

# THUMP

(Yawn!) Wake me when winter's over...

NYC METRO RABBIT

NEWS

FEBRUARY 2014

## Tooth Problems: Painful Subject With Numerous Warning Signs

By Natalie L. Reeves

Dental pain can be excruciating for people and animals alike. Imagine how frustrating it must be for a rabbit with tooth pain that goes unnoticed by his human guardian.

such as age and gender, are beyond our control to change, Dr. Pilny emphasized that the balance between tooth eruption and wear is heavily influenced by correct nutrition (i.e., unlimited hay). Grasses and fibrous plants contain large numbers of highly abrasive silicate deposits that wear down the teeth. In addition, fibrous diets require prolonged chewing, which promotes tooth wear.

How do you know if your rabbit has dental disease? Besides taking your rabbit for an annual examination by a rabbit-savvy veterinarian who will examine the teeth as part of the visit, be on the watch for other signs of dental disease:

- eating poorly or not eating;
- selective eating;
- weight loss;
- tooth elongation;
- excess salivation;
- wet chin;
- matted fur (a rabbit with bad teeth may not be able to groom properly);
- nasal discharge;
- eye discharge; and
- discharge under the jaw;

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Photo: Tracy Nuzzo

### ARIEL ADOPTED!

Special-needs bunny Ariel found a loving home. (Article on page 6)

February is Adopt-a-Rescued-Rabbit Month.

## Rabbit Fostering: Temporary Home For Bunnies to Heal

By Jane O'Wyatt

December 2010

After being neutered, Francis had the worst-looking bilateral scrotal hematoma\* I had ever seen. He had been caged in the medical department after his surgery the previous afternoon – to enable the

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Photo: Anthony Pilny, DVM

Preparing to examine a rabbit's mouth under sedation.


Dr. Anthony Pilny, a veterinarian at the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine, recently delivered a detailed lecture on "Dental Disease in Rabbits" to help attendees learn to spot dental problems early. Held on Dec. 8, and sponsored by Sequin, the jewelry company, Dr. Pilny's talk drew a crowd that braved a winter storm to attend.

Rabbits' teeth never stop growing, and the growth can be influenced by age, health, gender and nutrition. While certain factors leading to dental disease,

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## Painful Subject

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- picking up food, but then dropping it uneaten or only partially eaten (shows good appetite but pain upon chewing)

Rabbits sometimes develop points and spurs on their teeth as a result of uneven wear of the grinding surfaces. These points are razor-sharp and can cut the rabbit's cheek or tongue. Dr. Pilny advised that these may be able to be easily removed by the veterinarian, or they may require full reshaping.

Abscesses, or tooth-root infections that progress, are the bane of many rabbit guardians. Extractions may be the only way to treat these conditions. Veterinarians will often start antibiotic therapy before anything else, but surgery is often required.



Shelter bunny Asher's dental abscesses before surgery.

Sadly, abscesses frequently recur and the healing process is long. Critical in managing abscesses is the determination of the type of bacteria and selection of an effective antibiotic. Dr. Pilny expressed his concern that animals are developing more antibiotic resistance, in part due to failure to conduct culture and sensitivity tests to find the proper antibiotic.

Dr. Pilny concluded by noting that rabbits suffer from many types of dental disease, many of which are preventable. Rapid diagnosis generally results in a better outcome. In many cases, rabbits need to be sedated for oral examinations, and CT scans should be considered for severe cases. Dr. Pilny advised the group not to be afraid to obtain a second opinion.



Dr. Pilny discusses tooth trimming.



Maloccluded incisors.



Trimming incisors with a diamond disc.



Flushing a blocked nasolacrimal duct.

## FOSTERING

### Temporary Home

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medical staff to keep an eye on him. Yet 24 hours after his neuter surgery, Francis lay near death in a cage containing no hay, no pellets, no greens – and no poops. Since he was still breathing, the hemorrhaging had probably stopped, but he was clearly in pain from the scrotal hematoma and in full-blown G.I. stasis. After a frantic call to Cindy Stutts, head of bunny volunteers, I rushed Francis to Dr. Rebecca Campbell at Symphony Vet, where he received subcutaneous fluids and motility, antibacterial and pain medications.

Then I called my partner Kathy to ask if Francis could stay in our bathroom until he recovered, and she said yes.

I had been bunny-sitting for five years and volunteering in the shelter's rabbit room for three, but had never lived with a rabbit. When I had complained to Mary Cotter about being bitten by a series of freaked-out shelter bunnies, Mary offered me one of her biters as a mentor/foster. Though flattered by the offer, I declined. Sharing a small loft in downtown Manhattan with two imperious tabbies and a human partner who requested a two-cat limit, I wanted to help rabbits, but without fostering them. However, Francis's frightening condition and his need for vigilant care, including injectable medications at prescribed intervals, conquered my – and our household's – resistance to fostering rabbits. Francis's brief recuperative stay in our bathroom (the only part of our place with a closable door) would be the first of many.

Because I was super-cautious about protecting the recovering rabbits from

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\* Scrotal hematoma, a post-operative complication, is the swelling of one or both scrotal sacs, caused by an accumulation of blood therein, from the leakage of vessels cut and sutured during removal of the testes. When palpated, a hematous scrotal sac feels firm, even hard, and it is painful for the rabbit. While the blood in a scrotal hematoma is usually resorbed in the body, fatal hemorrhages and serious infections can occur.



Temporary Home

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Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Francis's scrotal hematoma.



Francis recovering in the bathroom.

our cats, and each species was curious about the other, opening and closing the bathroom door was an anxious business. Francis, who responded well to treatment, started binkying in the limited space and wanted to meet the cats on the other side of the door. However, he seemed to accept the fact that he wasn't here to bond with our cats. He made himself at home in the bathroom, becoming more host than guest: he welcomed us with invitations to pet him. He tickled our bare toes with his whiskers and chinned our ankles.

After Francis's scrotal sacs healed, he moved to one of the Petco stores where other rescued rabbits were living. Kathy and I had become very fond of him, yet we were relieved not to have to worry about keeping the bathroom door closed or stepping barefooted in bunny pee or poop.



Snowball.



Cinnabun.



Marlena.

While not continuously occupied, our bathroom became a haven for rabbits requiring daily medication and/or a quiet place in which to recover from surgery. (See Notes on Medical Foster Bunnies, sidebar.) Among the short-term medical fosters were Snowball, Cinnabun, Marlena, Nutmeg fka Angela, Flopsy fka Reilly and Asher. In addition, we accommodated others who needed a parking spot for a few days: Jordan, Serena and Venus.

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Notes on Medical Foster Bunnies

Cinnabun

Cinnabun arrived at AC&C Manhattan on July 27, 2011. I found her in a tomahawk cage in medical waiting to be examined. Her cage card said that she was a male and had been surrendered because the previous owner couldn't afford vet bills. There was blood on the kraft paper in the bottom of Cinnabun's tomahawk.

Holding her for Dr. Prattis's examination, I pressed lightly near her labia, and a small amount of blood (1.5 cc?) flowed out. Dr. P, who palpated her, said she felt healthy, and the area from which blood came wasn't painful. Upstairs in the rabbit room, Cinnabun urinated and discharged a little more blood. She was eating and pooping normally.

Dr. P. spayed Cinnabun on July 29, 2011. Dr. P. reported that although there had been an abnormality on one of the uterine horns, the bunny appeared to make a normal recovery. On Aug. 1, she tried to jump out of the 40-inch-high pen in the rabbit room at AC&C.

Appointment with Dr. Saver, Catnip and Carrots, Aug. 25, 2011:

Chest X-rays showed lungs were clear. Bunny seemed in good health. (Dr. Saver cited another young bunny with bleeding pre-spay who was healthy.) Cinnabun had lost a pound since she arrived at AC&C but her weight (4+ lbs.) was good. Excess weight could have been due to junk food in her old home.

Marlena

Dr. Wilson at CAEM (Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine) examined, X-rayed and spayed Marlena on Oct. 25, 2011.

At the time of her spay, Marlena had an enlarged uterus with a large cyst containing fluid and three dead fetuses. Also, Marlena had an untreated, healed fracture of her right tibia.

Marlena came home with me on Oct. 27 and ate like a horse: greens, hay, pellets. On the morning of Nov. 13, she got me up to feed her by banging her wooden plate on the bathroom floor. She was less timid and more active but still limped. I hadn't seen her binky. She couldn't balance on her rear legs to wash her face with both paws.

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**Temporary Home**

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In June 2012, a bunny named Lola moved into the bathroom. After sojourns in Central Park, AC&C and Petco Union Square, Lola really needed peace and quiet, along with good nutrition to remedy her emaciated condition. Initially she was defensive and nippy, but gradually she began to relax. She became the first bunny visitor to claim the entire bathroom, including the bathtub (when dry) and an open shelf where towels were kept. To compensate for the summer

heat, she always had two or three frozen water bottles (wrapped in threadbare old flannel pillowcases), but since it looked as though Lola would be staying beyond the customary fortnight, I decided to move her to an air-conditioned part of our loft. She would occupy a four-by-four-by-eight-foot metal wire pen, roofed by protective metal wire covers. At floor level, the perimeter was lined with cardboard to prevent nose-to-nose contact with the cats and to prevent them from reaching into Lola's enclosure. Fortunately, Lola liked her new place (the bunny equivalent of a studio apartment), and its location did not offend the cats.

In July, Lola began going on speed dates at Petco stores. She conducted herself well (though shyly), but didn't find a partner. Afterwards, she seemed relieved to return home with me.

In late August, Lola's Petfinder listing caught the attention of a woman who lived in the Bronx with her young daughter and a dog. All three were invited to meet Lola at Union Square Petco. When Lola and I met this woman, a single working mother, we liked her very much. But the dog, an aggressive, unneutered Shih Tzu, yapped and growled continuously at Lola, who tried to make herself invisible. Petco rabbit volunteers Cathe Rekis and Marcie Frishberg, skilled at eliciting information from prospective adopters, conferred at length with Lola's admirer, who confessed that she preferred rabbits to dogs. Her eight-year-old daughter, who loved the Shih Tzu (a surprise gift from her daddy), felt that the situation was simple: just add Lola. To Cathe, Marcie and me, the situation was equally simple: refuse to endanger Lola by consenting to this placement. Like many Rabbit Rescue & Rehab bunnies, Lola had already been abused – neglected, almost starved, then abandoned in Central Park. We volunteers didn't want Lola to suffer again from human callousness and ignorance. We were determined to find Lola a knowledgeable

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Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Nutmeg fka Angela.



Flopsy fka Reilly.



Asher.

**Notes**

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On Nov. 10 I took Marlena to Dr. Pilny. Dr. P. took another X-ray, which showed that the right tibia was broken in 2 places – not too long ago, he thought. The leg's broken pieces had joined together parallel (like sistered beams in a house) and she had lost 2-3 inches of length in the leg. But the bone hadn't been remodeling in the expected way: it looked gray, "moth-eaten" on the X-ray. Dr. P. pulled up X-rays from another rabbit, Webster, and indicated the color of Webster's healed tibial fracture – his healed bones were much whiter. If Marlena's bone remained in a moth-eaten, incompletely healed state, Dr. P said there was a possibility that it could break again. She was adoptable, he said, but had to be considered a "special-needs" bunny.

According to Dr. Pilny, reasons for the delay in the remodeling of the bone might include: previous poor nutrition, bacterial infection (from the dead fetuses), too much movement of the leg after it was broken, or some other pathology. He advised bringing her back for another X-ray in a month (Dec. 15) to see if the bone in the right leg looked healthier. Meanwhile, Marlena was compensating by putting more weight on the left leg, and she had a callus on her left hock. But all of these issues were later resolved.

*(The other medical foster bunnies were examined and treated for a variety of conditions. Nearly all recovered and found homes.)*



## Temporary Home

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new guardian who could offer Lola a loving and safe home. Still, I regretted that we had to turn down Lola's first potential adopter, a kind and intelligent woman – with an overly complicated life – who valued Lola for who she was.

During the three months that I fostered Lola, I had fallen in love with her. Affectionate and comically playful, she seemed to enjoy living with us. I wanted to convert a portion of our place into a house rabbit theme park, but my partner Kathy resisted. So Lola was confined to her 32-foot-square pen. She was not free to explore territory beyond it, to do spacious binkies or to run the length of our loft the way the cats did. Lola had become more trusting and friendly, but her ability to initiate social interactions was limited. She wasn't free to hop up to cats or humans for a spontaneous cuddle. Also, she lacked the consolations of shared captivity with a bunny partner or even a bunny neighbor. Lola could do better, I felt, in another, more rabbit-friendly, foster home.

Rescued rabbits often move from one fosterer to another before finding adopters, and in September a foster spot opened up at rabbit volunteer Thea Harting's place in Bushwick. With her few possessions – a set of colored nesting cups, a wooden salad plate, a small hooked rug, a ceramic tile, two chewed grass mats, a jute square and a partially

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Lola eating a straw hat, a gift from Thea.

destroyed five-foot cardboard tunnel – Lola took the L train with Thea, who immediately reported:

“Lola is here safe and sound. She hopped right out of the carrier and started exploring. She used the litter box and is now rearranging her grass mats ... So much excitement with Lola tonight! She kept lounging under my legs. It was so sweet. Then she figured out how to jump onto my bed and my nightstand.”

Amused and impressed with Lola's quick, confident embrace of her new

situation, Thea shared her digs with Lola in a way that empowered her.

Thea volunteered at Union Square Petco on Sunday afternoons and brought Lola with her for solo appearances and speed dates. In November 2012, she arranged Lola's adoption to a gentleman from Hoboken who had not only succumbed to the charm and force of Lola's personality but had satisfied the rigorous criteria of her protectors from Rabbit Rescue & Rehab.

*(To be continued in a later issue.)*



Finn.

## Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Cliff, Chili and Pepper, Plum, Golden, Huggybear, Mishoo, Lucero, Jameson, Rocko, Juliet, Fefe, Oreo, Butter, Narnia, Orson, Noel, Shorty, Almeria, Joseph, Doobin, Tammy, Thistle and Nettle, Powder and Puff, Chase, Alice, Pickle, Snuggle, Finn, Milo, Charlene, Tommie, Reeses, Rocky, Adam and Steve, Westbury, Baxter, Emily and Emilia, Noodles, Peppercorn and Cloud, Flopsy, Ori, Charlotte.

# Ariel Gets Adopted: Taking a Look Back at Our Time Together

By Tracy Nuzzo

*Editor's Note: Ariel was adopted in January and is living with her family, Coleen and Emil Pilacik, in Pennsylvania. Tracy Nuzzo, who fostered Ariel, thinks back on their time together and brings readers up to date on the latest news.*

Accepting a foster assignment is oftentimes like jumping into an abyss. We can't predict the parameters or the individual requirements. With little information, and the right intentions, we take a leap of faith so we can help a bunny in need. Meeting Ariel last July was ALL about the unknowns!

What I knew, going in, was that a very young silver marten bunny had been found, outdoors, in Queens. In addition to suffering from the extreme heat, this girl bunny appeared to suffer from hind leg paresis, origin unknown. With just that vague description, I knew I wanted to help. I raced over to Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine to meet my new houseguest. I must admit it didn't go as I initially imagined. A vet tech greeted me in the lobby and offered to get the small bunny. I was warned that she was pretty well matted in urine and would be handed to me after a quick butt bath.

A short time later, the vet tech emerged with a big fluffy bath towel and a bunny tucked inside. My heart broke for the poor creature, abandoned and injured. As I embraced this bundle of joy, I was surprised to realize what I had wrapped my arms around was mostly a fluffy towel. I could make out two giant ears, and some very large eyes. I unwrapped the towel to be surprised by an unimaginably tiny bunny body. Instinctively, I pulled her close to my heart. I petted her head and whispered, "I am so very sorry for what has happened to you." As I looked into her eyes, I saw a tiny front paw creep out from the blanket – and the new bunny viciously scratched my neck! Perhaps I had grossly underestimated the anger that comes with being dumped

and paralyzed? I realized right then that Ariel and I weren't on a path to immediate and everlasting friendship. Most bunnies, being prey animals, aren't inclined to bestow trust in a human they've never met. Naively, it hadn't occurred to me that an abused bun would trust even less. I soon realized any bond between Ariel and me would be on her terms, in her own time. I would have to prove myself.

Photo: Tracy Nuzzo



Ariel as a baby.

I spent the hottest days of July with the air-conditioning cranked up in my apartment while I was sporting a turtleneck. Any exposed skin was too tempting for Ariel to bite or scratch. I couldn't avoid handling her; after all, her hind limbs were paralyzed. She was unable to hop. I needed to bathe her once or twice a day just to manage her urine scald. Taking care of Ariel required a hands-on approach. I just needed to realize that MY hands on Ariel resulted, most days, in bloodshed for me. It was an acceptable trade, under the extreme circumstances, and one I hoped wouldn't be permanent in our relationship.

August picked up where July had left off. I desperately wanted to help a bunny who was very frustrated and incredibly angry. Despite being the only target of Ariel's anger, I never stopped loving her; instead I understood and my heart broke for her. By mid-August, I made an appointment for a consultation at Animal Medical Center. AMC provides the cutting-edge animal rehab program in NYC. With the cause of Ariel's paralysis still unknown, I found myself

anxious. I didn't know if AMC could help, but we needed to get help and time was of the essence. That consultation appointment with Dr. Leilani Alvarez was life-changing for both Ariel and for me.

The consultation went well – we left believing rehab could benefit Ariel. Even better, Cindy Stutts, head of rabbit volunteers, learned of a new grant program at AMC specifically aimed at shelter pets with a disability or health issue, so that they could receive help and become adoptable. It is an incredibly generous program known as "AMC to the Rescue." Cindy and Dr. Anthony Pilny filled out the required paperwork for Ariel and we all dared to hope our girl would qualify for physical therapy. I needed this so badly for Ariel. The answer came very swiftly – Ariel would receive a grant!!

By early September, Ariel was in weekly physical therapy. The workouts included skateboards, Jacuzzi treatments, balancing exercises, cold lasers and intensive work with caring therapists. Each week, Ariel brought her "A" game and frequently refused to leave when her hour was up. Ariel wanted mobility more than we wanted it for her! An added bonus was that Ariel's exposure to numerous people, and various pets, in the rehab room seemed to socialize her. I would bring Ariel to AMC and stay for her sessions. At home, every day, I would exercise Ariel, as recommended by Dr. Alvarez. We all channeled Ariel's frustration into hard work and in September, something seemed to change in this small bunny.

I recall sitting in the rehab waiting room with Ariel and she abruptly gave me a bunny kiss on the nose. I was shocked and after she bestowed the kiss, she snapped her neck straight as if to say, "THAT'S ALL YOU GET!" Ariel was softening, but again, on her own terms.

Early October brought some potentially devastating news. As Ariel was growing

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Ariel during a workout at AMC.



Working with plastic cups.



Ariel visits Whiskers in Wonderland at Petco Union Square.

## ADOPTION

### Ariel

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in leaps and bounds, an X-ray revealed the true cause of Ariel's paralysis. Ariel has a compressed spine, or a broken back, and the compression was in possibly the worst area – up by her shoulders. We had an informal team, Team Ariel, which was made up of all the wonderful doctors and staff who always supported the help we were seeking on Ariel's behalf. For a few days, every member of Team Ariel grappled with the catastrophic findings. We had made so much progress, but we now had to deal with belated news of an injury that threatened to derail everything.

Dr. Alvarez took a few days to thoughtfully consider the situation before making the final decision regarding Ariel's continued rehab. No doubt the X-ray showed a terrible injury, but we had Ariel's track record of improvement, through physical therapy. The X-ray would NOT define Ariel's situation. It was a picture, but it didn't tell the whole story. Rehab would continue! Good thing, too, because rehab was becoming an important part

of my bond with Ariel. I was no longer just providing baths and food. We spent over an hour together, every day, working on mobility and slowly, very slowly, Ariel was seeing me in a new light!

In November, we received Ariel's wheels from <http://www.doggon.com>. To see an immobile and totally dependent bunny get strapped into a four-wheel custom cart and zoom wherever she pleased may have been the best day of my adult life. By Thanksgiving, Ariel was happy to snuggle with me (no more boxing, biting or scratching). We had turned a corner. The bun I had adored from day one was maturing into a loving and sweet pet.

Ariel and I were co-conspirators. We shared a common goal – Ariel's independence. Ariel, my special-needs bunny, would spend the evenings in my bed, getting back rubs and doing her exercises. She was the last bun I would see before I fell asleep. In a home of two full-time buns and more than one other foster – Ariel was also the first bunny I saw in the morning. Her crib was right next to my bed, and as soon as I woke up, I would duck my head into her crib and she would happily give me kisses.

Early in December, I brought Ariel, and her wheels, to Whiskers in Wonderland at Petco Union Square. Although Ariel wasn't ready for adoption, she sure had every reason to be proud of her progress. Now extremely socialized, thanks to physical therapy, Ariel was a great attraction at the adoption event, and I was so proud to bring her. I had set up a Facebook page for Ariel in her early days in my home. I filled it with photo albums and positive updates of her successes. Unbeknownst to us, a Huffington Post reporter was at Whiskers in Wonderland. She culled information from that Facebook page and Ariel was suddenly on the online front page of the Huffington Post Good News section!

Ariel's Facebook page, comprised mostly of her local fans and members of Team Ariel, gained hundreds of fans and well-

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**Ariel***(Continued from page 7)*

wishers overnight. Messages flooded the page, filled with hope and love. Many just wanted to say how Ariel, a tiny disabled bunny, had inspired them. People from all countries felt their personal problems were dwarfed by Ariel's courage. Some wrote to us in languages that needed a Google translator, but all were messages of inspiration.

In mid-December, Ariel, Dr. Alvarez, Cindy Stutts and I taped a segment for NY1. After initially receiving the "AMC to the Rescue" grant, it seemed appropriate to ask NY1 to honor Dr. Alvarez as a New Yorker of the Week. Our initial Team Ariel was comprised of incredible professionals who never gave up hope for a tiny, abandoned bunny. AMC had not only given Ariel mobility, but their program had changed her outlook and socialized her. We were thrilled that NY1 agreed that Dr. Alvarez was exactly the kind of person who deserved the honor of New Yorker of the Week.

Christmas came and, of course, Ariel received gifts from "Santa" at our house. In addition, some of Ariel's generous Facebook friends – scattered across the country and never having met her – also mailed her gifts. We rang in 2014 with Ariel dancing around her crib to "New York, New York."

Then the New Year offered more promise to our incredible momentum. The very first weekend of 2014, we received word that the NY1 segment with Dr. Alvarez would receive the honor of being the first aired in the New Year. For 60 hours, at 42 minutes after the hour, Ariel's segment with Dr. Alvarez aired on Channel 1. In addition, NY1 invited Dr. Alvarez to the studio for a one-on-one interview to air the same night. Ariel was everywhere. Fame, success, recognition, almost 700 Facebook fans spanning the globe.....what could be next?

Photo: Coleen Pilacik



Ariel in her new home in Pennsylvania.

While Ariel's segment was airing on NY1, rabbit volunteer Kirsten Ott received an adoption inquiry. For Ariel! A lovely couple in Pennsylvania had spent more than a decade adopting the "un-adoptable" bunnies – senior buns, special-needs, and disabled bunnies. They lost a senior bun in November and began looking on Petfinder for a special-needs bun, within a 100-mile radius. In December, they came across the ad I had published on Petfinder, in advance of Whiskers in Wonderland. That led them to Ariel's Facebook page. They had been following along, happy for all of our milestones, and with Ariel's segment airing....they decided to inquire. And how happy we all were that they did!

Ariel and I took a train to meet Coleen and Emil Pilacik. I watched Ariel as she zoomed happily through their home, chinning every possible surface. I watched expressions of joy from Coleen and Emil. Ariel and I boarded a train back to New York, and all I could do was hope that this was the match for Ariel. It turns out, they were wishing the same.

On Jan. 22, the last hurdle had to be overcome. Ariel had to be spayed. She

had been mature enough for a few months, but we deferred because a spay surgery would mean rest instead of rehab. Ariel was successfully spayed and recovered at home. And on Jan. 29, it was time to give Ariel to her new parents.

Ariel and I embarked on our last trip together. In every sense of the word, it was bittersweet. I had loved Ariel long before she trusted or loved me. Now with her achievements, Ariel liked to kiss my nose and then kiss me ON THE LIPS! In almost no time, Ariel let go of her cruel past. Trusting me was the key to unlocking that incredibly sweet side of Ariel that seemed lost to her first owner's mistreatment. My singular goal, since July, was to place her in the very best home we could find. Still, that didn't make letting go easy! For foster parents, it is bittersweet.

As we rode the train to her new house, Ariel was very mellow. This was her second time on the train and she seemed to like it. Ariel was in her carrier and I spent the one-hour ride just rubbing her back, thinking of our complicated history, and how my return trip would be solo. I was feeling happy, yet melancholy.

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# One of These Bunnies Is Not Like the Other

By Robert Kulka

When most people look at rabbits they initially see cute, soft and cuddly “things.” They know them from childhood or storybooks or commercials on TV. But that is about it.

Upon closer observation, one sees that there are a variety of rabbits beyond the white ones with the red eyes. They see bigger and smaller rabbits, some topping the scales over eight pounds and others weighing barely four. There are black, brown, red and tan rabbits, with some even displaying all those colors at once. There are longhaired and shorthaired rabbits. People are amazed to see rabbits with ears that point straight up or flop down over the sides of their faces like a puppy dog. Some rabbits even have ears that seem to point straight out to the sides. People are really amused to see rabbits that even look like lions because of the hair around their heads. And there are rabbits with brown eyes, blue eyes and deep dark sultry eyes.

Those are just the visible characteristics. But there are some common traits that can be observed as well. Rabbits tend to be inquisitive but cautious. They are sometimes assertive when it comes to their homes and things (especially food). Some will hate to be picked up. Some will tolerate it. They typically like some measure of affection, but usually on their own terms. And they can be very stubborn about how certain things are

done for them. They all appear to be cute and docile, but don't let that fool you: they are sly, smart and at times down right courageous. Almost all are extremely social and want to be a part of the action, even if from a distance. They will stand on their back legs and crane their necks to see things (or search for paths to escape). Yes they all tend to want to eat about the same times, play about the same times and sleep about the same times during the course of a day. But all of them are a bit different in how they exhibit these common characteristics.

In fact, almost no bunny is exactly like another. It's true. Even siblings can be very different from one another in personality and character traits. Just looking at a few of our past and current adoptable bunnies will illustrate that. Here are just a few examples.

Rudy and Rusty are brother and sister. One is more outgoing than other. One tends to be easier to manage, while the other plays hard to get. They play with each other and tolerate the humans around them. They are performers and comedians and love the attention, but when and how they prescribe.

Terence is a long, wiry bunny. He is very loving and easy to manage. He loves to be out and about and will explore beyond all his usual boundaries when allowed to, which is uncommon. Most rabbits will only go so far each time they venture into new territory. Terence is also a

Photos: Robert Kulka



Rudy and Rusty.



Leona.

binky machine. In fact, he is the very definition of a binky if you ever wanted to see it in action.

Milo is a sweet, cuddly guy. He is a soft white bunny with beautiful eyes, and he likes to run and jump and check out his surroundings. Show him a little affection and he will sit for hours letting you pet him.

Leona is a little thing who thinks she's a big guard dog when in her habitat. But let her out and about and she will just

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## ADOPTION

### Ariel

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At one point, I placed my index finger next to her paw and like a human infant, Ariel wrapped her hand around my one finger. We were such an unlikely pair from the start, but Ariel had chosen to forgive all the anger she initially felt and

she started a new life under my roof. I looked into her carrier and realized that 197 days ago, that little paw, which now embraced me, had actually scratched my neck the day we met. I laughed, as I felt hot tears run down my cheek I was doing that indefinable job of a fosterer. You take a damaged bunny and you teach them to love again. Like a bridge, you help the bunny move onward to an amazing forever family. It's a leap of

faith when you begin, and somehow you just know when to bow out.

Ariel now happily lives in Bucks County, Pennsylvania with Coleen and Emil. And I have taken in an amputee foster who has been renamed Charlotte.

To see the NY1 segment, go to

<http://www.ny1.com/content/news/2013/37/myer-of-the-week-dr-kilani-alvarez-hdps-pets-get-back-on-their-feet>

The Huffington Post story is at

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/09/ariel-bunny-wheelchair\\_n\\_4414675.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=good-news](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/09/ariel-bunny-wheelchair_n_4414675.html?utm_hp_ref=good-news)

# Santa Brings More Bundles of Donated Toys

By Mabel Casado

Just five days before Christmas, Abigail McCue and I discovered another bag of donated goodies and toys for the buns at the shelter. The donation was provided by Pillows for Paws, which also brought us toys the month before. The rabbits played with their toys and seemed to have a lot of fun. I enjoyed taking photos of them.

Thanks to Pillows for Paws NYC! (<http://www.pillowsforpaws.com>)

Photos: Mabel Casado



## ADOPTION

### One of These Bunnies

*(Continued from page 9)*

pancake down and let you pet her nose to tail.

Lara is a big eight-pound black-and-white bunny with piercing blue eyes. She is a meticulous prima donna who is very well behaved and has full reign of her human's home. She talks with little grunts when it comes to meals and treat times. She will nudge your foot and grab your big toe when it is time to bestow loving on her.

Jingles, a beautiful Californian with stunning markings, hates being picked

up but will flop down and wait to have love lavished on her when she is firmly on the ground. And she is an out-and-out flirt, knowing just how special she is.

There are so many wonderful bunnies. Each has a story and a distinct personality. Each is ready to communicate his or her needs and wants. All of them want to develop a trust with their human mates so they can really show their true selves.

Rabbits are ready to provide hours of amusement and discovery for just a little bit of investment from us.

So remember, no one bunny is quite like another. Take some time to know a rabbit before taking your new friend home. That will help you find your best

Photo © Tai Shimizu



Jingles.

match. Once at home with you a rabbit's personality will really blossom. And the rewards of getting to know your new companion will be priceless.



## A Room Made for Bunnies: An Update From the Humans

By Helen Chen

Last year, I introduced my “bunny room,” which was renovated with my bunnies in mind. I have lived in my renovated home for just over a year now. The modular rubber flooring we installed on top of the stone floor was relatively easy to clean and replace when they dirtied it. The independent heating and cooling from my split ductless unit proved to be incredibly useful and energy efficient in the recent extreme cold temperatures and last year’s sweltering summer. But the best decision I made for the bunny room was installing all of the electrical outlets 36 inches from the floor so that bunny teeth wouldn’t easily find their way to my electronics. I never had to worry about the buns chewing on laptop wires or power cords, no matter how many times I rearranged the furniture. Despite my best bunny-proofing efforts, however, my bunnies managed to get themselves into trouble in the bunny room! Everyday life with bunnies compelled me to update the room.

My buns love to sit on the couch when I am there. They don’t like being held much, but they’ll sit next to me and let me pet them for a long time. When I am not there, however, they find it fun to dig at the cushions. At first they were just scratching at the surface, but weeks later they started to chew and dig out the stuffing, which can potentially be dangerous if ingested. I used storage cube panels and cable ties to create a barrier around the sofa. Snap bolts lock the enclosure away from the buns when unsupervised, but easily fold open when I am there to play with them. Wire storage-cube panels are great for custom bunny-proofing projects because you can tie many panels together in various lengths and shapes to suit your needs. They are sold at most megastores in the home-organization departments.

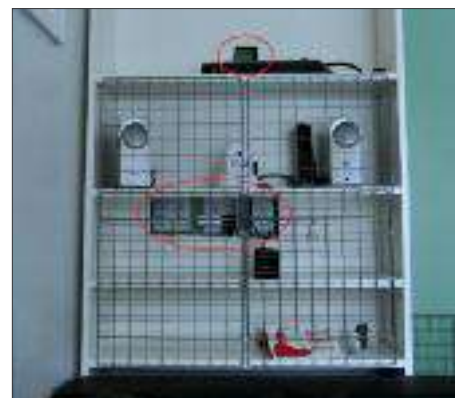
Photos: Helen Chen



The couch is now bunny-proofed with wire storage-cube panels.

I am currently trying to bond a new bunny with one of my own so I had to figure out a way to fit a new pen into the room. I ended up having to move my computer desk but I didn’t want to lose the use of all the electrical outlets where the desk used to be. An IKEA bookcase with a hole cut through the back, positioned in front of the outlets, was my solution. This allowed me to run wires behind the bookcase and put electronics on the shelves. You can put cabinet doors on the bookcase, but I wanted airflow for my electronics so I used some more storage-cube panels. I affixed them to the front with some metal hooks. Not only did I salvage the utility of my outlets but I also gained a lot of storage space. My webcam is safely spying on my bunnies from inside the bookcase. Depending on the height between the shelves, mesh wire baskets can also be a safe way to store items and block access to outlets in a bookcase. As for my computer desk, I just moved it to a new place, plugged my laptop into another nearby outlet and that was it!

Not everything is about bunny-proofing, though. I spend a lot of time in my bunny room so I like to give it a personal touch. One of the first things people see walking into my bunny room is my



The bookcase is reconfigured for electronics.



The storage cabinet is suspended.

storage cabinet. It’s suspended off the ground by a wall mount so my bunnies can run underneath it or use it as a hiding place. I used the glass doors as picture frames for my rabbits. Now everyone coming in knows right away that they’ve stepped into the rabbit zone!

# Dinner Time, With Four Hungry Friends

Photos: Sabine Heinlein



Blu sitting on Sabine's keyboard.

## By Giovanni Garcia-Fenech

My wife, Sabine, was out schmoozing with fellow journalists, and so it was my job to feed our pets when I got home from work. Sure, it might not be as dangerous as working on an oil rig, for example, but I was starving and we had four animals in the house – two cats and one rabbit, plus a guest rabbit we were taking care of for two weeks.

And it's complicated: We have to keep the rabbits on different floors because our three-pound handicapped rabbit, Peanut, tries to kill any creature bigger than herself, and Blu, the guest rabbit, keeps trying to climb the stairs. Then Barnaby, one of the cats, vomits if he eats too much at once, so I have to give him a little bit and then wait 20 minutes before I give him the rest. Of course, if I do that I have to do the same for Gilbert, the other cat. Otherwise, Barnaby pushes him aside and eats his food.

After all the parties had been fed, I took out the trash and cleared the dishes in the sink.

Finally, I could make dinner for myself.

I looked around to see what we had, but a) there wasn't much, b) I have no imagination, and c) I can't cook worth a damn. So I made tuna salad with the only can of tuna in the house and poured myself a glass of wine to class it up a little. That's when I heard the crash downstairs.

Earlier that day, Sabine had sent me a photo of Blu sitting on her keyboard, so I had a pretty good idea of what to expect. As I ran down to get the rabbit off the desk, I tripped on the cooler we're using to block the stairs, neatly upending my tuna salad bowl and spilling the wine all over the floor.

The cleanup was no fun, particularly with Barnaby all over me because of the tuna smell, and Blu all over Barnaby just because.

But before I could scavenge for a replacement dinner, it was time to prepare Peanut's nightly arthritis medication. As I worked on it (mashing a liquid and a powder with a slice of banana), I noticed Barnaby playing with a piece of insulation tape. I gave Peanut her meds, and then went to take away the tape

from Barnaby, but I couldn't find it anymore; evidently he had swallowed it. However, I was so hungry that I decided panicking would have to wait.

I finally was able to sit down for dinner: pita bread with cheese because I couldn't come up with anything else. That's when Sabine came home.

She smiled at my sad meal and asked, "Too lazy to make dinner?"

*(Editor's Note: You can find Giovanni's blog at [unutterable.org](http://unutterable.org))*



Peanut.



## Whiskers in Wonderland



Our adoptable rabbits were featured at the Whiskers in Wonderland event, which took place the weekend of Dec. 7-8. Tai Shimizu photographed the bunnies as they entertained the public. The two-day holiday pet adoption event was presented by the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, in partnership with the Petco Foundation. All rabbit photos © Tai Shimizu. Photos of signage are by Natalie L. Reeves.



Buster, front, on a speed date.



▲ Chocolate, top, and Snuggles. ▼ Emilia and Emily.



Divina.



Natalie Reeves with Oliver.



## Candy Touched Our Hearts

*Candy died on Jan. 30. Andrew Chen adopted Candy, and Tracy Nuzzo had fostered her. Here are two tributes.*

### Andrew Chen:

When I first saw Candy at AC&C, she was the smallest bunny I had ever seen in person. I immediately fell in love, but of course it couldn't be my choice but Momo's. My boy bunny had to decide which girl he wanted to spend his life with. That said, it wasn't even Momo who made the decision. It was Candy. The moment she saw him she ran up and kissed him on the ear. I don't know what Momo thought of this strange new bunny kissing him, but I know he didn't mind. And when she stopped, he would put his head under her chin as if he wanted more. From then on I knew it would be a crime not to have them together.

The first couple of days after she came home she would not wander too far from Momo. I didn't mind that she was cautious around my parents and me; she had her Momo for comfort. Eventually she got more comfortable and would often engage in games with Momo, their favorites being tag and hide-and-seek. She was also a very fast learner. She picked up the "art of begging" from Momo and was very, very good at it. It became much harder to say no with two adorable bunnies standing up at your feet. Though sometimes they grabbed each other's food, once they were done they'd snuggle up against each other. I never saw them sleeping apart.

When she died, I could not accept it. I am still trying to come to terms with what has happened as I write this. She had a brief episode of stasis a week prior, but that was cleared up in a day. She was playing with Momo as usual the night before and was fighting him for veggies in the morning. And then she was gone.

I may have given her a good life, but it was Momo who made her the happiest. It brings me comfort to know that he was there for her in her last moments. I will be personally bringing her to Pet Memorial Services in Pennsylvania to be privately cremated so she will always be close by.

She will be missed by all of us and, most of all, Momo.

### Tracy Nuzzo:

Candy Chen was the beloved wife of Momo Chen, a blue-eyed lop boy. She also was an adored bunny of the entire volunteer staff at Rabbit Rescue & Rehab.

Much loved, Candy lived a very full life. She was a middle child of Trixie, a supermom to 10 bunnies. All briefly lived in the shelter before being taken in by Will Leung. Candy was feisty and spirited, but we also knew her sweet and nurturing side. As a kit from a middle litter, Candy appointed herself as a nanny to her younger six siblings.

Candy met her mate Momo after she was spayed at Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine last May. Andrew Chen was working there and was excited to set up a meeting for his bunny Momo and Candy. It was love at first sight and the two married in a splendid June wedding at Petco Union Square.

I had the pleasure of briefly fostering Candy and she is one bunny I will never forget. Though small in stature, Candy's personality was huge. Bold and mischievous, Candy could command attention in a house full of bunnies. Although I am saddened by her sudden loss, I know all who met her will remember her with a smile.



Candy with her mother Trixie and siblings at AC&C.



Candy eating cilantro at AC&C.



Momo and Candy during a vet visit.



Candy and Momo.



## Our Wonderful Year With Sweet Annabel

By Birgit von Roemeling

When I adopted Annabel right after Thanksgiving 2012, I hoped we would have many wonderful years together. I called her my little miracle girl, because she looked like my previous bunny Mucki, and I was heartbroken and grieving over Mucki's loss.

She kept me busy, and soon the dark clouds disappeared, and the sun was shining again. Never ever in my wildest dreams did I think the worst nightmare would repeat itself so soon again. And now I have only my lovely memories of this one short wonderful year I spent with my sweet Annabel.

These are my memories:

—I remember how she explored every corner of the house when I brought her home. She adapted very fast to the daily routine, knowing she would get food and water, and lots of love and attention. After a few weeks she got the whole house to run around in, and she loved this. She made us so happy.

—Every time, when someone came to the front door, she was very nosy, and she came running to the door, to see who was visiting. She was a little party girl and loved company and lots of attention from everybody.

—When I was cooking in the kitchen, she was always at my side, and I had to watch out not to drip over her. She always hoped a little parsley piece or some other herb would “accidentally” fall on the floor.

—When my husband, Reinhard, came home in the evening, he could barely walk into the house. She was dancing around his feet until he was in the kitchen and she got her treat from him. If he was not fast enough, she would give him a little pinch on the leg.

—Whenever I came home from the market and put a basket with the fresh

Photo: Birgit von Roemeling



Annabel.

greens on the floor, she climbed in instantly, to get the first taste of everything.

—Each evening we had a race up the stairs to the bedroom. She was so fast, and she always won, and was sitting in bed first. Then she ate some more greens, and continued to snuggle in my arms for an hour or more. In the morning we also had our little snuggle hour. Sometimes when I woke up in the middle of the night, I heard her nibbling on the hay. Then I got this cozy warm feeling in my heart, knowing she was safe and her world was in order, and I easily fell asleep again.

—We spoiled her every day. She was our little princess, and we hoped she would forget her former life – that she was dumped in the woods of Staten Island, and that she rescued herself from this desperate situation by throwing herself in front of a woman walking her dog (Annabel's foster mom told me the story of how she was found).

Last November, Dr. Jennifer Saver discovered something in Annabel's lungs. There was a possibility that it could be cancer, fluid or an abscess, and we started with penicillin injections. Cancer was the least likely scenario, because Annabel had no cancer when she was found. Exactly three weeks later she passed away in my arms. A necropsy showed that she indeed had cancer.

We miss her terribly every day, and we will never forget her. But it gives us some comfort knowing that we were able to give her the most wonderful and happy year in her short life.

Many thanks go to Rabbit Rescue & Rehab; Cathy Zelonis, Annabel's foster mom; Dr. Saver – and also to Gabrielle LaManna and her friend Eileen, who came to the house to help me with the penicillin injections when my husband was traveling.

## Letters From Adopters

Photo: Kelly Del Valle



Mishoo.

### Mishoo

*Mishoo was adopted in December by Michael and Kelly Morales and their family. His full name now is Mishoo Butter Morales.*

After somewhat careful consideration and a bit of hesitation, Michael and I decided to adopt a bunny for our family.

Isabella, the youngest of our four children, said that all she really wanted from Santa was a rabbit in a pink cage.

Well, there was no pink cage. But a real rabbit was on the way.

On Dec. 23, we walked into the bunny room at the AC&C of NYC in Manhattan. Butter and Mishoo caught my husband's eye. Brian from AC&C took us on our tour of the bunnies and we ultimately chose Mishoo. He stole our hearts when he came up to the cage door to be petted.

We were able to contact Cindy Stutts that evening and by the next day (Christmas Eve), Mishoo was a part of our family. We loved him instantly and cannot imagine his cute little bunny self not being around us. Yes, he poops on the rug a little when we take him out, but that is nothing in comparison to the smiles on our faces when he is hopping around.

Mishoo loves to lie in the living room and watch TV with us. He hops over my daughter, Bella, and we all lie on the rug and make tunnels with our legs and he likes to go in and out of our legs and arms. It's too cute, sort of like an obstacle course. I think he is pretty happy.

We love our new addition to the family. I think he loves us, too.

Thank you to Cindy, Brian & AC&C for making our bunny-adopting experience an amazing one.

Michael, Kelly and family

Photo: Diane Zhong



Sesame fka Mel and Vanilla.

### Sesame and Vanilla

*Sesame (previously known as Mel) was adopted by Diane Zhong and her family in early December. He and Vanilla are getting to know each other.*

We adopted Sesame (formerly known as Mel) for our bunny Vanilla, who recently lost her partner. After about 10 speed dates with the help of Cindy Stutts in December, Sesame was the only bachelor Vanilla was outwardly interested in, although he mostly ignored her. Sesame is very cute and inquisitive. His favorite pastime is scouting out his surroundings while perched on top of the bunny cabana like a rooster on a barn. Vanilla adores him and loves to sprawl out and relax right next to him on their bunny dates.

Diane

Photo: Amanda Clare



Saxon, Charlotte, Brandon.

### Saxon, Charlotte and Brandon

*Amanda and Nick adopted Saxon (formerly known as Thumper) as a buddy for their bunny Charlotte after she lost her friend unexpectedly. The bonding was not going so well but they'd already fallen for Saxon so they later adopted Brandon for Charlotte with the hope that in the future, a successful triple bond would ensue. Charlotte and Brandon were bonded within two weeks.*

The trio bonding is going well now as Brandon appears to act as a

mollifying agent between the two other bunnies.

Meanwhile, everyone is very happy and healthy and they look forward to the time when they can all be one happy (bonded) family.

We want to thank all of the rabbit network volunteers who have so generously offered their assistance in staging bonding sessions and doing what they can to help out in this process.

Amanda Clare and Nick Kramvis

*(Continued on page 17)*



Photo: David Crawford



Melanie.

### Melanie

*David and Edie Crawford adopted Melanie in mid-November, and they sent this great update in January.*

Melanie is doing very well. She spent a little time with grandma while we were in Florida and she loved being there and was very entertaining for the whole family.

Melanie loves to devour the Zagat survey – oh, the irony – as well as a few cardboard boxes here and there. She also loves running laps around our coffee table. The construction of the table gives her four little hurdles per lap.

Melanie is also a very curious bunny. We are certain she loves watching TV because her orientation will change whenever the TV comes on and she will stay with her head pointed at it the entire time.

We are very happy to have Melanie as part of our family. She is currently nestled by the radiator enjoying some heat in the freezing weather.

Thanks.

David and Edie

Photo: John Inciarrano



Chopper and Buster.

### Buster and Chopper

*John Inciarrano adopted Buster in early December as a buddy for Chopper. The bonding process is continuing with the two boys, and there has been good progress.*

Bonding is going slowly. I have them up to about 30 minutes together in an open space before they get annoyed with one another. It's funny, though, because if the fence is up they are all about hanging out.

I'll keep you posted on their progress.

Johnny

Photo: Liv Pizzutello



Ruby and Oliver.

### Oliver and Ruby

*Liv Pizzutello adopted Oliver in December to be a buddy for Ruby, and the two bunnies are enjoying life together.*

I adopted my bunny Ruby Tuesday this summer and I have never been happier in my life. She is the kindest and most personable rabbit I have ever known. The special feeling of having something new still has not worn off with her, and I know it never will. I love her very much and when I heard that rabbits do better in pairs I decided that she should have a mate that she can love as much as I love her.

I tried her with several different rabbits and it did not work. I always wondered why until I met Oliver Flemmie. He stole my heart from the moment I saw his description online. I knew she would love him, and she did! He's a very special bunny boy and he charmed everyone he met. I still can't believe he is here with us now. He gives me that special new feeling that I had and still have with Ruby and I know that, too, will never change.

At home, Oliver is very different from my spunky Ruby Tuesday. Although she does love a good cheek rub, she can't sit still for long. She has a natural curiosity about everything and has to know what is going on at all times. Combined with her outgoing and adventurous qualities, she makes just enough trouble to always keep things interesting. Oliver, on the other hand, is a gentle giant. He's a mellow buddy with an old soul. He would rather snuggle up on my lap and watch TV for hours than hop around like a mad bunny the way some others do.

In his pen, Oliver loves to sit near his bonding partner in the other pen while she naps. He also loves to create a mess by shredding up all of his newspaper bedding and his phone book. Another

*(Continued on page 18)*

of his favorites is his plastic cup that he throws around his cage when he's feeling playful. This, of course, makes Ruby go crazy and she outdoes him by taking her cup and throwing it across the pen, running to get it, and throwing it again, over and over. This tires Oliver out, and they both snuggle up near each other for a nap.

In all, Oliver has made my special girl very, very happy and has found a place in my heart and the hearts of all my friends and family. Hopefully it won't be long until this bunny boyfriend becomes Ruby's husbun!

Liv



Photo: Chris Hamilton

Darcy.

### Darcy

*Darcy, formerly known as FeFe, was adopted in early January by Chris and Kristen.*

Darcy is a bunny who doesn't mind being held. She lives in a free-range home and has a hutch that doesn't lock.

We believe she must have spent the past two years of her life as a hutch bunny and she was surrendered for being too destructive and large. Interestingly, she has not chewed anything except hay, willow sticks, and her cardboard cave over the three weeks we have had her.

As an added bonus, she likes to lick. It's like a tiny cat tongue grooming us.

Cheers,

Chris

### Chili, Pepper and Golden

*Candace and her husband adopted Chili, Pepper and Golden in December, and she sent us this letter a month later.*

We are so lucky that Golden, Chili and Pepper have come into our lives.

This winter our beloved bunny, Peaches, passed away unexpectedly, and her rambunctious, loving and sweet personality was deeply missed in our home.

In honor of all the joy and happiness she brought into our lives, we decided to give some new bunnies a forever home. Chili and Pepper are a bonded pair who were found in a cardboard box in Brooklyn on a chilly night. They have been through a lot together and it shows – they are incredibly kind and affectionate to one another.

Chili and Pepper are having the time of their lives in their new home, sprinting around their play area and making anything they can into a tunnel to burrow through. They are incredibly social and receptive to us, and love being petted and played with.

Golden also had a rough start in life, but despite this she is simply the gentlest and sweetest rabbit we've ever had. She eats more hay than Chili and Pepper combined and becomes a pancake as soon as she gets head and ear rubs.

Our other bunny, Oreo, watches over all the newcomers and has already taught them when it is time for treats and

### Butters

*Butters, previously known as Lucero, was adopted by Allison and Sebastian, who sent us this update in January.*

My boyfriend, Sebastian, and I had been talking about bringing a pet into our lives for quite awhile. With his being allergic to the pretty standard household pets like dogs and cats, we shifted our

Photos: Candace Ratio and Daniel Pearson



Pepper and Chili.



Golden.

focus onto small animals like bunnies! I had been urging him to get tested to make sure he wasn't allergic to bunnies, but finding time to do that was difficult for him with his tough work schedule.

As a wonderful Christmas surprise, Sebastian had done his research on bunny adoption, secretly gotten tested

Candace

(Continued on page 19)



Photo: Allison Kim



Butters.

for bunny allergies (which he passed!), and put together the basics to make our home bunny-friendly. A couple of days after Christmas, we made our way to the NYC Animal Care & Control center where we met a super-knowledgeable and helpful volunteer named Erin. She asked if there were any bunnies we'd want to spend time with, in order to make sure we would be compatible.

Butters, then known as Lucero, was our second and final choice. As soon as she was brought over to us we knew she was the one we wanted to bring home!

Initially, Butters seemed a bit shy and wary of us in her new surroundings and always retreated to her hiding space. But as time progressed she would venture out into the play area we had set up for her, eventually hopping up onto the couch and into our laps.

The first time we saw her flop onto her side was a great feeling for us because we knew she was getting more and more comfortable with us, but that feeling was nothing in comparison to when we saw her first binky! Butters has been a great addition to our lives and we just hope she loves us as much as we love her.

Allison and Sebastian

Photo: Taresa Blunda



Sonic and Freeda.

### Sonic and Freeda

*Sonic and Freeda are adopted bunnies who are best of friends.*

Freeda was adopted from NYC Metro Rabbits in January 2013, after being fostered by rabbit volunteer Catherine Zelonis.

Freeda's friend Sonic was adopted in early 2013 from Bergen County Animal Shelter. With some time, training and patience, these two learned to be the best of buddies.

In August 2013, they lost their other best buddy, "Ruby," a 13-year old female chinchilla. Everyone still misses Ruby dearly :'(

Sonic and Freeda reside in North Jersey and are cared for by me and my husband. They usually have daily and nightly active/play time, and they have the run of all the rooms to roam around freely at

any time while at least one or both of us are at home. They sleep in their two-story, very large condo.

The rabbits enjoy playing and jumping for joy, and they have plenty of chew toys, a cat tunnel to run through and office low-pile carpeting in every room. The pet room is temperature-controlled all year long, with proper sunlight and proper shade, along with changing decorations in the room to fit the different holidays throughout the year. The room also has night lights on timers, and soft classical piano and orchestral music on low volume certain times of the day and night. The rabbits drink fresh spring water only, and eat a healthy diet of daily Oxbow Western Timothy hand-select hay, and controlled amounts of Oxbow pellets and fresh organic greens.

Taresa Blunda

(Continued on page 20)

## Chase and Pam

*Chase was adopted in January by Karen and Grant to be a partner for their girl bunny, Pam.*

Things have been wonderful with our little man home! My fiancé, Grant, and I are so happy with our new little guy. He has such a fun, rambunctious personality! Monday evening, he spent a good 20 minutes running in circles around on the living room floor/couch. He would do a semicircle on the ground, leap up onto the couch, push off the back of the couch with an arm and leg and hurl himself in the air, binkying while he was airborne, landed and turned right around to do it all over again! We were laughing so hard, and it was so good to see Chase liking his new home.

We've also had lots of cuddle sessions, which he calms down for. He loves to stretch out on the couch. Pam and Chase had their first official date at home on Wednesday evening. There was some sniffing, some coexistence, a little humping and some grooming. Oh, it went super well! They seem to really like each other

Photo: Karen Schierhorn



Chase on the left, Pam on the right.

and are starting to learn to trust one another. The dates on Thursday, Friday and today keep getting better and better. There's lots of cuddling, lots of grooming and a food sharing. No more humping! It's a match made in heaven!

Our little girl, Pam, has a wildly entertaining Instagram page you can

check out for more photos and Pam and Chase updates. Her IG name is "pamthesweetbun." I promised Chase I'd help him with his page, but he and Pam have to get married first!

One thing at a time, right? ;)

Karen, Grant, Chase and Pam

## Milo

*Milo was adopted in January by Paula, who sent us this nice update.*

I had never owned a rabbit before, but have always loved bunnies. I did a lot of research on care, resources and needs that rabbits have before deciding I'd be a good mommy to an adopted bun. My friend Izzy had adopted her bunny from Rabbit Rescue & Rehab so she recommended that I go to visit the bunnies during the group's weekend adoption events at Petco.

I went to both Union Square and the Upper East Side locations and sat with about eight different rabbits. They all were sweet and had distinct personalities. The last fellow I sat with was Milo. He jumped into my lap the moment I sat down in his pen and I was a goner. I'm not sure if

I really chose him or if he chose me, but less than a week later my apartment was bunny-proofed and Milo became my new roommate.

He is the happiest little fellow and quite the love bug. He loves his new ample space and is fully of binkies whenever he is exercising. He loves to be petted and is super playful. Playing peak-a-boo and burrowing under paper in cardboard boxes are two of his favorite activities.

He is a social guy and loves it when he has visitors. This little snuggle bunny warmed up to me and his new surroundings right away, but every day he is filled with even more affection than the day before.

I'm so glad I was able to give this special guy the home he deserves.

Paula Rosenberg

Photo: Paula Rosenberg



Milo.



CELEBRITIES IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Owney checks out the first snow from the window.



Nettle.



Alex practices "petting gently" on Snowball and Luna.



Love is feeling safe to flop. Luna guards Snowball.



▲ Amber Lee. ▼ Noodles and her babies.



Buns.





CELEBRITIES IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Adam.



Tammy and her pancake bunny.



Butler.



▲ Rocko. ▼ Thistle.



▲ Trixie and Bunz. ▼ Fuzzy.



Sweet Pea the cockatiel, 15 years old with Rich Gallo (Marylee Maiturro's husband), rescue rabbit Edison, 8, Marylee and Spanky, 11, on Spanky's birthday in December.



## 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

## 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](mailto:bygolyoly@yahoo.com) or call her at 646-319-4766. On **Long Island**, contact Nancy Schreiber at [nschreibmd@aol.com](mailto:nschreibmd@aol.com) or at 516-510-3637 ([www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org)), and in **Westchester** contact Mary Cotter at [mec@cloud9.net](mailto:mec@cloud9.net) or 914-337-6146 ([www.rabbitcare.org](http://www.rabbitcare.org)).

The rabbit volunteers' email address in New York City is [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:mec@cloud9.net) or Cindy Stutts at [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

For basic information about rabbits as pets, go to [www.rabbitcare.org](http://www.rabbitcare.org), [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org) and the House Rabbit Society main site, [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

## Licensed HRS Representatives

**Mary Cotter**, HRS Licensed Educator, Chapter Manager, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, [mec@cloud9.net](mailto:mec@cloud9.net), (914) 337-6146, [rabbitcare.org](http://rabbitcare.org)

**Nancy Schreiber**, HRS Licensed Educator, President, Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, [nschreibmd@aol.com](mailto:nschreibmd@aol.com), (516) 510-3637, [LongIslandRabbitRescue.org](http://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org)

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

**Mary Ann Maier**, HRS Licensed Educator, Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group Volunteer, [altitude8@yahoo.com](mailto:altitude8@yahoo.com), [LongIslandRabbitRescue.org](http://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org)

**Donna Sheridan**, HRS Licensed Educator, Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group Volunteer, [hpocus217@yahoo.com](mailto:hpocus217@yahoo.com), [LongIslandRabbitRescue.org](http://LongIslandRabbitRescue.org)

**Kerstin Aumann**, HRS Licensed Educator, NYC/AC&C Volunteer, [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com), [nycacc.org](http://nycacc.org)

**Mary Harnett**, HRS Licensed Educator, [mmharnett@optonline.net](mailto:mmharnett@optonline.net), (914) 948-7976

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

**Mary Christine Basile**, Educator-in-Training

**Jennifer Saver**, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

**Laura George**, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

**Monica Shepherd**, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

## THUMP February 2014

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS

56 West Pondfield Road #5C

Bronxville, NY 10708

[www.rabbitcare.org](http://www.rabbitcare.org)

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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 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](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).