

Article from "The Mickaboo Bird Rescue Companion"
Published April, 2017

Lois & Alice

by Guest Writer, Palomacy Adopter Lynn Eaton



I have never been a bird person. Period. When I was a newly-wed a hundred years ago, my then husband brought home a Quaker parrot. It was a hate/hate relationship that lasted about two months before I insisted it be brought back to where it came from. Never understood how anyone could have these flighty, pecky, noisy, messy, and destructive little creatures in their homes. And I'm talking about birds, not men. Although...

A few decades later, I currently have two rescued indoor pigeons that I would fall on a sword for. And it happened quickly. Almost like there was plan in place to shake me out of my coma-like existence when it came to pets.

A little over a year ago, I was very content with my two pedigreed elderly Ragdoll cats. Enter Janice, a co-worker at the newspaper office I worked at in Malibu. Under "bunny-hugger", there is a photo of Janice. She only worked at the paper a few hours a week and sweetly asked if I would mind assisting in the care of a "white dove" she found. She had received approval from the owner of the paper to keep this "dove" at our work place. She made it sound fun! We could have a contest at work coming up with a name! Keep it in the accounting department and listen to it coo softly all day! On and on and on.

Janice had found *Lois Lane* (contest winner name) stranded and unable to fly in an area of Malibu that is very tranquil and apparently, a perfect place for celebrations and dove releases. She gathered up the "dove" and took it immediately to the wildlife center where they promptly put it in with some chickens. This niggled at Janice for several days and after gaining approval to keep the bird at work, she re-rescued Lois (for which the Center hilariously charged her) and brought her into the office.

In short order, I realized neither Janice nor I knew anything about the care and feeding of this bird. We had a cage, some seeds and water and this pretty little bird that didn't so much as make a peep. I'm not certain when I came across Palomacy, but I'm almost sure it was on that first day. I was totally panicked. Elizabeth was the first and ONLY person to return my frantic calls.

Elizabeth calmly told me what to do and after I described what the bird looked like, burst my bubble by informing me that what we had was a pigeon. A "homer" at that. I fought that tooth and nail. I did not want a mere pigeon, I wanted a sweet-cooing dove. The Peace & Love and married-for-life kind of dove. It took me weeks and tons of research to realize yes, Lois is a homer. Not even a King. A homer. Dumb name. I didn't realize that homer meant HOMING PIGEON.

Poor Elizabeth was then my new best friend and I called frequently. Everything made me a nervous wreck. Was the cage big enough? How much should we feed her? Doesn't she need another pigeon friend? Is it acceptable to leave her ALL ALONE ON WEEKENDS???? It didn't help that Lois was going through a soft molt.

This went on for a few months and during that time Lois really was the calmest, quietest bird. So bomb-proof. We moved her cage around the office several times to find better locations, were constantly buying new and improved cage stuff (dishes, toys, mirrors and nesting thingys) and just futzing in general with her environment.



Lois at the office

In my on-going research and constant conversations with Elizabeth, I determined that Lois needed to spend time outside in the sunshine and fresh air. Lois just seemed so complacent; not unhappy but resigned. I was very twitter-pated about this. So, I purchased an Easy Up. Which is basically a big enclosed play pen for camping. Not predator proof AT ALL but we made do. Lois now got to go outside every day. I was happy. For a few weeks. It's hard to believe but we rarely if at all touched this bird. We would move her cage from the office to the easy up outside, open the cage door, put a large bowl of water for her to bathe in and then take her back in at the end of the day. Janice and I were pushing hard to recuse another pigeon friend for her as she was left alone so much – especially on the weekends. We



Lois bathing in the Easy Up

were met with a lot of resistance from the staff. We literally did not have the room in the office for a larger cage and building an outdoor aviary was not going to happen as it took tons of begging and cajoling to even erect the Easy Up outside our office space.

Around this time, I decided finally to move closer to my children in Tehachapi CA. A small mountain community 175 miles north of Malibu. As I was giving notice, I burst into tears and emphatically stated "AND I'M TAKING LOIS WITH ME"!!! Like a 5-year-old. I still can't believe those words came out of my mouth. I was met with no resistance – more like, THANK GOD. Can we help you pack up and put the bird in the car for you? Humph!

In short order, I moved and installed Lois in my home where she has a Rolls Royce of a cage that she resides in only at bedtime, poops on organic bird cage paper and can fly up to specifically installed corner perches in my office/indoor aviary all day and every day.

Now it was it was time to adopt her a buddy! With the assistance, once again, of Elizabeth, I adopted sweet, sweet Alice from Palomacy. (We each drove a couple hours and met in Fresno.) Yes, another female homing pigeon. Suffice it to say, there was a brief period of time where I was convinced Lois was a male – even renamed her Lincoln. Unfortunately, that brief period of time coincided at the exact same time I was adopting Alice. Hence, the two females. It's not perfect but we make it work. I'm the official mate of both these girls.



L-to-R: Lois, Lynn, Alice



Lynn and her clever self-rescuer Super Lois



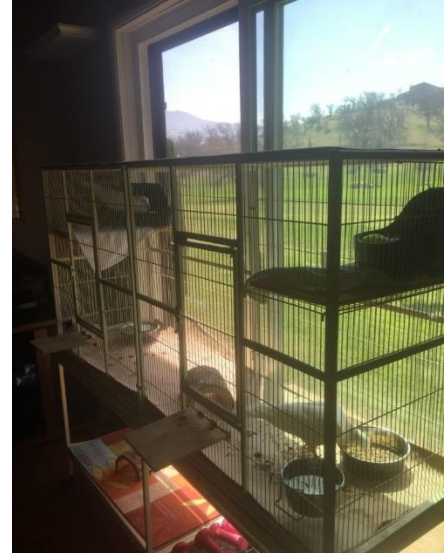
Lois and Alice meet

Thank you, Elizabeth, Palomacy, and all the pigeon/dove rescuers out there. I read every single post you guys make and have learned so much this last year. My ignorance of pigeons and birds in general proves how wrong I was and how truly adaptable these guys are. They fumble right along with you while you're

learning and never complain. That does not stop me from continuously trying to make their habitat fun and entertaining. I love the phrase: You will not save the world by adopting a pigeon, but you will save that pigeon's world.

In conclusion, these sweet little misunderstood birds have changed my life for the better. There is not a day that goes by that I don't laugh out loud at them. I love them, love them, love them.

Now if I could just find a male that could take on two females ...



Lois and Alice share a double-flight cage in Lynn's office



Lynn retired from a 35-year mortgage banking career and began enjoying life from the moment she quit smoking, drinking and finalized the sale of her company in 2012. She took on a very fun clerical position at The Malibu Times for a brief period but more importantly was introduced to the rescue pigeon Lois.

She lived in Malibu for 30 years before moving, snatching up Lois and high-tailing it to rural Tehachapi to be closer to her grandchildren.

She now resides in a condo on a very remote golf course and is spending most days checking out the wildlife or as she says, "living the dream smack in the middle of a Walt Disney movie set."

She pinches herself daily.