



# THE Rabbit Advocate



PROVIDING INSIGHTS INTO THE LIVES OF HOUSE RABBITS

FALL 2005

## Helping Rabbits Live Happily Ever After!

*As the year comes to an end and Rabbit Advocates has decided to focus on increasing adoptions in 2006, it seems appropriate to share with you, our supporters, some of our many rescue and adoption stories.*

*We share sad stories and tragic stories, but what keeps us going are the happy ending stories like Tamino's. Tamino would not have survived had it not been for the passion of Rabbit Advocate volunteers and generous donors who support our Medical Fund. We, and the rabbits, thank you for making all this possible.*



### Tamino's Story

Tamino is a little dutch rabbit whose remarkable story began when he was surrendered at a shelter. He had a broken leg, requiring expensive surgery that the shelter was not able to provide. That's when Rabbit Advocates came to Tamino's assistance. Six RA volunteers and the RA Medical Fund were involved in giving this sweet bunny a second chance at life.

#### Chapter 1: The Rescue

by Mary Thompson

RA volunteer Mary Huey retrieved Tamino from the shelter. Mary consulted with Southwest Animal Hospital, negotiated a price for the required amputation, and asked the shelter to provide a portion of the funding. Two RA volunteers generously offered to assist with the medical bills. The RA Medical Committee decided in this special situation to pick up the entire balance.

Tamino is such a sweet and perky rabbit! He stayed with me for nine days, before and immediately after his surgery. Despite his disability, the little guy could move around, was thrilled with attention, and showed interest in other rabbits. The leg was definitely an impediment, and I believe that it also must have been painful.

The surgery day arrived, and my confidence was high. Southwest Animal Hospital had performed successful surgeries on my own rabbits. I knew from personal experience that a rabbit who has lost a leg is still very mobile and capable of living a normal life.

When I brought Tamino home, he was wearing an e-collar around his neck to keep him from picking



**Before surgery, Tamino's broken leg flops out to his side, getting in the way, limiting his mobility, and likely causing pain.**

at stitches. The clinic sent home pain killers to last several days. The pain killer is essential to keep the rabbit in good spirits and willing to eat.

The next day, though, he seemed listless and had no appetite. I watched him and tempted him with every luscious veggie and treat I could come up with. At the end of the day I was not satisfied with his appetite and so arranged for another Rabbit Advocate, Lorraine Bushek, to rabbit sit that night and the next day so I could go to work.

When I came to pick him up, he was feeling much



photos: Mary Thompson

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## **Tamino's story cont.**

better. He was bouncy and had torn off his e-collar (but left his stitches alone). He was a welcome sight indeed!

Tamino loved his new-found freedom to move around without the burden of that pesky poking-out leg. I had thought he was happy before, but now he seemed exuberant.

Now it was time for Tamino to move on to his foster home with RA volunteer Helen Swann. I (a little reluctantly) delivered him to Helen at our next Rabbit Advocate meeting. Tamino spent a happy month in foster care with Helen, who named him after the hero of Mozart's opera, *The Magic Flute*.

### **Chapter 2: Tamino's Foster Home**

*by Helen Swann*

Tamino came home with me a few days after his surgery. He quickly made himself at home in the living room. He loved the empty paper grocery bag that was his sleeping place. His favorite thing was to sit on my chest when I was at the computer or reading. He would snuggle his little nose under my chin for hours.

After a week or so, I let him run in the kitchen. I put a carpet runner down so he would have traction – he promptly headed across the linoleum to my other bunnies'

enclosures. He proved that missing a leg did not slow him down.

The day before the Rabbit Advocates meeting I took him to Portland to have his picture taken with Santa. Santa did more than pose with Tamino; he adopted him!

### **Chapter 3 Tamino Finds His Forever Home**

*by Kem Sypher*

I had been looking for a companion for Buttons for some time. She craves lots of attention, which has made me feel bad about leaving her alone all day while I'm at work. I had tried several bondings in the hope that I would find a rabbit companion to keep her company. Always she had rejected any prospect.

It was in May of 2003 that Buttons came into my life. She was a new arrival in the shelter's small animal receiving room, a pathetic looking black & white Dutch rabbit with dull matted fur and covered in urine stains. All four of her feet had urine scald, she was badly malnourished and she looked absolutely miserable! I brought Buttons home for foster care since she was in no condition to be put out for adoption.



*photo: Kem Sypher*

*Buttons loves to play under the Christmas tree. Kem says she especially loves to look at her reflection on the shiny surfaces of the ornaments. There seems to be bunnies everywhere!*

I have had affectionate rabbits before, but I was not prepared for this little girl! Soon I was smitten and had given up all thoughts of ever taking her back to the shelter. It took two months before Buttons finally grew a clean shiny coat and put on enough weight to become a gorgeous healthy rabbit.

Every year I volunteer as "Santa Paws" for the Oregon Humane Society. As I posed for photos with Tamino, I wondered if his sweet personality just might win Buttons' heart. I decided to try one more time at bonding and took Buttons to meet this gentle little guy at the next Rabbit Advocates meeting.

## **Epilogue: Happy Together**

*by Kem Sypher*

***Tamino and Buttons came back to my house and were placed in Buttons' roomy two story condo. The bonding has been successful and I now have two very sweet black & white Dutch rabbits who came from very bad situations, but have found happiness together in their forever home. Buttons and Tamino enjoy running together in the living room, especially around the Christmas tree, and I can assure you that three-legged rabbits are fully able to do binkies.***



*photo: Kem Sypher*

# Lindy's Story

## Chapter 4: The Bonding Process

by Arlene MacMonagle

Kem brought the rabbits to me on the evening after their first introduction. They huddled together in the same carrier for the 10 minute car ride. They were quite calm and friendly. There wasn't any grooming going on but being nice is a good sign at this stage. My method is to keep them fairly close together during this process and not distract them unless they get aggressive with each other. I put them in a cage which was big enough for two litter boxes with some floor space in the middle.

I watched them through the evening. They were happy and Buttons tolerated the attention from Tamino. I left them together for the night but got up a few times to check them. No fur, blood or mayhem was in evidence.

In the morning I let them out and they had a good time running around the living room. This was the routine for the rest of the week. No problems, no fighting. Bonding sometimes happens this easily but it is not usual. I believe the key was to put them together in a neutral location.

*"From the moment I saw him racing around, my heart went out to him,"*

He's a tiny white rabbit with alert eyes and short velvety fur, and he bounces over to everyone who passes by and begs for attention. It's only when you look closely that you see that something is not quite normal. His hind legs are twisted in a pretzel-like deformity.

Like so many rescued rabbits, Lindy's past is a mystery. He was found outside the door of a shop in Willamette, abandoned in a basket on a freezing morning. Employees of the shop turned him over to Animal Control Specialist Gabby Deets of the West Linn Police Department. Gabby, a true friend of animals, was distressed at the rabbit's condition: he was dirty and infested with fleas, and appeared to have two broken legs. After passing through the hands of a vet and a foster family that decided they couldn't take care of him, Lindy was rescued by a Rabbit Advocate volunteer.

As it turned out, Lindy's legs were not broken. Veterinarian Mark Burgess determined that Lindy had been born with a rare deformity called arthrogriposis. Although he has limited mobility, his new



photo: Nolan Huzinga

mom was able to come up with a suitable environment to keep him comfortable and prevent injury to the skin on his legs. (Imagine if you had to run on your knees all the time!) Special attention is required to keep him clean, as he cannot groom himself properly or clean his ears. He also needs a little help when his ears itch! Despite everything he's been through, Lindy has a sweet, affectionate personality. "From the moment I saw him racing around, my heart went out to him," his mom says. "He doesn't know there's anything wrong. It's just normal, joyous life to him."

## Dasher

***The staff at the shelter said he batted too much and had to leave. It's true that an inexperienced potential adopter might have found him intimidating, maybe even scary! They might not have understood how a hormonal young bunny in a small shelter cage could be frustrated or defensive.***

***When he came to his current home, he spotted the most beautiful rabbit girl and he just had to be close to her. He jumped out of his pen so he could endlessly circle her pen. When his new family put a sheet over his pen to keep him in, he still wriggled out. When they gave him a pen with higher sides, he climbed out. The rabbit girl just ignored him. Once Dasher was neutered and given time for the hormones to subside, he was allowed to meet his rabbit girl face to face. Now Dasher and his girl Polly live in their own room – and Polly loves her Dasher boy!***



photo: Mary Thompson

# Toulouse

*“I knew he was biting because he was scared, so I forgave him and just kept trying to win his trust.”*

The big white New Zealand rabbit had been caged at the shelter for months and his behavior was deteriorating. There was no way this rabbit would ever be adopted. He was biting, lunging, and generally terrorizing the shelter staff. No one knew much about his past; he had been found wandering in Southeast Portland.

A Rabbit Advocate volunteer rescued him and gave him a new start on life. A spacious pen, a quiet room, and a patient, caring family were what he needed. “He



*Toulouse basking in the warm sunlight.*

bit me several times in those first few months,” says his mom. “I knew he was biting because he was scared, so I forgave him and just kept trying to win his trust. When you invest a lot of effort, you get a lot back. You can’t help falling in love with the rabbit.”

## Phurph’s Story

Phurph was a small messenger for the domesticated animal kingdom. He astonished his adoptive family with his strength, persistence, humor, loyalty, and love. They knew him just three short years, but the lessons Phurph taught will always amaze them. He shared a simple rationale for life that rivals the wisest voices—run fast, sleep long, love deeply, and pursue with wild abandon! Watching a furry companion elicits la joie de vivre we humans can’t experience any other way.



## Polly

***When she was found, Polly was just a young girl with huge ears. She did grow into those ears and became a big girl. Now about five years old, she still likes to swing her ears around as she bounces when she’s happy. One day she became blind in one eye, a consequence of E. cuniculi which was probably transmitted by her mother when she was born. It’s kept under control by medication. Polly has a friend named Dash (see his story on pg 3); what a card he is!***



Photo: Mary Thompson

## Jean’s Story

Jean and her cage-mate Marilyn came to the shelter in bad shape. They had belonged to a breeder and were kept in such cramped cage conditions that their feet had raw sores from standing on wire and the insides of their legs were burned because they could not get away from their own urine. They were large rabbits, and their white fur was yellowed from urine stains. Marilyn and Jean were fostered by a Rabbit Advocate volunteer for convalescence. She treated their sores and gave them space. Because they were adults, they had grown up nearly on top of one another, and that’s how they continued to sleep: snuggled together in a single litter box.

Marilyn and Jean lived happily together until Marilyn passed away in 2004. Jean now happily lives with a much younger man, Nick, and loves him very much.

## Luna’s Story

Luna was surrendered by a family that was moving. She had lived in a tiny cage and would throw her hay and litter on the floor. Her people claimed they couldn’t sell their house with her acting like that.

At first she was afraid of everything and didn’t realize people were for petting her. She eventually came around some. Her new family has helped her through some health problems and Luna finally has found love and happiness.

# Nudge's Story

Nudge and his friends Paisley and Sage were left in a hutch and the people who were supposed to care for them moved out and left them. They were found close to two weeks after the people left, hungry and super neglected. Nudge was dragging a huge furball off his backside and he had sores where his fur was pulling. It took about 8 hours to get him cleaned up. He is now living happily in an indoor home. He is a super friendly guy who likes to push on you with his head (hence the name).



## Digger and Dodger

Digger and Dodger (above) were born in a park along with six brothers and sisters. Luckily the little ones were rescued and now live happily indoors. They have a lot to eat now and plenty of room to run and play. They were skinny when found and since have almost doubled in size.

## Annie's Story

Like so many bunnies, Annie was rescued from a park. She was an adult who had already given birth to several rabbits before she was found. She had health problems and required surgery and medication. She is doing much better now and is really starting to enjoy her new environment. Now she gets all sorts of food and gets to play all the time! She's a much happier bunny now.



## Percy's Story

Percy came to the attention of Rabbit Advocates as a result of our pre-Easter publicity campaign about abandoned rabbits at Glendoveer Park. We don't know anything about his past, but when he was turned over to us he was in a miserable state, living in a box on top of his own feces. He had been without food for some time.

Our volunteers arranged for Dr. Wilson to do his neuter surgery, and after a stay in a foster home, Percy found his forever family.

His new parents write, "Percy is getting along very well, and he is a wonderful addition to our family. He is so sweet and so well behaved - amazing little guy! He loves to be with us, and is particularly attached to Sadie - when she goes to another part of the house, he stands at the gate waiting for her to return."

## Clarence's Story

***In his fourteen years of life, Clarence learned to roll with the changes. He lived in several adoptive homes and was in a shelter several times. He found his forever home when he was nine years old. A Rabbit Advocate and shelter volunteer decided to make his last days happy. His last days lasted five years! His first partner was eight year old Masuko, who died at nine. Clarence carried on and met his new loving partner Frances, a Fuzzy Lop.***

***Clarence was a rabbit with airplane ears and attitude. He was cuddly and crochety at the same time. He became blind the last year of his life. The blindness and his age only slowed him a bit. His resilience and enthusiasm made him a joy for his human family, and they feel fortunate to have had those wonderful years with Clare!***



## **Donate Your Car or Volunteer to Help the Rabbits**

***The vehicle does not need to be running, but should be able to sell for at least \$75 at public auction. 100% of the proceeds from car donations will go to Rabbit Advocates, and you will be issued a donation receipt for your tax records.***

***If you have questions about how to donate, please contact Chris Arends, 503-307-7407 or carends44@comcast.net.***

***Another way you can help is to foster a rabbit ( we provide training &supplies) or donate your time and expertise to Rabbit Advocates. We need professional help in these areas:***

***Database Development  
Marketing  
Fundraising  
Website  
Writing & Graphic Design***

***We also need centrally located storage space.***

***If you can help send an email to us at:***

***volunteer@adoptarabbit.org***

## **Desdamona, Our Cookie Thief**

The beautiful white rex rabbit with calico ears and calico spots was in trouble.

Her person had surrendered her at a shelter because the landlord was not willing to let the rabbit stay. At the shelter, Desdamona was extremely aggressive and vocal. She seemed unadoptable. The shelter asked Rabbit Advocates to rescue her.

When Rabbit Advocate volunteer Arlene MacMonagle arrived at the shelter, she realized what the problem was. Desdamona had never before been in a cage. With the proper environment and a little extra love, she would calm down and find a good home. "I let her have the whole bathroom to herself," says Arlene. "From the time I brought her home she has been nothing but sweet and gentle."

Today Desdamona lives in a loving home with two other rabbits, a dog, and a loving human." I explained she would now be my

forever bunny," says her mom. "Almost immediately she turned into a very bad bunny. Peed, pooped in inappropriate places, ignored me and was really awful for about three days, after which she reverted to her wonderful self."



photo: Mary Thompson



photos: Kem Sypher

*All eyes and Kem Sypher's camera became focused on Desdamona when we realized she was reaching for the oatmeal raisin cookies on the coffee table during a Rabbit Advocate board meeting.*

## **Vincent's Story**

Vincent was one of 37 rabbits brought to a shelter by an irresponsible owner who not only let rabbits breed, but did nothing to prevent them from harming one another. Vincent is named for Vincent Van Gogh because he is missing an ear. We think he lost that ear when he was a tiny baby. He doesn't suffer from it, but it always makes him look like he's intently listening to you.

He came to his foster mom as a baby along with his brother, Theo. Theo was adopted by a lovely family. Vincent is very shy, does not want to be with other rabbits, and does not want to be touched. But he lives happily in the TV room and has the entire space to himself. He's very well mannered and has perfect litter box habits.



# Wizard's Story



Wizard was surrendered at a shelter when he was 5 years old. He was very angry that he was given up. His previous home had been a good one and he lived

indoors with his family until one member became highly allergic to him. Wizard has always had a gruff personality and when he was caged at the shelter for weeks on end he started lashing out, growling and slapping anyone who dared put their hand in his cage. This behavior made him difficult to place in a new home, and he was eventually rescued by a Rabbit Advocate volunteer.

Wizard became a great "watch rabbit" and would run at top speed to anyone who approached, grunting and growling the whole way. Then he'd stop at your feet and expect a head rub. His new family realized that he was just a talker and was actually a super nice, but misunderstood, guy. Today Wizard is 12 years old and he no longer growls. He is a little hard of hearing, but is a happy bun.



## Wilson's Story

Wilson had been abandoned in a downtown park. When a lady spotted him, she thought he was a soccer ball. Boy, was she surprised when the soccer ball hopped! She took him home, where he lived with her and her daughters for four happy years. Then the lady got sick and had to give him up.

Wilson is living in a new home where he enjoys running on the wall-to-wall carpeting. He is still adjusting to his new home, and courting a cute little female rabbit.

## Zula and Babs



Zula began her life outside on a big hill. A kind Rabbit Advocate found her and took her home, where she lived with other foster bunnies but had no special rabbit friend. One day, a little gray male rabbit named Babs came to visit. His partner of many years had died, and his person didn't want him to be lonely any longer. Several female foster rabbits were introduced to him and tried to be his friend, but he just did not like them. He looked very sad and nervous. But when it was time for him to meet Zula, she hopped right up to him and kissed him on the head. She went home with him that day, and they were the closest of friends.

After a couple of years, Babs was diagnosed with lymphoma and has since died. Zula was crushed. Her family brought her a little stuffed dog to fill the empty physical space that Babs left. Zula lies beside her dog sometimes, and grooms him. She has begun visiting other rabbits in the house, and now appears to be ready to accept another partner.

### RABBIT BENEFACTOR

Leann Bleakney, in memory of Kona, Duran and Clifford Petco Foundation

### RABBIT RESCUER

Greg & Joyce Fallgatter  
Vicki Holechek  
Kimberly Osmonson, in memory of Lilac & Basil  
Evelyn Roeloffs, in memory of Milton, Lucy and Shadow  
Barbara Spears

### RABBIT SPONSOR

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Joann F. Kelly, in honor of Sam & Sally Bunny and Erika R.

### RABBIT FRIEND

Anonymous, in memory of Hugo  
Frederick J. Baron  
Lorelei L. Cohen, in appreciation of Erica Hartmann  
Julie Cooper  
Kenny & Penny Dillon  
Julie Eddy  
Barbara E. Grover  
Karla J. Saindon-Hayes  
Diana Kottmeier  
Carolyn Marineau, in memory of Nancy Huggins  
Doug Marshall  
Dan & Kendal McDonald, in memory of Poncho  
Maegen Mickman  
Elizabeth Miller, in memory of our good friend, Romeo  
Susan Miller, in memory of Flopsie  
Clarissa Osborn, in memory of Arora & Freckles, in appreciation of my family  
Katherine Perry  
Madison Richardson, in appreciation of Rabbit Advocates  
Carrie Sapp, in memory of Thumper Trinity  
Ruby Schouten  
Jim & Jackie Schwab  
Gail Sears  
Satomi F. Wise  
Sarah Yasutake, in appreciation of Sandy Alto

Donations received after November 10, 2005 will be acknowledged in our next newsletter.

# Upcoming Meetings

*The Rabbit Advocates meet at the Oregon Humane Society, 1067 NE Columbia Boulevard, Portland, Oregon, on the third Sunday of every month (or as noted) from 4:00 - 6:00 PM. Meetings include a "Bunny Basics" Q & A session where we invite your questions about any aspect of rabbit care. The public is welcome!*

## General Meetings

*2006 meeting dates have not been confirmed with Oregon Humane Society. Check the RA website [www.adoptarabbit.org](http://www.adoptarabbit.org) for confirmation.*

*No meeting December 2005*

**January 15, 4-6pm**

**Repairs in the Bunny Household**

**February 19, 4-6pm**

**How to Groom Your Bunny**

*Would you like to continue receiving our newsletter, or update your mailing address? Or maybe make a comment or suggestion?*

*WRITE TO US AT [newsletter@adoptarabbit.org](mailto:newsletter@adoptarabbit.org)*



## Betty and Barney

*Barney and Betty were living on the streets, eating whatever they could find while dodging traffic and running away from predators. Luckily they were rescued and today they live in a nice house with plenty of food and room to play. They have other rabbit friends, but Barney and Betty are special bunny companions.*



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**"Promoting  
the Welfare of  
Domestic Rabbits"**

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