

# THUMP

NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS OCTOBER 2010

## Ben's Discovery

By Ben McCool

People never cease to amaze me.

I come from a family of ardent animal lovers, and as a child I thought that everybody shared a similar kinship with the creatures living with us. Over time I grew to understand that this was an unrealistic notion; after all, taking care of animals requires a degree of effort, and laziness is an unfortunate human condition.

A few weeks ago, I was walking back to my Manhattan apartment after a shopping trip, arms filled with groceries. Thing is, the bloody things were heavy! I decided to take a shortcut through a neighboring building's passageway – a route I almost *never* use – hoping to relieve my aching arms a few minutes sooner.

From here, my afternoon took a deeply upsetting turn.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Ben McCool where he found Benita

After passing by the entrance to the aforementioned building, I noticed a small box in the doorway. Upon closer inspection, it appeared to have something inside it: something *alive*. That's when my

Photo: Kathryn Pizzo



The bottom of Benita's cage

heart sank; it was a filthy bunny rabbit trapped inside an even filthier cage, stewing in a concoction of its own urine, feces and God-only-knows what else. The cage – barely large enough for the rabbit to stand upright – was rusted and the attached water bottle also heavily oxidized, barely capable of releasing the murky fluid inside. At first I panicked, completely overwhelmed by the shocking discovery; how could somebody just *abandon* an animal like this? I rushed

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## Crafty Rabbit Ideas, Courtesy of Amy Sedaris

Actress, writer and comedienne Amy Sedaris is a House Rabbit Society honorary educator who is well known to rabbit adopters in the New York area. Amy lives in Greenwich Village with a mini rex rabbit named Dusty who runs a bakery (featured in a video along with NYC HRS foster rabbits:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjrWXXvw-yA>).

Amy devotes a chapter of her new book to rabbits. She generously gave Thump permission to reprint this excerpt.

From "SIMPLE TIMES: Crafts for Poor People" by Amy Sedaris. Copyright (c) 2010 by Amy Sedaris. Reprinted by permission from Grand Central Publishing. All rights reserved.

### Hay Burners

If you have a pet, there are two things you know: one, you will never get that smell out of the couch; and two, they don't judge you. You could openly embezzle funds tagged for the local

orphanage, and as long as you provide him with food and a warm place to sleep, "Hopscotch" will greet you with the same enthusiasm those orphans will greet Christmas morning with, at least until they realize there are not going to be any presents this year. And it is this unflinching naïveté that makes pets perfect to craft for. That is not to say that our pets will happily accept whatever you place in front of them. They may

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**Petco Stores In Manhattan Help With Our Adoptions**  
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**Long Island Rescue News: Barbie and Hugh Get Medical Care**  
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**Rosie Is Taken Into Custody On a Rooftop In the Village**  
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**Enchanted By a New Zealand White Named Bella**  
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The rabbit in our masthead is Long Island volunteer Carlina Jarmel's Robbie Two, who is bonded to her other rabbit Robbie. Their names are a coincidence.

**Amy** (Continued from page 1)

turn their nose up at the crocheted sweater vest or attempt to bury the miniature sombrero, but this has less to do with them consciously forming a negative opinion about your abilities, and more to do with the fact that the item isn't edible. Animals are always honest. They react in the moment and, unlike humans, they are not capable of backhanded compliments. They will not

belittle your choices and they don't condescend. You are safe in crafting for your pet, and regardless of their reaction, you can be sure you will never hear such statements as, "If my aunt were alive, she'd probably enjoy this," or "Off the top of my head, I can't think of anything to do with this, but it's not for lack of trying," or "Has your therapist seen this?"

For me, when I talk about crafting for my pet I am talking specifically about

rabbits. I have lived with one rabbit or another for many years now. There is much misinformation out there about rabbits and rabbit care. Perhaps one day I will work on a book just dealing with rabbits – are you listening, publishers of the Harry Potter series? I am willing to write a book solely about rabbits, no narrative, no amusing anecdotes, just dry rabbit facts, or are you tired of publishing blockbusters? Until that day, I will have to make do with including some crafty rabbit suggestions in this craft book. So here is a little taste of where the future of publishing is heading.

### **Rabbit-Proofing Your Home**

Rabbits love to chew. Rabbits will chew furniture legs, bedspreads, clothing, drapes, high-heeled shoes, and baseboards. I was forced to nail a wooden two-by-four faux baseboard over my actual baseboard so my rabbit would chew the fake one and not the real one. I was renting the apartment and I wanted my deposit back. Unfortunately, I didn't account for the collective aroma that builds up after years of housing a rabbit in a small apartment, and I certainly didn't realize they would retain a deposit because of it.

But more than baseboards, or furniture, rabbits love to chew electrical cords. They enjoy the jolt. Like little junkies, they prance around the room gnawing on anything that has a current running through it. At the top of their list is a computer cord. Electrical cords must be protected so the rabbit can't get to them. Vinyl tubing that you can buy at the hardware store is best for this. Use a utility blade and split the tube lengthwise and then push the cord through. The tube will naturally close around the cord.

You can also encourage your rabbit to chew things that won't cut all the power to your appliances. Craft toys out of balsa wood for your rabbits to chew. Or if you want something slightly more ambitious, try crafting Dusty Dean Dynamite Sticks. Simply fill a toilet

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Dusty and Amy Sedaris



Photo: Jason Frank Rohnberg



Dusty Dean Dynamite Sticks

paper tube with treat hay, such as oat, and allow the hay to stick out the ends like a scarecrow. Rabbits love the fringed edges, and it's easier for them to pick these up with their teeth and toss around the room, hopefully keeping them busy long enough for you to rewire the lamps.

## Cardboard Indoor Rabbit Dwelling

For a mini hutch, this is a good way to go because it has the textures rabbits love to gnaw on. Also, the material is fixed, and they love resistance. Leave the back or side open so your rabbit will have a way to enter. This rabbit dwelling pictured here was assembled using glue. Your challenge is to make this exact hutch, but without using glue or staples, which are not good for rabbits. Good luck.



## Here are the top nine simple yet crucial things you must do to ensure your pet rabbit will be safe in your home.

1. **Electrical wires must be covered or made inaccessible.** Or better yet get rid of all electrical appliances including televisions. The Amish have been living this way for hundreds of years and they seem happy.
2. **Toxic houseplants must be removed** (many, if not most, common houseplants are toxic to rabbits). In other words no foliage in your home, including flowers, which, ironically, are the one thing that would have slightly combatted that gamey rabbit smell.
3. **Flat, no-pile, nonskid carpeting is needed** to give rabbits traction and a place to run and leap. After switching out all your carpeting, why not remove the furniture to really allow them to cut loose?
4. **Rabbits love to chew against resistance.** Woodwork is a big favorite for many rabbits. If you live in an old building, assume there is lead paint under your current paint, and prevent rabbits' access and chewing. The easiest way to do this is to gut your place entirely, all the way down to the studs! Put up new drywall and crown molding, and cover with responsible non-rabbit-killing paint.
5. **Prevent rabbits' access to toxic substances** you may use around the house – especially insecticides and rodenticides. Cleaning chemicals (particularly those containing limonene or pine oils) may also be harmful to rabbits. You will need to toss out all your cleaning supplies, including your broom. Brooms are a chewing hazard. This is unfortunate, because what's not covered in rabbit droppings will be dusted with hay, so now that you own a rabbit your desire to clean will never be more burning.
6. **Reclining chairs are particularly hazardous.** Rabbits can climb, unseen, into the mechanism and can be crushed when someone leans back. All comfy chairs must go!
7. **Prevent rabbits' access under the bed** – rabbits love to chew the filmy fiberglass covering that is tacked on the underside of the box spring. This can be lethal. The downside is, you will be resting in a sleeping bag on a flat rug. The upside? You have a rabbit!
8. **Put away human snacks and pet foods.** Rabbits should not ingest chocolate (or any other high-carbohydrate food), and should not ingest dog or cat food. It's about time you and your dog went on a diet, isn't it?
9. **Be careful with toys that can wrap around a rabbit's neck** (such as a large-sized slinky). The rabbit can panic in an attempt to escape, and can seriously hurt himself. Even chewed-up towels with holes in them can be hazardous if the bunny's head gets caught. It's just best to not have toys. You have a rabbit now and that should be the focus of your joy!

Indoor Rabbit Dwelling. Your challenge is to replicate this without using glue or staples.

## Benita *(Continued from page 1)*

back to my own apartment, dropped off the groceries (my appetite having since expired) and got online to contact my local animal rescue shelter. This is where I encountered my first problem: it was Labor Day, and the shelter was closed.

*Nightmare.* What should I do now?

I expanded my Internet search and came across a bunny rescue center located in a suburb of New York. Mercifully, a delightful woman named Mary Cotter answered my phone call, and I explained the situation in rather frantic fashion. A little too frantic, in fact: Mary had trouble understanding my nervy British accent! Once I'd managed to calm down a little, we managed to battle out a plan of action: Mary knew a rabbit volunteer who was at the uptown animal shelter, and with a huge stroke of luck was able to contact her. Despite the shelter being closed, I was told that the staff would take in the animal. *Thank God*, I thought. There was still hope for the poor little thing.

I managed to flag down a cab, and despite the driver's lack of enthusiasm

toward having a crud-filled cage in the back of his car, I convinced him to take me to the shelter. The roads were relatively clear (any other Monday at 4 p.m. would've been a very different story in New York) and I arrived shortly afterward. I got the staff's attention, and though they were initially dubious about letting me in (after all, the place was technically closed), I mentioned that I'd been chatting to Mary Cotter, who had told Jane O'Wyatt (another caring rabbit-rescue volunteer) to expect me. First indications were far from good: the receptionist noted that the rabbit was covered in blood, and though I disagreed (it looked more like diarrhea to me; hardly a pleasant alternative, but surely a less serious one), I was in no position to argue. It was observed that the rabbit was in very poor condition, and would likely need to be destroyed. However, I was assured that a more comprehensive checkup would be conducted before resorting to this (horrible-sounding) outcome.

They took the bunny away, leaving me feeling apprehensive and still very upset. But at least she was in good hands and

out of her sordid cage. A short time later, I received a phone call from Mary informing me that the bunny – now named Benita – was eating and drinking. A very encouraging sign!

Slowly but surely, Benita is recovering. I've received regular updates on her condition, including photos, and continue to hope that she heals up fully. How somebody could neglect a poor defenseless animal to this extent is beyond me; as I said earlier, people never cease to amaze me. But not *always* in a negative way – Mary and Jane's dedication to Benita's welfare is incredibly touching, and the fact that she now has a fighting chance of pulling through is very inspiring.

Ever since that fateful day, I've been taking the shortcut on a frequent basis, keeping my eye out for any more abandoned animals! Thankfully, I've found none yet. Here's hoping it stays that way...

*Ben McCool is a British writer living in New York City. A huge animal lover, he is incredibly grateful to those who care for neglected creatures, bunnies or otherwise!*

## Benita's Road to Recovery

After Ben McCool delivered Benita to the East 110th Street shelter on Labor Day, her life changed. Jane O'Wyatt was at AC&C and kept a log of the rabbit's arrival. Later, Mary Cotter provided emailed updates, which are excerpted here.

### Jane O'Wyatt's Log Entries

Monday, Sept. 6, 4 p.m., AC&C

Announcement over PA system: rabbit volunteer, please come to reception. I go, but am told a new bunny in bad shape has already been taken to Medical. Rabbit's rescuer, Ben, sweet, worried young English guy in reception, says he found her abandoned outside, at Second Avenue and 27th Street. Mary Cotter told him to bring the bunny to the shelter. Ben asks if he can hang out till we can give him some news. Yes, I say, and rush into Medical, but no one is there. Where is the rabbit?

Then I spot a small cage (footprint approx. 14 x 10) near the big sink in the treatment room. White bars look as

though they were sprayed reddish orange. My God, there's a small rabbit in that cage and she is soaked to the skin. Small tan-and-white Dutch mix looks and smells like she is drenched in rust-colored urine. I grab a clean bath towel, undo cage clips, take bunny out, wrap her in a towel and hold her close to my chest. Bottom of cage is awash with ½- to ¾-inch of water and/or pee, with liquefied poops and a couple of leaves of Romaine lettuce.

Sitting on the exam table, the bunny tries to groom herself but can't raise front paws to her face. Extremely weak and emaciated, long nails, hock sores. Techs suggest bathing her, giving her sub-q

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Sept. 6, 2010. Benita on the scale in Medical fluids. I call Mary Cotter and ask. "Don't bathe the bunny, it could kill her. Don't give sub-q fluids; her oncotic pressure may be too low for her to absorb them. Offer her water, pellets mushed up with water. Do you have any kale? Try wet

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## Log *(Continued from page 4)*

kale. If she's trying to groom herself, she wants to live."

A tech weighs the bunny (2 lbs. – she should weigh twice that) and he takes a picture for the record. Then I am free to take her upstairs to start with Mary's suggestions.

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Sept. 6, 2010. Benita taking a rest break while eating pellets

My helper Kitty Pizzo gasps, looks horrified when I bring the bunny into rabbit room. We set up cage: litter box lined with kraft paper, topped with soft Organic Hay Co. 2nd-cut, trimmed AC&C cardboard carrier with clean towel as a hideaway, water bottle with sipper tube. Rabbit sits in litter box in corner of cage with her back to us. She is wet and trembling, so I ask Kitty to find and nuke two SnuggleSafe heating pads, which go in the litter box under the hay and in the hideaway under a layer of towel. We add water to pellets and try to crush/mush them in a hurry. Offer mushed-up pellets and bunny eats some. We offer small pieces of wet kale. Bunny grabs and munches on the kale! Ditto cilantro, parsley. We watch, enthralled, as a strand of hay disappears into her mouth. We offer dry pellets and bunny has some, chewing slowly, sometimes stopping mid-mouthful to rest, then starting to chew again. She staggers around cage, very weak, looking as though her feet hurt, stumbles into a

shallow water bowl. Wanting her to get dry, we decide to remove the water bowl and let her get water from greens. Kitty runs downstairs to get cage card from Medical (they've named the bunny Angel) and to take pix of cage she came in. Kitty says the cage has a water bottle fastened to it, so the bunny knows how to use it.

Bunny is so weak and uncoordinated, it's a struggle for her to get in and out of smallest litter box, so Mary (whom I continue to call for advice), says get rid of litter box, spread hay on cage floor. That done, I remember Ben waiting anxiously in reception. Not wanting to leave the bunny, I ask Kitty to go downstairs and give him an update. But Ben is gone, asked to leave by skeleton staff (it's Labor Day), so again I call Mary, who has his cell number, and ask her to call him. She says she will, though I know she's swamped in deadlines. Mary says she will come tomorrow to see the bunny, whom she has named Benita, after the man who saved her life.

About 7 p.m., Cindy Stutts arrives and examines the bun. Puts HEALx Soother Plus on hock sores. Asks what bun has eaten and says we have apple-banana Critical Care in fridge. I mix up some CC, which Cindy offers in a plastic spoon to the bunny, who is now in the front of the cage, bracing herself against wire walls in the right corner. She is mildly interested in CC but has eaten enough for now. Cindy says you have to be very careful when feeding an emaciated rabbit.

After Kitty and Cindy leave, I reheat both SnuggleSafes and put them back in cage (it's 8 p.m. and maybe they will stay warm through the night, though manufacturer guarantees only eight hours of heat), set up a salad bowl with wet greens and add dry pellets to bowl on top of which Cindy had put the uneaten CC. I notice a small cluster of poops where the bunny had been sitting, another poop over near towel. Soft but formed poops: good news. I pick them up with a paper towel and throw in garbage. Drape pieces of kraft paper



Sept. 7, 2010. Benita eating greens, ears up

over top and side of cage, turn out rabbit-room lights, go home.

## Tuesday, Sept. 7, 7:30 a.m., AC&C

Lights are on in rabbit room when I arrive. Benita is sitting alertly on the SnuggleSafe in her hideaway, surrounded by poops! More poops near the almost-empty food bowls! For the first time since she arrived, her ears (which looked like wings lying over her back yesterday) are up and they are huge. The other rabbits in this room, Geppetto & Jiminy, Rochelle, Corrine, Chavez, Nikita, Louis, Isis, Tom, Nugget and Chocolate, surely helped Benita get through the night, with their bunny smells and rustling and chewing pellets and veggies and tearing paper and moving stuff around in their cages.

I've brought copies of amNew York – it's ubiquitous, softer than kraft paper and has no staples – and I replace the paper and hay in Benita's cage. She is hungry, so she gets more greens and some Critical Care. After eating, she grooms her face, which she can now reach with her paws. She's not quite dry yet and she feels a little cold, so I re-nuke her SnuggleSafes and replace them in her cage under fresh hay and a clean towel. Return home, will go back this afternoon for rabbit-room shift.

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**Log** (Continued from page 5)

Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2 p.m., AC&C

Mary comes to shelter to see Benita. She doesn't think all the stuff in the bunny's coat is urine – says the smell isn't right, it's some chemical – familiar odor that she can't place. Mary invites me to sniff and I agree with her, but when Benita came in, before she dried out, the top note was urine, the other smell submerged. Mary asks for a comb and grooms Benita's head while the bunny holds out her ears cooperatively. After evaluating Benita, Mary worries that the rabbit will need more intensive care than possible at AC&C, so she decides to take Benita home to foster. We set up a carrier with paper, hay and fresh greens. Ready to leave, Mary puts Benita in the carrier, where the bunny starts nibbling greens.

Sept. 7, 2010. Mary Cotter examines Benita in AC&C's rabbit room.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



## Mary Cotter's Email Updates, Excerpted

To AC&C rabbit volunteers  
Wednesday, Sept. 8

Hi all,

Benita seems to have her own fan club, and Jane has asked for updates, so here goes:

I removed her from AC&C because she needs some care immediately that is just about impossible to give her at AC&C, including (but not limited to) a wet-cleaning and partial (probably pretty extensive) shave-down to get off the "mystery substance" that won't come off with cleaning. Her hocks are also in very bad shape, but right now that's probably the least of her problems.

Last night, when I got her home, she settled in right away, seemed comfortable and relaxed, and had a very good night.

This morning, however, I came out to discover that all the good, fresh food she has eaten for the past couple of days at AC&C seemed to have exited her all at

once. There were the usual normal poops, but her cage was also FULL of stinky mushed cecals, and she had urinated copiously, all over the place.

I gave her a half-body bath this morning in a white tub, and the water immediately turned dark brown – not from poop or urine, but from the mystery substance that is smeared and dried over her fur. Whatever it is, it has a quite strong chemical odor, and a very greasy feel to it when you rub it between your fingers while trying to wash it out of her fur.

There are multiple places on her body where the very loose skin folds (from her emaciated state – all the sub-q fat is gone) is caught up into dried balls of this gunk, and this has got to be quite uncomfortable or painful for her.

Underneath her chin there is a sizable, very hard lump – not an abscess, but a hunk of that mystery substance with all the under-chin hair caught up in it – probably extremely irritating to her, since she cannot stretch her neck out to chin anything until this lump is removed.

I had thought I'd be able to cut it out, but this will probably not be possible because of the amount of skin that's caught in this hair-glue-rock.

Same thing under her right arm, and on her underside: lots of hard lumps of hair dried into the gluey stuff that's smeared all over her body.

Anyway, I dried her off as thoroughly as possible with both turkish towels and paper towels, and she is now on a heating pad, working hard on continuing to groom herself.

I am going to try to get some help today in getting the rest of the stuff off (hopefully with an electric clipper), as it is just not possible to do this without skilled help to restrain her safely, and the stench of her in my otherwise-odor-free apt. is overwhelming (to me, at least). The clothes I wore to clean her absolutely REEK.

Ordinarily, a rabbit in this shape (covered with a dried, mystery substance) would be anesthetized for the kind of cleanup

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## Updates *(Continued from page 6)*

that is needed, but this bunny is a poor candidate for anesthesia because of her extremely debilitated state, so we will have to do the best we can with her awake.

Thanks so much to all who have participated so far in Bennie-Angel's care. She could not have made it without all the wonderful help she got from the AC&C bunny volunteers for the two days she was there.

Once she is cleaner and more stable, she will need a temporary foster home (probably for 2-3 months), to give her a chance to gain weight slowly but safely. When she reaches a normal body weight, she can be spayed and put up for adoption.

Her will to live, in the face of what she has been through, is nothing short of astounding, and whoever becomes her forever parent is going to have an extraordinary little spirit on his/her hands!

### To AC&C rabbit volunteers Saturday, Sept. 11

Benita has spiked what is commonly known as a "fever of unknown origin": 105.6.

I spoke with two of our vets, and they advised me to put her on injectable penicillin and an NSAID – preferably Banamine – but I just discovered that my Banamine is long-expired, so, after another veterinary consult, started her on Metacam.

She also has ice water to drink, and an ice pack to lie against.

She is still eating and pooping up a storm. Please send her healing vibes and keep her in your thoughts and prayers. There's no question that she has the will to live; we are just hoping that her weakened, emaciated body won't give out on her in spite of her fierce will.

### Subsequent emails were addressed to Jane O'Wyatt

#### Monday, Sept. 13

Still hanging in – fever up and down – eating and pooping well, and letting me

know – very clearly – which foods she wants, and when.

She is easy to medicate – licks the Metacam right out of the syringe, and sits perfectly still for her penicillin injections.

I'm working on cutting off those hard, sharp, dried spikes that are all over her body, one at a time (this is a must, as she cannot really get comfortable lying on them, and has made no headway trying to groom them off herself), and even shaving some areas with the surgical blade (#40) on my electric clippers. It is painstaking work that requires a lot of patience on both our parts.

It is truly astounding what she will let me do, with no restraint, just sitting on a thick towel on my lap. Folds of her thin, delicate, emaciated skin are caught up tightly in many of the dried lumps of fur (so much so that, unless you look closely, they look sort of like cutaneous tumors), so it is VERY tricky and VERY time-consuming to free her skin from these dense mini-glue-balls.

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### She looks pathetic – like a half-plucked chicken.

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She gives a quick startle and jerks away when I am too close, or nicking her skin, but she settles right back down on my lap, unrestrained, ready to tolerate more. I am able to use one hand to hold up the spikes, and the other hand to work them loose with tiny scissors or with my electric clippers – leaving no hands to restrain her. She permits me to use those loud electric clippers even right next to her enormous angel-ears. Some very sensitive areas (especially under her chin) she does not want me to touch, but we "negotiate," and sometimes she relents a little, and I am able to make some progress. And when she has had enough, she lets me know, and I put her back in her cage so we can both take a break.

And so it goes. We are both taking it one day at a time, and I'm still keeping my fingers crossed for her.

#### Tuesday, Sept. 14

She DEMANDS greens and is not having any loose cecals, so her body seems able to handle them. Green leaf lettuce she attacks with gusto – as if it will disappear if she doesn't scarf it down fast enough.

#### Thursday, Sept. 16

Her spirits are great and she is still eating like a little piggy.

Today she weighed 3 lbs.

#### Friday, Sept. 17

So far I have kept her caged (she's in a Leith condo – one level) in order to give her time to rest and to keep her from burning off the desperately needed calories that her body is using to restore her health.

But her temp. this morning was normal (though it doesn't always stay this way) and now she seems strong enough for some exercise, so she is having her first session today, in my carpeted exercise hallway.

At first, she didn't know what to make of it, and kept standing (I should say, wobbling) on her tiptoes looking around. But then she started to move around in the hallway and to get her "land legs." With her skinny little legs, her half-shaved back and her scissors-snipped paws and chest, she looks pathetic – like a half-plucked chicken.

She rocks back on her heels to keep her weight off those sore spots in the middle of her hocks.



Photo: Mary Collier

Sept. 19, 2010. Scabs on hocks

*(Continued on page 8)*

## Updates *(Continued from page 7)*

Monday, Sept. 20

This is the best shot I could get, through cage bars, so as not to disturb her, since the shot was probably better than I could get by holding her. She was lying with feet outstretched – no more scab pads (I applied Soother Plus around this time yesterday), and it looks like bone is exposed, though without a closer look I cannot tell.

Yesterday when I applied the Soother Plus, she would barely let me touch those spots – just got a glob of Soother Plus on the scabs and she struggled to jump free, before I could even rub it in. Now, I'm really glad I didn't apply any pressure to that area.

Monday, Sept. 20

Vets say the spots are too superficial to be bone, so we are continuing with the Soother Plus, but with bandages as well.

Benita is a BEAR to handle when she decides she'll have none of it, and she made it a real challenge for Jennifer and me to get bandages on her feet tonight (she now has more than enough strength to struggle when she wants to!). It remains to be seen if I'll be able to do this without someone to restrain her (the bandages must be changed daily).

Friday, Oct. 1

Benita now weighs 3.7 lbs.

Saturday, Oct. 2

The body shot shows a) how/where her hair is growing in – FINALLY! and b) how she is still rocking back on her heels even on soft surfaces – her hocks are healing nicely but still not healed enough to bear body weight – we are guessing another couple of weeks on Soother Plus will do the job.

*(To be continued in Thump, Dec. 2010.)*

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab wishes to thank Drs. Jennifer Saver and Gil Stanzone for generously providing assistance and advice during Benita's recovery. Our rabbit-savvy vets (see list on page 24) have provided invaluable emergency help for many of our rabbits. Unfortunately, Benita's case is not a particularly unusual one. Often AC&C rabbit volunteers are confronted with medical emergencies and receive assistance from the shelter medical staff, from knowledgeable vets, and from other volunteers and HRS educators. Our success stories must be credited to this large circle of people who have helped us over the years.

Photo: Mary Colter



Sept. 20, 2010. Scabs on hocks have come off.

Photo: Mary Colter



Oct. 1, 2010. Hocks are healing.

Photo: Mary Colter



Oct. 2, 2010. Clipped fur is growing in.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Oct. 11, 2010. Benita and Mary visit AC&C.

## BONDING

# Two Bonding Breakthroughs, But With Rocky Beginnings

By Megan Krieman

## 1. Hugo and Delilah

Bonding a Type-A girl to a young frisky guy has been my project for the last few weeks.

There have been ups and downs. At first, Delilah seemed delighted by Hugo's presence. However, when he didn't respond to her demands for grooming by placing her head on the floor just in front of his, she would then shove her head under his. Hugo was at a loss for what this girl was looking for. Furthermore, having just had a lower molar removed, he undoubtedly had a bit of a toothache. So he'd run off, afraid of this demanding, gorgeous girl. Delilah would then give chase, biting his hind legs all the while. Thank goodness she doesn't have any incisors, or this may never have worked out.

Finally one day, he seemed to understand, and he groomed her for a brief moment. The tide was turning. Well, Delilah and Hugo spent their first night together in mid-September. It started like a junior high dance with each at opposite ends of the pen. This wasn't the immediate love connection that I witnessed bonding her with her last boyfriend. Hugo is a young guy with ideas of his own. She grooms him endlessly and he hadn't figured out yet that he needed to reciprocate, much to Delilah's dismay. Hugo seems very happy with his new life but is a little confused by Delilah at times. So it goes for boys and girls...

Incredibly there was a breakthrough moment the other evening. Hugo started to groom Delilah, and rather than sinking into what I call bunny-loaf pose and enjoying it, she put her head in the air and moved it around, as if to tell

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## Hugo and Delilah

(Continued from page 8)

Photo: Megan Krieman



Delilah, at left, and Hugo

Hugo, “a little over here,” and then turning her cheek, as if saying, “and a little over here.” She was teaching him what to do. It was very sweet.

Thankfully, they seem to have it all figured out now. They’ve become quite an affectionate duo.

## 2. Dolly and Lulu

Photo: Megan Krieman



Dolly and Lulu

Dolly (Parton) came into my life as a foster in recovery from reconstructive surgery. You see, she carried around a far too ample dewlap. It was impressive. However, it debilitated her movement. She literally was tripping over herself. Dolly is an outgoing gal with a big personality. I think she’d been poorly handled in her previous life, as she

## A Love Story, as Told by Sambuca the Rabbit...

(with assistance from Lisa Mosseau)

Life with my two human companions had been going great for the past four years – though I did get a bit lonely when they were off at work during the day. So they decided to get me Bailey, a partner bunny.

On one seemingly innocent Sunday afternoon, we shuttled into Manhattan to something that they called a “shelter.” Well, this shelter had really strong smells and noises from dogs, cats and even rabbits.

We went to a small room where there were four little boy bunnies who wanted to meet me. Imagine that. I was finally getting proper recognition for being the diva that I truly am. Once I got in the greeting area, though, I got really nervous and could not relax. A lot of the boys were really interested in me, but it just didn’t feel right. I felt like Goldilocks. I wanted to choose the gentleman who was “just right.” That turned out to be the friendly harlequin!

I was fine hanging out with him at this shelter place but what I didn’t realize is that this goofy bunny would be coming home with us, permanently. I just liked how he smelled. And then when we got back to our home, my living space was suddenly divided and I didn’t have full control of the apartment. I was not a happy bunny.

After we brought home this new guy, Bailey, every night was spent trying to get me and him to enjoy each other’s company. We did have some scuffles at

first. Bailey has a bum leg and I thought he would sometimes hit me in the head with it on purpose. But of course that wasn’t the case. Plus, I still wanted to rule the apartment and show him who was boss. But soon enough, we were able to have dates that lasted long enough for us to really get comfortable with one another. The first day we were left on our own, we didn’t know what to do with each other. It was exciting.

Photo: Lisa Mosseau



Bailey and Sambuca

It’s been over a year now since Bailey and I have been friends. And even though I’m not always happy with having to share my food, we’ve worked out our routine and we’re happy to have each other to depend on. Bailey likes to lean on me for support sometimes since his balance is a little off because of that bum leg. But this works for me since he returns the favor with kisses for several minutes at a time. I rarely need to groom myself anymore because he does such a good job!

growled at everyone and bit the ankles of those who were caring for her. Eventually, after lots of love, care and socialization, the biting stopped. We also began to socialize her with other bunnies. We got her acquainted – first through a gate and later in a pen – with Lulu. Lulu was an outcast. She was another girl with a big personality who really wanted a

bunny friend but who didn’t seem to know how to act. She could nip as well, and consequently was rejected by other potential mates. Well, these girls finally met their matches. Dolly and Lulu have a terrific bond and enjoy each other’s company tremendously.

# A Year of Milestones

By Cindy Stutts

For Rabbit Rescue & Rehab in Manhattan and our partnership with NYC AC&C, this year has been remarkable. More than 200 of the New York AC&C rabbits were adopted into great homes over the past 12 months, and our volunteers played a big role in vetting potential adopters and educating families about proper rabbit care.

We have approximately 40 volunteers at this point, which is a major achievement for a shelter volunteer program that is only six years old.

The rabbit room, located on the second floor of New York Animal Care & Control on East 110th Street, houses about a dozen rabbits at any one time, with puppy pens, cardboard playhouses and bunny toys providing entertainment for the rabbits when they get exercise time. Manhattan volunteers visit the AC&C shelter daily, as well as two Petcos in the city, one at Union Square and the other on the Upper East Side. Both the Petcos last fall installed double-level permanent cages for the rabbits.

I cannot adequately express my thanks to the volunteers, the shelter personnel, the Petco Foundation, and the rabbit-savvy vets who assist us with the NYC AC&C rabbits.

## Our Rabbits Are Publicity Hounds

Over the past year, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab bunnies and volunteers have grabbed the spotlight again and again in the New York City area. Local papers have portrayed our rabbits in educational articles about lagomorph behavior, about rabbit bonding, on health issues and regarding our regional rescue efforts. Our shelter rabbits have taken part in several photo shoots for the fashion industry, or to publicize media events. In each case, our primary goal is to use the publicity to educate the public about

We have received donations from many adopters, and this generosity inspires us and enables us to help our rabbits get proper care and, in some cases, very specialized attention.

Among our success stories this year was a rabbit named Marge, who came to NYC AC&C with an injured eye that was removed; Lucky Lady (now Snowball), who was rescued from a park and who required treatment for skin problems, and Ashes, who required a leg amputation. All found great homes.

Our volunteers respond to emergencies at the shelter when required, put in long hours to post information about our rabbits online, shuttle our rabbits to medical visits, and fill in for each other when necessary. We foster many of the rabbits who have special medical needs.

We clean cages, buy greens, play with the rabbits, look for medical and behavioral issues, email updates to other group members, and spend our free time thinking about how we can do our jobs even better. We familiarize ourselves with each rabbit, knowing that this information will help us in finding a good home, or a good buddy, for that particular rabbit.

If readers would like to help us (we need foster families desperately!), please call me at 646-319-4766.

rabbit adoptions in the city: where to go for information, what life with a rabbit is like, where adopters can get advice and medical help.

Just a few years ago, New York mirrored the rest of the country in its general ignorance about rabbits. Housing was bare-bones, nutritional rabbit food was scarce and general attitudes about rabbits reflected decades-old hazy memories of how pet rabbits used to be treated – as lowly outdoor hutch creatures.

*(Continued on page 12)*

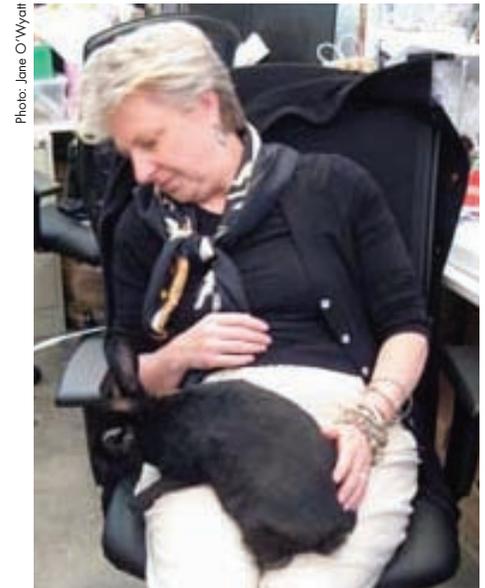


Photo: Jane O'Wyatt  
Cindy Stutts, RRR Coordinator, NYCACC Rabbit Adoptions, with Marge, shortly after Marge's left eye was surgically removed.

Let's make this coming year an even bigger one for the bunnies!

### NYC AC&C Rabbit Volunteer List:

#### Shelter

Lauren Abrams  
Vivian A. Barna  
Katelyn Belyus  
Ryan Campbell  
Lisa Carley  
Alice Kim  
Erin McElhinney  
Amy Odum  
Kirsten Ort  
Jane O'Wyatt  
Kitty Pizzo  
Cathe Rekis  
Brittnee Spence  
Joanna Ung  
Melissa van Wijk

#### Transport

Maddy DeLeon  
Larry Marion

#### Adoption Screening

Kerstin Aumann  
Genevieve Hannon

#### Foster

Kim Berndt  
Marcie Frishberg

#### Foster (continued)

Sean Harvey  
Erin McElhinney  
Amy Odum  
Cathy Zelonis

#### Petco

Helen Chen  
B.Tench Cox  
Marcie Frishberg  
Mindy Jackson  
Loraine Kopf  
Sari Krieger  
Robert Kulka  
William Leung  
Susan Lillo  
Kirsten Lodge  
Parsa Ludhi

Larry Marion  
Erin McElhinney  
Lisa Mosseau  
Emma Mullins  
Amy Odum  
Cathe Rekis  
Kiva Ryan  
Melissa Schroyer  
Jenn Varn  
James & Karina York

#### Special Projects

Helen Chen  
Megan Krieman  
Susan Lillo  
Jane O'Wyatt  
Natalie Reeves  
Kathie Rokita (RRR websites)



Photo: Mary Collier  
At AC&C: volunteer Jane O'Wyatt with a new arrival

## Petco Adoptions: An Idea That's Working

By Marcie Frishberg

It's been four years since we started our rabbit-adoption program at the Union Square Petco on Saturdays – and one year since our bunnies were allowed to make a full-time home there and at the Upper East Side store. Both Petco locations have become magnets for rabbit adopters and animal lovers in general. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons, in particular, people drop in to visit with our rabbits and chat with volunteers. The bunnies spend the entire afternoon hopping and playing in exercise pens. With two rabbits at each store, we find ample opportunity to educate the public and to promote adoptions.

Both stores have undergone major renovation work. The Lexington Avenue store relocated across the street at the beginning of the year, and the rabbit cages were placed in a special adoption area near the glass-enclosed dog-grooming room. At the Union Square store, which was modernized over the summer, we are able to set up the pens on the weekends in a central location, between the birds and the grooming area.

Through it all, our rabbits have been made welcome by the Petco staff and home-office administrators. The stores, with funding from the Petco Foundation, assist volunteers by providing food for the rabbits as well as other needed supplies. Staff members enjoy meeting our rabbits, and then cheer for them as they leave with their adopters.

We had a challenging start, finding volunteers for every night of the week, training them all and communicating with the Petco staff and management about what our rabbits need and also what they shouldn't have. But now we are seeing that some of our adopters like stopping in to ask questions and just to meet the bunnies in residence. We keep printouts on hand, so that interested store customers can learn the basics about rabbit care when volunteers aren't



Mary Ellen Ryan, left, chats with volunteer Marcie Frishberg at the Union Square Petco as the rabbits relax in cages behind them.



Arisa Srivilai-Sutunya, assistant manager at the Lexington Avenue Petco, holding Nugget, and Bonita Labossiere with Isis.

present. Our contact information is displayed on the cages.

Having our rabbits live in the stores makes all the difference in the world. Customers know there are always rabbits to visit, and this is just the first step. Then people may contact the email address posted on the cages, or may check out [rabbit.org](http://rabbit.org) or [rabbitcare.org](http://rabbitcare.org). After doing some research and reading our handouts, customers feel that they are better prepared when they talk to volunteers.

We have several regular visitors at the stores – people who like to visit the bunnies and us, but aren't able or ready to adopt, and people who stop by with their children to pass the time. The socialization process is important for our rabbits because we want them to trust and love people, despite any prior experiences with their former families.

At the beginning of our Petco initiative, I was traveling to the Union Square store many evenings during the week and both days on weekends. We have settled into a routine with a full complement of volunteers covering every day of the week to clean and exercise the buns at both stores. The weeknight volunteers are vital to our success; not only do they help with basic rabbit care, but they assess each rabbit's personality traits in order to find a good match with potential adopters.

The cages are sturdy and comfortable, and the stores are friendly places where the rabbits can see lots of activity and hear customers chatting. The lighting is good, the décor is cheerful and the employees

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## Petco

*(Continued from page 11)*

often stop to glance in the cages and say hello to the rabbits.

Sometimes when children meet a rabbit, it is the first time they have had an experience with an animal other than a dog or cat. I often encourage people to sit in the pens with the bunnies, and I discuss the wonderful benefits of having a rabbit as a companion animal. I talk about how the rabbits ended up at the shelter initially, whether through being dumped on the street or surrendered by their families, or just left in the aisle of a store. People are horrified, and it gives them a chance to think about how important it is to have compassion for all animals.

Some potential adopters come ready to adopt; they already have done the necessary research. Other people just

walk in and want to “buy” a rabbit to take home immediately. We discourage impulse adoptions and instead give out literature and suggest that people do research to make sure they have the necessary information to decide whether a rabbit is the best choice of pet for them.

We have developed a basic checklist of questions that we pose when we meet a potential adopter. As situations arise and people return bunnies to us, we add new questions to make sure these issues are considered before adoption. For example, not only do I ask if any family members have allergies to animals AND hay; I now ask about close friends and boyfriends and girlfriends or other frequent visitors to an adopter’s home. If there are children involved, I may suggest the child get tested for allergies before adopting.

I’ve noticed patterns in the stores. Fall is a busy time for adoptions, as is the late winter season leading up to Easter. After

Easter, adoptions slow down again till early summer. Things become slow in the height of the summer as people leave for vacation.

Through our adoption efforts at Petco, we have found forever homes for many rabbits and have educated people who come to us for guidance. Some of these people have bought rabbits in pet stores without any support or information. We’ve also enlightened staff members about the proper care of rabbits and found them to be receptive and helpful, compassionate allies. With the Petco stores now stocked with a variety of Timothy-hay pellets and several brands of hay, along with dishes, puppy pens, plastic litter boxes and other supplies, we are able to help adopters find what they need in order to have a happy, healthy rabbit.

— Susan Lillo contributed to this article.

## Publicity Hounds

*(Continued from page 10)*

Times have changed, and the positive publicity about house rabbits has helped to change the landscape. We continue to jump at the chance to get publicity for our rabbits, so if you can think of a way to get us into the news, let us know.

Here then are just a few highlights from our thumpingly great year in the New York media spotlight.

—“Time Out New York” magazine, in its “Sex & Dating” issue for the first week of December 2009, included photos of rabbits from Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, along with pictures of dogs and cats from other rescue groups.

—The New York Daily News ran an article on Feb. 26 about Rabbit Rescue & Rehab speed-dating sessions, including comments from Mary Cotter, Cindy Stutts, comedienne Amy Sedaris and Kirsten Ott, whose bonded rabbits Irving and Filli were featured in a photo with the article.

—Former shelter bunny Snowflake appeared March 1 in an “Alice in Wonderland” promotional shoot in the “Pulse” section of the New York Post.

—Long Island Rabbit Rescue volunteer Nancy Schreiber was interviewed by a reporter for News 12 Long Island on March 27. She discussed why families should not buy rabbits as an impulse gift for their young children at Easter (or at any other time).

—On April 7, amNew York carried an article on its Petropolis page, titled “Cottontails Make Sweet City Pets,” which included advice from Dr. Deborah Levison of Symphony Veterinary Center and Cindy Stutts of Rabbit Rescue & Rehab. Included were photos of three rabbits up for adoption: Nonna, Madeline and Felicia.

—Local TV station NY1 honored Rabbit Rescue & Rehab’s Cindy Stutts on April 30, choosing her as “New Yorker of the Week.”

—The New York Post on Aug. 29 ran an article about rabbits and pet therapy at Animal Medical Center’s Pet Outreach Program, titled “Paging Doctor Rabbit!”

—This summer, New York’s rabbits got social when “Big Apple Bunnies” on Facebook was formed by volunteer Natalie Reeves to focus on the needs of New York area rabbits, and especially those rabbits up for adoption. Already, “Big Apple Bunnies” has had an impact: a fan of the page was touched by one of the stories that had been posted and she has become a fosterer for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab.

**Bunny Bulge! Amy Sedaris!**  
**Don't miss this year's**  
**Rabbit Care Conference!**  
**Sunday, Oct. 24**  
[www.rabbitcare.org](http://www.rabbitcare.org)

**Hay! Heartfelt thanks to all of**  
**our generous hay donors!**

# Long Island Rabbit Rescue News

By Mary Ann Maier

## Middle Island

Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group receives daily (sometimes hourly) calls asking for help with abandoned or unwanted rabbits. Occasionally, one of these cases turns into a real medical drama.

On Aug. 23, Nancy Schreiber got a call from a woman named Lisa who reported sighting three abandoned rabbits in a large field in Middle Island. She was able to catch only two of them.

Volunteer Renee Fischer brought cages, food and other supplies to Lisa, and determined that one of the rabbits was a female. In such cases, we arrange to get the rabbit immediately to a vet who can check her for pregnancy, and spay her if necessary. This is essential to prevent more unwanted rabbits. So “Barbie” was brought to Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital.

The next day, volunteers Nancy Schreiber and Mary Ann Maier met Lisa out at the field in Middle Island to search for the third rabbit. A group of six of us failed to find him. So we turned our attention to the male bunny Lisa had already caught. Upon examination, we determined that “Hugh” had not one, but two cuterebrae in his scrotal sacs. A cuterebra is the larval stage of the botfly, and these larvae must be removed surgically. So off to the vet we again went.

Hugh and Barbie are recovered from their respective surgeries and are waiting for adoptive homes. In the meantime, we are seeking foster homes for them.

If you would like to mail a tax-deductible donation to help us pay for their medical costs, please let us know! Contact us at: altitude8@yahoo.com, (516) 671-6654.

## New Hyde Park

On Sept. 5, Nancy Schreiber responded to a call from a New Hyde Park town official. A rabbit was abandoned, in her cage, at a local park. She was skinny and neglected, yet a friendly and beautiful harlequin lop. Not only was she hungry



Photo: Mary Ann Maier

Nancy Schreiber searches Middle Island field where three rabbits were abandoned.



Photos: Mary Ann Maier



Not cute: Two cuterebrae were embedded in poor Hugh's scrotal sacs.



Photo: Nancy Schreiber



Photo: Mary Ann Maier

Eloise, abandoned in a park, was adopted one week later by the Finks.

for food, she was starving for attention. A doll. Nancy named her Eloise.

At that time, there was a family visiting the park, and they were very interested in the bunny. Nancy explained that we were seeking homes for these abandoned rabbits, and educated them on house-rabbit care. The family went home to think about adopting her. Meanwhile,

Eloise got a vet checkup and a spay date for when she put on some weight.

The Fink family didn't need much time. They knew it was fate, and they adopted Eloise a few days later. It was our fastest adoption ever: rescue, vet assessment, adopter screening, home visit and adoption in one week flat!

*(Continued on page 14)*

# For My Allergies, the Third Rabbit Was the Tipping Point

By Helen Chen

The bunny bug is what I've been told "bites" people when they feel an urge to get a pet rabbit. What I did not know was that, for me, the bunny bug had side-effects. The more time I spent with my pet, the more the symptoms crept up: sniffing, itchy eyes and red, irritated skin. Whether it was the hay or the rabbit, only an allergy test could tell for sure. Still, the symptoms were pretty obvious. I was allergic to *something*.

When I adopted my first rabbit, Kirby, nothing seemed to be out of the ordinary for months. My husband sneezed once in awhile, but it was winter and a little sneezing didn't alarm anyone. When I handled Kirby's Timothy hay, I found that my skin reacted if the harder stems pricked my hands. This was remedied with diligent hand-washing and some over-the-counter hydrocortisone.

Soon after, I found myself sharing my home with a second rabbit. Baby Toby crawled all over me in bed and on the couch. He loved to perch on my shoulder, tickling my face with his whiskers. The skin irritation started to occur on my face, but still, it was a small price to pay for the love of a bunny.

The two bunnies, meanwhile, were taking over more of our apartment. Once confined to the second bedroom, they now roamed freely throughout our home. And then in April 2010, 15 months after my first rabbit adoption, I adopted my third rabbit, Penny, from NYC AC&C.

Suddenly, the walls closed in and I couldn't breathe.

I seemed to have reached a tipping point with the third rabbit. It felt as if I had a cold that dragged on for months, except the symptoms worsened daily. Then I



Penny

came down with a real cold and I had the air, literally, knocked right out of me. The coughing, sneezing and alternating runny and stuffy nose seemed like child's play compared to the asthma symptoms that took over. On good days, my breathing was shallow and wheezy, while on bad days I choked when inhaling and coughed as I exhaled. All at once the

*(Continued on page 15)*

## Long Island

*(Continued from page 13)*



Long Island foster rabbit Lucky on set between video takes.

## Photo Shoot

On Sept. 4, Donna Sheridan and Mary Ann Maier were the "animal wranglers" for a video shoot to promote designer James Victore's new book, "Victore, or Who Died and Made You Boss?" His work has long featured rabbit imagery, and we were happy to help him with his video. It was a long day, but foster rabbit Lucky seemed to enjoy every minute of it, and we were happy the production

crew asked us instead of buying a rabbit for the shoot. We received a very generous donation from James Victore at the end of the day.

## The Nate Berkus Show

We were recently contacted by producers from "The Nate Berkus Show," looking for rabbit owners interested in bringing their pets on the show for a segment on how to take better pictures of your pet. Long Island volunteer Renee Fischer jumped at the chance. Renee was interviewed that day, and by that night, got the good news that she'd been selected. Taping was on Sept. 23. Renee brought her bomb-proof bun Ruby, rescued this past spring from an unsuitable home. Ruby shined like a star, and was, according to Renee, better behaved and more relaxed than the cats and dogs on the show.

Another LIRRG adopter, Denise, was in the studio audience! She texted Donna Sheridan the whole time about how great Renee and Ruby were doing.

For a link to the show, go to

<http://www.thenateshow.com/videos/detail/295/pet-photography-tips>

## Adoptions

Our adoption numbers are suffering along with the rest of the economy. Our numbers are way down compared to the past. Since the last newsletter, we have adopted out four rabbits. At that same time, we have fielded approximately 150 calls and emails regarding rabbits in need of homes – owners who no longer wanted their rabbits, folks who found stray, abandoned rabbits, pet stores that had rabbits dumped in their aisles.

We don't have space, and we don't have a shelter to refer these callers to, which means these calls for help get answered but not solved. Over 150 bunnies a month go unrescued here.

Please help! Every rabbit that we adopt out opens a space for another rabbit whose life we can save. Please consider adoption. Email [nschreibmd@aol.com](mailto:nschreibmd@aol.com).

## Allergies

(Continued from page 14)

initially innocent symptoms were terrifying. Could the cause of all these problems be my pet rabbits? I'd seen people surrender their rabbits at the shelter, citing allergies, and I knew plenty of people who were allergic to hay and suffered seasonal allergies, but I had never had these allergies before.

I sought help from an allergist and got myself tested. The sad truth was, yes, I am highly allergic to grass hay – and the even more devastating news was that I am allergic to rabbits, specifically their fur. From the thorough allergy test, I found that I am also allergic to almost all tree pollen, weeds, dust and furry animals in general. My case of rhinitis was severe because I had my own personal source of allergens indoors and an endless sea of pollen outdoors during allergy season.

My doctor put me on drug after drug. Some made me feel sicker than my symptoms. I couldn't breathe through my nose and I was still wheezing. I was told I needed to make changes in my life, including the possibility I would have to remove the rabbits from my home.

When my rabbits, Kirby, Toby and Penny, each entered my life, I vowed I would always be there for them. The fact of life for them is that I am all they have. In my miserable state, however, I didn't know what to do to make it possible for me to live with them.

The bottom line was that the rabbits would stay. I was committed to them and I was committed to getting better. Things were looking hopeless on the medical front, though, so I needed to find alternatives.

I placed HEPA air filters in every room of my two-bedroom apartment and operated most of them 24/7 on a low-power setting. The apartment was vacuumed from top to bottom at least once a week with a HEPA-filter vacuum, and high-traffic bunny areas were hand-vacuumed to remove fur balls and bits of hay. The

Photos: Helen Chen



Penny, Kirby, Toby

bunnies were confined to their own room and the living room. I wore a mask whenever I had to handle a lot of hay. I self-mandated a change of clothes and a shower after playing with my bunnies or heavy handling of hay. My bedroom was turned into a bunny-free and allergen-free zone so that I had one safe haven where I could breathe easily.

There are only a limited number of antihistamine drugs available in the market today and I tried every one. It took months of trial and error, but I found the one that worked best for me with no side-effects. Armed with a prescription for Allegra (or its generic form, fexofenadine), relief was in sight. My doctor added two nasal sprays for my runny nose, a maintenance inhaler for the wheezing, and Singulair (an asthma medication that seems to help many allergy sufferers) to help my sinuses. For the first time in months, my nose was clear and I was able to take a deep breath comfortably.

Understandably, my doctor has concerns about me being on so many drugs for any length of time. Now that the symptoms are under control, we are exploring allergy shots as a way to slowly increase exposure to my allergens and build up my tolerance for them. I would have to

get a shot once a week for six months, and then once a month for several years.

Most people are not allergic to rabbits, and if they are, they don't have three at home while also volunteering with a rabbit-rescue group, so an allergy shot to treat rabbit allergies is not that common. My doctor, in fact, has had to special-order my shots. (Shots for normal environmental allergens, such as hay, are commonly available, and they are a successful course of treatment for many.) Meanwhile, my husband, who suffers similarly from allergies at home, got help from a reputable acupuncturist abroad and he lives symptom-free after several rounds of this alternative treatment.

Today, I feel almost normal. I now know how to manage my symptoms by managing my environment. All three of my rabbits still live happily with my husband and me. I still volunteer with Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, caring for shelter rabbits on a weekly basis.

This journey has taught me that allergies don't have to spell the end of our relationships with our pets. There are many options that can help. I am hopeful that I will live happily with my bunnies and fulfill my promise to give them a forever home.

## Taking Rosie Into Custody on a Rooftop Was Tough, Even for a Seasoned City Cop

By Robin Sternberg

On the sultry Saturday afternoon of June 12, I received a frantic phone call from my boyfriend, Gary, who lives in Greenwich Village. “Please get down here quick. We have a situation!” He refused to elaborate further on the telephone. Because I am both a retired NYPD sergeant and a licensed veterinary technician, this could mean practically anything. I hurried down to the Village.

When I arrived at Gary’s apartment, he explained that earlier in the afternoon two police officers had knocked on his door. They informed him that they had observed someone jimmy open a door into his building, and they were checking all apartments in the five-story walk-up. Gary accompanied the officers upstairs and through a door to the roof. Although there appeared to be no sign of a trespasser, on the rooftop next to Gary’s building was a small black bunny, scampering dangerously close to the edge. The police told Gary to call the ASPCA, and left. Instead, Gary called me.

The two roofs are separated by a low wall, atop which sits a chain-link fence, laced with razor wire. The wall itself is topped with a thick layer of black tar. In my more than 20-year career with the police department, I have chased many a perpetrator over a rooftop. So technically, this shouldn’t have been a problem. I had the brilliant (at the time, it seemed) idea of sitting on the edge of the wall and swinging my legs around to gain access to the other roof. Within seconds, I was glued to the ledge of the wall by the tar in which I had sat, and impaled in three different places by the razor wire, my legs dangling precariously 100 feet over Bleecker Street. This wasn’t going to work. Gary pulled me back to safety.

Go to plan B. I called Mary E. Cotter, Ed.D., licensed educator, veterinary

Photos: Gary Rosenberger



Top, the front of the rooftop, facing Bleecker Street. The rabbit easily could have hopped off the roof, plunging six stories to her death.

Middle, this was an apparent attempt to construct a rooftop rabbit shelter. It consisted of a piece of plastic tarp over a box, held down by bricks.

Bottom, these mushy pellets were evidence that someone intentionally put the rabbit on the roof. There was no fresh water.

technician and bunny-master extraordinaire. She patiently explained to me how to coax the rabbit into a carrier, using freshly cut carrots. She told me that I shouldn’t make eye contact with the bunny, and that the entire process could take quite a bit of time. Patience would be key here.

Photo: Tanya S. Kramer



Robin holding Rosie, who was rescued from the rooftop.

I didn’t have to be patient. The poor bunny, left on the roof without any shelter or drinking water, and only a bowl of mush that may have passed for pellets in a previous life, came right over to me and gladly accepted the carrot pieces I laid out, leading up to a small hole in the fence. She was obviously much hungrier than she was frightened. Within minutes, I had taken the bunny “into custody.”

It had been my intention to drop the rabbit off at the Manhattan office of Animal Care & Control, but by the time I actually had the bunny in my possession, it was past AC&C’s deadline for accepting stray animals. I figured that she could spend one night at my apartment. I set up her cage in my kitchen, so as not to offend Skittles, a New Zealand White adopted when I was a veterinary technician student in 2007.

Needless to say, the bunny never quite made it to AC&C. By the time morning came, I had already named her Rosie (after my maternal grandmother) and ran to buy her a proper cage, litter box, sipper bottle and toys. The following Monday, I brought her to our amazing exotics veterinarian, Dr. Anthony Pilny, at the practice where I work (Veterinary

*(Continued on page 17)*

## Taking Rosie Into Custody

(Continued from page 16)

Internal Medicine and Allergy Specialists on East 84th Street; ph# 212-988-4650), who examined her and determined that she was approximately four months old and relatively healthy. My new plan was to have Dr. Pilny spay Rosie when she was old enough, and attempt to bond her with Skittles (also a female).

And then I met little Doc.

Dr. Pilny performs low-cost spays and neuters on bunnies brought to us from rabbit-rescue organizations, and I volunteer my time as an anesthetist for these surgeries. In early July, Dr. Pilny neutered a small hotot bunny by the name of Doc, brought to us by Rabbit Rescue & Rehab. Doc was also so badly maloccluded that he needed to have all of his incisors and peg teeth removed. As I stood over him in the surgery room, monitoring his heart rate and respiration, and watching Dr. Pilny pull his teeth, I fell in love. And as he recovered post-op on my lap, I knew that he, too, would have a new home.

As it turns out, Doc had checked into our hospital under an assumed name. Using the skills I honed as a detective, I

Photo: Eveline Han



Dr. Anthony Pilny, left, performing an ovariectomy (spay) and mass removal on a bunny in August, with Robin Sternberg.

was able to track him down. His real name was Ace, and he had already been placed in a foster home in Brooklyn. I quickly laid claim to him, and was able to pick him up in early August. And as luck would have it, a coworker at my veterinary hospital fell in love with Rosie, and agreed to take her from me, solving any potential problems associated with the often-slow (and sometimes impossible) bonding process between two females.

Skittles and Ace (who has since been renamed Davey, after my maternal grandfather) had their first date on Aug. 16, in the neutral territory of the carpeted hallway in my apartment building. Their date was chaperoned by myself and my neighbor, Tanya, who is presently a vet-tech student at Bergen Community College in New Jersey.

It didn't occur to me that Skittles, who is close to eight pounds, and Davey, closer to

two pounds, wouldn't make a good bonding pair due to the relative difference in their respective sizes. And as it turned out, the size difference wasn't an issue.

We paid close attention, ready to pull them apart at the first sign of aggression from Skittles...remember, Davey has no front teeth! After a few minutes of ignoring each other, pint-sized Davey quickly approached Skittles and attempted to mount my big girl. And she let him! This was quite funny, but not as funny as when she turned and attempted to mount him, almost smothering him in the process. Not one sign of aggression from either of them!

They had another date a couple of days later, on the neutral territory of my bed, where they nuzzled and groomed each other. So far, so good. Size is obviously not a concern here.

Meanwhile, Rosie is enjoying her new home with my coworker, who reports that the bunny loves to snuggle up with the two Maltese dogs in her new family. They even nap together in the same doggie bed. Dr. Pilny and I spayed Rosie on Aug. 25. All's well that ends well! Although I suspect this is only the beginning of a most beautiful friendship...

Photo: ©2010 Douglas Dubler 3



Ace, also known as Doc and now named Davey, was featured in a "Mad Hatter" fashion shoot this summer. Photo is reproduced with permission of Douglas Dubler.

Photo: Robin Sternberg



Little hotot Davey and "Goliath" Skittles.

# A Tale of Three Lops

By Jane O'Wyatt

Sunday, June 27, 2010: Three big bonded lops arrived at the shelter. According to intake paperwork, they were: Tosia, female, agouti and white, 2 years old; Zuzia, female, orange and white, 4 years old; Frankie, female, agouti, 2 years old.

Examining the rabbits, I found that Frankie was a male. That is, I saw a penis but no scrotal sacs. Had he been neutered? Was he cryptorchid?

*(Cryptorchid refers to an individual with one or both testes not descended into scrotum, according to Douglas McBride's "Learning Veterinary Terminology." Cryptorchid males may or may not be capable of impregnating females.)*

Had the females been spayed? Were they pregnant? While the bunnies were in their roomy double-cage, they cuddled peacefully, but in the exercise pen Frankie humped and chased both of the girls. One of them, orange-and-white Zuzia, was plump. Pregnant plump or obese plump?

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



At AC&C  
Top, Zuzia  
Bottom, Tosia, left, and Frankie

Photo: Alice Kim



Frankie by himself at AC&C

Despite Frankie's aggressive behavior toward Tosia and Zuzia, Cindy Stutts was reluctant to separate him from the females because she didn't want to dissolve their bond. Instead, she decided to get in touch with the people who surrendered the rabbits to find out their reproductive status.

Upon reaching the lops' former owners, Cindy was told that Zuzia was the mother of Tosia and Frankie. None of the bunnies had been spayed or neutered. Despite Frankie's zealous humping, however, neither his mother nor his sister had become pregnant in two years. The reason the rabbits were surrendered to the shelter was that a pediatrician had diagnosed a baby's respiratory difficulties as an allergic reaction to rabbits. The child's mother was heartbroken but felt that she had no choice but to give up Zuzia, Tosia and Frankie.

Cindy tactfully suggested to the previous owners that the blame-the-bunny analysis of such a situation might be simplistic, and she emailed them Mary Cotter's "HELP! I'm Allergic to My Rabbit" article (NYC Metro Rabbit News, October 2009). If the apparent rabbit allergy could be remedied, the three bunnies (spayed/neutered) might possibly return to their former home.

Meanwhile, although we were all theoretically in favor of keeping this rabbit family together, volunteers working in the shelter began to complain via the AC&C Rabbits listserv:

"...the male (Frankie) was being very aggressive toward the two females,

humping constantly and chasing the girls when they refused to succumb. It created a lot of stress in the pen. The bunnies all started circling/chasing each other, and it was getting chaotic, so we decided to separate Frankie from the two girls, and he's now in a separate cage, and the girls are chilling together..."

– Kirsten Ott

After reading that Frankie had been separated from his mother and sister, I went to the shelter and put him back in their cage. They all snuggled in a contented pile. No humping.

The following evening, another team of volunteers separated the bunnies again:

"Tosia & Zuzia enjoyed pen time until suddenly circling and chasing each other. When back in their cage, snuggled up (all was forgiven)." – Cathe Rekis

Since the girls were acting like the unspayed rabbits they were, we couldn't accuse Frankie of causing all the uproar. I put him back in their cage once again.

While Frankie was still harassing the girls, Tosia and Zuzia were also hormonally unsettled as they were being separated and reunited. I asked Cindy again if we should separate them. She repeated that they all should be caged together. We all hoped that the trio's previous, supposedly heartbroken owner would consult a brilliant allergist who would instantly solve the infant's breathing problem, enabling Zuzia and her daughter and son to return to their old home and live happily ever after. (In the rabbit rescue

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## Three Lops

(Continued from page 18)

and rehab world, we can't help imagining and emotionally investing in scenarios like this.) But it didn't happen.

Tosia's spay surgery at AC&C went well, but Zuzia was a surgical risk because she was too fat. Zuzia would have to go on a diet in foster care (with Tosia), and if she gave birth, homes would be found for the kits. The girls would remain together, and Frankie, who had finally been assigned his own cage, would be adopted out singly.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Dr. Terefe, right, with Mary Cotter

Cindy asked Alemnesh Terefe, who had spayed and neutered hundreds of rabbits at the shelter, if she would do Frankie's neuter surgery. Lo and behold, Dr. Terefe found Frankie's troublesome testicles in his abdomen and removed them. He had been bilaterally cryptorchid. His source of testosterone gone, we looked forward to an improvement in Frankie's manners.

In mid-July, Tosia and Zuzia went to the foster home/weight-control spa of a rabbit-lover named Kim Berndt in New Jersey.

Shortly after his mother and sister left the shelter, Frankie was adopted into a multispecies household in Woodside:

"Frankie adopted. Nice family owns a house in Woodside. Adopter has her own floor and will give Frankie the run of the place when she is home. Parents own a toy poodle who is best friends with her sister's guinea pig plus they also have turtles and goldfish." – Cindy Stutts

We heard from Frankie's adopter, Anna Kwon, in late September. She said, "Frankie is definitely not shy when it comes to grabbing people's attention. He happily lets me know that it's his breakfast time by slamming his litter pan up and down in the wee hours. He also hops onto the couch next to me when I'm paying too much attention to my computer." And she added, "I took Frankie to work last week, and he was a HUGE hit—he's now considered the company mascot. Frankie is laid-back yet very curious, mischievous but sweet; he looks like he's napping one second and before you know it, he's hopped up next to you for a cheek rub." On Oct. 9, Anna took Frankie for a speed-dating session at AC&C, where he selected a girl named Trix to be his partner.

On Sept. 17, Kim Berndt, who had fallen in love with her two foster bunnies and had renamed them, sent Cindy an email saying that she wanted to adopt "the girls." Cindy forwarded Kim's email to me. "The girls"? Whoever they were, I thought, it was good news because finding homes for bonded pairs wasn't easy. But wait. Could they be —? I emailed Kim, "These girls are Frankie's sister and mother, Tosia and Zuzia, right?"

Photo: Kim Berndt



Minnie fka Tosia, left, and Martha fka Zuzia

Kim replied, "They are wonderful!!! If the mom was overweight (to put it politely), then these are them! What's their story? I had no idea one was the mama of the other. It makes sense since they both have those big gorgeous brown eyes. :) These girls are soooooo sweet. Mama is especially loving and she loves giving kisses (licks). We really lucked out. We love them soooooo much."

## Bunnies Across The Pond

By Natalie L. Reeves

London's famed Harrods department store, renowned for being one of the world's most luxurious, does not have a pet department. It does, however, boast a "Pet Kingdom," and no kingdom would be complete without bunny supplies. So, when I took a short trip to London, I made sure to purchase presents to take home to my bunnies.

Harrods's Pet Kingdom encompasses numerous rooms on the store's fourth floor. Most of the rooms are full of wonderful items for dogs and cats, including a bakery for dogs where you can purchase fancy cakes and other baked goods for your dog or even plan an elaborate dog birthday party, but other species are not forgotten.

Rabbits and other small animals have their own section where luxury goods are mixed with essential supplies. Instead of plain-vanilla crocks, you can purchase Lucite bowls with hand-painted carrots or strawberries for approximately \$50 each.

Some treats being sold, like those sold in many pet stores in the U.S., are not healthy for bunnies and include bad ingredients such as seeds or yogurt. But there were also a number of treats that are both healthy and appetizing. For example, there were many varieties of dried herb mixes, including herbs such as dandelions, marigolds, Jerusalem artichokes, parsley and assorted fruit leaves. The herb mixes came in bags and also in "stick" form. There were sticks of nettle, dandelion and mint all mixed with dried grasses and rolled in paper, similar in appearance to a cigarette.

I wanted to buy my bunnies everything, but could not, so I purchased them dandelion and nettle sticks, two herb medley mixes, and thick grass mats with toy carrots sticking in them that the bunnies can pull out. Harrods also sold bags of hay (imagine hay being sold in an equivalent American store, such as

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## Across the Pond

(Continued from page 19)

Bergdorf's or Saks) that I would have loved to purchase, but since the bags were all fairly large and extremely fragrant, I had images of being carted off by customs officials if I tried to bring the hay home. They sold Timothy and meadow hays, and some of the hays were mixed with dandelions and marigolds.

After making sure that I would have plenty of souvenirs for the bunnies, I continued to soak up some bunny culture in London. I visited an exhibition of artwork by Beatrix Potter at the Victoria and Albert Museum that contained original art from Potter's "The Tale of Peter Rabbit." Since I named my first-born, Mopsy, after one of the bunnies in "Peter Rabbit," I was excited to see the original artwork. All of the characters in Beatrix Potter's books were based on pets she had, including bunnies Benjamin Bouncer and Peter Piper.

What was most heartening about Potter's bunnies was that even though they lived during a time when it was probably rare for any animals to live inside (much less rabbits), hers were true house rabbits. She wrote in her journals how Peter loved to sleep on the floor in front of the fireplace and how she took them with her when she traveled to and from her city home in London and her country home in the Lake District in northern England. Sadly, she believed that Benjamin passed away from ingesting too many peppermints, but Peter lived to be almost 10 years old, a long life at a time when there were few advances in rabbit medicine.

The Potter exhibition will be on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum until Jan. 8, 2011, and I'd highly recommend it, but I think that the museum would be smart to add some Mopsy-themed items to its gift shop. Anyone who loves rabbits would likely enjoy looking at the extensive realistic drawings of Potter's pet bunnies who inspired her books.

While I missed my bunnies every minute I was gone, experiencing London's bunny culture was a rewarding way to narrow the distance between us.

## Enchantment in White

By Lesley Warrin

This past summer, I adopted a New Zealand White rabbit named Bella.

I already had two rabbits – Piper, an angora, and Peach, a dwarf white with pink eyes. But Piper and Peach were wrapped up in each other, and I wanted a single rabbit to bond with *me*. I had read about the plight of ex-laboratory rabbits, most of whom are New Zealand Whites. Since I can't save all the lab rabbits, I decided that I would do my part and save one. That one is Bella, my girl.

When I decided to adopt Bella, my only thought was that I wanted to give her a loving home. Through my work, I had dealt with several drug companies that use rabbits in their lab tests. I knew that Bella deserved a better life after being born in a steel cage and living in one for the first two-and-a-half years of her life.

Mary Cotter visited my house with two rabbits, Bella and Ruby. They looked alike to me. Thank goodness, Mary could tell them apart because I couldn't. They were both beautiful and seemed comfortable in my home, and I could easily have taken either of them.

I decided on Bella because she was slightly more resistant to handling than Ruby was. Apparently it's easier to adopt out rabbits who don't mind being picked up. So that left Mary with the more "holdable" rabbit and me with Bella.

It's funny now to think that I really didn't expect much from Bella. I just wanted



The white and ginger cat is Bella's boyfriend Damie.

to be a good rabbit Samaritan and give her a happy home. Bella had other plans, however. She expected a lot as she set out to win the hearts of all in my home.

I have six cats and they all love Bella. Percy will sit with her on the couch and lick her head because he knows she likes it. Damie, is Bella's "boyfriend." When she is in her cage, he sits outside and they touch noses. When she is out, he lies on his back and reaches out to her with his paws, as if he wants to hug her. She basks in his attention.

I have watched Bella blossom in her new home. She runs like the wind when she explores the house. She jumps on and off of the couch and then peers up at me with a look on her face like, "see, mom, look what I can do!" She is so proud of herself, and I am proud of her.

I think about the other rabbit who I didn't adopt – Ruby. I am hoping she finds a home where she can flourish as Bella has.

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



## Forever Homes Found!

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Chip, Homer, Bonnie, Lucy, Charlotte, Maddy, Benedict, Tanya, Lindsey, Lalo, Gracie, Ferdinand, Raoul, Deirdre, Caroline, Fluffy, Chipotle, Tucker, Rabbit, Baxter, Patrick, Priscilla & Elvis, Ashes, Skipper, Tom, Rochelle, Chavez, Janelle, Malcolm, Muffin, Cocoa, Chocolate, Muffin, Mashimoro and Corrine.

Corrine

# Letters

Photo: Danielle Cuomo



Addie with Hopper

## Addie

Addie was adopted in July as a partner bun for a male named Hopper. Margarite sent this email to Amy Odum on July 24.

With regard to the little gray lovers :) I must say, it's been a wonderful bonding experience not only for Hopper and Addie, but for my daughter, boyfriend and myself.

These two seemed to hit it off quite well. Both my daughter and I gave Hopper and Addie a bonding session in the a.m. and p.m. for about 3-4 minutes the first two days. Initially, the two sniffed and then Hopper, his cool dude self, gave Addie a kiss on her cheek and Addie seemed to love that.

Since that time, the sessions are longer – up to about 15 minutes (believe me, they are quite fine and Hopper is very receptive to her advances, too. I think it took him awhile to “catch on.” LOL).

Addie is super sweet and has a wonderful disposition as well. We love her and welcome her into our family and are very happy we chose her (Hopper too) :-)

Margarite

Photo: Alanna Slepitsky



Queen Bea and Benny

## Benny

Benny, originally named Homer, was adopted by Alanna, who introduced him to Queen Bea. Here is Alanna's update.

Queen Bea was a birthday gift, and she took me by surprise in the best way possible.

For the last year, we've been the best of buds, but with work and life sometimes getting in the way of playtime, I knew that it was time to introduce a new bun as a potential companion for Bea.

I had read stories about the long and tedious process of bonding rabbits, which turned me off at first, but as soon as I saw Benny (formerly known as “Homer”), I wanted to give it a try anyway.

Both rabbits were introduced to each other at the shelter, in what is called “speed-dating.” Their interaction with each other seemed promising, so I took Benny home with me.

I kept them separated for about a week before I decided to give the bonding a whirl in a neutral environment.

To my amazement, the two hit it off from the get-go. And they've been inseparable ever since!

Best,  
Alanna

Photo: Elena Geraschenko



## Deirdre

Deirdre was adopted in August by Elena and her husband, Haralambos. Elena sent this update in early September.

Hi Susan,

Our little bunny is making so much progress in communication with us!

She got so comfortable around us that she jumps on the couch when we're watching TV and sits next to us asking for attention! It's amazing!

We're so happy with her!

Elena

Photo: David Ehrlich



## Fluffy

Melanie, who adopted Fluffy, sent us this email in early September.

Genevieve,

Fluffy has stolen the hearts of everyone in my family and I couldn't be happier.

(Continued on page 22)

Photo: Ellen



## Benny the Bunny

Ariana, Ellen and Alan adopted Benny, who sent us his own email in early September.

Hi.

My name is Benny the Bunny and I adopted this great family and went to live with them.

When they come into my room, I get so excited that I jump high in the air and then do a couple of laps of the room to show off.

Then I just flop down to relax and watch some TV with them. I really like the Yankee games!

Sometimes I get visited by the three cats who live here, too, and we plot new ways to entertain our people (and get extra food!) I hope every bunny gets a chance to adopt a cool family like mine.

Love,  
Benny

## Letters

(Continued from page 21)

I thought I was going to have a hard time picking out a bunny to adopt, but I knew he was our bunny the second I saw him! He is so much fun, very feisty but very snuggly too! He loves playing with shredded newspaper, hopping up on my bed, sniffing EVERYTHING, and stretching out in a few select corners of his pen.

He also really likes raisins; they're his favorite treat. He's got a healthy appetite and loves to run around the house! My brother loves feeding him and petting him and just laying down next to his pen and watching him, and my parents love watching him zoom down the hallway outside my room and run around the living room. He peed on their bed today, though, which I don't think they liked as much.

I have Erin's contact information and she's been very helpful with everything so far. We are so, so happy with our little fluffball! Thank you so much for all your help!

Melanie (and Fluffy)

Photos: Ben Zucker



Halyard and Sherpa

### Halyard

Emma Mullins and Ben Zucker adopted Halyard, previously known as Malcolm, as a buddy for their bunny Sherpa. Emma sent this note in late September.

Hello All!

I had the pleasure of bringing my rabbit, Sherpa, to a "bunny speed-date" at AC&C on Saturday to find my girl a boyfriend!

I am so happy to say that Sherpa and Halyard (you may know him as Malcolm, a very sweet and cuddly little white dwarf) are getting along quite a bit better than I anticipated this soon!!

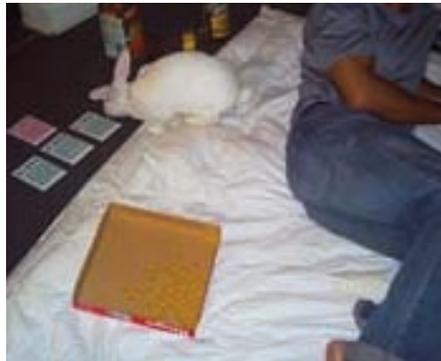
They nuzzle and groom and cuddle, but we still have them in separate cages at night. He

still gets a little frisky sometimes and mounts her. This scares her and she runs off, so I am assuming they are not ready to sleep together. Thank you all so much for all your help and knowledge with the rabbits. I really respect and honor the amazing, life-saving work you are doing for the beautiful, sweet, innocent rabbits. Hope to see you at the conference in October!

I will be emailing Marcie and Susan about volunteering at the Union Square Petco tonight!! very excited!

Emma

Photo: Ellen Kartsomito



### Joanie

Joanie, known previously as Toni, was adopted late last year. Her photo appeared in the February Thump, and here is an update from Ellen.

Joanie is a sweetie. What surprised us is that she acts like a dog. I mean every time I call her to come eat, she runs up to me.

She is so smart. She loves to be around us and you can see her play Bingo with us in one of the pictures I have sent.

She loves to be petted. She just lays down and waits quietly for us to play with her. She always wants to be close to us.

We love her so much.

Ellen

Photo: Tomi Hellmann



### Betty and Malcolm

Malcolm was adopted as a partner on July 3 for Betty, formerly known as Sarah. Toni sent Cindy Stutts this update in late July.

Photo: Joyce Baldessari



### Mini and Marie

Mini, who had been called Sgt. Pepper, was adopted as a partner bun for Marie by Joyce, who sent us this email in mid-August.

Hi, Everyone:

I am pleased to announce that the rabbit formerly known as Sgt. Pepper, and his hostess, Marie the Miserable, appear to have started to enjoy each other's company. Sgt. Pepper (currently referred to as Marie's Mini-Me or just plain old Mini) has ceased and desisted in taking great leaps over Marie's back, which tended to annoy the old girl. Boxing matches, thumping tantrums and rabbit tumbles have stopped; and, after many, many days of supervised visits, the rabbits finally started to ignore each other. Taking this as a good sign, they were placed in the habitat together. Initially, Mini took the high ground rarely visited by the out-of-shape Marie. However, after a day or so, the rabbits were spotted sitting side-by-side contentedly munching on some greens. Marie and Mini now coexist harmoniously, enjoying the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer.

Joyce

(Continued on page 23)

Hi Cindy,

Thanks for checking in. Nice to hear from you. The bunnies are getting along perfectly and are now blissfully sharing a large cage. Malcolm helps prop Betty up when she falls and they groom each other a lot. Adorable!

Betty definitely seems more energetic and competent since her beau's arrival. Thanks for all your help. They bring so much love into our home!

I really appreciate the work you do, and I love my rabbits!

Toni Hellmann

## Letters

(Continued from page 22)

Photo: Mabel Casado



### Moe and Maxy

*Mabel, who adopted Moe as a partner for Maxy, sent this update to Cindy Stutts and Amy Odum at the end of August.*

Hi. I know it's been awhile. I just want to email you both to let you know how the bonding went between Maxy and Moe after I brought Moe home with me.

The first two weeks were difficult but I am very happy to say that after the second week both my rabbits became inseparable and still are.

They are very much in love. It's the cutest thing. And thanks for the tip on getting the Cottontail Cottage. My boy loved it. Maxy loved it also. I've attached photos of the both of them.

Mabel, Maxy & Moe

Photo: Catherine Marquette



### Peter

*Peter, known previously as Portobello, was adopted by Catherine and now lives with her in Boston. Here is her update about him, sent in late August to Helen Chen.*

Hi, Helen,

How are you? Fine, I hope.

I wanted to let you know that Peter (Portobello) is a DOLL. He's honestly the sweetest little bunny!!! He now has a double-decker bunny condo, but he's so good that he typically is out of the cage while I am home, even when I sleep. He still doesn't like me picking him

up, but he regularly circles my feet, sits under them while I work, follows me around and watches over at the foot of my bed while I sleep. Even my mother is in love with him, and she didn't want me to get another rabbit! I feel super, super lucky that you rescued him and that I had the opportunity to make a home for him.

I'm absolutely in love with the little guy! He runs the show!

He's got my heart, that's for sure!

THANK YOU!!!

Catherine

Photo: Olivia O'Neill



### Varg

*Olivia adopted Chip, who is now known as Varg. She sent us this update in August.*

Hey!

Chip (We've changed his name to Varg) has been an absolute joy to have around the last few weeks. He's bonded with me really well and cleans my nose when I put my face next to him and has started cleaning my clothes when he sits on my lap.

He's pretty much completely used to my apartment and we leave his cage door open for most of the day so he can go in and out as he pleases.

He's also great with the litter box. We only had a couple accidents outside the cage, but he's really good about going back into his cage when he has to go.

It's hilarious when he starts throwing things that he picks up in his mouth.

I thought that all rabbits liked to chew on wires but whenever he comes in contact with them (unplugged, of course) he only sniffs and nudges them, thank god!

His favorite place to hang out is a cardboard box fashioned with a window that sits on my desk next to my bed, so we can chill out and watch TV together.

Best,  
Olivia

Photo: Lilly Vance



### Wasabi and Saffron

*Wasabi, formerly known as Benedict, was adopted in August as a partner for Saffron, who used to be called Tribeca. The bonding process was a smooth one, and Lilly sent us this email in early September.*

Jason and I adopted Saffron from the Manhattan shelter in June. We learned quickly that she was an intelligent, curious and independent bunny and we tried to spend most of our time very carefully and slowly building a relationship with her. She was initially very shy around us, and made it very clear we were going to have to work hard, and for awhile, for her affection.

After a couple months of having her at home, we decided to try to find her a buddy, hopefully to help her come out of her shell and to have company while we were at work.

On her bunny speed-date at the shelter, she immediately made it very clear who was in and who was out. When we met Wasabi, we fell in love with his love of being petted and his obvious desire to cuddle with people, but the decision was up to Saffron.

Luckily, she was just as smitten with Wasabi as we were, although the two bunnies are as opposite as you can get. Saffron is small, impeccably neat, shy and agile, while Wasabi is a larger, floppy, rambunctious boy who will happily (and clumsily) join us on the couch for a scratch behind the ears.

Saffron and Wasabi were fully bonded within a week, and have been entertaining Jason and me with long chase games up and down the hallways in the house, along with their constant desire to redecorate their exercise pen. We are so grateful to Amy and all the volunteers at the shelter for helping us find the perfect bunny match!

Lilly

## 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**

Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital  
2221 Hillside Ave., 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

### Manhattan:

**Becky Campbell, DVM**

**Deborah Levison, DVM**

Symphony Veterinary Center  
698 Amsterdam Ave., 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

**Alex Wilson, DVM**

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

**Anthony Pilny, DVM**

Veterinary Internal Medicine  
and Allergy Specialists  
207 East 84th St., New York, NY 10028  
(212) 988-4650

### Westchester County:

**Gil Stanzione, DVM**

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

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Luke and Mark

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)).

**Our group's email address in New York City is [nyc.acc.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.acc.rabbits@gmail.com).**

You can visit the New York Animal Care & Control Center at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues. Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

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

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 Amy Odum at [amy@adoptabunny.info](mailto:amy@adoptabunny.info) or [nyc.acc.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.acc.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).

## Donations

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them. Checks should be made out to **Rabbit Rescue & Rehab** and mailed to:

Nancy Schreiber, 12 Grace Court North, Great Neck, NY 11021

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