



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.

Hedgehog Welfare Society Newsletter #5, March 2003

The Hedgehog Welfare Society

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Can music help your hedgehog?

JENNIFER PLOMBON

CHARLESTON, SC – I believe that music can offer benefits to any being; it can stimulate, calm, add interest to life, mask unpleasant sounds, and offer healing energy.

I discovered music's calming effects when my hedgehog Norma was in the initial stages of WHS; she would often become agitated and frustrated at trying to move, and would be unable to rest comfortably during the day. I had read an article about harp music being played in zoos to calm the animals, and purchased some CDs of harp music for Norma. She would noticeably relax, yet become very attentive to the sounds, when the music was played for her. I found that harp music playing in the room while I was on the computer made the room seem more welcoming and calming for myself, as well.

I first learned that music can offer healing energy from Elizabeth Severino, an animal communicator who spoke with Norma several times while she was suffering from WHS. Norma expressed a desire for music to make her feel better, and Elizabeth suggested some works designed to stimulate chakras and the relaxation response. I would often find Norma lying relaxed, yet awake, and listening intently to the music as it was playing; in a later conversation with Elizabeth, she said her world sounded "better" to her.

I learned that music can add interest to life when I rescued a little hedgehog boy from a very bad life in a pet store in Florida. He was so infested with mites, they were crawling on his eyes; all he could do was ball up and gently moan and hiss in complete misery. I could not get him to a vet the first day that he was rescued; despite several baths, the mites remained and his misery and withdrawal from any type of contact was very evident. I held him on my

lap, hoping my warm presence would help him feel well enough to open up, lift his head, and take an interest in his surroundings, but he simply could not. As we sat, I began to hum, then quietly sing, some of my favorite songs by Leonard Cohen, whose slow, melancholy, deep-toned songs seemed to fit the mood. As I sang, a little movement started in the tightly closed ball on my lap; and soon, a set of ears and a nose appeared. As I continued to sing, Cocquino opened up, and began to walk about on my lap; soon he was ready to run about in the hotel bathroom (yes, Cocquino spent the night at the Ritz Carlton on Amelia Island; how posh) and try some food!

I have since sung to many upset, sad, or unwell hedgehogs, and all reacted positively, despite the fact that I really have a terrible voice. Recently I cared for a very sick little hedgehog girl, to whom I sang every evening after she took her medications. When she was offered a chance to speak with Elizabeth, she offered that she liked my "voicing." I questioned Elizabeth; did this mean she liked my voice? No, she liked the "voicing" or "sounds" that I made; evidently, she really enjoyed the singing every evening.

Many people have told me of the silly little songs they compose just for their hedgehogs, and of how much their hedgehogs seem to perk up and listen when they

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A rescue named Zachary...

(Why is it the most stubborn of these prickly-butts make some of the strongest imprints on our hearts? While rescue work can shatter your heart over and over again, the smiles you can experience will swing the pendulum of emotions clear over to the opposite extreme. Read on and enjoy...)

Laura Wetterau

MOORESTOWN, NJ – My interest in hedgehogs began well over a year ago. I began my investigation via the internet, trying to find out if a hedgehog was for me. People asked me “why”? I could not tell them anything other than I had always wanted one. It was via my “surfing” that I found someone who lived the closest to me (Maryland). And that begins the story of how I came to know and love a hedgegie named Napa, which I soon changed to Zachary.

Zachary, is the recluse of all hedgegies – he was rescued by the lady that I purchased my first hedgegie from. The night before I was to pick up my new baby, I got a call from the breeder. “Would I be interested in taking in a rescue?” Why not – I could handle two, after all I rescue greyhounds and at that time I had five of them as well as four cats.

So began my adventure with Zachary – I found out much later that she had tried to find him a home while she attended a hedgegie gathering. No one wanted this huffy little guy. I think we were destined to be together. She told me how to handle Zach and I began to work at it in the evenings when I could. It took quite awhile before I could

even get him to unball. He was a stubborn little one and absolutely refused to “get out of his quills”. Anyway, one day, I came up with a song for Zach which goes like this – you can’t appreciate it till you know the tune and I made that up as well!!

*Zachary, Zachary,
momma’s little brown sweet pea.
Zachary, oh Zachary, momma’s little,
momma’s little brown sweet pea.
Zach, Zach, Zachary,
he’s his momma’s little brown sweet pea!!!*

You can probably guess that I was trying to get him to learn his name, which he certainly knows now!! Anyway, I would hold him cupped in my hands, all balled up, and the only thing I saw was his nose – I sang to a nose for a long time and eventually Zach allowed me to rub him under his chin. It took a very long time to get this far.

I have had Zach for about a year. The other evening I was holding him, and I allowed him to unball on his own while I watched. Low and behold, little Zach climbed up my chest and snuggled in my neck to chew my hair. I was “tickled pink” and felt quite honored to have this beautiful soul trust me enough to get on my shoulder. Now we have had this routine for the past several evenings, and Zach is exploring more, climbing on the back of the sofa, etc.

In that time, I have learned to love Zach for who he is, one of God’s creatures who deserves to be loved unconditionally – it has



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 or via snail-mail to
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c/o Kathleen Knudsen
PO Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107



turned out to be a wonderful lesson in learning how to let others “be who they are” (even the ‘huffy’ ones!!). Hopefully, sometime soon, I will have another update on Zach to share with you.

Hedgegie hugs!!! Laura Wetterau (It is with heavy heart we regretfully report that little Zach crossed the Bridge into that wondrous place of countless mealies and endless wheeling shortly after this article was written. Zach’s story loses none of its importance to be told – he will be a forever teacher to us in our work with ‘huffy’ rescue pogs. Our sincere condolences are extended to Zach’s human care-family. – ed)



HWS
is pleased to
welcome its
newest little
hedgegie
care-person,
Simon!

**Congrats
Donnasue &
Carl!**



(If you are celebrating a new arrival, or a special event in your life, please allow the HWS to share in your joy by sending the appropriate information to us either via email at newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org or snail-mail to HWS Newsletter, c/o Kathleen Knudsen, PO Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107.)

Birds & Hedgehogs: compare and contrast

JENNIFER PLOMBON

CHARLESTON, SC – I am a volunteer at the SC Center for Birds of Prey. At least twice per month I spend 4 hours assisting in the care of birds brought into the Center. The majority are birds of prey, which are hawks, eagles, owls, osprey, and vultures (which are not exactly birds of prey, but share many of the same characteristics). Other birds do find their way to the Center; wading birds such as herons and bitterns, water fowl such as seagulls and ducks, and occasionally turkeys and chickens.

These birds are brought in by the people who find them, or by SCCBP transport volunteers, who will drive to almost anywhere in the Carolinas to rescue and transport an injured bird to the Center. Most of the injured birds have had collisions with motor vehicles, windows, or power lines; they usually have head and eye injuries, as well as fractures. Many others, particularly the larger hawks, and eagles, have been shot; in addition to head and eye injuries from the fall to the ground, they may have severe fractures and open wounds. Many of the birds have been down for quite some time before being noticed and rescued, and suffer from emaciation, dehydration, and wound infections as well.

Working with these birds is an extreme honor and privilege; we humans are allowed to help them at their expense. It is very abnormal for wild birds to be handled by humans; our voices alone will raise their heart rate. Our touch and presence is stressful for them; many of the treatments they require are painful or frightening. The fact that they allow us to help them is a miracle to me; the fact that approximately 50% of the birds brought into the Center are eventually released to the wild is awesome.

Having always been a 'mammal person', and most recently, a 'hedgehog person', I have spent many long hours in operating rooms and veterinary offices assisting in the care of mammals. There are many differ-

ences between the care and handling of these 2 very different sets of beings; and since raptors, or birds of prey, are the most danger-

ous predators of our dear little hedgehogs, I

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The Literary Hedgehog

NAOMI WIKANE

SCHOHARIE, NY – In this column, which I hope will live through several issues of our newsletter, I plan to bring you some material from my ever-growing collection of hedgegie books. Some of it will be educational and some just for fun.

This column's focus is the hedgehog in history. *The Natural Hedgehog* by Lenni Sykes with Jane Durrant gives the following information. "Hedgehog worship formed part of various cultures, especially those worshipping the Earth Mother Goddess. It was believed that she would often take the form of a hedgehog. In particular, hedgehogs were associated with the Babylonian goddess *Ishtar*, the goddess of love and war, also known by her Greek name *Astarte*. *Ishtar* was associated with the planet Venus and identified with the Sumerian goddess *Inanna* and the Phoenician *Ashtoreth*. In Ancient Egypt, the hedgehog was revered as a symbol of reincarnation because of its death-like hibernation followed by rebirth in the spring."

Hedgehogs have appeared in art work since ancient times. The above mentioned book shows a glazed model of a hedgehog from Ancient Egypt dated around 2000 BC and a Greek clay hedgehog from the 4th century BC.

Hedgehogs by Konrad Herter pictures a Saxon stone jug from the 14th century and an illumination from an early 13th century manuscript showing fruit trees with hedgehogs rolling in the fallen fruit and carrying it on their spines. Hedgehogs have long been a symbol for protection and self-preservation, which may be why it appears on several heraldic coats of arms. Les Stocker in *The Complete Hedgehog* shows illustrations of 17th and 18th century English tokens with heraldic hedgehogs.

In Medieval Britain up until the law was repealed in 1863 hedgehogs were killed and bounties paid because of the belief that they could suckle milk from a cow's udder and thus were milk robbers to farmers. It was also thought they'd crack open and eat hen's



Little Ian eagerly awaits Naomi Wikane's Literary Hedgehog column.

eggs.

Both Pat Morris in his book *Hedgehogs* and Konrad Herter speak of how dried hedgehog skins were used. As far back as Roman times the skins stretched flat and allowed to dry hard formed a durable pad of sharp spikes used for carding wool and flax in preparation for spinning. In Medieval Europe generally the skins were used as clothes brushes. Another use in the 19th century was to attach a dried skin to strategic parts of carriage shafts to prevent horses from dozing off when standing still.

In many parts of Europe hedgehogs were eaten, especially by gypsies. Traditionally they were baked in an open fire inside clay which was broken open when ready, thus removing the spines and hair. Folk remedies included using hedgehogs for medicinal purposes. "Konrad vonMegenberg writes in the 1300's of the flesh of the hedgehog as wholesome for the stomach. It also deals with the water of dropsy and is of great help to those with elephantiasis."

Such is history and we can be happy today the hedgehog in the wild is considered useful because of its diet and in many areas a protected species. And for us they are pets and companions beyond compare.



SHOPPING?

Shopping for Mother's Day?
Come browse thru the HWS Store!

hedgehogwelfare.org



BIRDS AND HEDGEHOGS...

(...Continued from page 3)

thought that you might all benefit from a comparison of the differences and the similarities between the two.

Senses

In contrast to our constantly sniffing hedgehogs, birds have very little sense of smell. While this seems odd at first, since their nares, or nostrils, are fairly large and thus would seem to be very sensitive, there is an explanation. First, the nostrils are large, particularly in fast-flying birds such as raptors, because flying takes an enormous amount of energy, and thus, an enormous amount of oxygen; large nostrils allow for large volumes of air to be taken in and used for the hard work of flying. Second, raptors usually find their food from the air. They either look for ground dwelling animals,

water dwelling fish and animals, insects, or other birds. Most of these need to be located at great distances, giving the bird time to swoop down upon the prey, and scent would be unlikely to travel such a great distance; even if it did, the birds' acute sense of sight would have long since located the prey. One implication of this almost absent sense of smell is that birds are usually more accepting of anesthesia gas; most pets will struggle and pull away from the mask or the gas piped into an anesthesia chamber, because the smell of the gas is unpleasant or unusual to them; birds may object to being held or confined, but do not seem to pull away from the gas itself. There is another interesting result of this difference in sense of smell between birds and hedgehogs. While I can go to the SCCBP smelling pretty much like anything (if it doesn't bother the people there!), because the birds are not affected, I have to strip down at the door and get in the shower as soon as I get home from a shift at the Center, because my hedgehog would be appalled and dismayed at what she would smell on me. More on that later, when we get to the Food section.

Raptors have incredible vision. While common wisdom says that hedgehogs don't see very well, it is my experience that they can see quite well over fairly large distances, particularly in dim light. Walking into a very large room where my hedgehog is exploring will elicit an immediate heads-up and run across the floor to say "hi"; it is clear that she sees me, and that she is not merely using her sense of smell and hearing to find me. However, the vision of all mammals pales in comparison to that of birds of prey. Here is an oft-used comparison; an eagle's vision is so sharp that if ours were as sharp, we could read a newspaper at a distance of one mile! One implication of this incredible sense of sight is that birds react quickly and strongly to movement around them. Once captured and held, they need to have a towel over their heads to calm them and reduce their struggling and attempts to escape while being treated. The notable exception to this practice are the eagles; they want to see what is going on, and believe me, when an eagle's eyes are fixed firmly upon your own, you try very hard to make sure that what is going on is right! You do not walk or stand behind an eagle that is being treated or examined, as they will attempt to twist around to see you.

Much like our hedgehogs, birds of prey have very acute hearing. This allows the nocturnal birds, such as owls, to locate their prey in complete darkness. Since the prey they seek often consists of small mammals who also have an acute sense of hearing, owls have the advantage of large, soft, fringed, and extremely quiet feathers, all the way down onto their feet. They can barely be heard as they fly, and their feet are quite silent when they land. The implications of this acute hearing have already been discussed; humans helping wild birds must be very quiet. Our voices stress them; sudden noises startle them. I have had to learn that my habit of quiet conversation, humming, and even quiet singing, which tends to be calming and soothing to injured mammals, is not helpful to birds.

Bodies

Birds have feathers; hedgehogs have fur and quills. What does this mean when you are caring for a bird or a mammal? Feathers are ESSENTIAL to flying. Feathers hold the air and thus, hold the bird up. They can be positioned to allow for soaring, for stooping and diving, for floating and swimming, and if feathers, particularly flight feathers, are damaged or missing, the bird may be unable to



A QUESTION FOR THE POGS?

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

FAVORITE RESCUE STORY

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

FAVORITE PHOTO(S)

Do you have a favorite photo of your quilly master(s)?

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE NEWSLETTER WELCOMED!

Please send it/them to us
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fly or float, and thus unable to survive in the wild. It is therefore extremely important to protect feathers whenever a bird is handled or confined. Many of the birds at the Center have their tail feathers protected with tail wraps while in Critical Care.

When a bird needs to be captured for an examination or treatment, the person handling the bird must be constantly aware of where the wings are, and of where the flight feathers are, and must protect them at all times. When one of our hedgehogs loses quills or fur, we can generally count on them growing back; and if we keep them warm, and their surroundings humidified and their skin moisturized, they are "safe" until quills and fur return. Birds of prey will also often regrow lost feathers, but generally not until normal molting season; until flight feathers return, they cannot be released. Thus, humans may need to provide feathers for them depending on the season and the need to release the bird.

Flight feathers from other birds are numbered and stored at the Center, and when a bird needs a feather, a replacement can be attached via a process called "imping." The exact same feather, from the exact same type of bird, in the exact same numbered position on the wing or tail, will be cut, slid over the injured feather's spine, and glued on. The bird can then be released, and the impeded feather

will be shed and replaced with the next molt. Try replacing lost hedgehog quills in that way!

Food

Well, dear little hedgehogs, read on. The good news is that the birds at the Center, just like you, have humans who spend large amounts of time carefully preparing food just for them. Many of the birds receive medications in their food, many are unable to eat their food in its "usual" state and need it cut up, skinned, or otherwise prepared, and many are too sick to eat by themselves at first, and need gavage feeding, which is somewhat like syringe feeding but looks scarier. For gavage feeding, a long tube, attached to a syringe full of beef baby food and other yummy things, is slid waaaay down into the esophagus and food is delivered to the bird. What do the birds eat? Well, some eat fish; the ospreys, the occasional seagull, the herons or other water birds; not salmon, though! Some eat mealworms. Yes, and the mealworm beetles, too; there is a small mealworm farm at the Center. These are for smaller hawks, some small owls, and perhaps orphan birds; I can't say that I have fed a mealworm to anyone there yet. Some birds eat baby chickens (not alive), and some eat other things.

Little hedgehog friends, please do not read further until I tell you it is OK. Bye now ... I'll let you know when to come back ...

OK. Most of the birds eat small mam-

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MUSIC ...

(...Continued from page 1)

hear it; a song with your hedgehog's name in it, particularly for a new hedgehog with a new name, is a wonderful way for them to learn their name, and learn your voice, and associate both with love, care, and comfort. I doubt they are critical of our voices, rhythms, words or rhymes; so let your voice and imagination roam free!

Some of the musical selections I have used with good results (most available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, and music stores), include *Silence Awakens my Song* harp music by Julia Shaw and Nora Bumanis; *Echoes of a Waterfall* harp music by Susan Drake; *Chakra – Vibrational Healing – Lower Chakras* by Gary Edelburg; *Inner Peace* serenity music by Steven Halpern; and *Music for Sound Healing* healing and relaxation music by Steven Halpern.

Try your own favorite selections and sing your own favorite songs. Remember hedgehogs have sensitive hearing and keep the sounds soft and low. And do share with us any music that your hedgehog really likes.



Yikes!!! Phileas and Passepogtout visit the raptors

CHARLESTON, SC – WELL! My intrepid companion and I hardly know where to begin!

As you all know, the biggest threat to our persons would be raptors, or birds of prey. Their silent way of flying overhead (as you know, with our short necks it is difficult for us to look up) and their huge talons which can pierce our quilly armor, make them quite scary and threatening to us. So ... what did we do today? Why, we accompanied our human hostess to the SCCBP (SC Center for Birds of Prey) for her morning shift. There we were, surrounded by hawks, owls, osprey, and, yes, EAGLES!

Once when we felt brave enough to peek, we saw our hostess HOLDING an adult Bald Eagle, and giving her anesthesia! Why, if you could have seen those fierce eyes, those incredible talons, that enormous hooked beak, cradled in her hands, inches from our persons, you would have been appalled on our behalf. We are quite certain we have never been so simultaneously amazed, appalled, and frightened out of our wits as we were this day. We then posed with a lovely stuffed vulture, used to feed orphan vultures, and made our way back to the nice safe condo. Now that we are safely returned to our temporary quarters, we are both rather proud of ourselves. Why, *we* beheld EAGLES!



Phileas & Passepogtout are very brave guests at the SC Center for Birds of Prey!

Checking with the vet staff...

(With this issue, we would like to welcome Kim Scea as a regular contributor to the HWS Newsletter. This introduction kicks off a new feature which, with the help of HWS members, will appear in each issue. If you have a medical question regarding your quilled companion(s), please submit it/them to us via email at newsletter@hedgehog.org or snail-mail at HWS Newsletter, c/o Kathleen Knudsen, PO Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107. We do wish to stress that this column is not in any way, shape or form to replace the proper veterinary care your hedgie might require. —ed)

ONTARIO, CANADA – Some of you may already know me, but I will introduce myself anyway. My name is Kim Scea, and I was a Veterinary Technician for 17 years.

The last 5 of those years was as Head Technician with a veterinarian – not an exotic ‘specialist’, but the only veterinarian within at least one hours drive, if not more, who knew anything at all about exotics. She made it a goal to learn as much about exotics as she could – to be a valued, experienced, knowledgeable veterinarian who



‘knew’ about exotics. We both went to many, many continuing educational seminars on exotics – including hedgehogs. This veterinarian has since passed away.

I have had hedgehogs myself since about 1996. My first two chosen with love, the rest have stolen my heart through rescue work. I hope I can offer some helpful experience to this newsletter and its readers.

BIRDS AND HEDGEHOGS...

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mals. It is difficult for me to prepare this food; we need to cut open, cut up, skin, or in other ways prepare mice and rats for the birds. After my first day there, I realized that I *MUST* wear gloves while doing all food prep; it is almost impossible to wash the scent of the mammal innards off my hands well enough so that my hedgehog can't smell it. She is not amused by the odor.

I know in my head how necessary this food is, if the birds are to recover and be released. I know in my head that the mice and rats come from a lab where they were bred just for food, and euthanized by gas as quickly as possible and frozen. But it hurts my heart to prepare them, despite what my head knows. At the start of every shift I say a silent prayer to all the mice and rats I will have to cut up that day, asking forgiveness, and thanking them for their sacrifice which allows the birds to survive. I hope that on some level, they know and have chosen this, and that in another existence, they are rewarded for what they have done to help. But I do sometimes have tears in my eyes when I am doing food prep; then I see a little East-

ern Screech Owl open his squeezed-shut eyes and take a little bit of food for the first time in days, and I have even more tears. Always there is a balance.

Little hedgehog friends, come back now!

Needs

Our pet hedgehogs need us to survive here in North America. They are desert animals, and accustomed to warmth; they are unable to effectively hibernate, and there are probably few if any places in North America where they could survive for long in the prevailing climate. Certainly they could find food and water and places to hide (and they would need places to hide from the very birds we are discussing!), but they would not likely be able to become wild animals and survive on their own in this country. The birds of prey, on the other hand, need us in a far less invasive or personal way. They need us to keep wild areas for them, so they can find their own food. They need us to keep the water clean for them, so they can drink and find fish. They need us to keep humans from shooting them, and poisoning them, and putting power lines and other impediments in places where they need to fly. And sometimes, for a while, they need people like the marvelous people who manage and volunteer at bird of prey centers all over the

2003 Wheel-a-Thon a smashing success!

CHARLESTON, SC – The Hedgehog Welfare Society's 2003 Wheel-a-Thon far exceeded our expectations for participation and dollars raised, thanks to more than 30 Wheelers from across North America. The Wheelers collected more than \$2,100 for the HWS's good works from friends, family, and co-workers, and they were rewarded in turn with prizes and recognition.

Top prize, a stylish Hedgegie Gear wheeled backpack and travel accessories custom-designed by artist Judie Peters, went to Kathleen Knudsen of Seattle, WA, who raised an astonishing \$550.00. 17 Wheelers raised \$50.00 or more and qualified for a 2003 Wheel-a-Thon logo t-shirt, sure to be a coveted item at future hedgehog-related events.

“The awesome efforts of these members will help hedgehogs around the world,” said Jennifer Plombon, HWS Chief Volunteer Officer. “This is an amazing example of what good and caring people can accomplish.”

Information for how to participate in the 2004 Wheel-a-Thon will be announced next fall in the HWS newsletter and on the website at www.hedgehogwelfare.org, so stay tuned. For additional details, see www.hedgies.com/wheelathon.htm.

Thanks to our 2003 Wheel-a-Thon Participants! Melanie Abell, Russell & Gina Anderson, Sherry Arata, Marian & Emily Brown, Ashley Cohen, Lisa Duncan, Linda Edwards, Janet Ernst, Kari Espelien, Penni Godemann, Donnasue Graesser, Kim Harman, Aimee Hassler, Janet Hollinger, Heather & Chopper Johnson, Amy Kartage, Kathleen Knudsen, Carol Kreager, Jane Kuta, Kerri LeMotte, Elizabeth Olson, Judie Peters, Jennifer Plombon, Nora Resk, Wendy Jane Robbins, Laurel Sedgwick, Amy Scholz, KT Vaughan, Kuniko Vroman, Laura Wetterau, Naomi Wikane, Dawn Wrobel and Linda Woodring.

world, to treat their injuries or illnesses, to give them safe areas to regain flying and hunting abilities, and to ultimately let them go. They are wild, and they do not need our hands-on, loving friendship the way our pets do; they need our respect and love and their own freedom.

It has been, and continues to be, a most amazing experience to work with these marvelous wild birds. I am honored that they allow us to help them; I am honored to learn from them; and I enjoy the contrasts and similarities between the birds and the hedgehogs who are important parts of my life.