



# The Hedgehog Welfare Society Mission Statement:

The Hedgehog Welfare Society exists to protect the well-being of pet hedgehogs through rescue, research and education of the people who care for them.

## The Hedgehog Welfare Society

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## RIISING TO THE OCCASION:

# Hedgie Communications 101

I daresay we are all familiar with the tale of Dr. Doolittle and his conversations with the animals, however are you brave enough to entertain the idea that there might just be more truth than fiction in that tale? How many mornings have you entered your hedgie's territory just to find the food picked at by a suddenly-very-finicky eater, poop flung in the most unattainable places, or homes totally redecorated, and wondered just what exactly they were trying to tell you? This issue of the HWS Newsletter focuses attention on this topic – or more precisely, the real-life experiences of three HWS members. A word to the wise: a few kleenex in hand might be a good thing...

### Judie Peters:

Can we communicate with animals? In my experience the answer is "absolutely". I have come to this conclusion as the result of attending an animal communication seminar this past June. The seminar took place in New Jersey and was conducted by Elizabeth Severino. Jennifer, Julie and I attended the class together along with four hedgies. Although the focus was canine communication – they are good subjects for novice 'communicators' (dogs have lots to talk about!) – the most astounding events of the day (for me) involved communicating with hedgehogs. Both Julie and I were traveling with hedgies. Our hedgehogs "audited" the class, although they spent most

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### Julie Meihee:

On June 9th 2002 I was able to take a class from animal communicator, Elizabeth Severino. I was drawn to Elizabeth during the illness of my dear hedgehog, Rosie, where she helped me through this hard time. Through my experiences with Rosie during her last day with me and after speaking to a dear friend of mine, Jennifer Plombon, we decided that we must both take a class from Elizabeth this year.

The second hedgehog to come and live with me, Rosie, crossed the Rainbow Bridge April 6th of this year. I spoke to Elizabeth the day before she crossed the bridge and received a lot of comfort and support during this hard time. Something extraordinary

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### Jennifer Plombon:

In June I attended an all-day Animal Communication Class taught by Elizabeth Severino, an animal communicator and spiritual healer. I had spoken with Elizabeth many times in the past, as have many of my friends; she has been invaluable in helping me to learn more about what Norma and Skeeze needed and wanted. In addition, I have often joined Elizabeth's Public Healing Chats, offered every other Thursday evening. In these chats, many people join together to send strong healing energy to people and animals who are in need.

Judie, Julie and I arrived at the class a wee bit late; the streets of New Jersey are not well-marked, we found, and much of our weekend seemed to be spent driving around lost :-)

We had "reserved" dogs in advance; the class was held at a Best Friends No-Kill Shelter in Cherry Hill, NJ, and attendees

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# JULIE MEIHEE...

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happened to me the morning that she crossed that I would like to share.

After Rosie spoke to me via Elizabeth, I felt much more in tune to her needs. I realized more than ever what she was going through and knew her exact wishes. I felt as if she was speaking to me the whole time, letting me know when she wanted to be moved, needed to be cleaned up, and needed just the comfort of my hand touching her.

After her death I was sitting in my chair holding her, I just wasn't ready to put her away forever. I held her, kissed her, shut her eye and read the story of the Rainbow Bridge to her one last time. I told her I would see her there one day and that she was going to the most beautiful place that exists. When I was finally ready, I wrapped her up, placed her in her hedgeie bag and put her back in her cage till morning. This occurred at about 5am EST.

I remember it clearly – there was an infomercial for the thunderstick pro on tv. I thought to myself that I should probably get some sleep since I had been sitting up with Rosie all night. It all seemed so final – I didn't want to do anything but hold her.

The next thing I remembered I was in my bed. My bed is lofted 6 feet off the ground, my chair underneath it. I was

fully dressed, lying on top of my sheets. I looked at my tv and saw the EXACT same infomercial on tv – I hadn't even turned the tv off. I have no recollection of getting into bed. Nor do I even remember sleeping – because I hadn't slept at all. I thought back and realized I was in more of a hypnotic state. I knew if I was as tired as I felt, I would have slept longer than one hour. I knew what was going on the whole time, I was semi-aware of what had happened to me in the last hour.

After Rosie's death, every time I closed my eyes it was like looking into a mirror, I saw myself, but only saw Rosie's face. It was as if her face was mine. During that one hour I became her and she became me. We were almost cohabiting my physical being. I felt everything she felt in the last 2 days. I felt her pain, my pain, her anxiety – all her emotions and physical feeling had become my own. I knew at that instant that I had made the right decision for her. During the night as I saw her condition worsen, I questioned whether or not I had done the right thing. When I "came to" in the morning, I realized all my anxieties were gone and I knew she had to leave me for a while, until we are able to see each other again. Every time I closed my eyes, I still only saw her face as my own.

I decided to get up and watch some tv. I got out of bed and sat in my chair. The first thing I noticed was the sun coming up – it comes up on my side of the house. My room was golden in color. There was an aura of warmth, peace, tranquility, and serenity. I don't know how to describe the atmosphere in my room. My room, that normally stresses me out, went from tension that had to be cut with a chainsaw to extreme quiet and peace. The peaceful atmosphere was unbelievable. My room looked absolutely beautiful with the golden sun shining in my window and the calmness that had settled into my room. I got the feeling that I never wanted to leave this place.

I wanted to doze off and try to get some real sleep. Every time I closed my eyes, I was completely aware of my surroundings. I knew what was happening outside and could hear my tv. I went to another world, so to speak. This time Rosie and I were connected. It wasn't her physical self or my physical self, yet I knew I was I, and Rosie was Rosie. A rope connected us. What came next is a bit unclear as I don't remember all of it but I do remem-

ber I was out collecting information and she was telling me if it was the right thing for her. It was almost a search to find the right "thing" to make her better. It was about making the right decision for her. She was talking to me and I was talking to her, yet I don't remember ever speaking an audible word, though I could hear quite clearly what she had to say, and what I was saying as well.

Elizabeth told me to keep my candle lit for Rosie because as long as it was lit, the candle was a physical representation of Rosie's physical being. I left the candle burning all night and brought Rosie to it frequently throughout the night. After Rosie crossed, the candle went out about 10 minutes later.

This is how I came to take this class.

The class started on a beautiful Saturday morning. Everyone had dogs except Jennifer Plombon, Judie Peters and myself. We borrowed dogs from the local shelter then we began the class. We were taught different touches to perform on our animal companions to calm them and to put our energy at the same level as theirs. We practiced simple communication such as sitting, lay down, and be quiet. Different techniques were taught to communicate to our animals and we learned to delete certain words such as "no" and "not" that animals don't seem to understand.

After lunch and a brief communication session with Elizabeth and our hedgeies, we got to practice "speaking" to our animals. I brought Punky out for this part of the class since we didn't need to have the dogs for this particular exercise. We were instructed to ask our animal about a bothersome behavior. This is where my experience got very interesting...

First we asked our dogs about their bothersome behavior. My dog's bothersome behavior was barking at the sky during thunderstorms. I was amazed that everyone in the class got a similar message. We all felt he did this because he thought he was being a "big" dog and barking at another dog. Elizabeth confirmed that she had told this dog (it was her personal pet dog) that the thunder was a dog in the sky barking at him.

I asked Punky about her bothersome behavior of chasing other hedgehogs, females and males alike. She bites their butts and tries to mount females. I was told various things about how she saw this behavior with other hedgehogs so she thought this was what she was supposed



## FAVORITE PHOTO

Do you have a favorite photo of your quilly master(s)? If so, please share it with us. You can either e-mail the electronic image to us at [newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org](mailto:newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org) or via snail-mail to  
HWS Newsletter  
c/o Kathleen Knudsen  
PO Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107



to do as well. Then Judie said something that SHOCKED me!! She told me that all Punky sent her was cold and blue. Now, months before this class I had the feeling Punky was trying to say something to me and I just couldn't hear her. After some advice from Jennifer Plombon I sat down and tried listening to her. All I ever saw was BLUE!!! Now, I had never told Judie what I saw. Jennifer was the only one who ever knew what Punky told me. Not only did the blue shock me but the cold part did as well. Punky is pretty prone to hi-

bernation and had just had a hibernation attempt a week before.

After this exercise, we were to ask an animal (present or not) of our choice, their purpose of being there. Since I had Punky out, I decided to ask her what her purpose of being in my life was. She told me that her purpose was to bring me happiness and to be my teacher. Elizabeth confirmed that she was my teacher and she was here to teach me about loving and appreciating life, and to teach me how to be a better person. She brought me to where I am

today – helping with animal welfare, especially in hedgehogs – and she brought me tons of new friends.

After the class, Elizabeth told us how to continue practicing speaking to our pets. I thanked her for all the help she had given me that day and for the help and support she gave me during Rosie's illness.

When I got home from the class, I practiced speaking to Punky and Alma daily. Then came the real test – there was the dreaded spider in my room. I watched this spider stay on the wall so I left the room. When I came back it was still there. Trying to stay calm and do what Elizabeth had taught us to do, I thought of a good quality (eek) the spider had and tried to level our energies. I calmly told the spider that I was leaving the room and would it please leave before I got back. There was no way I would ever touch the spider so I figured that if I couldn't see it or know where it was, we would both be safe. I calmly left the room for a while and when I returned – there was NO spider!!

Some people won't believe or will be skeptical of the kind of work Elizabeth does. To be honest I was too, until I actually spoke to her. This class was a wonderful experience and I feel I am able to take better care of my animal companions through communicating with them. I highly recommend taking Elizabeth's class for anyone who is open and willing to experience this kind of work.

## Crystals and Healing: Rose Quartz



*Many of our hedgie masters display a preference for the rose quartz, such as Bolla Pinnsvin shown here with the heart he would often sleep curled up around.*

### TERESA JOHNSON

MARYLAND – As the name implies, rose quartz is a true member of the quartz family. It is found virtually all over the world and ranges in color from the palest translucent almost frosty white pink to deep rich rosey pink. What depth of color you choose is merely a personal matter and has no bearing on the effectiveness of the stone. Shape and size is also of no consequence. You may choose a piece of raw stone, tumble polished, or cut into a shape.

Rose quartz works directly with the heart chakra to teach unconditional love, forgiveness, and bring peace of body, mind and spirit. We humans sometimes find it easier to love and forgive others before ourselves. Rose quartz will help aid loving and forgiving yourself.

Don't be surprised if you are given over to tears as emotions neglected or

suppressed come to the forefront. Tears are a physical manifestation of 'cleansing' the soul and heart.

This stone aids healing of trauma, both physically and emotionally, of the heart. While pink is a dilute of red, a 'hot' color, rose quartz possesses a coolness to sooth fever, calm the mind, and strengthen the spirits.

A large enough piece to avoid risk of swallowing can be placed directly in a hedgegie bag... Or it can be placed on shelf near the hedgegie, hung in a small pouch on a cage or carrier. Rescuers and rehabilitators, rose quartz is an excellent stone to have on hand for abused or neglected hedgegie companions as it will reinforce that they are now loved and wanted.

Rose quartz can safely be used to make a tincture for both topical or ingested uses.

*Bright Blessings,*

*Teresa and the HedgeHerd*



### FAVORITE RESCUE STORY

Do you have a favorite rescue story you would like to share?

Please send it to us

either electronically at

[newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org](mailto:newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org)

or via snail-mail to

HWS Newsletter

c/o Kathleen Knudsen

PO Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107



**It's here!**

# Go Hog Wild!! 2002 busts loose in Chicago

CHICAGO, IL – “Our mission when we began sponsoring *Go Hog Wild!!* back in 1995 was first to educate people about hedgehogs. Second, and almost as important, we wanted hedgehog owners to have fun with their pets. What started as a one day event has blossomed into a weekend festival! Join us this year and *Go Hog Wild!!*”

Go Hog Wild!! 2002 is sponsored by Ain't No Creek Ranch Inc. The Ranch is home to the Ranch hedges and specialty products for small, caged pets. They are also the corporate sponsor of the International Hedgehog Olympic Gym-Bar-E program.

This year the Hedgehog Welfare Soci-

ety is cosponsor for the seminar program, and Hedgehog Valley of Iola, KS will co-sponsor the two International Hedgehog Association shows.

## **Mealie Awards**

The Mealie Awards are their little spoof on the Academy Awards. This year they will offer youth and adult divisions. The division is based on the age of the hedgehog's handler — not the hedgehog. Adult handlers are age 18+. Youth handlers are under age 18.

Hedgehogs may be in costume with no set, in a decorated set in or out of costume, etc. Handlers sometimes dress to match the

hedgehog's theme – but it is NOT required. Awards are typically given for categories such as Best Costume, Best Set Design, Best Comedy, Best Depiction of a Historical Figure, Best Villan, Best Performance in a Musical, Best Actor/Actress and other categories as invented by our panel of judges.

This year's theme is *The Golden Age of Westerns*, keeping with the overall Western ranch theme of the 2002 event. Entries are encouraged but not required to follow the theme.

## **Seminar Program**

Sponsored by Ain't No Creek Ranch Inc

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## **Mark your calendars!**

# Coming soon: The Mighty Niagara Hedgehog Show

NORTH TONAWANDA, NY – Well, *Go Hog Wild* (GHW) is creeping up on us rapidly. I know I have been looking forward to the next since the last GHW. I hope to see many of you there, that I have already met and some of those I haven't. I know it will be a fun weekend.

Since GHW is every other year, The Mighty Niagara Hedgehog Show had decided to rotate with the GHW so that people who wanted to attend a larger show did not have to make a choice. And the Niagara show is much more accessible to those on the East coast. We also have the wonderful attraction of Niagara Falls, to make the weekend extra special.

I have already made arrangement for the hotel for next year. I have had a few people ask when it is so they could make plans for next year. The dates are June 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. These will be the show active days. The rooms are reserved for the 18<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be \$79 per night this time. Things are a little higher this time, I wanted to plan the show for when the kids were out of school and past exams, but this coincides with peak hotel business. They did still give us a break, but we do have minimums we will have to make to get the best prices. The rooms are set, but the meals are still in negotiation.

We plan to start the Saturday morning part of the activities with the Rainbow Bridge ceremony, followed by a lovely, all you can eat brunch while we are taking last

minute late entries for the sanctioned IHA show. If the show should run into dinner hours, we will break for that great buffet we had last year. Have the silent auction and socializing going on until we are full, then complete the show, if necessary, or just continue to socialize and have the silent auction. Last year we had wonderful things to bid on, and I am sure people are all very happy with the items and bargains they got at the auction. And the competition was fun.

The next morning (Sunday) will start with an all you can eat continental breakfast. Then we will have our speaker program. A lunch break will then be available and there will be a luncheon, hot buffet, with a nice choice, all you can eat again. After lunch will be the IHOG and Bedlam balls games.

We should be able to put all of this together for a very affordable eat all weekend price. I am also going to see if I can get a lower price package for kids. Actually, the prices quoted to me so far, you couldn't eat out for pizza or Burger King for much less. More on the actual prices as the show develops. In the package some of the show events will be included, of course.

This is just the basic outline of the show. Of course, we can't give it all away.

The rooms will be available from Thursday to Monday. If anyone would be interested in coming in early or stay late, I can arrange some group tours. If we have enough people for both Friday and Mon-

day, we will arrange for that. These tours will be 4 to 5 hours and cover everything to see in and around the falls, Maid of the Mist ride, Cave of the Winds tour as well as some of the other tourist attractions. And no waiting in line, no tickets to buy, everything in covered in the cost of the package, and the tours do not wait in line, they get priority over the regular tourists.

So, you may want to plan a vacation and sight seeing tour out of a hedgehog show. If you want to stay longer than the days the rooms are available, the hotel is willing to work with you and probably continue the same price, depending on the demand when you contact them for reservations. Suites will be available, but probably at regular prices, unless things are slower at the hotel than expected, so it may be something you may want to look into early as well.

Well enough of that. I will give updates as they develop. We are hoping this show will be the success the last was so multiple donations to hedgehog charities can be made again.

Circle your calendar NOW!

Oh, by the way, our own Lenny has consented to be our judge at this show. So if you haven't met Lenny yet, this is a wonderful time to meet her and see her in action. Last show she gave a beginners talk on hedges that was WONDERFUL. So many people really enjoyed her talk and learned so much.

– Pat Storm

and the Hedgehog Welfare Society, the seminar program will be held on Saturday, September 21, 2002 at the Union Street Gallery, 1655 Union Ave, Chicago Heights IL.

The program will begin promptly at 9:30 am – please arrive no later than 9:15 am to complete your registration. A deluxe box lunch is included in the seminar fee. The seminar series is \$60 when paid by September 10, 2002 and \$70 after that date or at the door. Online registration is available at [www.aintnocreek.com/acatalog](http://www.aintnocreek.com/acatalog) in the events section. Phone registration is available at 1-800-PETS-TOY.

The seminar program will cover a variety of topics including:

**Things I should have known before I got my hedgehog**, by Susan Goetcheus and Lori Keller. This presentation describes the basic information every prospective hedgehog owner should know, including required supplies, recommendations for acclimating your hedgehog, things to avoid, and how to find competent medical care. We will talk about good places to find information on the Internet and elsewhere, and also describe some problems we encountered as novice hedgehog owners.

**Introduction to hedgehog veterinary care /ask a vet**, by Dr. Mary Beth Wajda, DVM.

**Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrom: What we know and what we don't know — and what we can do about it**, by Dr. Donnasue Graesser, PhD and Jennifer Plombon. Dr. Graesser will provide a brief description of the pathology behind this common syndrome, and the statistics of occurrence in pet African Pygmy hedgehogs. Ms. Plombon will focus on nursing care for hedgehogs with WHS. Her presentation will discuss diet, medications, habitats, alternative treatments, support from others and end of life issues for hedgehogs who need the assistance of their care person throughout their illness.

**Animal communication as a complement to traditional care**, by Carol Schultz. Animal communicators fulfill the role of interpreting messages from your companions. This is used to help discover the source of behavior problems and assist in resolving the concerns. Through the counseling process, the animal's viewpoints, needs and feelings are relayed. Animal communicators also assist animals and their humans in dealing with trauma, fear, injury, illness and death. Learn how this process can complement your program of nutrition, exercise and veterinary care. Carol will also be available for private sessions.

**Alternative therapies: An introduction to crystal healing**, by Teresa Johnson. Learn about the very basic concept of “vibrational healing” and the most popular stones used for health, healing and meditation. Includes a brief overview of Reiki and healing uses of colors. Teresa will be available for private or small group discussions at other times during Go Hog Wild!!

**Quills of fortune: working with pet stores**, by Dawn Wrobel, Ain't No Creek Ranch. This is a two part program. In the first segment, Dawn will discuss strategies for working with pet stores to achieve better in store care and handling for hedgehogs. In the second segment, Dawn will address alternative methods that breeders can use to effectively sell hedgehogs in pet stores.

### Speaker Biographies

**Susan Goetcheus** – Susan and her husband John are slaves to Fangio, who has lived with them since he was five weeks old, and Nell, who was a rescue and pricked her way into their hearts. In addition to spending time with her hedgies, Susan enjoys reading, biking, skiing, making hedge crafts, helping out with hedgehog rescues in the New England area and maintaining Fangio and Nell's web pages.

**Donnasue Graesser, Ph.D.** – Donnasue's biography reads Yale University, Department of Pathology and Albertus Magnus College, Department of Biology – but she is currently masquerading as the proprietor of the Ruby Rescue Shop, the Hedgehog Welfare Society's store, when not teaching. Donnasue and her husband, Carl, share their home with several hedgehogs.

**Teresa Johnson** – Teresa is slave to a number of hedgehogs at her rescue in Maryland. Her sisters claim she is the weird one in the family. This comes from her chosen spiritual path, her interest in things outside the “mainstream”, her tattoos and her love of hedgehogs. She has always had a deep love for animals and at one time thought of going into veterinary medicine. Instead, she went into police communications for the better part of 20 years. Her interests in spirituality, metaphysics and healing grew over time, especially after a back injury. A search for relief sent her on a mission to learn about the healing use of herbs, massage, crystals, colors, sounds and more. The time and money spent paid off in helping family, friends and now hedgehogs. When Teresa became smitten with hedgies she found an open community where she could blend all her favorite things from arts and crafts to

spirituality to alternative healing ideas.

**Lori Keller** – Co-handler of the Twinkle Fund, Lori has run a USDA licensed rescue for 4 years. She is slave to a small herd of hedgehogs. Lori seriously thought she was being original when she named her first hedgehog “Spike”.

**Jennifer Plombon** – Jennifer is a Registered Nurse specializing in Operating Room Nursing, primarily neurosurgery. She also has a degree in Forestry and a great interest in learning animal communication. She learned about nursing a hedgehog with WHS while caring for her first, most beloved and brave hedgehog, Norma. Her current hedgehog companion is the butt biting diva, Skeezi. Jennifer is CVO, Chief Volunteer Officer, for the Hedgehog Welfare Society and works hard on the Carolina Hedgehog Society care package program.

**Carol Schultz** – Carol Schultz is an Animal Communication Specialist based in Arlington Heights, IL. Her studies to enter this field have included Basic and Advanced Courses with Penelope Smith, an internationally known pioneer in this field. The animals that Carol has worked with as clients have provided some of the deepest knowledge in how to regain the telepathic link we all have with them. They have assisted her with the transition during the past three years from a successful career in corporate America, to a counseling role based on our spiritual core.

**Dawn Wrobel** – Intrigued by hedgehogs since she first read about them in 1992, Dawn's nickname is Spike (the second most common hedgehog name) and she was married on Hedgehog Day (February 2) before she and her husband even knew what it was. Her business, Ain't No Creek Ranch, is USDA licensed. She has actively tried to educate pet owners, breeders, pet stores and veterinary professionals through her Go Hog Wild!! programs, Hedgehog Herald newsletter, myriad speaking engagements, numerous articles on and off line and the book, “The Hedgehog, An Owners Guide to a Happy Healthy Pet” written by Dawn and Dr. Susan Brown. Dawn is happiest about the success of the IHOG program in promoting active play for hedgehogs.



### SHOPPING?

Shopping for your hedge Secret Pal?  
Come browse thru the HWS Store!

[hedgehogwelfare.org](http://hedgehogwelfare.org)



# Watch the feet!

NORTH TONAWANDA, NY – A warning was recently issued by Skeezix Plombon about watching hedgegie feet, at least twice a day. A thread or hair can happen to a foot so rapidly, it is almost impossible to fathom.

My Teazel had been with me the weekend in Boston. She had had her nails trimmed during her bath, to make her beautiful, and there was absolutely nothing on her little foot at that time that Thursday.

We went to the show where she was handled by many people, including myself, and nothing was ever noticed by anyone. Now Teazel sleeps with me every night. She seems to be able to walk better on a carpet or on the rumped bed. She has scoliosis and one leg is shorter than the other. I also suspect possible WHS. If there is a problem of WHS, it is spontaneous, as both lines she came from were clean of the disease. If she does have it, I will have to think that it is one of those diseases that both parents have to be carrying the recessive gene for it to show up. None of the others in this line have showed any signs.

Anyway, on with this warning. I have longer hair and she loves to walk along my back and back of my leg all night. I think it helps her to keep her balance. She can no longer wheel, so the wheel was not a contributing factor. She must have picked up a hair on the bed from me between the show in Boston and the Tuesday afterwards. I got her home Tuesday night and was horrified to see that telltale ring around her back foot. No, not my Teazel. How? In the past I have never run up against this in my own hedges, but did have one that I had sold come to me with a thread around his leg. I tried what I could to get it off, but he would not cooperate, so off to the vet he had to go. I felt bad at the time, thinking he isn't getting the care he should.

Well, that song has changed. Between Monday and Tuesday Teazel had a deep gash around her back leg. Her foot was just slightly purple. Naturally when I called the vet, he wasn't available. And then when I did reach his office, he was out of town for a symposium. Drats. Normally he will meet me at the clinic for any emergency or see me the next day if it is something that came wait. So now what do I do? I did not want this to go any farther.

Well, luckily I had my handy dandy first aid kit from the Hedgehog Welfare Society (thanks Jenn!). My first thought was to re-

lieve the tightening cutting off off the circulation. So, with a little sterilizing of tools – scissors and tweezers – and some soap (really strong stuff) I had from back when I needed to give myself IV injections, the tools were washed as well as the hedgegie foot, twice.

Now hoping for the best, I dove in with the intention of at least relieving the pressure. What a good hedgegie. She stuck her foot out and let me do what I needed to. I did cut into what was a long hair, and with the tweezers tried to get it out. I got some of the hair, and while not confident that I had gotten it all, felt the immediate danger was over.

A few days later (vet still away) part of her scab looked normal, while a part of it looked a little odd, kinda thick. I took a chance and pulled the odd scab off. Guess what – more hair was in that scab. She again started to heal well, when there was just a small piece of the odd scab. I pulled that off – again, more hair.

I am happy to say we have no infection, a nicely healing wound and a happy Teazel now walking without a thought to that foot. She still has a little bit of an anklet, but it is going away. The foot is nice and pink, and she looks forward to her nights to run on the carpet when she can tease the dog and cats.

The moral of this story: No matter how careful you are, you can never be too careful. You may think people are not doing their part in caring for their hedgegies, because it never happened to you. But in this case, it happened so fast to a hedgegie that had constant handling and care – it almost seemed impossible that it could happen.

Yes, be sure to check those vital areas. Not just once a day – twice a day as advised by Skeezix. Not only the little feetsies, but the male and female external organs. They can also create horrid problems. Here again, I have not run into a problem. I found that there could have been a problem if not checked and was able to prevent it from happening. For an example of a really horrible situation, just ask Kristi Solis, but that is another story...

– Pat Storm



## JENNIFER PLOMBON...

(...Continued from page 1)

without dogs of their own were assigned a shelter dog for the class. Of course, we also brought 4 hedgehogs!

My dog – Bridget – was a very large, shaggy, none-too-clean, fairly smelly girl with a lot of anxiety and great difficulty in settling down for the class. Initially, as her odor rose to my nose, and huge clumps of shed hair settled on all my clothes, I thought “Oh, this is going to be a long day and less than ideal situation.” After learning calming and touching techniques, we learned to ask our dogs for some background on their life experiences.

Suddenly, I sensed great pain and sadness and shame from Bridget. Elizabeth would not tell us everything that had happened to her, but she had been abused, punished for barking, and made so anxious that she had become incontinent, eliciting even more punishment. As I sensed and felt what her life had been like, I began to cry and cry, and it was very difficult to get myself under control. But when I was calm again, I realized that as I hugged Bridget and comforted her, I no longer noticed the odor or the hair – there was no room for anything but love and concern for her.

After each of us had spoken with our dog and learned about them, we addressed behavioral issues with pets who were in attendance. The care person would describe the behaviour that they wanted changed; then we would ask the animal what the behaviour meant to them and whether they wanted to change it. There were some interesting situations; one dog who always ran to the basement and hid in a corner during thunder storms was quite indignant that we considered this behaviour to be a problem. \*She\* thought she was being very clever and inventive; she was not AFRAID of thunder, the pressure changes and sounds hurt her ears. She had found that down in the basement, the pressure changes and sounds were muted and she felt more comfortable. She did not want to change her behaviour – she indicated that she was proud of her solution and wanted her person to help her by putting her crate down there, with a blanket over it, so she could stay there in peace and quiet during storms.

Another dog, recently taken into the shelter, was observed to have what looked like a hatred of cats; when he encountered cats being brought into the shelter, he lunged for

them. Since this would make it difficult to find him a home, the shelter personnel wanted to change this behaviour. As we spoke with him, we learned that as a puppy, an abusive owner had wanted to teach him to kill cats, so he threw a large, fully clawed cat right into his face, to teach him to hate cats. Thus, the dog did not think of cats as other animals with whom to coexist, but as animals who wanted to attack and hurt him unless he attacked first. The class attendee who was working with him for the day was horrified; she was a cat lover, and had several cats at home, and was deeply disturbed by this dog's thoughts and feelings about cats. As she told us that, the dog, a very large boxer, climbed up into her lap, put his front legs around her neck, and tried as hard as he could to express love and comfort to her; it was amazing to see how he picked up on her distress and tried to relieve it. He then indicated that if he were gradually introduced to cats, he would promise to try to be friends and accept them as safe animals. By then, his person for the day, as well as the rest of us, were in tears over his obvious repentance and desire to change.

Julie had a MOST interesting talk with Punky about her behavioral issues, which I will leave to her to tell.

Another segment of the class asked us to picture the animal that most frightened, re-

pelled or disgusted us, and to try to find something about it that we could admire and appreciate. Then we were asked to think about the animal again and see if our feelings toward it had changed. I was able to picture a cockroach and appreciate its great quickness and ability to react to its surroundings ... and I feel a bit of confidence that perhaps someday, when I see one, I will be able to ask it to leave quickly, before I get the can of Raid. I have always had some fear of and difficulty with spiders. While I have never deliberately killed one, I have found it difficult to catch and release them, and would sometimes simply leave and hope they would disappear before I came back. A few days after the class, an ENORMOUS spider appeared in my house, in Skeezi's free roam room, a few inches from her. The BODY of this spider was as big as the end of my thumb; I was very queasy and frightened. My first thought was for Skeezi - I know of a hedgehog who died from a spider bite, so I was eager to get her away before they encountered each other. I sent a quick strong thought to her "DON'T MOVE!" She froze and crouched, no doubt wondering what on earth I was up to. Then I fetched the biggest glass I could find, and a piece of sturdy paper. Approaching this enormous spider, I needed several calming breaths before I could even get close. Then I asked him to

"Please stay still; I will take you to a safe place. Please do not run from me; I will NOT hurt you." The spider stayed still as I approached and placed the glass over him, allowed me to slide the paper under the glass, and did not move as I opened the door, set the glass down, and released him. He nonchalantly walked off into the darkness. Had I not learned to appreciate and stop fearing an animal that I would usually fear, I don't think I could have done what I did.

The final exercise in the class asked us to choose an animal that was very close to us, and to ask them what their purpose was in our life. I could have tried to talk with Norma, though she has crossed the Bridge, but I already knew that she had been my teacher; my reason for getting involved in animal welfare, and my reason for almost everything that is now important to my life; so I "contacted" Skeezi and communicated with her. As a preface, I should tell you that having pets in my life has been a mixed blessing - most have not stayed in the physical world for very long, and especially after Norma's long illness, I had begun to feel that having animals in my life caused more sadness than happiness.

Well, Skeezi sent me her funny, smiling face, and her joyful personality (quite some time ago, I bought her a rock that says "JOY" and put it in her cage - it suits her so well), along with the thought that she had already been with me for almost 2 whole years, *and* was very healthy *and* sturdy *and* happy, and it was clear that her purpose was to teach me to ENJOY sharing my life with an animal rather than to fear it and anticipate sadness and loss. For which I thanked her most sincerely... I have indeed become much happier and more relaxed about having her in my life.

Working with animal communicators has been a wonderful way to learn more about animals and about myself. I will continue to talk with animals whenever I can, and hope that continued practice will make me better at it. Elizabeth did say that I tended to get too emotionally involved and upset when the animals had anything sad or distressing to say, and said I need to learn to meditate before talking with animals. She said that she generally meditates for 30 minutes or so before communicating with animals... when I asked how long I might need to meditate, she said "At least two hours!"

I highly recommend a class or seminar in animal communication; whether you continue to study and practice it or not, you will learn so much! - Jennifer Plombon



*The famous hedgie hats, now available from Momma Plombon (Jenn's, not Skeezi's!)*

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of the day in their pet carriers in a storeroom.

During the lunch break I asked Elizabeth if she would spend some time with my handicapped hedgegie, Dancer. When I purchased Dancer at a pet store, I was told she had lost a back foot due to unknown circumstances. Actually, that was not quite the case: Dancer has stumps for back legs and NO back feet. Not surprisingly, Dancer was an easily agitated and extremely huffy hedgegie – she was not a happy camper. Also, due to her handicap, Dancer rarely struggled out of bed except to eat and use the hedgegie “facilities”. I was anxious for Elizabeth to speak with Dancer, as I knew she needed help. I felt it was critical to understand Dancer’s past in order to help her in the future.

Elizabeth held Dancer quietly for some time. After a while, she explained that Dancer had experienced a horrific event. In a frantic effort to get rid of the mites that were eating her alive, Dancer had gnawed off her own feet. I was stunned and nearly speechless; I could scarcely imagine anything more appalling. But interestingly, part of Dancer’s story I can verify. Dancer had been totally and completely infested with scabies (mites). The day I purchased her, we went directly to the vet. After an exhaustive exam, Dr. Colorado said Dancer was literally being “eaten alive” by scabies. The mites were everywhere and on the move. They were in Dancer’s ears, crusted around her mouth, all over her body. This is such a sad and amazing story; it is hard for me to even comment further. But, Elizabeth was entirely correct about the mites.

I have no doubt they provoked Dancer into a desperate act of self-mutilation. Although the mites are long gone, they were

A new column is debuting in the HWS Newsletter this month, called *Pog Predicaments*. Any of you pogs or people out there may submit a question to our panel of pogs, and they will all answer; then you will see many opinions and answers, and gain much useful information.



How can you be part of this?

1. Submit your questions to Kathleen at [Bollask2@aol.com](mailto:Bollask2@aol.com) – I’m sure our pogs feel capable of answering any question, but please don’t ask them medical questions that a vet should be answering. However, questions such as “What type of cage do you pre-



still tormenting Dancer mentally and had affected her physically as well. Elizabeth recommended that Dancer be given a course of Bach Flower Remedies to help cope with both known and unknown fears. Two months later she is a different hedgegie. She is calmer and very loving, and weather permitting she now has a daily ‘run’ in the yard. It is difficult for Dancer to walk on most flat surfaces, but the grass provides a cushion and some stability. Dancer now ‘runs’ like the wind, free at last.

Another amazing event involved Julie’s Punky. Each person was given the opportunity to have the class communicate with the animal of their choice. Julie chose Punky, and she had a specific issue that she wanted Punky to address. Frankly I cannot recall what that issue was, primarily because I was totally “blown” away by what happened next.

I went through the process of communicating with Punky, but really, not much happened. I did not get a clear message from Punky. In my mind’s eye all I perceived was blue. Bright blue, soft blue, blue, blue and more blue; all I saw was blue. Then I saw ice and cold. When it was my turn to ‘share’ I told Elizabeth that it wasn’t a go, that I really didn’t get anything from Punky at all. Elizabeth said, however, to share what I did see or feel. So, I explained the blue. After pronouncing my blue ‘sighting’, Julie gasped. Then Elizabeth nodded in agreement as she too saw the blue. Julie explained that Punky LOVES blue. She sleeps only in her blue baggie and she has a blue fetish, plus she regularly sends Julie blue “messages”. I was not aware, beforehand, of Punky’s penchant for blue, so there is no



*Judie’s precious little Dancer.*

doubt in my mind that I tapped into Punky’s mindset, or vice versa. And the ice and cold? Well, the room had recently become quite chilly... Punky was cold, and was trying to “share”.

Lastly, Elizabeth asked that we chose an animal and ask them if they are (or were) with us for a particular purpose. I chose my darling Twixie, whom I had also brought to the seminar. Again, I did not get a clear ‘message’, but I saw a staircase. It was old and creaky and looked difficult to navigate. I knew immediately that the stairs represented the upward path to a more enlightened level of being. And then, much like a camera lens brings a picture into focus, I gained an even clearer understanding. I saw that Twix did have a very specific purpose. Twix is a spiritual guide; her purpose is to help me attain a highly level of spirituality. She is helping me navigate the “stairs”. This is not hard for me to believe. Twix is my heart’s delight.

– *Judie Peters*



*Dancer and baby Cupid*

fer? And where might my person get one?" or "What types of fruits or veggies do you like?" will give them a chance to express their strongly held opinions.

2. If your pog feels the need to be heard, and wishes to join the panel of pogs, please submit their first and last name (i.e., Skeezi Plombon) to Kathleen so she can get the panel together; as questions come in, they will be sent to the paneled pogs and answers collected by her. Hope to hear from pogs and people alike!

**Question:** "Why do hedgies who have lovely hats to sleep under and warm fuzzy bags in which to slumber choose to crawl under their vellux liners and sleep on the cold, plastic bottoms of their containers, instead of using their hats and bags?"

Now that is certainly a very good question. One part of my hedgehog brain wants to say "We will NEVER tell you our Secrets, bwa Ha HA HAA!!!!!!", but then I get control of myself...

Well, as you know, we hedgehogs are always trying to get Under. Under is a good place to be, because Up is where the birds are! Our biggest predator threat is birds – raptors, to be precise, because they have talons long enough to grab us and pierce us, even through our quills <SHUDDER>. So whatever else we are doing, we have a little bit of our eyes and thoughts focused Up, in case a bird should be flying over and see us. This is why we stop and freeze when you disturb us on our wheels, or running about

the room; birds – like cats and dinosaurs – are attracted to rapid movement. If we hold very still, they may stop seeing us. Of course, we can never stop our adorable noses from sniffing, sniffing, sniffing, so that's a risk...

Therefore, even when we are safe and warm in our lovely cages, with Hats and Bags galore, we sometimes feel the urge to be Under, and so we dig and scratch and claw our way Under everything, even the nice soft vellux, until we feel safe. Well, then there we are, Under. But not a very nice Under; a cold, hard, plastic-y kind of Under. And yet... what if an enemy SAW us go Under? If we stay there, and don't move, they will forget about us (enemies have short attention spans). If we dig our way back Up, we might be seen! Or, maybe, we can't quite find the same little path we took to get Under, and get all turned around in there.

So I would say that our Care Persons could try a couple of things; when the room is dark and quiet (birds can't fly in the dark), they could carefully dig us out from Under and offer the Hat or Bag again. Or, they could put the heating pad under the cage, so it comes through the plastic and we would be warm even lying on the cold plastic; of course, the pad must be checked and monitored for overheating, and never set higher than "Low". And, if the cage walls can be set down on top of the Vellux or corduroy pad to hold it in place, we can't get Under it, and will be satisfied with our Hats, Bags, and Care Person's shirt.

I hope this helps all of you Care Persons to understand us a bit better.

*Warm and Quilly Hugs,  
Skeezi Plombon*

We here at Pins and Needles have two opinions on why we lie on bare plastic!

After I've shaken all the monsters out of my blankies, liners, toys, and whatever else that woman puts in my place, I poop and pee all over everything, just to make sure. After that, the only safe, clean, place to get a nap is underneath it all, on the BARE PLASTIC!

*Scabbiwog Arata*

I am so careful with all the lovely liners, sleepy bags, blankies and toys in my apartment. I keep everything so clean and have it all arranged so nicely, so I sleep on the BARE PLASTIC so everthing stays just so!

*Asta Arata*

*So there you have it!  
The Pins and Needles Gang*

Hi! Needles Stanoch here.

I know that I tend to sleep on the cold plastic bottom of my container occasionally

because it just feels good to me.

I have one of Jennifer's wonderful hats, and I take it everywhere with me. I even eat under it. However, sometimes I just like to feel the coolness of the plastic container against my quills.

Also when I am under my liner I feel really really safe. The liner is really close to my quills and I feel snug and secure. My hat fits loose around me, and I can't feel it against my body.

Have any of you slaves ever sat at a table and put your head in your folded arms to take a cat nap? If so, one time try doing that with a newspaper or magazine over your head, you will notice how much more secure you feel. I know, crazy analogy but hey, I'm a hedgehog.

*Hugs  
Needles Stanoch*

Well, I would just like to answer this question...

I do it first off because I know my humna doesn't like it. Sometimes when it is really hot, it is nice to sleep against the cool plastic or metal of our cages. I know I also have a personal preference for corners. If their is a particulr corner we pogs like, we will dig under our liners and hide ourselves in the corner. It's also fun to annoy the human.

*Sincerely, Punky Hintz*

The answer to this one lies deep in the mystery of our past. Don't forget, we have been around millions (and millions) of years. We've seen a lot!! We hedgies have to keep our skills honed, just in case. In the desert, we had to move from time to time. Occasionally a flash flood would take out our favorite sleeping place, sometimes the food would disappear and we'd have to move on.

Why, it was just the other night that Hawgy Goldbutt (dumb banana that he is) got his fleece blankies in his water and created the Second Great Flood in his very own house. He had to sleep above the flood line to keep his little feetsies dry. Up into his wheel he hopped – being used to moving around and all. He was really, really cranky, but no worse for the wear and got a good bit of sleep swinging quietly back and forth in his wheel 'till Mom got up and saw the mess. So. We keep our skills to the finest by sleeping on hard ground from time to time. Say – don't you humans go camping sometimes? Why do you sleep on the hard ground in the cold, when you have nice warm beds at home?

*Poog  
(Hawgy – "You told on me, you rat")*



## A QUESTION FOR THE POGS?

Do you have a question you would like to ask the pogs?

Please send it to us either electronically at [newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org](mailto:newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org) or via snail-mail to HWS Newsletter c/o Kathleen Knudsen PO Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107

