



**NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS APRIL 2010**

*WEAPONS AGAINST MASS DESTRUCTION*

## Bunny-Proofing Basics: Learning to Expect the Unexpected

By Mary Ann Maier and Kathie Rokita

The joy of living with a rabbit is well worth the effort of bunny-proofing, to protect both his well-being and your valuables from his activities and wanderings. This is not to say that a rabbit shouldn't be confined. On the contrary, most rabbits enjoy having a comfy, well-appointed cage of their own, and it's recommended that you confine your bunny while you are sleeping or not home so he can be located in case of fire. Rabbits can get into trouble in the most unexpected ways, even after years of not engaging in certain behaviors.

But rabbits need to run and play, too. As wild rabbits chew through tree roots and brambles to make their burrows,

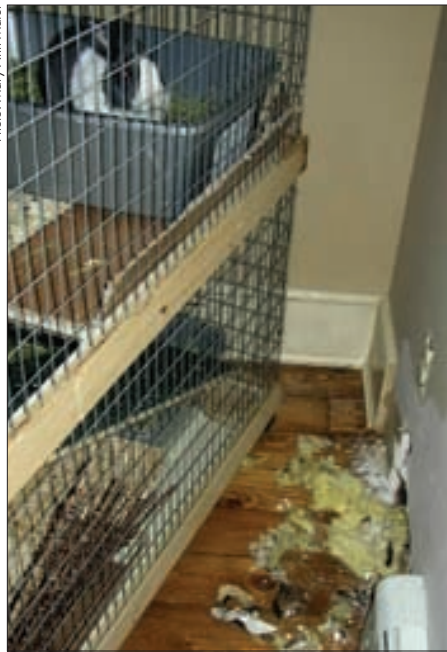
*(Continued on page 2)*

Photo: Fall Willbordse



Book damage

Photo: Mary Ann Maier



Insulation

## Blogger Laments Loss of His Couch

Jim Nesbitt, a Long Island volunteer and adopter, writes a blog about life with his four rabbits.

He recently described an "evil" assault on his couch.

His rabbits are:

– Frannie (aka Baby Fwan): "Big fat fluffy white/black 400-diff-breed-mix sorta lop, who eats stuffing – no, not the stove-top kind."

– Thumper (aka Tumpie Rabbits): "My first rabbit, absolutely gorgeous fat white

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Photo & design: Jim Nesbitt



Frannie, caught in the act.



Severed phone cord

### Bunny-Proof!

*(Continued from page 1)*

their domestic cousins, our pet rabbits, will instinctively chew items in their indoor environment.

*Don't be surprised to find your bunny where you were sure he couldn't go.*

### Electrical and phone cords:

Deter your rabbit from chewing cords by encasing them in split loom tubing/cable organizers (available at RadioShack, Ikea and Home Depot), plastic shower-rod



Split tubing



Nibbled rug

covers (houseware stores), plastic wire channels and raceways (Wiremold available at home centers and online through [www.cableorganizer.com](http://www.cableorganizer.com)) or for stubborn buns, PVC pipes and fencing made from panels of wire storage cubes.

### Carpet:

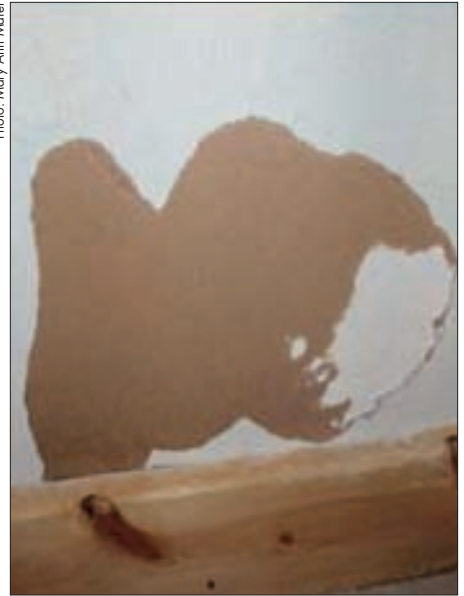
Cover a favorite chewing area with a large ceramic tile or a plastic office-chair mat. Choose low-pile carpeting that may be less tempting.

### Baseboards and corners:

Use plastic or wood corner protectors (home centers). Rabbits love to chew against resistance, such as that afforded by your baseboard. You can attach furring strips to your baseboards as "sacrificial" pieces of wood.



Carpet corner



Chewed sheetrock

### Furniture legs:

Slide on cardboard, plastic or PVC tubing.

### Box springs and upholstered furniture:

Some rabbits love to burrow into the soft underside of upholstered furniture and bedding. Protect the entire underside with plywood or hardware cloth (a metal material), or create a barrier underneath with under-bed storage containers (like Rubbermaid). Or you can surround the entire piece with a puppy pen while the bunny is roaming about.

### House plants:

Remove poisonous plants from rabbit areas and be aware of falling leaves. See list of toxic house plants at [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

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Protection for bun-level books

## Bunny-Proof!

(Continued from page 2)

People can't understand that many common house plants are highly toxic to rabbits. They might move them to high places but forget how toxic the leaves can be.

### Insecticides:

Prevent access to roach/ant traps and powders, as well as all other poisonous household products.

### Getting stuck:

Be aware that a rabbit can become entrapped in recliners, heating vents and toilets, as well as behind appliances and furniture. Keep the hanging cords of your drapes and blinds out of reach, as they can choke a panicked bunny.

### Barriers:

Keep unsafe areas off limits, or keep the bunny confined to a safe area, with a portable baby gate or puppy exercise pen. Avoid plastic or vinyl-coated pens and gates, which can get chewed. Pens can be configured to fit most areas. You can make a barrier with hardware cloth, but note that a rabbit can chew through chicken wire. Make sure that the spacing of the wire in any enclosure is tight

enough so that neither the rabbit's head nor his limbs can get caught. As a general rule, just about any bunny can get out of a 24" pen. Some bunnies climb up the sides of pens like monkeys. So a pen lower than 30" generally is not considered safe.

### Deterrents:

Some people find that a little spritz from a spray bottle of water can be used as a temporary brake when your rabbit discovers something new that he shouldn't get into. Others swear by the repelling power of a bar of Ivory soap rubbed on items not to be chewed. Your results will undoubtedly vary. Clapping your hands and saying "No" loudly will also let your rabbit know your displeasure, until you can find a permanent, less stressful solution. A better approach is to immediately separate your rabbit from the item he is chewing and improve your bunny-proofing!

### Diversions:

Litter boxes full of hay. These magic boxes are three things in one: potty, grazing station and recreation center. Baskets (no paint or varnish) and grass mats to chew. Paper-towel rolls, hard plastic baby keys to toss and shake. Cardboard boxes, large enough for bunny, with a hole for a

doorway; willow tunnels ([busybunny.com](http://busybunny.com)) and cardboard concrete forms (Home Depot) to explore. Shredded paper or junk mail in a box to dig in. Also see: [catsandrabbitsandmore.com](http://catsandrabbitsandmore.com), [bunnybunchboutique.com](http://bunnybunchboutique.com), [bunnyluv.com](http://bunnyluv.com) and [bunnybytes.com](http://bunnybytes.com).

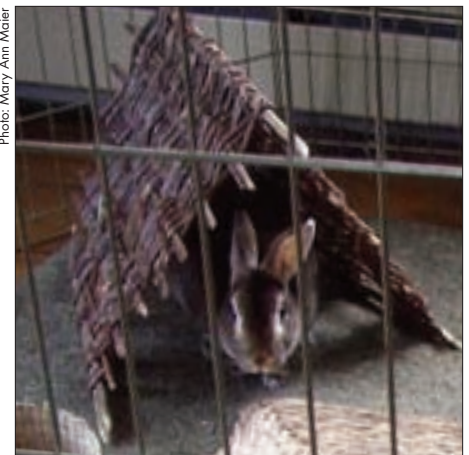
Bunnies are as different from one another as we are. Some are adventurous; some are couch potatoes. Expect the unexpected. Don't be surprised to find your bunny where you were sure he couldn't go. Successful bunny-proofing is often an ongoing process. It's also how many of us can finally find out if we are smarter than our rabbits – or not!



Under-bed storage box



Box buddies



Tent tunnel



Well-loved box

## Blogger's Lost Couch

(Continued from page 1)

fluffy albino lop; you can pet him for hours, feels like a down comforter.”

– Sydney (aka Squibbles): “Little brown Netherland dwarf; I can sit with him and hold him on my shoulder and on my chest for hours; he is the newborn baby of the group.”

– Fuzzy (aka Fuzzby, Fuzzy Wabbles): “A cute, quiet dwarf mix with long eyelashes and a permanent sneeze due to pseudomonas she can't get rid of.”

To follow his blog posts, go to <http://thebunlife.blogspot.com>.

Here are excerpts:

**Jan. 20:** The Bun Life – Baby Fwan Has Done It This Time!! (With Photo Evidence)

Okay, I leave for a few hours the other night, and on the way out I keep thinking about the bunny gossip going around about Thumper and Frannie. The word on the street (huh?) is that Thumper is the one actually chewing up my couch when I am gone, that he is just framing Baby Fwan to take the hit for his criminal clawing of my chewed-up couch. Do I really believe that? Not a chance. I have caught Frannie on the couch grooming the armrest, burrowing into the corner. Not for a SECOND do I think Frannie is innocent.

Well, I come home the other night, and I was horrified by what my eyes were telling me. I kept a camera handy and ready to go in case I ever got a chance to take evidence photos (for the prosecution). Well, here it is, truth unfolded, undeniable proof that Frannie is a couch criminal:

Frannie is an evil bun, and I will see to it that prosecutors will be violated! Wait, I mean viacutors will be prosellated, oh whatever, you know what I mean! Vote NO for Baby Fwan!

**Jan. 25:** I was in the post office this morning, and I look up for a second and I see this poster, and Frannie was on the poster! Obviously, what she did to my couch was a felony, and now she

Photo & design: Jim Nesbitt

**WANTED**  
**DEAD, OR AT LEAST WITH NAILS**  
**CLIPPED VERY SHORT**  
"FRANCESCA THUMPER III"  
A.K.A. "Baby Fwan", "The Mangler", "Old Iron Hocks"



Fwan is armed and very dangerous. She is wanted for the 2010 mauling of Jim's couch. The above photo was snapped from a surveillance camera at Jim's house early this week. Fwan is a repeat offender and has been known to be violent if confronted, especially on the couch. She has been known to dye her ears red, and was last seen buying a dime bag of illicit couch stuffing, anything to feed her foul addiction to couch stuffing. Police recommend to lock your doors and put up fences around your couches. Do NOT confront Fwan, pick her up and she will claw you! CALL Police at 1-800-BBY-FWAN if spotted.

skipped bail. I hope I don't have those Dog the Bounty Hunter guys bashing down my door now, looking for Baby Fwan.

What the heck is going on with that bunny? I don't need all this drama; I have cable, for god's sake. The other three bunnies are very upset; it took four or five carrots just to settle Thumper down about all this. He can't believe what Frannie is doing to my upholstery, or what used to be my upholstery. Wonder when she'll stop running from her problems.

**Feb. 18:** I figured I would come clean and tell you about an experience I had with Baby Fwan a few years ago. After she chewed up my couch the first time, I decided to send her away to a house-rabbit wilderness treatment camp. The one I sent Baby Fwan away to was called Aloof Bun Bun Treatment Camp.

Anyway, the day came that she was to report to the camp and Frannie was not excited about going, obviously. It took me three hours to stuff her into the carrier. We talked about how the place would benefit her and that it was for her own good, but Fwan doesn't speak English so the conversation was pretty one-sided. I dropped her off at the camp. After only three days there was a knock at my door and sitting there, right outside

my door, was a DHL package. I opened it up and it was Baby Fwan! There was a letter from the camp in the box also, and it read:

“Dear Jim: Inside this box is Fwannie, Fran, or whatever you call her. You will also find a check for the full refund amount (less shipping). Fran doesn't fit our requirements here at the camp. She is absolutely the biggest pain in the rumpus we have ever met. First off, we put her on a strict diet because she was too fat, and on the second night of her stay we found 27 'Couchocolate' bars in her suitcase. It is a candy bar that is basically couch stuffing coated with chocolate. Where did she ever get such a ridiculous habit from? Anyway, we try to do group activities with all the buns, but Fran zips right under the nearest piece of furniture and won't come out for NOTHING! We tried to lure her out with the candy bars but she was having none of it. Not only that, but the first night she slept here she lost one of

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*Frannie was not excited about going, obviously. It took me three hours to stuff her into the carrier.*

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her 'detachable' ears. Since when are bunnies' ears detachable? Fran said that her ears have a mind of their own and do what they want, when they want. Also, we have reports of Frannie demanding that the other rabbits give her a manicure??? She said that you do her nails almost every week. Is that true?? Jim, don't you have any sort of a life?? Do your bun a favor, and leave her alone for a minute; she needs to grow and meet other buns her own age. Frannie also wouldn't eat anything besides Oxbow pellets. Well, you must be rich, but we ain't, so she had

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## Blogger's Lost Couch

(Continued from page 4)

to eat whatever we gave her. Oh, and that reminds me; every single time we opened the refrigerator, Fran would run right up to us and sit down like a puppy – waiting for a carrot, I guess. This is unacceptable. She made the other buns feel less worthy. So here, you can have your Fran back. By the way, she looks like a loaf of pumpernickel bread.”

**Feb. 25:** I know all 3.5 of you are going to laugh at me for this, but this is a serious matter and is not to be thought of in a lighthearted manner. The thing is, me and Baby Fwan have been having some relationship problems lately (since the minute she got here). Of course, we constantly argue about her obsession with the couch, and I have been getting depressed lately because Frannie's ears don't perk up and fly away like they used to when I come in the room, or lift the couch up. I spoke to Frannie about this, and she told me, in Portuguese, that when it comes down to it, she and I are just too different. This upset me greatly, especially since right after she said that, she hopped by me and splashed one of her hocks in the water bowl, thus squirting me with a shot of water right up my pant leg! Anyway, I went to a private bun counselor who specializes in mitigating bunny/couch/human relationships, and she said that if I wanted to get back in Baby Fwan's good graces, I would have to bridge the gap of differences between us – be more like her, be more like a bunny rabbit, do what she does. Then she would see me as an intellectual equal, thus further developing and sustaining the complex diabolical relationship that has manifested itself under my couch. That's the theory anyway, but as you may well know, theory rarely proves to be fact, especially with bunnies.

I set out to be more like Fwan this past week. What a nightmare it turned out to be. The first day, I tried sleeping under the couch with Thumps and Fwan during the day, but my job called and

said I had to work and would have had to hold off on sleeping under the couch until tomorrow. So much for that. Plus, I hit my head 15 times and got a furniture staple driven right into my toenail.

Three days ago, Frannie ran across the living-room carpet and jumped in the air and did a binky where she threw her back legs out and twisted her whole body. Wanting to make an impression, I decided to try a binky of my own. I lined up in the corner of the room and ran as fast as I could toward the middle in a diagonal pattern. Just when I got to the coffee table, I jumped up and threw my back legs out, but instead of doing a binky, my legs slammed into the vacuum cleaner, fracturing my pinky toe, and I

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### *I didn't dare tell my neighbor that I had like a whole gaggle of googly bunny rabbits in my apartment.*

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spun around, fell backwards and smashed into the coffee table. The whole table shattered and a splinter stabbed me right in the kidney. I had to go to the hospital, and while I was in the hospital bed a nurse came over to me and was asking me how I was doing. Still wanting to be like Fwan, I jumped off the bed and ducked under one of the surgical tables, and wouldn't come out for a half hour. To show my distrust of the nurse, I thumped my right foot, but fractured another toe doing so, and had to be recast. Fwan hasn't said a word to me since; she just sits there eating hay and shaking her head, like, “What an idiot!”

**March 2:** UNbelievable, THE nerve, the GALL, the UTMOST guts she has. I have never had a more somber day – well, maybe when Thumps picked Baby Fwan at the rescue, but other than that, NEVER! I was going out somewhere, and I always open the door to my apartment and leave it ajar a little while I go get the

mail. Anyway, I never even worry about the door being open just a little because the bunnies never even go near the door, EVER, and I mean never, or until now, that is.

Okay, well my neighbor comes out to get her mail, and she gives me a grunt or two, and out of nowhere, all I hear is, “Ohhhhhhhh Myyyyyy GGGooooooodddd!!! WHO is THIS Lovely thing????”

Yup, you guessed it, Baby Fwan, in the flesh, standing in the hallway. I darn near had a heart attack and would have shooed BF into the apartment, but my neighbor was acting like she had just discovered the six-slice toaster, for Pete's sake. She was asking me a thousand questions about Baby Fwan. I didn't dare tell her that I had like a whole gaggle of googly bunny rabbits in my apartment or I would have never gotten rid of her. Anyway, she was petting Baby Fwan, and telling me how she had a bunch of rabbits when she was in her twenties while she was living with her sister.

Then, all of a sudden, out of nowhere, it happened, the unthinkable, the unforeseen, the unimaginable, the – oh, whatever, enough already. SHE PICKED HER UP AND HELD HER!!! AND BABY FWAN FELL INTO HER ARMS LIKE IT WAS HER WEDDING NIGHT!! I simply couldn't believe it. For nearly 15 minutes she was holding my dearest wabbit. She looked at me, the neighbor that is, and said, “Why, she doesn't like it when you hold her??” I told her that, yeah, as long as it is not longer than 30 seconds, she loves it.

Me and Fwan had a long discussion over a few pots of coffee that night. Things got really heated. So much so, that I had to turn on the fan for a little while. Just in case anyone is interested, I am starting a rabbit adoption program. We have one black-and-white overweight lop/houndstooth mix if anyone is interested. Comes with a couch.

# Long Island Group: Recent Rescue News

By Nancy Schreiber and Mary Ann Maier

## Abandoned Lops

Around March 11, four lop-eared rabbits were abandoned on the side of the Wantagh Parkway. There were three females, two of whom were pregnant, and one male. Long Island Rabbit Rescue had the rabbits spayed and treated for ticks, fleas and intestinal parasites. The male is awaiting neutering. We don't know if these rabbits were recently abandoned, or if they had been living in the area for some time. The area where they were found adjoins a wooded preserve, and is a dumping ground (and probable breeding ground). Long Island Rabbit Rescue saved two rabbits from the same location eight months ago.

The rabbits are all beautiful lops and very friendly. One has been adopted already, and we are screening inquiries about two others.

## New Petco Adoption Program

On March 13, we started our Long Island Petco adoption program, by placing our first adoptable rabbit in the Garden City Park store. This is an extension of the Manhattan program that got under way in the fall. The following day, we placed a rabbit in the Levittown store. Petco staff will manage the day-to-day care of the bunnies, under direction from Long Island Rabbit Rescue. Rescue volunteers will visit frequently, take the rabbits out of their cages for exercise, and answer questions from store patrons. Both rabbits were adopted out to good homes within two days! The cages have been filled again with two more rescued rabbits.

The staff at Petco have been very receptive and helpful, and our volunteers have been terrific. This program is off to a great start, and holds great promise for many homeless rabbits. There is even the possibility of expanding the program to other Petco locations on Long Island.



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

We are limited mainly by the number of volunteers we have, so:

***Please volunteer and help rescued rabbits find good homes!***

## Two Buns Need Flight to N.Y.

In February, we were contacted by a family who adopted a rabbit from us four years ago. They said they now needed to return the rabbit due to financial hardship. The bunny's name is Gomez, a mustachioed lop who was one of a large group of rabbits that we rescued from a backyard in Massapequa. This was a big rescue (20-plus rabbits) that led to the formation of the Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group. The situation is complicated by the fact that the family now lives in Utah, and Gomez is part of a bonded pair. We have been trying to get the rabbits back to Long Island, but haven't been able to find a way that is inexpensive and safe. We are looking for someone who is taking a pet-friendly flight from Utah, Colorado or Las Vegas to the New York area who could have the rabbits ride under the seat. If you know of anyone flying this route in the near

future who may be willing to help, please contact Nancy or Mary Ann (see contact information on last page of newsletter).

## Your Donations Work Hard!

Every month, LIRRG reaches out by supplying cages, water bottles, food, litter boxes and toys to many people whose rabbits had accidental litters. We help with sexing and arranging emergency veterinary care for rescued stray rabbits. When rabbits are ready to be rehomed, we screen and educate potential adopters. The Petco program Will help us find a safe outlet for some of these rabbits, as this is a never-ending problem on Long Island. We cannot take in every rabbit who needs our help, but we can assist, in some way, the majority of them. We use donations of supplies from the public to help rabbits in need. We use your financial donations to cover emergency spay costs, other medical costs, food, hay and toys, in addition to supporting all of the fosters we care for in our own homes. 100% of your donations goes to the rabbits. Thank you.

# Speed-Dating at Petco Draws Crowd

Photo: Carolin Grose



Happy and Luann at home.

The fine art of rabbit speed-dating was on public view in late February at the Union Square Petco.

As Amy Odum began the bunny introductions inside a double puppy pen, she glanced up to see more than a dozen onlookers. “At one point there must have been 15-plus people, between the adopters – nine people for three bunnies, counting spouses, children, and roommates – three ‘observers’ who may adopt later, and a few miscellaneous people who were just curious. All were standing around the pen as if they were watching some sort of sporting event,” she said.

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*The two girls ‘hit it off right away! Like two little old-maid sisters, cozy as can be.’*

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As she orchestrated the speed-dating, watching to see if there were some potential matches between rabbits, she fielded comments: “All were asking questions at once, while I’m in the pen with the bunnies, trying to keep an eye on them and train the adopters about the bonding process.” Amy got some needed assistance from Marcie Frishberg and Jane O’Wyatt.

Marcie said the session generated intense interest. “A few people were there to watch the bondings to see if they wanted to go through the process,” she said, “and I distributed our literature to a lot of other people.”

Two rabbits, Luann and Samuel, went home with new families.

Luann, who had been fostered by Amy, was chosen to be the partner of Happy, a five-year old female with head tilt. Luann, who is 6, is “a very mellow girl who could be bonded with anybody easily,” Amy said. The two girls “hit it off right away! Like two little old-maid sisters, cozy as can be :)” Amy was particularly happy for Luann, surrendered as a “stray” in early January. It turned out that Luann’s owner had someone turn her in, claiming she was a “stray,” and then, a few days later, did the same thing with Luann’s bonded mate of five years. “By the time we found out what was going on, the male had already been adopted as a single bun and his new owner had no interest in reuniting them,” Amy said.

Samuel was adopted as a partner bun for a little agouti girl named Apple who herself had been adopted six months earlier.

Photo: Jane O’Wyatt



Apple at ACC, June 2009.

Photo: Jane O’Wyatt



Samuel at ACC, August 2009.

## Happy Tales



Ranel at ACC, April 2010

Rabbits adopted since the last newsletter include: Jacob, Esmeralda, Kate, Hermione, Riley, Raisin, Madge, Belvedere, Sonja, Maxy, Curious, Shadow, Luann, Samuel (again), Ellie, Frederika, Roger, Rhett, Snowflake, Busefelo, Red, Jenny, Ranel, Johanna, Darvey, Portobello, Marty, Brendon, Coco Latte, Mia and Milky Way.

# When Maya Met Ollie: Taking Baby Steps to Love

By Katelyn Belyus

The minute I saw Ollie press his twitchy gray nose to the bars of his shelter cage, I knew I'd found a friend for Maya. He literally begged for attention; when I let him out to play with my friend Philip, he peed on Phil's leg and exclaimed brightly, "I did that!" Then he smiled and tried to hump Phil's shoe.

The perfect bunny for Maya.

Maya, my rabbit, was never much of a social bun, always preferring to lounge

under the couch, paint her nails black, and mouth off to guests. Ollie was no exception. The minute he arrived, she looked distraught. Sure, they were in separate cages, but the mere fact that he was living in her space, *in her home*, was enough to set her off. She peed outside her litter box and attacked the sides of her pen in his direction.

But Ollie, our little grey and white lop, was unfazed. From the moment he arrived, Ollie enthusiastically embraced life with a youthful vigor. He is happy-go-lucky,

endearing and charming, like a cross between Rudy Huxtable and Ferris Bueller. Though he's neutered, it took a while for his hormones to calm down. One day I was laying on the couch while he was out, and I saw him out of the corner of my eye, about five feet away, sizing me up. He cocked his head to one side, calculated the distance, then took a running leap onto my head, and began humping. Like, he actually started humping *in midair*. It was a feat worthy of Cirque du Soleil.

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*If anyone was going to teach Maya how to love, it would be Ollie.*

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Maya is what we refer to at the shelter as "difficult," and I was quite worried about the bond. The two little bunnies lived next to each other, in similar-sized cages, for a full month without physically interacting, during which time Maya took up kickboxing and Ollie practiced his moonwalk. I'd let them out in the same room at separate times; sometimes she'd lunge at him through the bars, but it wouldn't stop him from returning to press his little face as close to her as he could. He wanted so badly to love, and she wanted so badly for him to leave.

A full month passed before I invited another shelter volunteer to help me with the first bonding session. I'd sectioned off a large portion of my kitchen, where neither spent any significant time, and would alternately let each one run around for about 10 minutes. Maya would usually hunker down and nap; Ollie would try to give you kisses through the pen.

If anyone was going to teach Maya how to love, it would be Ollie.

The first session was not great, but it wasn't bad. He chased and humped her; she grunted in retaliation, but she never

*(Continued on page 9)*

Photos: Philip Forrest



Top: Ollie and Maya during bonding session. Bottom: Maya and Ollie bonded.



## The Bunny Rules

The bunny is not allowed in the house.

Okay, the bunny is allowed in the house, but only in certain rooms.

The bunny is allowed in all rooms, but has to stay off the furniture.

The bunny can get on the old furniture only.

Fine, the bunny is allowed on all the furniture, but is not allowed to sleep with humans, on the bed.

Okay, the bunny is allowed on the bed, but only by invitation.

The bunny can sleep on the bed whenever he wants, but not under the covers.

The bunny can sleep under the covers by invitation only.

The bunny can sleep under the covers every night.

Humans must ask permission to sleep under the covers with the bunny.

From House Rabbit Society's Web site:

<http://www.rabbit.org/journal/4-5/bunny-rules.html>

Top, Mog, a boy bun, is laid back but has his crazy Holland side, too. Bottom, Mog enjoys his role as a footwarmer. For more of Mog's antics, search for Mog Troll on YouTube.

## Maya and Ollie

*(Continued from page 8)*

openly attacked him as she so often had done with humans. From then on, I'd repeat the sessions every night when I came home from work, setting up the pen and letting each one out separately, then together. I gradually added two litter boxes, where she often perched, daring him to hump her.

I'm not going to lie; the humping freaked me out. Not because I don't understand the dominant-submissive relationship that often occurs between rabbits, but because she whimpered. It was so weird to me, to see her as the submissive one, and whimpering, as he grabbed on with his teeth and humped her rear end. At first, I tried to stop the humping, but the more I intervened, the more confused they seemed. I consulted other volunteers – people who'd been doing bonding for years. I got a mixed bag of answers, but what it all boiled down to was that if they weren't hurting each other and she let him do

the mounting, then okay. Consensual sex truly is the best sex of all.

After two months of long bonding sessions, I still didn't seem to be getting anywhere. So, instead of doing one long session until they became agitated, I tried several smaller sessions. I'd been told that they'd be more likely to bond if they had several positive interactions uninterrupted by biting, growling or, in Maya's case, slapping.

Perfect advice!

Within another month, the results were obvious: they were amicable, grooming each other, snuggling. I removed the pen and instead gave them supervised runs of the living room, with hard-to-reach places (read: under the couch, their home away from home) blocked off. Ollie still humped Maya, but he became tempered by the open space and by all the fun new stuff: Couch cushions! Heating vents! A coffee table!

The whole process took about six months before I felt comfortable with them sharing a cage and having full run of the

house. But it was well worth the wait. They have each other for company, and though Maya's attitude isn't all sugar-and-spice-and-everything-nice, she's at least learning to love in baby steps. The other day, he was trying to hump her, and I pushed him away, saying, "Enough, Ollie! Give her some space!" In response, she growled, lunged at my hand, and smacked me away. Then she went back and put her head down for him to groom. "Mine now," she told me.

As for Ollie, he is just happy he has someone to love unconditionally. He was never once turned off by her attitude or scared. He knew what I'd realized – that she just needed to be loved. So now when he's not hopping on my lap to watch TV or greedily rushing to the fridge begging for greens, he's licking her face, cleaning her back, or flopping next to her for a little spooning. He's such a sweet little jock – you know, the one who also sings in the choir – that I can barely stand it, but she loves it, and the two of them are the most adorable addition to my home.

## And the Oscar Goes To...

By Natalie L. Reeves

Glitz, glamour, celebrities, Oscars and rabbits. This year, rabbits finally received some of the Hollywood acclaim they deserve when a movie about rabbits living in the shadow of the Berlin Wall was nominated for an Academy Award in the best documentary (short subject) category.

“Rabbit à la Berlin” is a 40-minute Polish documentary (in German, with English subtitles) about a colony of rabbits that lived within the confines of the Berlin Wall for 28 years.

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab volunteer Helen Chen and I recently attended a Museum of Modern Art screening of all five Oscar-nominated films in the documentary short category. Prior to watching the movie, we weren’t sure what to expect because there was little information available in English about the movie. We were uncertain whether the film would depict any violence directed toward rabbits. Nevertheless, we couldn’t resist the opportunity to view a rabbit-centric film.

After steeling ourselves through four other gut-wrenching movies on topics such as the deaths of thousands of children in China, assisted suicide, lives of Zimbabwean children with disabilities, and the closing of an Ohio General Motors plant, we were fearing the worst. “Rabbit à la Berlin” proved to be interesting and well done, but also sad and upsetting to rabbit lovers.

The film tells the story of the construction and fall of the Berlin Wall from the resident rabbits’ point of view. When rabbits that had been living in the Potsdamer Platz – a public square in the center of Berlin that was divided by the Berlin Wall – witnessed men gathering materials to build the wall that would trap them in their meadow home, they were confused. The rabbits eventually decided that the wall was being built to protect them from predators and that the armed guards and visiting world leaders, such as Fidel Castro, were

working on their behalf. Once the rabbits felt comfortable that the wall was being built for their protection, they felt free to binky and reproduce.

The rabbits who were trapped by the Berlin Wall lived an idyllic existence for years. They had a field of delicious grasses that was maintained just for them. No one bothered them, and guards were not tempted to shoot them because each man was required to account for each bullet in his gun on a daily basis. The black-and-white footage of rabbits running happily outside and inside their warrens was excellent. The film hints at the notion that after many generations of living in a protected area, the rabbits seemed to have shed their prey-species instinct. Wild rabbits simply lounged in plain daylight, without any fear of hunters or predators.

Rabbit lovers will enjoy much of the film, but may want to restrict their viewing to the first part of the movie if they don’t want to see the ultimate demise of many, if not most, of the rabbits during the period of time immediately preceding and following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Upsetting footage of rabbits being poisoned and shot is included.

The documentary is intended as an allegory for the people who had all of their needs provided for when they lived in East Berlin before the fall of Communism. When the wall fell, the rabbits (and the people) who had been secure during Communism faced a dangerous world with no one to protect or care for them.

The movie closes with footage of rabbits living in Berlin today. Rabbits still live in Berlin, but in far fewer numbers, and today’s rabbits face dangers from hunters, traffic, animals and other sources.

“Rabbit à la Berlin” didn’t win an Oscar, but it certainly raised the profile of Germany’s wild rabbits and their precarious existence.

## Harley’s Wild Ride

by Kara Alderisio

My rabbit Harley can’t laugh her troubles away. But a sense of humor and a playful attitude carries her through times that would turn any other rabbit into a sourpuss.



Harley

Harley had a rocky start to life. She was abandoned by her owner and dumped at New York Animal Care & Control when she was just a young bunny. When AC&C checked her out they found several small lumps on her belly. Surgery was the only way to determine the cause of these mystery lumps. Two extraordinary vets, Dr. Jennifer Saver (aptly named) and Dr. Laura George, both of Catnip & Carrots Veterinary, removed the tumors and deemed them malignant. Harley had mammary cancer. A tough diagnosis for such a tiny bunny. But Harley handled the surgery well and charged right into the recovery period. After she woke up from the anesthesia, she started munching on hay almost immediately. (Harley hates missing a meal.)

Post-op required several days stuck in a cage, but Harley treated her time more like a stay at a spa. She feasted on fresh vegetables every morning (thanks to Catnip & Carrots) and sipped water she probably imagined came from a hidden spring in a primitive rainforest. She

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## Harley

(Continued from page 10)

exercised her little legs every day by stretching and walking around her cage. A great attitude sped her recovery, and soon she was ready to return to AC&C foster care.

That's when I met Harley.

I already had Carmine, a male bunny who's a mashup of Niles Crane, Jabba the Hut and Tony Soprano (thus the name Carmine). I figured Carmine could use a buddy to hang out with and I turned to Petfinder.com. A gracious and generous AC&C volunteer (Amy Odum) made the 45-minute drive with Harley to meet me. I thought that was a wonderful gesture, but Harley was less appreciative. It turned out that Harley hates riding in cars. However, like every unpleasant experience in her life, she shook off the bad and got ready to experience something good.

Carmine and Harley met, twitched noses at each other, and then hopped away and ignored each other. I took this as a good sign; at least they weren't fighting. Subsequent play dates and bonding sessions followed, and Carmine and Harley never became what you'd call bosom buddies. But I adopted Harley anyway, thinking Carmine would eventually come around.

It never happened. Harley was a willing, perky friend but Carmine would have none of it. If their body language was any indication, their conversation was something like this:

"Hey Carmine, wanna chase each other around the room?"

"No."

"Want to go hunting for carrots?"

"No."

"We can nibble the corner of the rug together."

"No."

"I'll race you to the kitchen."

"Just leave me alone!"

But Harley didn't. She was indefatigable in her optimism, always believing Carmine

would agree to one of her schemes. Of late, she's even taken to teasing Carmine when he's in his cage and she's out of hers. She hops up to him, pushes her nose through his cage, and twitches her nose up and down as if to say "Ha, ha, we both could be running loose right now. You're missing all the fun." Then she binkies away across the room.

---

*I keep going because  
Harley keeps going.  
She keeps teasing  
and dive-bombing,  
agitating and instigating.*

---

When Harley tires of teasing Carmine, she sets her sights on bigger game. Because, let's face it, there's only so much fun to be had in trying to instigate a chase with another rabbit who's happily ensconced in a cage. So Harley goes after Brit, my 12-year-old black lab and tries to get a reaction out of her. I call it Harley's Dive-Bomber Maneuver. Harley runs straight at Brit, barrels toward her at full speed just like a kamikaze pilot, and then at the last second veers off and scampers to the side, missing Brit by a whisker. Harley then stops and turns to see what kind of rise she's gotten out of the dog. Brit always keeps her cool, though she also keeps an eye on the crazy rabbit in case Harley ever does go full kamikaze on her.

Harley keeps life very lively for a few weeks. Then I notice a lump on her belly. The tumors have returned. Dr. Saver confirms this and Harley undergoes another round of surgery to remove them. Amazingly, Harley handles the surgery well; she wakes up ready to start eating again and comes home after a few days.

Then, days before I'm supposed to go on vacation, I notice a lump on Harley's jaw. More tumors? I head back to the doctor, and it turns out Harley has a jaw abscess. I pack up the penicillin shots in a cooler, put Harley in the pet carrier

and off we go on vacation – in the car, Harley's hated method of travel! Three hours later, Harley arrives at the vacation house, in completely new surroundings. She's getting shots in her neck, has a big lump on her jaw and I'm sure I'm going to see Harley's surly side. Instead, she starts hopping around looking for the dog.... let's play!

I'm astonished by such tenacity, such a joy for life.

Two months go by and once again Harley has more tumors. And so the surgical process repeats itself. Harley's an otherwise healthy rabbit with an extraordinary tolerance for these lumpectomies; it's the only reason the doctors continue to do them. The truth is, without removing these tumors they will metastasize.

I keep going because Harley keeps going. She keeps teasing and dive-bombing, agitating and instigating. She's like a little wind-up toy that never winds down. With all she's been through (and continues to go through), if she can maintain her sense of adventure and mischievous spirit, who am I to stand in her way?

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Harley checking out the other rabbits at ACC, October 2008. Note tumor on side of her chest.

## Bugsy's Bout with Stasis

*Rabbit Rescue & Rehab volunteers try to assist adopters in any way they can. The following emails, sent Jan. 28 by Genevieve Hannon to the other volunteers, tell how she came to the rescue of a much-loved rabbit named Bugsy, who recovered completely. As Gen later said, "I am so honored to have been able to be there for them. It feels really great to help save a life. And it's the culmination of so much that Loraine, Cindy and Dr. Pilny have taught me. I think it says a lot about the group when we can all of be there for each other and for our adopters during these moments of uncertainty and emergency." Genevieve is studying to be a veterinarian.*

Jan. 28, 3:52 p.m.

Hi guys,

Please keep Bugsy in your thoughts today as he at the vet on an emergency basis with GI stasis and battling hypothermia.

Last night at 9:30, I got a text from Bugsy's very diligent mom, Catina, who is a first-time bunny mom, and who met and adopted Bugsy with me just before Christmas, and whom I have trained with many conversations and articles from rabbit.org, all of which she's absorbed really well.

The text said she thought something was wrong with Bugsy since he wasn't eating anything all day yesterday, was lethargic and antisocial – just not acting like himself. I called her right away and listened to her description of the symptoms and behavior, asked her a bunch of questions and walked her through what to do. He hadn't eaten his pellets all day; wasn't interested in his salad and wasn't touching his hay; wasn't excited to greet Catina or Mikey; was lying around more than normal; was drinking a lot of water, though, and just seemed not himself, based on how she had gotten to know him so well for the past month she's had him.



Bugsy at ACC, January 2010.

She mentioned he'd been shedding like crazy for the last week (molting) and wondered if he had a hairball. I asked her to check his litter box and she found no poop after the box had had its daily change that morning. They are amazingly doting parents and give him fresh hay and change his litter box daily and give him fresh water daily and make amazing salads for him and know what he loves the most. He's free-roaming in their bedroom upstairs and has his own area, but they bunny-proofed the area well and didn't think he could have swallowed anything strange.

I told her it was an emergency as he hadn't been eating for 12 hours, and I told her about all the possible causes of GI stasis. I gave her the option of taking him to the Animal Medical Center and gave her the address. I also told her I could walk her through nursing him at home until she could get him to the vet the next morning. She chose the latter since she wasn't sure there'd be a rabbit vet on hand at AMC and wanted to get him to Catnip & Carrots the next morning.

So we began. I had her take his temperature and it was 100.7, so I told her she had to warm him up just a bit to get him within normal range. I gave her a few methods as she doesn't yet have a water bottle. I instructed her to administer baby simethicone, which she had bought for her first-aid kit for Bugsy. I told her to give him something that is his favorite treat, and she chose a

small slice of banana, and he ate it. I was less alarmed.

We talked some more about what she should do for the next few hours before bed to monitor and nurse him and I asked her to call me back before bed. She called me back at midnight and said his temperature was the same, 100.7, so she called her vets (Drs. Saver and George) and one of them told her that she had to continue to warm him up with the rice-in-a-sock-in-the-microwave method but instructed her to not force-feed him Critical Care, and to call in the morning with an update.

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*The doctor told Catina she'd done a great job with nursing him, and she cutely credited her RRR volunteer with walking her through it.*

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From midnight on, Catina and I were on the phone, till around 3 a.m. She administered another syringe of baby simethicone and kept heating him up and checking his temperature every 20 minutes. She did a great job and, at last, got his temperature up to 101.7, but he still wasn't interested in eating. We all went to sleep for awhile, at least hoping his temperature was resolved. I told her what to do to check him in the morning and said to make an emergency appointment with Catnip & Carrots if his temperature was still out of normal range even slightly, or if he still wasn't eating. This morning when she woke up a few hours later, around 7, Bugsy's ears were cold again and when she took his temperature, it was down to 99.5, so she

*(Continued on page 13)*

## Bugsy

*(Continued from page 12)*

made an emergency appointment for this morning with Catnip & Carrots.

She texted me from there and said that the doctor told her she'd done a great job with nursing him last night and she cutely credited her RRR volunteer with walking her through it. The doc was keeping Bugsy for the day and administering meds and fluids.

I will keep you posted. Keep Bugsy in your prayers. Catina and Mikey really love him and he's a great bunny.

Love, Genevieve

**Gen's Update on Bugsy (sent later the same day):** I spoke to Catina tonight.

Bugsy spent the day at Catnip & Carrots under the care of Dr. Saver and staff. They got his temperature normalized and with fluids and meds, they eventually got him to eat hay. There had been no blockage and there was no infection – just a bad case of the silent killer from gas. He did great, made it out of the woods and was ready for pickup this evening. Catina and Mikey went home, so relieved with their Bugsy and his meds – Metacam at a 0.25cc dose, Reglan at a 0.5cc dose and simethicone at a 0.5cc dose – and are very comfortable at administering them. In the office, Catina and Mikey got to watch Dr. Saver feed Bugsy 10cc of Critical Care before they got to take him home, but also Catina had already given Bugsy an oral syringe last night of baby simethicone, so she knew how to

do it. She also bought him some papaya cubes, which I told her about last night. I told Catina that her nursing him last night, through the night, and her taking him to Dr. Saver this morning saved his life and that I was proud of her, especially as a first-time bunny mom. Now that Bugsy is back home, he is acting more like himself. He ran over to his area in her bedroom and inspected it and made himself comfortable. He ate his greens and veggies happily, too. She will monitor him and medicate him and, hopefully, he will stay healthy. She knows she can call me any hour of the day or night with any questions going forward. We really bonded through this. I am so relieved Bugsy is okay. Boy, I can't wait to be a vet.

Hug, Genevieve

## Smokey Gets Help for His Ears

Genevieve Hannon is fostering Smokey, a rabbit who had an inner ear infection, ear mites and head tilt. When he arrived at Animal Care & Control in mid-January, Smokey's ears were heavily encrusted and he was slightly overweight. He would flinch if his ears were touched, even gently. All the volunteers became very attached to Smokey, who was a gentle, loving guy despite the severe pain he was suffering at the shelter.

At the outset, Cindy Stutts administered a dose of Revolution, which cleared up the ear mites, and Jane O'Wyatt gave him Metacam for the pain. He received additional pain medication from other volunteers, and Genevieve Hannon took Smokey home to take care of him.

"When I picked up Smokey from the shelter to foster him on Feb. 8, he had spent three weeks there under the care of my fellow volunteers," Gen said. "I took him to see my friend, wonderful exotics veterinarian Anthony Pilny at Veterinary Internal Medicine and Allergy Specialists, where Smokey was diagnosed with an inner ear infection and head tilt and was prescribed a course of treatment. I picked up medicine from Cindy and began treat-

ment. The treatment entailed measuring his two liquid oral meds with syringes, crushing his solid pill, mixing the three medicines in apple sauce, and serving the concoction to him in a small bowl."

"For the first couple of days, poor Smokey was so sensitive around his ears and head that he was hyper-reactive to the slightest touch anywhere on his body, so I could comfort him only with food and sweet talking," Gen said. "But within three days of treatment, Smokey wanted to be petted and was clearly not in as much pain anymore. The medicine was working. What a trooper."

Gen also reported that despite his condition, Smokey had a great appetite, "gobbling up his medicine-laden applesauce and his pellets, hay and greens and drinking plenty of water." Also, she said, "he defied the imbalance that can come with head tilt and got around his cage pretty well, even though his head was literally on sideways, his right eye pointing toward the ceiling. He finally shed the dried skin on his ears and his fur began growing back. He became "clean and shiny," and loved to snuggle in bed and to be held. She

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Smokey at ACC, January 2010.

described him as a handsome bunny who was sweet, gentle, social and brave.

Gen provided this update on March 2: "Now, at day 21 of his treatment, his nose points at 6 o'clock where it is supposed to! What a great recovery! Now he's still pretty skinny, so I am fattening him up before sending him to get neutered and out for adoption. His black coat shines and his brown eyes are chocolates. He is the friendliest, sweetest guy. He's big and social and cuddly and will make whoever adopts him very very happy indeed. He's a great bun!"

Smokey, may you find a great home! As one of our rehab success stories, we will be watching your progress and cheering you on.

## Eye Surgery for Marge

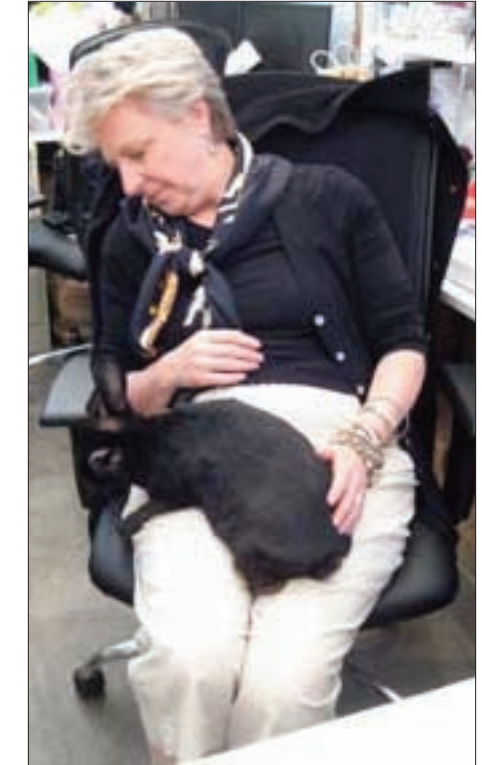
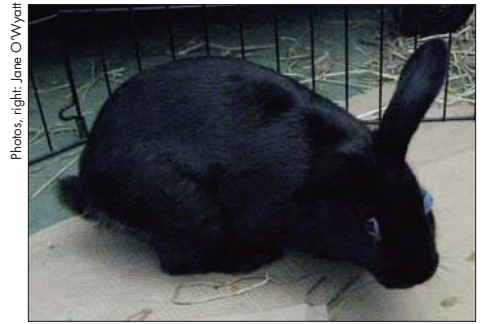
Marge, a charismatic black bun with one bad eye, was found in St. Vartan Park on the East Side in August 2009. When she came to the AC&C shelter in Manhattan, Marge was friendly and had a good appetite. However, she had fur mites and her left eye was in obvious need of medical attention. She was examined on Aug. 20 by Dr. John Sapienza, who said Marge's abnormal eye was the result of glaucoma. Surgery was recommended.

Marge's eye was removed in early September by Dr. Laura George at Catnip & Carrots. Following surgery, Cindy Stutts fostered Marge at her home and then at her office at Sequin.

In October, Cindy posted the following Petfinder description of Marge:

"Marge is not a bunny for the faint-hearted. An energetic adult female, she is a highly gifted 'child' who needs lots of activities to keep her out of trouble. Although her left eye had to be surgically removed, Marge gets around just fine: in fact, she scales unimaginable heights! She must have been a mountain climber in a previous life. Marge responds to her name and is one of those rare rabbits who actually loves being held and cuddled. She has been spayed and possesses excellent litter-box skills. Marge would love to find a human companion who would revel in her uniqueness. Are you that special person for a very special rabbit?"

More recently, after Marge was adopted in mid-February by Amy Takemoto and her family, Cindy emailed Amy to say: "Marge is a very special bunny and it was hard to give her up but knowing she deserved a home and human companions she could call her own, was what most mattered." Cindy added, "She reminded me of my Samantha, who passed away a year ago." Samantha "was the first rabbit I pulled out of AC&C when we began our partnership with them. I never thought I would meet another like her." Amy Takemoto sent back this update: "I never in a million years thought we



*Marge is one of those rare rabbits who actually loves being held and cuddled.*

would find a bun like Marge. She's such a lovey, and is always in the middle of the action."

Amy added that Marge is "a free-roaming bun now. I was putting her in the X-pen at night, and Marge just wasn't having it. When I would wake up in the middle of the night, there would be Marge sound asleep on the mat outside the pen. She's not destructive in the least (how could she when she's got four people making her toys all the time!!), so we decided to do away with the pen. Marge stays in the playroom, our bedroom and the long hallway in our apartment. I usually wake

Top left, Amy Takemoto's daughters Abby and Vera, with Marge.

Bottom left, Marge reigns on the sofa.

Top right, Marge at ACC, August 2009.

Bottom right, Marge with Cindy at Sequin.

up in the morning to huge bunny ears sticking up at the end of our bed. (She'll let you know when it's meal time!) My girls are in absolute love with her."

Amy also said that Marge "is getting only the best food: a wide variety of greens for dinner, Oxbow T pellets for breakfast and an unlimited amount of hay from Farmerdave.biz."

And in closing, Amy told Cindy: "Thank you for rescuing such a wonderful bunny, and giving us the chance to adopt her. Marge is truly a one-of-a-kind rabbit."

## Portobello Comes in From the Cold

By Helen Chen

Small, white, with big dark eyes, Portobello has been through a lot in his three years of life. On Feb. 10, during one of the city's worst snowstorms, I heard his story.

He was purchased as a gift from a pet store and was thought to be a girl. Following the advice of a store employee, Portobello's owner fed him pellets exclusively. He lived outside in a homemade cage.

Through the summer heat and winter blizzards, Portobello stood alone in his backyard cage. His family rarely visited, other than to feed him and clean the cage. He wasn't allowed out of his cage, except when the family gave him an unnecessary bunny bath.

Knowing how harsh life would be for a rabbit kept outdoors with more than 10 inches of snow piling up in February, I convinced his owner that Portobello could have a better life with people who could care for him indoors. Surrendered to the volunteers at Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, he arrived cowering in the corner of a flimsy box. Other than being a little thin, his health was good.

The volunteers introduced Portobello to a proper diet and gave him a large cage indoors where he could stretch his legs. He quickly developed a love for kale and parsley, and his bouncy antics were fun to see. Portobello often sat on top of his favorite cardboard box at the Upper East Side Petco, where he was one of two shelter rabbits in residence. He wanted to see everyone and made sure everyone could see him. Always the center of attention, he would hop down to greet passers-by or to savor a lettuce leaf.

And then, at the end of March, Portobello was adopted into a wonderful home. His new mom, Catherine, took playful Portobello home with her on March 30. She planned to rename him Peter.

Photos: Helen Chen



Top, Portobello dozes on his cardboard box at Petco. Bottom, with his adopter Catherine.

# Snowflake's Journey to Wonderland

Snowflake, who was one of our AC&C shelter rabbits, made her fashion debut on March 1 in an "Alice In Wonderland" promotional shoot in the "Pulse" section of the New York Post. She appeared, of course, as the White Rabbit. A natural fashion model, Snowflake seemed to really enjoy her Feb. 25 photo shoot. Mike Pastore, director of AC&C field operations, provided transport for Snowflake to the session at the Gramercy Park Hotel's Rose Bar. Cathe Rekis, a Rabbit Rescue & Rehab volunteer who helped with Snowflake at the session, said, "After her scheduled photos posing with Alice, the photographer asked that Snowflake be included in additional photos for the 'Mad Tea Party.' Snowflake was beautiful and held every pose like a pro! Everyone fell in love with her."

"The pictures were phenomenal," Cathe said. "As I mentioned, Snowflake was so good that the photographer insisted on including her in the group photos!! Snowflake was placed right in the middle of the tea-party photos, posing on the chair all by herself between Alice and the Mad Hatter. She had the photographer snapping dozens of pictures as she put her ears up and posed looking first into Alice's eyes, then at the Mad Hatter. She was great!" Cathe added, "The pictures with Alice were priceless, too. The model held and cuddled her, and Snowflake was such a pro; she was comfortable sitting all by herself, looking both over Alice's shoulder and also directly into the camera. When the camera starting snapping, Snowflake assumed her pose and got all the attention!"

Best of all, Snowflake provided the opportunity to communicate information about rabbit adoptions at Animal Care & Control, along with our group's email address, [nyc.acc.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.acc.rabbits@gmail.com). The New York Post printed this information, adding that Snowflake was among the rabbits available for adoption.

A mere 10 days later, Snowflake, along with a huge New Zealand rabbit named Busefelo, were adopted. Michael and Julie Quinn, who have twin 6-year-old girls,

visited the Union Square Petco and took both girl rabbits home. Marcie Frishberg handled the adoption, and Cathe Rekis stopped by to meet the family. Snowflake is now know at home as Princess Snowflake; Busefelo is now Churchill.

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*'She put her ears up and posed looking first into Alice's eyes, then at the Mad Hatter. She was great!'*

---

Cathe said the "Alice in Wonderland" photo shoot made her think more broadly about all of our rabbits and their hidden abilities. "On the photo shoot, when I was watching Snowflake pose with the models, it reminded me of how talented our bunnies are. Because they are shy and silent creatures, their talents are hidden; but given the opportunity, they blossom and shine. And given lots of love, they astound us!" Marcie noted that another shelter rabbit, Duchess, last fall took part in a photo shoot for "Time Out New York," savoring all the attention and helping to generate publicity for rabbit adoption efforts.

On Feb. 26, New York Daily News reporter Amy Sacks wrote about the 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 that accompanied the article.

And on April 7, amNew York ran an article on its Petropolis page, titled "Cottontails Make Sweet City Pets," featuring 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.

Photos: NY Post: Victoria Will



Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Snowflake at photo shoot, then back in her cage at ACC.

# Love Letters From Adopters

Photo: Janna Salisbury



## Jonathan

*Jonathan was adopted by Janna, who sent this happy update in late January.*

Marcie,

Thanks so much for all of your help. We're doing great, getting to know each other and falling into our routine. He makes me smile everyday :)

Janna

Photo: Donna Marvin



## Pico (at rear) with Deira

*Pico, formerly known as Dino, was adopted by Donna, who sent this report in early February.*

Marcie,

Pico is doing great!

It took quite a while for him and Deira to bond but it was worth the wait. They lived in separate cages but next to each other and had some play time together each day.

When we came home we got them both new soft houses. One is in the shape of a strawberry and one looks like a pineapple. We got rid of Deira's old house. We watched them in the pen together and

they did pretty well. Then they began to groom each other. Now they are best buddies and are taking on a bit of each other's personalities.

Pico is a bit more outgoing. And once you get him in your arms he is such a little mush. He loves to be hugged and kissed and petted by the ears and the face.

They are very happy together and Pico seems a lot more relaxed. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to adopt him.

Thank you again for Pico and all your helpful advice.

Donna

Photo: Edwin Flores-Collaghan



## Trip

*Trip, formerly known as Jacob, was adopted by Tyler and Edwin, who sent this update in early February.*

Hey Everyone!

Just wanted to say Jacob (Renamed him Trip :) ) Is doing great !!!! His first day was slow just because he was warming up. Now he is very happy and hopping around and doing his thing! Very funny guy!

He doesn't like going into his cage after being out during the day; this is the only problem I have. He will get better, I assume. He hops in during the day but doesn't like to go in for the night. He really wants the freedom and space of his room.

Thanks so much for everything!

Edwin

Photo: Ann Elizabeth Dongjuein



## Sabrina

*Sabrina was adopted by Ann Elizabeth, Herman and their daughter, Lily, in early December. Lily wrote this essay for school.*

I got a rabbit over the weekend. We got her on a Saturday. It was rainy that day.

Her name is Sabrina. She is a black Netherland Dwarf mix. I think her mix is Satin because her coat is so soft and shiny.

When she comes out she cuddles blissfully.

While she is fun, Sabrina is a lot of work. Sabrina needs fresh food and water every day. Plus, she needs a clean cage.

We got her from a big loud shelter. The shelter was in New York City in Manhattan. It was about 30 miles from my house.

We got Sabrina home by driving her. It took about 1 hour and 5 minutes. When my dog barks, it doesn't bother her, because at the shelter there were other dogs barking and she got used to barking.

I like my rabbit Sabrina so much.

Lily, age 8

*(Continued on page 18)*

## Love Letters

(Continued from page 17)

Photo: Karen Shieh



### Bella

*Bella, formerly known as Hazel, was adopted by Karen, who sent this letter in February.*

Hi Vivian,

How are you and your bunnies? Bella is definitely adorable. She looks like a little stuffed toy when she's hanging out on the couch.

The scary thing is I think she knows she's a little cutie! The little two-pounder definitely rules the apartment. She makes it known what she wants and how she feels... She burbles all the time!

For such a tiny thing she's very dominant and verbal! She has no problem bossing my fiancé and me around – completely spoiled! She's doing really well – quite a popper and full of energy. She does laps around her cage every day – much better about exercise than her mom! You guys do a really wonderful thing for these rabbits!!!

I'm definitely interested in getting her a playmate in a few months! I would like her to have somebody to keep her company while we're at work.

We've been leaving her cage open while we go to work so she can come in and out of her cage whenever she wants! She likes it much better this way!

Thanx again!

Karen

U can just refer to me as her mom! :)

Photo: David Mohney



### Mimi

*David and Bonnie adopted Mimi in February after the death of their beloved Mr. Bunny, who was deaf. Here is their update.*

Good Morning ~

It is soooooo different having a "hearing" bunny. :) :)

Miss Mimi is aware of absolutely everything. When she hears the shaking of the pellet container she is really active and funny ... and where Mr. Bunny was a short jumper, and hopped on his way to get places, she takes flying leaps across the living room carpet and can jump very high.

Mimi is very interested in some of the toys and I saw her toss a pine cone in the air.

When we first got home, I opened the little box and just left her there for a couple of minutes so that she could adjust, and our cat came over and kissed her on the nose, and she was fine with that. He seems very happy to have another bunny here. We were all so devastated without Mr. Bunny these last weeks.

She and Artie, the 15-year-old cat, are having a very good time chasing each other around ... very funny to watch. They are both very sweet with each other and clearly enjoying this new friendship. I think that Artie has found the fountain of youth!

Mimi seems to have adjusted well to her new space ... and has not been shy at all about exploring and checking out the other characters. :) :) She went over to the parrot's cage and pulled herself up to check him out, and he came down to check her out.....very cute.

Will keep you posted.

Thank you !  
Bon ;)

Photo: Jarett Hulise



### Wiggins

*Wiggins, formerly known as Monique, was adopted by Stephanie and Jarett. They sent this update in February.*

It's been a year since we got Wiggins from the Adopt-a-Bunny program at the Union Square Petco, and she is the QUEEN of our apartment. I could sit and watch her for hours, but she's not having any of that! When we first got her, she was a little bit nippy. But as she got used to us, she bites much less— unless we're not paying enough attention to her, that is. When we are watching movies, she will hop around the floor with us and sometimes nibble on my fiance Jarett's hair. Or, she just nudges us for a petting. She will sit forever and let us pet her, but if we stop there's definitely a chance we will get an angry look or grunt.

Wiggins doesn't like to leave our area rug in the living room because her paws slide on the wood floor, so that is her domain. She never has accidents on the floor, and her favorite treats are bananas (on special occasions) and yogurt-covered hay. She LOVES her lettuce— loves it—and she hops back and forth in her cage until I put her salad down in the morning. We really couldn't be happier with her. She is a benevolent Queen, and with a face like hers who wouldn't want her as a pet??

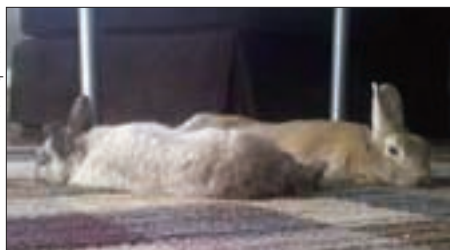
Best,  
Stephanie

(Continued on page 19)

## Love Letters

(Continued from page 18)

Photo: Monique Monzier



### Sophie and Sadie

*Marique adopted Sadie, formerly called Thumpet, and a boy bun named Sophie. She gave us this update in February about how they were doing.*

Sophie met Sadie and it was love at first sight! They met at the AC&C in Manhattan and were immediately smitten, shy at first and then smelling each other.

Sadie, or Thumpet as she was previously named, was very nervous and scared when brought home. However, within the first hour, Sophie was grooming her and brought Sadie out of her shell!

Now they hop around the house together, never more than a few feet apart, and their favorite thing is to nap on the carpet or play in their cardboard maze.

Marique

Photo: Christina Grant



### Posey and Pacino

*Posey and Pacino were adopted by Christina and husband, Rob. She sent the following email to us in February.*

We adopted Pacino (formally Jo) four years ago and Posey (formally Miss Whiskers) one year ago. With help from Cindy, we set up a speed-dating session for Pacino at the shelter, and voilà! Posey became the new member of our household.

After a month-long bonding process, Posey and Pacino are settling in nicely. Pacino is completely infatuated with Posey, but she treats him more like a nerdy little brother. They have their occasional power struggles, but a nice spray of water keeps things from getting serious.

My husband and I are constantly entertained by these two. They have completely different personalities: Pacino is very smart, fastidious and picky. He doesn't like being told what to do and acts like a tough guy (at three pounds!), but deep down he is just a little weenie. At close to eight pounds, Posey is a little doofy, not very graceful and a total destruction machine. But she is super-sweet and loves to be petted. We can't help but love her! Thanks to HRS for bringing these two buns into our lives!

Christina

Photo: Sabine Heinelein



### Teddy and Pooka

*Giovanni and Sabine adopted Teddy in 2005 and Pooka in 2008. They sent this to us in March, titled "Teddy and Pooka, A Winter-Spring Romance."*

We picked Teddy from the shelter in Harlem for a couple of reasons: At the slightest touch, he flattened himself into a pancake and crunched his teeth with pleasure. And since he was already four years old, we were worried that he would have a difficult time finding a home.

The shelter "fixed" Teddy and we picked him up the following week. While in many ways he was an admirable bunny – keeping out of trouble and not chewing the furniture or books – he had one little problem. He would go through periods in which he would hump whatever came his way – stuffed animals, visiting grandmothers and our cat Mietzi, who

didn't appreciate the attention. We assumed he might have been fixed too late and was humping out of habit.

We very much wanted to get a companion for our bunny, but when we took him to a "play date" at the shelter to pick a mate, Teddy blew it. He humped every poor rabbit he was introduced to. Obviously, something was wrong.

Nevertheless, when House Rabbit Society was urgently looking for a foster family for a little baby bunny girl, we jumped at the chance. We quickly fell in love with Pooka. Unlike Teddy, who seems to suffer from vertigo, Pooka enjoyed jumping up on the bed, where she would do athletic binkies before plopping down on the pillow to have her cheeks rubbed. We couldn't help but keep her.

Teddy was thrilled, but Pooka was fast – much too fast for the old guy. Worried that eight-year-old Teddy was headed for a heart attack, we decided to take him to Jennifer Saver on Long Island. Dr. Saver suggested that the reason for Teddy's randiness was that he had an undescended testicle. Blood work confirmed that he was still producing testosterone like a teenager. After some hand-wringing, we decided on an operation, which proved Dr. Saver's theory correct.

Teddy recovered swiftly, and his sensitive, caring character shone through. He has become a perfect companion to Pooka. For her part, Pooka is a devoted wife. She adores Teddy and looks at him for guidance. She even made him her royal food taster. Only after he first had bit into a carrot or a leaf of lettuce, would she then eat it. It took about a year for her to begin making dietary decisions independently.

Although half his size, Pooka keeps her new husband in shape. Young and springy, she chases nine-year-old Teddy around the house and diligently grooms his ears for hours. And, in particularly excited moments – the smell of banana or apple will trigger them – she sometimes even humps him!

Giovanni Garcia-Fenech  
and Sabine Heinelein

## 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.

### Westchester County:

**Anthony Pilny, DVM**  
Animal Specialty Center  
9 Odell Plaza, Yonkers, NY 10701  
(914) 457-4000

**Gil Stanzione, DVM**  
381 Dobbs Ferry Road, White Plains, NY 10607  
(914) 421-0020

**Laurie Hess, DVM**  
Fine Animal Hospital  
Bedford Hills, NY 10507  
(914) 666-8061

Bond Animal Hospital, 250 Central Ave.  
White Plains, NY 10606  
(914) 949-8860

## Adoptable Rabbits

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

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

## 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**  
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

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.

On Long Island, there are adoptable rabbits in the Garden City Park and Levittown Petco stores. Volunteer hours are variable. For more information, call Nancy Schreiber.

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).

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).

To contact us at the Thump newsletter, email [nyc.acc.rabbits.news@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.acc.rabbits.news@gmail.com).

## Licensed HRS Representatives

**Mary Cotter**, HRS Licensed Educator,  
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**Nancy Schreiber**, HRS Licensed Educator,  
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**Jennifer Saver**, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator  
**Laura George**, DVM, HRS Licensed Educator

## THUMP April 2010

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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.

### 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:

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12 Grace Court North  
Great Neck, NY 11021