretty well. ... We've ordered the brush you suggested, and hopefully that'll help us keep him handsome!”

ADOPTIONS

Adoptapalooza's Lucky Bunnies

Five lucky rabbits found homes at this year's Adoptapalooza, which took place Sunday, Sept. 7 at Union Square Park. The rabbit-adoption activities were conducted inside the Petco store at Union Square, and it was a very busy day.

Marcie Frishberg, who organized Adoptapalooza's rabbit events, said she wanted to give "a giant thank you to everyone who came to set up, clean up, bring food, bring buns, take home buns, pet buns, do speed dates, do adoptions, sit outside, clip nails, brush bunnies, walk around with a big sign, and talk, talk, talk to all the folks who came to see us."

Marcie added, "It was a great event. Thanks to you all and a big special shout-out to Amy Odum for the three speed dates that resulted in great homes for the adopted bunnies."

Adopted rabbits were Greyson, Brianna, Cannoli, Lenny and Orson.

The next big adoption event will be "Whiskers in Wonderland" in December.

Ross.



Photo: Natalie L. Reeves

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



▲ Orson and Gloria, speed date. ▼ Moxie meets Twitch during a speed date. Twitch, however, preferred Brianna.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



▼ Ronan chinning Amy's pants during speed date.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



▼ Austin John Torres, left, with Abigail McCue.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



We Are Looking for Loving Homes

Written and compiled by Kirsten Ott

Teandra

Teandra is a medium-sized Dutch who was seized by the authorities from a home in Queens. This lovely girl's coat is a dark agouti and white, with an extra-large Dutch triangle on her face and an equally outsized white bib. The best thing about Teandra is her sweet, gentle disposition. She'll smush herself right down for petting, and she adores head rubs. Teandra is sure to be a total love sponge in her new forever home. She would probably also make a good partner for another bunny.

Efren

Efren is a medium to large black Rex boy who was found in Flushing Meadow Park. This guy is really friendly. His personality is a nice balance of outgoing and mellow. He'll hop up to you to make friends and politely request petting, and then crunch his teeth to signal satisfaction with every stroke of your hand. Of course, Efren's coat is made of the typical Rex velvet. This guy would make a great family bunny.

Diamond

Diamond is a medium to large female bunny with a super sweet disposition. This girl is white with grayish-brown ears and eye "makeup"; she also has a nice big grayish-brown beauty mark next to her nose. Her white fur also has a brownish-gray cast in places. Diamond is very well socialized. She's friendly and very eager for affection. She would make a good choice for a first-time rabbit owner, and would do well in a family situation.

Temple

Temple is a New Zealand White female who was rescued, along with about 20 other rabbits, in Brooklyn. This girl, though still young, is quite large. She's also quite beautiful, with soulful big red eyes that seem to take up her whole face. As you observe Temple, you get the feeling that she has no idea just how lovely she is. She is shy – she'll hang back and examine you, nose wiggling and teeth crunching all the while. She will eventually accept gentle petting. Temple would do best in a quiet home where she can come into her own.

Emily

Emily is a medium-large New Zealand White who was found in Queens. This pretty girl makes friends quickly; if she likes you, she becomes downright clingy in no time. She loves having her cheeks scratched. Despite her fairly large size, Emily is very feminine, with slender legs and a cute, pouch-y dewlap. She would make a good choice for a first-time bunny owner.

Arielle

Arielle is a small young bunny who was rescued, along with about 20 extended family members, in Brooklyn. When they were discovered, this little girl was living with her sister, who subsequently died, so now she's alone in the world. Arielle is very slight, with a lean young face, and exhibits the agility and energy of youth. She's not used to people yet, so she'll need a fair amount of socializing. Arielle is mostly white with tricolor markings on her ears and eyes.

(Continued on page 11)



Teandra.



Efren.



Diamond.

Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Vanessa, Tweet, Winston, Toes, Greyson, Brianna, Cannoli, Lenny, Orson, Shakespeare, Robbie, Gina, Cadberry, Donut, Babette, Montey, Helena, Batman and Puddles, Melba and Margaret, Mel, Nala and Lonnie, Tomato, Lola, Romeo and Juliet, Jeremy and Joey, Maddy, Ronan, Hershey, Odette, Tony, Sunshine.



Temple.



Emily.



Arielle.



Brock.

ADOPT US!

Looking for Loving Homes

(Continued from page 10)

Brock

Brock is an extra-large New Zealand White fellow who was rescued, along with about 20 extended family members, in Brooklyn. We think he was the father of a number of the younger rabbits in the group. In fact, he brings to mind a male in a pride of lions. This big hunk of a rabbit is a very mellow fellow. He likes attention, and enjoys affection when in the mood. He would probably make a very good family bunny.

Buster

Buster is an adorable little bunny rescued from the streets of Brooklyn. He is kind, playful and loves to have his nose rubbed. He is litter-box trained and well mannered. Buster loves carrots, hay and his wicker chew toys. He's looking for a loving home where he will get lots of petting and some space to run around. He has been neutered and is in foster care.

Margot

Margot is a medium-sized brown bunny. In mid-July, she was found in Pelham Bay Park – being attacked by a pack of dogs. Park rangers were able to free Margot and she was rushed to the shelter in very bad shape. She was emaciated, suffered several deep, open wounds from the attack, and had severe head tilt. It was unclear whether she would survive. To give Margot a better chance, she was placed with a private vet and spent two weeks in their care. The staff at the veterinary hospital marveled at Margot's sheer will to live. By early August, Margot was moved to foster care with the expectation that if she continued to improve, it would be three to four months before she would fully recover from her attack. In her foster home, Margot continued to amaze her new caretakers. She was able to gain weight and through the use of veterinary lasers, her wounds healed more quickly than anyone had imagined possible.



Buster.



Margot.

This girl bunny is a fighter! The only reminder of Margot's terrible past is her head tilt. Although the angle has decreased, Margot is still a head-tilt bunny and it's expected she always will be. Because of this, we are labeling her "special needs"; however, Margot lives her life like a "normal" bunny! She is incredibly playful, runs the bunny 500, and enjoys affection. She requires no special care or housing, with the exception of a low-entry litter box to make her life easier. Margot requires no medication. She has a good appetite for greens and she loves to eat hay. She has a green plastic slinky that she adores. Margot's vantage point on the world around her may be different, but her zest for life is unmatched.

(Continued on page 12)

Don't miss December's Whiskers in Wonderland adoption event, presented by the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, in partnership with the Petco Foundation. For details about the event, go to www.WhiskersinWonderland.org.

Looking for Loving Homes

(Continued from page 11)

Cocoa

Cocoa is a medium-sized brown-and-white Dutch-mix boy who was found in Queens. This guy is an absolute sweetheart. He'll approach you very gently and politely for petting – you can sense the hope in his heart. The brown of Cocoa's coat is two-toned, with a darker shade on his face and cute rounded cheeks. Cocoa would make an excellent choice for a first-time bunny owner.



Cocoa.

Tony

Tony is an extra-large brown helicopter lop with energy to beat the band. This bruiser of a bunny is very eager for attention and exercise – he literally climbs the walls of his cage. When you go to pet him, he sticks his nose way up into the air for maximum-impact rubbing. Tony has a nice big head, and it contains a pretty amazing brain – this smart guy will keep you on your toes! He'll calm down a bit post-neuter, but he'll still need lots of space to run and explore.



Tony.

Jess Rabbit

Jess Rabbit is a small to medium-sized agouti and white Dutch mix. This is an adorable little munchkin! She is a little shy, and will hang back a little, but she welcomes petting when it's offered. She'll surely open up in a nice forever home, and would probably do best in a calm environment. Jess has especially lovely, shining big brown eyes.



Jess Rabbit.

Barnabas

Barnabas is a very friendly young New Zealand White who was found in Queens. This guy is super outgoing! He bounds over joyfully to greet you, as though you're a long lost friend. He adores being petted, and is fairly mellow for a young rabbit. Barnabas is medium-sized now, but will be a large rabbit when he's finished growing. He has traces of grayish-brown on his left ear, signaling a touch of ancestral Himalayan blood. Barnabas would make an excellent family bunny.



Barnabas.



Tootsie.



Autumn.



Precious.



Honeybun and Roger.

Hare ye! Hare ye!

RRR/HRS 20th Annual

Rabbit Care Conference

Sunday, Oct. 26, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Radisson Hotel • One Radisson Plaza

New Rochelle, NY

Conference hotel is walking distance from Metro North train station in New Rochelle (28-min. ride from Grand Central)

There is plenty of free parking for anyone driving to hotel

Featured Topic: BUNNY EMERGENCIES: How to recognize them, how to deal with them, how to work with your vet—presentation by Gil Stanzione, DVM

SAME-DAY REGISTRATION: \$40 (\$10/family member). For details, go to rabbitcare.org



ADOPT US!

Looking for Loving Homes *a*

(Continued from page 12)

Tootsie

Tootsie is a medium-sized reddish-brown Rex bunny who's all about the love. This girl seeks out your hand for petting, and lifts her sweet nose up into the air for scratches. Tootsie's regal-looking coat is darker in certain places, and almost black in some areas. She has a very cute little dewlap. Tootsie currently resides at the Pet Valu store in the Rye Ridge Shopping Center in Rye Brook.

Precious

Precious is a medium-sized Himalayan mix and the angel of the shelter's rabbit room. This cute girl is mostly white with some grayish-brown markings, including a soft mottled pattern on her ears and a funny smudge on her nose – it looks as if someone was painting her nose and the paintbrush slipped! Precious is as sweet as she looks, and loves to be petted. She would make a good choice for a first-time bunny owner.

Autumn

Autumn is a large dark brown boy who was found in Queens. This guy is very impressive-looking. He's strong and athletic, and he has huge ears – practically jack-rabbit sized! Despite his powerful appearance, Autumn is on the shy side – it seems he's not very accustomed to kind human interaction. He would do best in a home with experienced rabbit people who can socialize him and develop his trust.

Roger and Honeybun

Roger and Honeybun are a bonded brother and sister pair and must be adopted together. Both are medium-sized lops; Roger is black and white, and Honeybun has a Harlequin coat. Both love to run and thump around. You'll often find them snuggling or hoping to eat a treat right out of your hands! Roger and Honeybun are currently in foster care.



Don't miss December's **Whiskers in Wonderland adoption event**, presented by the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, in partnership with the Petco Foundation. For details about the event, go to www.WhiskersinWonderland.org.

Bunnies and Biceps

By Erin McElhinney

Sean Harvey, an adopter and former rabbit volunteer, can currently be seen in the 2015 Tails of NYC RescueMen calendar. Anyone who knows him or just has followed Sean on social media knows how he just brims with positive energy and juggles a creative, driven and successful life with the demands of caring for multiple rabbits. In other words, he is very relatable to most of us fellow rabbit owners. What makes him calendar material, though, would be his biceps and his tattoos and indeed, those features must have been evident to the producers and photographer because they stand out in the photo, outshone only by Sean's trio of adorable rabbits. Sean joked of the experience, saying that the whole photo shoot consisted of the photographer telling him not to smile and to flex more. The final picture that made it into the calendar confirms this. It's an alluring juxtaposition of edgy and cute as Sean cuts a serious, imposing figure above a fluff pile of his three absolutely adorable rabbits.

However, the calendar is not just about handsome New Yorkers who have saved (furry) lives. The calendar is also about

Photo: Natalie L. Reeves



Erin McElhinney and Sean Harvey celebrate publication of the 2015 Tails of NYC RescueMen calendar at the Leonora in Chelsea. A photo of Sean and his bunnies, the late Colby along with Ophelia and Bobo, appears for the month of April.

the stories behind these men and their animals. Sean and his buns landed the plum spot of being the April photo. April, as the rabbit community knows, is a month where rabbit education is needed more than ever to prevent impulse Easter rabbit purchases from pet stores. Fittingly, April also happens to be Prevention of Animal Cruelty Month, and Sean talks about how his rabbit Colby was neglected before being surrendered to Animal Care & Control of NYC.

The photo shoot has special significance to Sean because shortly after the photograph was taken of him and his bunnies Colby, Bobo and Ophelia, Colby unexpectedly died. Sean described her as the cuddliest rabbit he has ever known. She would frequently press up against him as he slept in bed and she would lie there next to him, all night.

At the October calendar release party, rabbit volunteers like myself, Natalie Reeves, Cathe Rekis and Sherry Riad showed up to support Sean. We had the unexpected pleasure of meeting another rabbit person who appears in the calendar. Rob Eigenbrod is shown with his two rabbits for the month of July. Rob and his wife, Christina, adopted their rabbits from a rescue group in New Jersey.

The rabbit community can only benefit from having such knowledgeable, kind and passionate advocates. Of course, being extra photogenic definitely helps get the message across a little more effectively!

The calendar can be purchased at www.rescuemen.org and all proceeds benefit Pillows for Paws and Grandpa Dave's Creature Comforts. Both groups provide enrichment toys and programs for New York City's homeless shelter animals, including our rabbits!

Volunteer Snapshots

Photos: Natalie L. Reeves



Longtime volunteer and fosterer Loraine Kopf, right, with Erin McElhinney and Loraine's foster bunnies, Gilderoy and Remus.



At party for volunteers hosted by Cindy Stutts, left: Marcie Frishberg, Helen Chen, Yumi Nakayama.

What Really Matters to You Matters the Most

By Robert Kulka

In today's world of overwork, sleep deprivation, sensory overload and messages coming at us from everyplace, just how can we process it all? Our primary communication seems to be texting or selfies and we hardly look up to see the world around us. It seems everyone has a cause or message to tell us about. What do we do? How can we do anything at all? How do we filter these messages throughout our day?

Take the issue of Whole Foods and rabbits, for instance. I am going to be perfectly honest here. If I take myself back to June of 2002, in my BB period (Before Bunny), I wonder what my reaction would have been to a group of rabbit enthusiasts asking me not to shop at a store because rabbit meat was being sold there. Sure, I am concerned about animal rights, our environment and social injustices. My response back then to those things would range from commenting how awful it was, to making donations, to feeling unable to do much. I might send a letter to someone if it was easy. I might sign a petition if I felt it was trustworthy. (Even my own personal issues don't get me out of the comfort of my personal space very often at all. I rarely take handouts or acknowledge giant blow-up rats on the streets of New York. Yes, I have refused to eat veal since a very young age because of the conditions in which they are bred. I try to stay away from pork because I see pigs as smart animals that could also be pets. But if a store was selling veal or pork would I stop shopping there? Of course I wouldn't.)

Then came July 2002 and the entrance of a very special companion into my life. It was the beginning of my AB

period (After Bunny). Suddenly I came to recognize that rabbits were very special, great companions – smart, with distinct personalities. The more I was around a rabbit the more open I became to seeing a whole new world I never dreamed was out there. Rabbits were cool!

Along about three and a half years ago I began volunteering with Rabbit Rescue & Rehab. The new level of awareness I developed about rabbits was astounding. Not only do rabbits have personality but they each have very distinct personalities. They all had individual charms and a cleverness that impressed. I met dozens of different rabbits and developed very different relationships with each, based on the individual bunny. I became ever more amazed at how interesting, gentle and somehow spiritual they were.

My experience with my own bunnies and the rescue crew showed me that rabbits had real feelings. They developed routines. They would miss you when you were weren't there and would nudge you for a few pets and some attention. You could sense that they understood what you were giving them and they showed true gratitude. At times they were mischievous and always they were entertaining. They are smart little things. Most important, they brought sheer joy into the lives of all they touched, even if for just an instant.

So now I know that I have become one of those "rabbit people" asking other folks to respect my concerns about a store like Whole Foods selling rabbits as food. I know I personally will not shop at Whole Foods until their practice of butchering bunnies is amended. I will bring that message to as many people as I can and hope they, too, will pass by Whole Foods and not shop there. But is

that too much to ask of others? Is a response of "I can shop there as long as I don't buy the meat of a rabbit" sufficient?

I ask myself how I might have responded before I was pulled into the wonderful world of the rabbit. Would I have just said I would not buy the meat but would still shop there? I hope not. But I can say for sure now that I won't shop there and that I will try to educate anyone who will listen to the horror of the situation. Maybe now I will be more sensitive to other people's concerns. Maybe I will read the handouts and sign the petitions. After all, I suppose that is how every movement starts – one person at a time. Things change because one person cares. Injustices can be righted one moment at a time. Best of all, each of us can save one little bunny at a time. And at the end of the day, isn't that what really matters?

Photo: Robert Kulka



Skip.

Dedicated to a little bunny who helped me see what was real and what mattered. For Skip, who lives in my heart always.

Lights, Camera, Cotton!

Photos: Tracy Nuzzo



Cotton in the Jane hotel lobby.



Another lobby shot.



Back at Petco Union Square after the photo shoot.

By Tracy Nuzzo

Okay, fashionistas and bunny fans! Who reads LULA, the British fashion magazine? Well, if you don't, you will be reading it soon! One of our NYC Metro Rabbits and resident-bunny-in-chief at Union Square Petco attended his very first modeling shoot on Sept. 23, and he is a star! We're not sure when his fashion spread will be published, but, of course, we will alert you when it appears.

I took some amateur photos of Cotton, our handsome model, in lobby of the

Jane hotel, where the photo shoot took place, and back in Petco, exhausted after flaunting his good looks for the cameras. He appeared with actress Tavi Gevinson.

The shoot was arranged with the help of Kirsten Ott, who was contacted by Anne Koch, a creative director who had spotted Cotton at the Union Square Petco and thought he would be perfect as a fashion star.

Anne said, "I really fell in LOVE with Cotton when I saw him at Petco only a week earlier. He was making eyes at

me... I knew he was special!" Anne made a \$100 donation to NYC Metro Rabbits.

Cotton was originally found in an elevator in a housing project. He was tiny, scrawny, filthy and unwanted. One of our most caring volunteers, Erin McElhinney, fostered him and helped him to grow into a sweet, beautiful creature who is turning heads in the fashion world. Go, Cotton!

Marshmallow the Diva

By Nancy Furstinger

Big, bouncing New Zealand White rabbits are colorful characters. Their pink eyes turn shades of powder blue and lavender in different lights. These rabbits are the equivalent of the class clown: high-spirited rascals determined to spread their contagious joy.

Marshmallow nudges my foot to attract attention. Then this jumbo New Zealand White races the bunny 500 – spinning and twirling around an invisible obstacle course. She'll screech to a stop and binky straight up in the air, twisting her

Photo: Nancy Furstinger



Nancy with Marshmallow.

head and body in impossible yoga postures and flicking her ears until I giggle, which starts her off again. When people witness their first bunny binky, some become frantic and wonder if their bunnies are having convulsions. Binkies may be sporadic, but they're a dance of delight. And with a gigantic rabbit like Marshmallow, binkies surprise and delight all who witness them.

Difficult to imagine this vivacious rabbit was jammed into a tiny outdoor cage (not even a hutch) for the first three

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Marshmallow

Continued from page 16

years of her life. Marshmallow came to me as a foster girl with House Rabbit Society. I kept telling her that she was going to go home – who knew she was already there? And little did either of us dream that Marshmallow would soon star in my newest picture book: “The Forgotten Rabbit.”

I have been rescuing rabbits for more than 25 years – fostering them and transforming them into adoptable house rabbits. After winning the 28 New Zealand White rabbits at Catskill Game Farm’s going-out-of-business auction and then fostering and rehoming them, I started dreaming about a NZW of my own.

Then Marshmallow came along. Another house rabbit probably wasn’t a wise idea at that time. I had recently become my father’s caretaker. So I fostered her as I navigated the mountains and valleys of caring for a cantankerous man who was dispassionate about animals.

When the inevitable happened and my father passed away, I watched Marshmallow binky, and reckoned she was our house jester. How could I resist those rose-colored eyes and that enormous personality? So I emailed House Rabbit Society, explaining that I flunked Fostering 101 once again. Marshmallow was mine! And soon she instantaneously bonded with husbun Max, who (incredibly) was also rescued after enduring three years of misery in an outdoor cage; together they share my office plus deck.

The Gryphon Press had recently published one of my picture books: “Maggie’s Second Chance: A Gentle Dog’s Rescue.” It was loosely based on a big black dog I had rescued from an abandoned house. Black is beautifully mysterious, but if you’re a shelter dog, black often renders



Marshmallow reading her book.
<http://www.thegryphonpress.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/gryphonpress?ref=hl>

you invisible. Big black dogs are the least likely to be adopted from a humane society for a variety of reasons, including the difficulty of photographing their facial expressions and features.

Red-eyed white rabbits are in the same boat. They languish in shelters because people are afraid of those albino eyes. I wondered if my publisher would be interested in a rabbit book. After all, they are the third most popular pet in the country. And I could loosely base this book on Marshmallow, who was a forgotten Easter rabbit.

Not only did The Gryphon Press sign up this title, but my publisher sent me an article about rabbit agility that had appeared in her local paper. Could I incorporate this sport into my book? I literally hopped at the opportunity. By having Rosalita, the child protagonist, rescue Bella the bunny and then encourage her to excel at agility, I was able to incorporate fun action verbs into “The Forgotten Rabbit”: zigzag, zoom, zip, rocket, torpedo, hop. And the artist was able to illustrate fun action scenes with homemade and professional agility courses.



Marshmallow and Max.

I also asked the publisher if I could approach bunny aficionados about writing back cover blurbs. I was delighted that Margo DeMello, president of HRS, agreed. Then I remembered Amy Sedaris, whom I had met at a rabbit conference in New York City. Both wrote terrific blurbs.

As soon as “The Forgotten Rabbit” was published, Marshmallow hopped into publicity mode, helping me spread the word about house rabbits. As I read my book to young audiences, Marshmallow demonstrates why rabbits are unforgettable!

Editor’s Note: Nancy Furstinger donated a copy of “The Forgotten Rabbit” for the raffle at Rabbit Rescue & Rehab’s October conference. To learn more about the book, go to either

http://www.thegryphonpress.com/pages/books/bk_forbidden-rabbit.html

or

www.nancyfurstinger.com.

Don’t miss December’s Whiskers in Wonderland adoption event, presented by the Mayor’s Alliance for NYC’s Animals, in partnership with the Petco Foundation. For details about the event, go to www.WhiskersinWonderland.org.



Abigail, wearing edible hat, with her rabbit Napoleon.

Edible Hats for Rabbit Rescue!

Local hat designer Abigail Aldridge, who earlier had donated a green lace-up travel hat to raise conference-related funds for House Rabbit Society, created two rabbit-edible hats for auction at the September HRS Educators Conference in St. Louis, Mo.

She said she hopes that the hats will “add to the growing awareness of rabbit-rescue efforts.”

Oxbow Animal Health donated most of the edible materials for the hats, and Abigail added some sisal bunny toys as decorations.

Abigail wearing another edible style.



Letters From Adopters

Molly

Kathleen McGullam adopted Molly, formerly known as Coco, at the end of July. Kathleen had adopted her first rabbit from Mary Cotter 15 years ago, and she adopted another rabbit, Emma, from Cindy Stutts. This letter was sent to volunteer Tracy Nuzzo.

I adopted Coco a few days ago. I just wanted to let you know she is doing very well. She is comfortable here and becoming friends with Alex, the guinea pig. Her new name is Molly.

She is really wonderful and I just wanted to give you a quick update because you

Photo: Kathleen McGullam



Molly.

took such good care of her. Thanks for all your help!!

P.S. She does really love getting pets!

Kathleen

Blixa

Blixa, formerly called Heaven, was adopted in early August by Maya Gutierrez and Claude Bauschinger as a partner for their mini Rex boy, Mr. Bun-Bun. Maya and Claude sent this update in mid-September.

I can't believe Blixa was found by the garbage! She is really thriving with us and has completely taken over her new home. She is a sneaky bun and spends a lot of time trying to get into the cat's litter box and the fridge. She also loves to go on early morning sprints through the house, but for some reason avoids the series of carpets which have been laid out for that purpose. I think she likes to slip and slide on the wood floors! She uses the carpets for her daily binkies.

We're still doing bonding sessions with Mr. Bun-Bun, my mini Rex, and Blixa at this point is totally calm around him, showing signs of curiosity. Mr. Bun-Bun,

Photo: Maya Gutierrez



Blixa.

on the other hand, is set on being the spoiled center of attention at all times, and is still unsure about her. They haven't had any tussles for over a week, and mainly ignore each other during bonding, so that's a good sign for now.

Thanks,
Maya and Claude

Bebe

Bebe was adopted by Jess and Christian in early August. Jess sent us this update a few days later. (A page one article about Bebe appeared in the August Thump, <http://rabbitcare.org/ThumpAug25.2014.pdf>)

Thank you so much for taking excellent care of Bebe. We are completely in love with her – her adorable swimmy movements and high-energy personality make her completely irresistible. So far she has been doing well. We put down a

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Photo: Jess Kelley



Bebe.

bunch of carpets so she can get around easily and discovered that with enough traction, she loves to jump, and sometimes jumps several feet in one bound! She also loves to be petted and is very curious to interact with our older male rabbit, Berkeley. We hope to bond the two of them after Bebe gets used to being in the environment, Berkeley gets used to sharing his space, and we get used to her unique body language.

I picked up her blanket and toy from the 86th St. Petco yesterday. That is the pet store I generally frequent because it's on my way home from work. Please send my gratitude to the other volunteers at the 86th St. Petco!

Sincerely,
Jess Kelley & Christian Madera

Life With Our Four Happy Rabbits

My husband and I now have four rabbits in total after our Sunny passed away. Sunny was the black-and-white Dutch you included long ago in your newsletter. He is dearly missed. We still have Pete, our great 10-pound New Zealand White who thinks he is a dog; Lola, our tiny Netherland rabbit with unusually tiny ears; Adam, a black-and-white dwarf who is the boss around here; and Daisy, a beautiful gentle dwarf. We love our babies :-)

Our oldest rabbit, Daisy, is now 11 years and she is the sweetest, most resilient

and grateful little creature I have ever known. She is also our first rabbit and a rescue. She has seen three rabbits and one rat go to the other side.

I wanted to take the time to extend my condolences to you and those involved in caring for Charlie Stutts, the Dutch bunny who recently passed away.

He was a little hero in my eyes. He was so lucky to have you guys. He had so much love and protection and that is the biggest gift we can give these defenseless and amazing creatures. Keep up the good work!

Once again, I wish you guys all the best in finding homes for all the rabbits in need. God knows we would adopt more of these babies if we could.

Sincerely,
Karina Yuen

Photo: Liz Richards



Wednesday.

Wednesday

Wednesday, previously known as Joy, was adopted in August by Josh Krebs and Liz Richards, who sent us this update.

Wednesday was welcomed into our lives after our previous bunny, Guapo, sadly had passed away in the early summer. Needless to say, we were devastated to lose such a wonderful pet whom we loved very much. It was a difficult choice when we decided to adopt again.

We were worried about trying to find a bun with the chillness that Guapo had.

We spent weeks looking. Wednesday caught our eye because of her beautiful black fur, and when Liz held her, Wednesday sat comfortably in her arms.

Personality-wise she is Guapo's opposite. She is much younger, faster and a climber – oh BOY, does she like to climb – and she jumps up on everything. We realized that we didn't want to get a copy of Guapo. He was special in his own bunny way just as Wednesday is, and we love her for that.

When we brought Wednesday home, it took some time for her to get used to us. We spent a weekend (for Liz and me, it was our three-year anniversary weekend) with Wednesday, talking to her, sitting on the floor and trying to get her to be comfortable with us. It didn't take long for her to explore the apartment, and now she pushes on her pen when she wants to be let out, and she will climb all over us on the couch when we are watching TV. She has a fiery personality and we love it! She loves to play throughout the apartment and then when she is a little tired she will rest on our stomach and take a nap.

Wednesday is fitting in nicely with us and we couldn't have asked for a better pet than, as we call her around the apartment "Lady Wednesday."

Josh Krebs and Liz Richards

Louise

Louise, known previously as Harriet, was adopted by Malinda and Eddie in mid-August.

My husband and I walked into the Animal Care & Control of NYC thinking we would be faced with making a heartbreaking decision on "whose life to save." Instead, we were pleasantly surprised to find dozens of bunnies relaxing quite comfortably in well-

(Continued on page 20)

Photos Malinda



Louise.

ventilated, cozy rooms. In fact, the bunnies were listening to classical music – a nice touch considering all of the barking and meowing that was going on outside the door.

We had done all of our homework and were well prepared to welcome a small, fluffy bunny into our lives. We walked away having adopted an underweight though extremely large, rather matted New Zealand White rabbit who managed to escape from a slaughterhouse in Brooklyn. We named our new moose “Louise” after one of the characters on the TV show “Bob’s Burgers.”

After a short stint in foster care (shout-out to Erin and her pitbull!!!) Louise came home with us and has been in our family now for almost a month. In this short time she has grown in size, weight and personality.

She loves to run around the apartment and has finally shown us some rather clumsy binky moves. Louise has no idea how massive she is and she has no personal boundaries. We keep telling her that she can’t sit on top of the cats! Louise is quite comfortable lying around the apartment on her side, on her back, completely splayed...she can fall asleep absolutely anywhere and in any position. She has the most expressive eyes, and she voices her disapproval with sounds more appropriate for a toad.

As Louise continues to grow and flourish in her new home, we look forward to spending time with her and watching her develop to her full potential. Louise joins



Louise with Erin McElhinney’s pit bull Amelia.

the family alongside three chinchillas, two cats and one very defiant hermit crab.
Malinda

Photo: Tiffany Park



Zoro.

Zoro

Tiffany Park adopted Bruno in mid-July at the Animal Care & Control of NYC (AC&C). He is now (legendary) Zoro.

Zoro has been a curious guy since the first day we met, but he was extra alert and cautious at the start. Therefore, it took some time to earn his trust, and I’m still working on getting closer each day. Thankfully, Zoro is now more relaxed, approachable and more submissive than ever. Though he chooses to stay inside the cage most of the time, his cage is open at all the times with access to plenty of space to run around. Since he wouldn’t step out on our wooden floor, we gave him area carpets and foam tiles for him to walk on. He utilizes his litter box well and uses the one set up in his play area more often than one in his cage.

Zoro is not afraid of us anymore, for sure. When I start to pet him on the head, he puts his head down and turns himself to a bread shape and relaxes with his eyes closed. He especially likes the cheek strokes, and this helps him calm down tremendously. Also, he lets me stroke on his mane, by lowering his front body, and waits until I’m done. What makes us delighted is that he even does simple tricks like spinning around, begging, and hopping on a red cushion on his hide-away furniture with a little help of his favorite treat, raisins. I really love waking up in the morning because he will spontaneously run out (otherwise we shake the raisin box) of the cage to greet me (or his breakfast). Haha.

I fear that there are still some unsolved challenges, though. Our biggest challenge with him is handling. His friendly and approachable character disappears when he is stroked or touched near his chest. (He thinks I’m going to pick him up) He freaks out and flees to the nearest hide-away. I can’t help but suspect that Zoro must have been through some traumatic handling experiences with a previous owner and/or handler. I will keep trying until he opens up a little more. We will help him overcome his fear of handling in the future. Zoro is our family member and we adore him so much. I can’t imagine a life without Zoro now. My husband and I will never stop loving him. Thank you so much!

Tiffany

(Continued on page 21)

Photo: Rebecca Mills



Gandalf and Sweet Pea.

Sweet Pea

Rebecca adopted Sweet Pea as a partner bunny in early August. Gandalf and Sweet Pea are enjoying each other.

Sweet Pea is doing very well in our home. She is curious about everything and not afraid. I love the fact that she loves to cuddle with us. My boyfriend, Konstantin, and I have been keeping both her and our other pet rabbit, Gandalf, confined to their own living spaces for now (cages next to one another). We are hoping once the bonding process is complete that they both will be free to roam around our living room without supervision. We know it will be months before the two bunnies are ready.

Gandalf and Sweet Pea are showing improvements each day with bonding, they are able to lie next to each other without issues. I think the two will be fine. They are learning habits from each other. Gandalf is now eating more hay after observing Sweet Pea, and he's tried lying in my lap like Sweet Pea (a little tough for me because he weighs 18 pounds). Sweet Pea learned what the fridge is from Gandalf, and she now is starting to beg like him. It has really been interesting. I will keep you posted of the two. Attached is a photo of them lying next to one another when they wanted petting from me.

Thank you,
Rebecca Mills

Photo: Natalie L. Reeves



Sweet Dee.

Sweet Dee

Sweet Dee, formerly known as Gina, was adopted by Anna in September as a partner for another girl bunny, Trix.

We are all very happy to have "Gina" with us, renamed "Sweet Dee" after the main female character from the TV show "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia."

(The television character Sweet Dee is sweet-natured and usually has good intentions, but has unfortunate situations foisted on her, similar to what happened to Gina, I'm told. Gina was not fed properly and had uterine tumors when she was found in front of a pet store.)

Sweet Dee has settled herself in nicely with our family and three dogs. She has taken a particular shine to Max, my 90-pound lab/pit, and she doesn't seem to mind our noise and commotion.

Right now I'm working on making sure she puts some weight on her bony frame. She's eaten everything I've put in front of her so far – Timothy hay mixed with oat hay, chopped celery, cilantro, purple cabbage, Oxbow pellets – and she's been hopping around a lot, exploring and sniffing.

I am doing the bonding sessions with Trix slowly but steadily. Sweet Dee and Trix are both being very laid-back and calm during their sessions. I can't wait to show you all the end result when they become fast friends.

Thanks again to NYC Metro Rabbit for allowing me to welcome Sweet Dee into our home. :) I'll be sure to send along additional updates and photos soon.

Kindest regards,
Anna

Photos: Juliane Infantino



Pepper.



Melbon

Melbon and Pepper

Melbon (formerly known as Mel) was adopted in September as a partner for Pepper. Juliane says the bunnies are doing well.

It's a pleasure to have Mel in my company. He's very sweet and so loving. His name has been extended to "Melbon."

He also has been getting along with my other female bun, Pepper.

Thank you so much!

Juliane



Batman and Puddles at 72nd Street Petland store.



Montey and his adopter, Patrick Geraghty.



Luna, rear, with Romeo and Juliet, at Petco, 86th Street & Lexington Ave.



Volunteer with Vanessa.



Moxie.



Cadberry.



Ronan at Union Square Petco.



Cotton with volunteer.



Clifford.

We Are Five Years Old!

The online, full-color newsletter Thump is a continuation of NYC Metro Rabbit News, the earlier newsletter started by Mary Cotter in the 1990s, and mailed out in hard-copy form.

NYC Metro Rabbit News became "Thump" in the fall of 2009, just as the first shelter rabbits were taking up residence at Petco stores in Manhattan, and is celebrating its fifth birthday this month.

The second issue, in December of that year, featured the first Thump masthead, created by Mary Ann Maier, our wonderful logo designer.

Thump has appeared every other month over the past five years. Our free newsletter is sent out in a PDF format and is now received by about 1,700 rabbit lovers.

Over the years, we have covered the many rescue efforts of our volunteers, while educating the public about medical and behavioral issues.

Under the guidance of Mary Cotter, president of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, we have been able to provide information about opportunities for adoptions, fostering and fund-raising.

Our creative director, Jane O'Wyatt, is responsible for the great layouts over the years. Nancy Schreiber handles emailing. Volunteers, veterinarians, adopters and rescuers have contributed articles, letters, photos, drawings and poems that are beautiful, thoughtful and witty.

The high quality of Thump's content is a direct result of the hard efforts of our amazing, multitalented volunteers.

Our rabbits make this all worthwhile. They are our inspiration, and our love for them is reflected in the pages of Thump.

Back issues of Thump, as well as NYC Metro Rabbit News, are at rabbitcare.org (click on Newsletters).

— Susan Lillo, editor

NYC Metro Rabbit News

www.rabbitcare.org • www.LongIslandRabbitRescue.org • www.Rabbit.org
Newsletter of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab/New York City Chapter of House Rabbit Society • Fall 2009

NICE DIGS

First Shelter Rabbits Take Up Residence at Petco

By Lisa Fresolone

Want to adopt a rabbit but can't make it up to the shelter? Check out the bunnies at Petco!

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, in conjunction with the New York Animal Care & Control Center, have recently put in place an adoption program at Petco's East 86th Street and Union Square locations. Two rabbits will be living at each location 24/7. Volunteers will visit the rabbits daily to make sure they have food, water, clean litter boxes and plenty of out-of-cage exercise time.

The in-house rabbits are the next step for the adoption program already in place on weekends. Volunteers and adoptable bunnies are at Petco Saturdays and Sundays. The volunteers screen potential adopters and educate the public about rabbits as pets, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Union Square, and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 86th Street and Lexington. The program is considered a success, as an average of three to four rabbits are adopted from each location every month.

The Petco adoption program is "in-



Cindy Stutts at Petco, Union Square

Stutts, a licensed educator for the House Rabbit Society and founding board member of New York City Chapter of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab.

Marcie takes her time—often several hours—making sure prospective adopters are told everything there is to know about having a rabbit in the home. She covers nutrition, rabbits' psychological and physical needs, rabbit-proofing the home, bunny-sitters and common health problems to look out for. She even demonstrates nail trimming, temperature-taking and grooming.

Petco announced that it would stop selling rabbits in all of its stores nationwide in December 2008, as part of its "think adoption first" philosophy. The company was already a major advocate of dog and cat adoptions, and over the past year it has stepped up its efforts at promoting rabbit adoptions, too.

There's always a need for volunteers, and even a novice can be a huge help. If you think you might be interested, please email Cindy@att.net.

please

@att.net.

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Tripod José
rocks bunny
conference
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New Year's
resolutions for
naughty hares
Page 5

THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS • DECEMBER 2009

HOLIDAY SAFETY

Go Ahead and Buy That Poinsettia... But Bunny-Proof Those Holiday Lights!

Compiled by Kerstin Aumann

It's that time of year again...festive holiday decorations, parties and travel to celebrate with friends and loved ones. Below are a few pointers to make sure the holidays are safe for your rabbits:

Decorating Your Home

Opt for bunny-friendly decor. Pine cones are safe for your rabbit if untreated with pesticides or other chemicals, such as scents or dyes. Untreated wood or wicker ornaments are also good options.

Go ahead and buy that poinsettia. They're festive and safe. Contrary to popular belief, poinsettias aren't toxic. That, however, doesn't mean they should become part of your bunny's holiday salad. They can cause mild intestinal discomfort if your rabbit has a sensitive stomach.



Bobo inspects the tree for hazards.

Some holiday greens are toxic. Although poinsettias are in the clear, many other holiday greens are toxic. This includes holly, mistletoe and certain types of ivy. To be on the safe side, make sure all plants and greens are out of your rabbit's reach.

Keep hazardous materials out of reach. Keep in mind that coffee tables and end

tables are often easily accessed by rabbits, and some rabbits are avid climbers. Keep these things safely out of reach:

❗ Decorations made from synthetic materials, including tinsel or garlands. When ingested, they can cause tummy trouble and impactions, necessitating

(Continued on page 2)

The Adoption Option: Better Than New

By Mary Ann Maier

I once had a co-worker who decided to get a pet rabbit. She told me she'd only feel comfortable buying a new baby rabbit rather than adopting. "Don't worry," she said, "I'll only buy from a very reputable breeder." When I told her it's better to adopt, she replied, "I know I really should adopt, but I want a perfect, healthy bunny. I want a 'new' one."

And she's not alone. Here in the New York area, there are pet shops that sell

rabbits in almost every neighborhood. But what the thousands of people who purchase baby rabbits every year don't know can hurt their chances of having an enjoyable relationship with their new pet. We all know that adoption is the humane thing to do. Adoption saves the adopted rabbit's life, of course. But adoption also helps save the lives of other rabbits waiting for shelter space. Third, adoption doesn't contribute to the miserable lives

(Continued on page 4)



Bam Bam found a new home after being rescued in Elmhurst, N.Y.

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, president, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab; Chapter Manager, NYC House Rabbit Society, 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

Mary Harnett, HRS Licensed Educator, mmharnett@optonline.net, (914) 948-7976

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

Mary Christine Basile, HRS Educator-in-Training

Jennifer Saver, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

Laura George, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

Monica Shepherd, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

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.longislandrabbitrescue.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.

In addition, NYC Metro rabbits are at Petland Discounts stores on West 117th Street, East 86th Street and West 72nd Street.

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.longislandrabbitrescue.org and the House Rabbit Society main site, www.rabbit.org.

THUMP October 2014

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56 West Pondfield Road #5C
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www.rabbitcare.org

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

Masthead Logo Designer: Mary Ann Maier

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

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them. 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.longislandrabbitrescue.org.