



The Hedgehog Welfare Society



TO PROTECT THE WELL-BEING OF PET HEDGEHOGS THROUGH RESCUE, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR THEM **NEWSLETTER #19, NOV/DEC 2005**

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by Jennifer Plombon, Minneapolis, MN

Many of you have had companion animals that have needed medication. And many of you (or your veterinarians) have wondered "How will I find a form of the needed medicine in a small enough dose, in a doseable formulation, in a flavor this animal will like?" The answer is, find a compounding pharmacist!

Compounding pharmacists are traditional, licensed, regular pharmacists who have obtained additional training, and most importantly, have purchased additional (and very expensive) equipment to enable them to create individualized medications in a variety of formulations, for animals and people. As the above logo illustrates, medications can be formulated for women (usually hormones); for children (often because they need smaller doses, or doses that taste better, or doses that can be more easily taken, or medicines lacking fillers and allergens); and for veterinary use.

My compounding pharmacist, Dr. Verne Betlach, R.Ph., FIACP (Registered Pharmacist, Fellow of the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists), told me that he sees the need for compounding when he hears of a pet owner being told to make their pet swallow 1/16 of a tablet; impossible in so many ways!

There is currently no universally established requirement of courses or schooling to become a compounding pharmacist. A licensed pharmacist completes a 4-year Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree in an accredited university, usually after a previous 4-year college degree including undergraduate pre-pharmacy coursework. He/she may then choose to take a fellowship in compounding pharmacy, one of the best of which is offered through the Professional Compounding Centers of America. PCCA offers education and continuing education credits, and is where Dr. Betlach obtained his compounding training.

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The need for compounded medications is great, but the supply of experienced and accredited compounding pharmacists is small, though it has improved. There were fewer than 50 compounding-only pharmacists in the country when Dr. Betlach began his practice. The IACP (International Association of Compounding Pharmacists) now has a membership of over 1700 pharmacists, which is still miniscule compared to the number of traditional pharmacists in the world. Why so few, even today? First, the coursework, which used to be required in PharmD programs, has become an elective. Second, insurance programs either do not pay for, or pay a very tiny fraction of, the costs of compounded medications. Third, the equipment (very accurate scales and balances, mixers, sterile hoods, to name a few) and the supplies (flavorings, oils, unformulated pure medical chemicals, packaging, etc.) are very costly and seldom found in "regular" (i.e., large, chain-store) pharmacies. Thus compounding pharmacists are usually independent business owners, working without the safety net of a large chain pharmacy, who must depend on customers paying out-of-pocket for their or their pets' medications.

And yet, they thrive, more so in Europe and Australia/New Zealand and other areas with a longer tradition of compounding. Why? They can recreate a "retired" medication that chain-store pharmacies would find impossible and costly to make; they can create, in small frequent doses, medication that cannot be made in large commercial doses; they can make a tasty oral dose of a traditional bitter pill or injection so a pet or child can take it; they can create small, individual doses of hormones for people to avoid the risks found in standard large doses that have been found to be risky; they can create very pure doses of medications that might normally contain substances that would harm the taker; and they can create medications for non-standard uses that a chain-store pharmacy could not make. One interesting example Dr. Betlach gave is the non-standard use of Dilantin, or phenytoin. Commonly used to treat seizures, it has been found to be very helpful in encouraging the growth of granulation tissue in chronic

wounds. Only a compounding pharmacist can create the phenytoin ointment that can do this, and it may make all the difference to a person or animal who has tried many other (but ineffective) ways to heal a wound.

Dr. Betlach sees a trend toward more compounding pharmacists seeking out the training and accreditation, and the trend toward licensing them and then licensing their laboratories, which is promising. Unfortunately, the current licensing of the equipment is extremely expensive and time-consuming, since it was set up to look at all pharmacies, including the chain-store facilities with less equipment and a greater



ability to pay for the inspections. This leads to worries that traditional pharmacies, with some accredited equipment and seeing the market for compounded medications, will begin to act as compounding pharmacies, creating medications that circumvent the FDA and the intent of true compounded medications. A traditional pharmacy that adds a flavor to a medication (and calls it "compounding") may be safe. However, when they believe that they are "compounders" because they can simply crush pills and make them into liquid (many pill-form medications become completely ineffective when crushed or liquefied) or can crush pills and put them into an ointment

(many medications must use the pure chemical elements in ointment form), they risk harming their patients.

Dr. Betlach finds his career extremely rewarding. He meets his patients, both human and animal, in person. I brought Skeezix in to meet him and his staff, and there is usually a dog or two in the office. He counsels his patients, he knows what they need and the effects of their medications, and he receives their "thank you" when they finally find a form of medication they or their pets can take. His office is festooned with photos of his animal patients, including those of Skeezix and of Deb's Gabby. His pharmacy technicians love their jobs and would never return to a traditional pharmacy technician job, which involves counting pills, talking to insurance companies, and dealing with mounds of insurance paperwork. At Dr. Betlach's laboratory, they are mixing medications, working with sophisticated equipment, and personally meeting their clients. One tech told me that she "loves to come to work every day."

Most of Dr. Betlach's patients find him through alternative medicine practitioners, enlightened physicians or pharmacists that see the need for individualized medication, and veterinarians. Approximately 30% of his business involves creating individualized hormone preparations for humans (mostly women), and approximately 45% of his business involves creating medications for a wide variety of animal clients. For pet guardians,

(and yourself, in many cases) I highly recommend finding a compounding pharmacist if needed to make your medications. They need not be close; for instance, Dr. Betlach will ship compounded medications overnight within the U.S. Your veterinarian may already use a compounding pharmacist and can refer you.

Dr. Betlach's web site is www.customrx.com and contains much useful information about his services. The web site for the IACP, which has a list of compounding pharmacists and much more information on what they do, is www.iacprx.org.

Quills and Comfort

by Judie Peters, Bluffton, SC



Healing Candle Ceremonies

The Healing Candle Ceremony is observed by hedgehog companions worldwide who ask for healing and comfort for all hedgies in need. Those gathering for the Ceremony light candles at exactly the same time around the world. As Hobie Wikane expressed it to his animal communicator, hedgies are joined in spirit to observe the Ceremony around a campfire. Other hedgies have subsequently expressed the campfire image to their own communicators and have felt a flow of energy and the power of collective prayer.

The Healing Candle Ceremony was called three times in October and early November. As always, Hobie lights his campfire and leads the Ceremony. Linda Woodring has graciously accepted the coordinator "baton" from Naomi Wikane.

OCTOBER 5

For all hedgehog guardians and other animal caregivers to be given the gifts of patience, insight, understanding and strength, and for the following:

Noah James, guardian Jacque
 Rambo, guardians Sondra & Kimberly
 Buckwheat, guardian Naomi
 Hobie, guardian Naomi
 Payton, guardians Jim & Linda
 EL, guardian Judy B
 Zoey, guardian Jeanne
 Miss Pepper, guardian Laura D
 Miss Penelope Anne, guardian Laura D
 Huggles, guardian Cyndy
 Grover, guardian Deb Weaver
 Timmy (rabbit), guardian Jennifer
 Zoey, guardian Renae
 Molly and Ruby, guardian Cindy C
 Oliver, guardian Tawana
 Jerry, Chris Houze's Dad
 Sweet Pea, guardians Rick and Tonya
 Cidhis, guardian Susan M
 Murfi
 Josephine, guardian Becky
 Dulcinea, guardian Becky
 Hatch, guardian Susan M
 Pinny, guardian Naomi
 Emma, guardian Elena
 Roger, guardian Elena
 Oliver, guardian Susan M
 Un-named rescued kitty, guardians Julie & Francis
 Molly, guardian Deb
 Johann, guardian Aimee

Allie
 Yoda, guardian Kristen
 Archie, guardian Standing Bear
 Arella, guardian Steph

OCTOBER 26

For all hedgehog guardians and other animal caregivers to be given the gifts of patience, insight, understanding and strength, and for the following:

Rambo, guardians Sondra & Kimberly
 Buckwheat, guardian Naomi
 Hobie, guardian Naomi
 Payton, guardians Jim & Linda
 EL, guardian Judy B
 Zoey, guardian Jeanne
 Miss Pepper, guardian Laura D
 Miss Penelope Anne, guardian Laura D
 Grover, guardian Deb Weaver
 Timmy (rabbit), guardian Jennifer
 Molly and Ruby, guardian Cindy C
 Jerry, Chris Houze's Dad
 Sweet Pea, guardians Rick and Tonya
 Cidhis, guardian Susan M
 Murfi
 Hatch, guardian Susan M
 Pinny, guardian Naomi
 Emma, guardian Elena
 Roger, guardian Elena
 Oliver, guardian Susan M
 Un-named rescued kitty, guardians Julie & Francis
 Johann, guardian Aimee
 Yoda, guardian Kristen
 Cuddles, guardian Cyndy
 Jacque's mother and sister-in-law
 Emma Rose, guardian Laura
 Balki, guardian Darcie
 Spaz, guardian Kimberly
 Kyra, guardian Zoe
 Darla, guardian Donnasue
 Chewy, guardian
 Dymaxion, guardian Dawn
 Quincy, guardian Lois (temporary guardian Dawn)
 Molly, guardian Deb
 Zera, guardian Floyd
 Elena's mother
 Gumball, guardian Tiffany
 Rilla & Tiegen, guardian Krissa
 Bean, guardian Carol
 Poco, guardian Carol
 Tinker Bell, guardian Vicki
 Warwick/Christopher Robin, temporary guardian
 Francis, guardian Julie
 Miss Margie, guardian Laura D

NOVEMBER 2

For all hedgies suffering from the mysterious illness that is prevalent and that a cure will be found

For all the vets who dedicate their lives to helping our little friends, that they determine the cause of the "mysterious illness"

For all hedgehog guardians and other animal caregivers to be given the gifts of patience, insight, understanding and strength, and for the following:

Rambo, guardians Sondra & Kimberly
 Buckwheat, guardian Naomi
 Hobie, guardian Naomi
 Payton, guardians Jim & Linda
 EL, guardian Judy B
 Miss Pepper, guardian Laura D
 Miss Penelope Anne, guardian Laura D
 Grover, guardian Deb Weaver
 Timmy (rabbit), guardian Jennifer
 Molly and Ruby, guardian Cindy C
 Oliver, guardian Tawana
 Jerry, Chris Houze's Dad
 Sweet Pea, guardians Rick and Tonya
 Cidhis, guardian Susan M
 Murfi
 Hatch, guardian Susan M
 Pinny, guardian Naomi
 Emma, guardian Elena
 Roger, guardian Elena
 Oliver, guardian Susan M
 Un-named rescued kitty, guardians Julie & Francis
 Yoda, guardian Kristen
 Cuddles, guardian Cyndy
 Jacque's mother and sister-in-law
 Emma Rose, guardian Laura
 Spaz, guardian Kimberly
 Kyra, guardian Zoe
 Darla, guardian Donnasue
 Chewy, guardian Jennifer
 Dymaxion, guardian Dawn
 Quincy, guardian Lois (temporary guardian Dawn)
 Zera, guardian Floyd
 Elena's mother
 Gumball, guardian Tiffany
 Rilla & Tiegen, guardian Krissa
 Bean, guardian Carol
 Poco, guardian Carol
 Tinker Bell, guardian Vicki
 Christopher Robin, Elena temporary guardian
 Francis, guardian Julie
 2 girls and 1 boy rescue, guardian Julie
 Sauza & Fat Albert, guardians Steph & Joe
 Andra, guardian Joey
 Sam, guardians Steph & Joe
 Madelaine, guardian Tawana
 Zoey, guardian Selena
 Mimi, guardian Nicole



by Jennifer Plombon, Minneapolis, Minnesota

We hedgehog guardians love our veterinarians! We love them because they help our hedgehogs to feel better, to live better, and to leave us comfortably and painlessly and with kindness if necessary. We love them because they want to learn from us as much as we want to learn from them. Many of them have asked us to participate in talks, hands-on demonstrations, and open houses to share our knowledge and hedgehog-handling skills. We love them because even though our hedgehogs usually prickle up, pop, hiss and try to bite (it would seem as if maybe they don't all love their vets as much as we do) they handle our hedgehogs with loving care and humor.

And we love them because they are each unique, individual, and have a story to tell. This is the first in what we hope will be a continuing series, telling a vet's story, and we hope the rest of you will tell us about the vets you love.

Dr. Nikki Burk, of South Hyland Pet Hospital in Bloomington, Minnesota, is my veterinarian. Dr. Nikki is unusual in her dedication to becoming a veterinarian, because she didn't grow up in a household full of pets. A veterinarian attended her kindergarten class for a career day event, and then and there, Nikki decided that she would be a veterinarian when she grew up. She finally shared her life with pets in 5th grade, when she cared for hamsters, and in junior high she shared her life with a Samoyed. She also took riding lessons while in school. Nikki now shares her home with 2 pugs; and used to share it with hedgehogs (more on that later.)

Acceptance into veterinary school is not easy - many of the student volunteers I work with have been on waiting lists for years - but Nikki was accepted, worked her way through, and a few years after joining a practice, bought the practice and now owns it!

I asked her what was hardest about being a veterinarian, and she gave a 2-point answer.

First is the fact that she must participate in euthanasia; this is never easy for her, but it is tempered by the fact that she knows she is providing animals and their persons with a much needed and very kind and loving option to end suffering. Second is the fact that, as she put it, she occasionally meets "less than amicable people." Some offices see far more "less than amicable people"; people who don't care much about their animal companions, who don't want to hear what the doctor has to say, who don't want to pay, who are antagonistic, but Dr. Nikki believes that how you practice influences who your clients are.

By providing a clinic with experienced and caring staff, with the latest and most up-to-date equipment and techniques, with an in-house laboratory and the ability to mix and provide many medications, she draws the clientele seeking that top level care, and willing to work with the staff to provide the best care for their companions.

I asked her what was best about being a veterinarian, and her answer was the same: the people and their pets. In this case, though, it's the people who love their pets who come in often, who become members of the family, and whose pets are known and loved for many years by the office staff.

So, what's the hedgehog connection? Several years ago, Dr. Nikki's husband took custody of two hedgehogs; they were the pets of one of his students who had decided to give them up. The hedgehogs lived in the classroom for a while, and unfortunately, it was there that Dr. Nikki's husband learned that they were male and female hedgehogs, when they had a litter which was cannibalized right in the classroom. A traumatic way to learn hedgehog gender and habits, to be sure, but Sonia and Spike went on to live (separately!) for several more years with Dr. Nikki.

Unluckily for Dr. Nikki, she developed an allergy to hedgehogs; she has both a contact and respiratory allergy to them, which is untenable if they live with her, but manageable if she treats them in her office and washes her hands well after handling

them. Luckily for me and other hedgehog guardians, she has chosen to adopt her pets out to decrease the allergy attacks, and thus be able to continue to treat them. It's a pleasure to watch a hedgehog-experienced vet deal with them; she is well aware of the "lick ... lick ... CHOMP" habits of hedges, and always has a dab of baby food on a tongue depressor ready to offer if it's appropriate.

I asked Dr. Nikki for words of advice regarding our quilly friends and she said, "annual visits!" An annual check-up, to include an oral exam and teeth cleaning, is very important for good hedge health. Furthermore, she says that "good husbandry" is vital; a varied diet, access to daily exercise, frequent and gentle handling to catch any incipient problems early, and a large clean enclosure are important. She recommends spaying female hedgehogs if possible, since uterine and mammary problems including cancer are common and can be devastating to their health.

I love Dr. Nikki! My girlz love her, too, and I am quite certain that her suggestion to try Piroxicam for Skeezi's oral cancer bought her 5 months of healthy life, and has helped other hedgehogs throughout the land, as more people have heard of it and tried it. Dr. Nikki attended a conference on cancer shortly after Skeezi was diagnosed, and sought out and attended a talk on Piroxicam, which was most fortunately given by a compounding pharmacist right here in Minnesota. She immediately put me in contact with the pharmacist, and assiduously followed Skeezi's progress. When Skeezi finally needed to cross the Bridge, Dr. Nikki made sure that her final visit to the office was a warm, gentle, loving visit, with Skeezi's favorite vets and techs in attendance. She even arranged for me to personally attend Skeezi's cremation so that she was never away from me. I couldn't ask for a better veterinarian, and neither could my girlz.

Please visit Dr. Nikki's web site; her current newsletter is all about hedgehogs!

<http://www.southhyland.com/>



Dr. Nikki Burk, DVM
South Hyland
Pet Hospital,
Bloomington,
Minnesota



Christmas is coming!

Maisey's Costume Corner

Maisey hedgehog is traveling the globe to bring you the latest in hedgie costume fashions. This month, Maisey's theme is winter and the holidays.



Bucky Woodring atop some packages (above)

Angel Emma Leber (right)

Cinder, Emma and Peaches from Nancy Denny (below)



Krista's Boule de neige (above)

Hoover and Payton Woodring (below)





Mile High Hedgehog Show Fun in Colorado!

by Susan Morrison, Denver, Colorado

The Mile High Hedgehog Show was held from October 14-16, 2005 at the Clarion Hotel in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Susan sent this summary on behalf of the Colorado Hedgehog Society for folks who couldn't make it!

Friday

On Friday evening the weekend started with a Hospitality Night and Fun Show. The Hospitality Room was filled to capacity with people checking in at the show and entering the Fun Show with Judge Dee Warner from Manitou Springs, CO. She is not a hedgehog person, but had a good time judging all of the various costumes and antics of our hedgehogs. Food was delicious thanks to Narciso and Brenda Sandoval, who did an excellent job. A caricature artist drew wonderful pictures of the participants and their hedgehogs.

Saturday

Events got underway with an IHA conformation show held at 10:00 and judged by Sherry Songhurst. All the classes were filled and Jeanne Stanoch and her Narnia won Best of Show Grand Champion, Boris and owner Sarah Shore won Reserve, and Honorable Mention went to Jane Kuta's Ambrose.



Darcie Carter
Photo courtesy of Laura Galloway

Lunch was served in the vendor room and Terri O'Hara gave a wonderful talk on animal communication. Thanks to the HWS for sponsoring her talk. Our vendors were Exclusively Hedgehogs (Valerie and George Stein), Pins and Needles (Sherry Songhurst), Designs by Darcie (Darcie Carter), Select Diet (Jim Nutter), Penny Black Stamps (Darnell Wimmer), Art by Amber (Amber Dressen, who also did the Grand Champion Prizes for us), Hedgehog soaps, TNT (Tiffany Williams), Teresa Johnson, and new to the hedgehog scene, a new bucket wheel maker – Chet and Dana Fields and Jan Webber. We also had the Hedgehog Welfare Society with many lovely items on their table, including handy first aid kits, and art by Judie Peters. The Hedgehog Breeders Association, the International Hedgehog Association, and the USDA were all represented.

At 2:00 the second IHA Conformation Show was held with Judge Bryan Smith, and again all classes were filled. Best of Show Grand Champion was Lulu, owned by Floyd Aprill, and Reserve was Cotton Candy, owned by Tiffany Williams.

We adjourned to the Banquet Room for the evening. Colorado's own Priscilla Dressen, DVM, gave a very inspirational talk on our hedgehogs and the wolves that she cares for in Fort Collins. She presented Sherry Songhurst, Fran North and Susan Morrison with a wonderful hedgehog whose quills were acupuncture needles glued in, much to Susan's dismay. IHA took a minute to honor one of its own: Jeanne Stanoch was named



Su Morrison
Photo courtesy of Linda Woodring

IHA Outstanding Volunteer of the Year for her hard work and dedication to rebuilding the International Hedgehog Registry. She was given a silver computer mouse and a spa treatment from the Board. Thank you Jeanne for all of your efforts. Fran North did a beautiful job on the Rainbow Bridge Memorial, and thanks to Teresa Johnson for the lovely candles in rainbow colors. Then George Stein took over and auctioned off many a wonderful item, raising many a dollar for all rescues. We then had the worm eating fundraiser, and our special rescue this year was Linda Edwards in Canada. Permanent Grand Champion Awards were presented to Floyd April for Camilla, Linda Cassell (Jeanne accepted for her and will

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*The HWS table
Photo courtesy of Darwin Godeman*

send it on to Gillian Holmes) and Quilliam, and to Sarah Shore for Boris, our Grand Gentleman. Pat Storm was awarded an honorary first place to Ivan, the tenrec. Ivan tried to enter the conformation show, but was sadly rejected - wrong color class. "Laughter and tears" was the theme of the evening.

Sunday

The IHOG was held in the morning and judged by Dawn Wrobel. It was a great time; we don't have the results to post, but they should be posted on the hedgehog lists soon. I do remember that Junior Handler Andrew Gannon's hedgehog Snowballs won a gold.



*Ivan the Tenrec
Photo courtesy of Laura Galloway*

The other morning event was an IHA judge training conducted by Bryan Smith, and new judges will be announced soon. Colorado is very proud of our own Sherry Songhurst, who was promoted to Master Judge. Congratulations to Sherry!

We adjourned to various automobiles and took a road trip to Flash and Thelma Memorial Hedgehog Rescue in Divide, Colorado, just up the road from Colorado Springs. Z. G. Standing Bear was his usually gracious self, preparing a lunch for the whole group and giving tours to one and all. Afterward, we all wandered down the mountain back to Colorado Springs, Denver, and other various locations; we were sad to see everyone leave and hope all had as good a time as we did.



*The IHOG sprint
Photo courtesy of Sarah Shore*

Contributions and thanks

We are proud to say that we are making contributions to Hedgehog Heights Rescues, Hedgehog Welfare Society, Twinkle Fund, and Flash and Thelma Memorial Hedgehog Rescue. Some of the smaller rescues will be getting some funds from the Twinkle Fund.

The success of this show was due to many wonderful people who worked very hard for the last two years on the central committee, show committee, event committee, and general committee to make it happen. The committee members are:

- Darcie Carter, Doug Carter, Kari Espelien, Lisa Farrell, Jane Kuta, Susan Morrison, Fran North, Sami and Tammy Oldson, Oliver (2nd Marine Division), Brenda Sandoval, Narciso Sandoval, Sherry Songhurst, Standing Bear, George Stein, Darnell Wimmer, Zami, Karen Zoltenko

Thanks for photography contributions from Gioia Kerlin, Sarah Shore, and Linda Woodring.

As you see, many people and many hours. We also, thankfully, had a wonderful group of volunteers from outside and inside the hedgehog community. Thank you, thank you, thank you. To all the sponsors, a heartfelt thank you; without you many things would not have happened. But most of all THANK YOU to everyone who came, encouraged us, and stood beside us; and to our family and friends whom we neglected for a short while. We truly appreciate everything.

As of this show, the Mile High Hedgehog Show name has been retired and we are now the Rocky Mountain Hedgehog Show. Start planning; October 2007 will be the next show in colorful Colorado!

The Hedgehog Ornament Project

by Linda Edwards, Waterloo, Ontario

In April of 1997, Gary and I excitedly welcomed the arrival of our first baby hedgehog, Charlotte. Little did we know at that time that she would literally change our lives forever. She captivated us and transformed my every waking thought and action around her. I was hopelessly in love! Consequently, it was a natural transition for my 20+ year tradition of making handmade Christmas tree ornaments for family and friends to evolve into hedgehog-themed ornaments. Although my friends and family were grateful for my thoughtfulness, they didn't truly appreciate my creations to the extent that I knew my "hedgehog family" would. So I focused my efforts in that direction.

By 1998, I was an active member of several hedgehog lists and was warmly welcomed into the hedgehog community. I casually polled other list members to see if anyone would be interested in participating in an ornament exchange project. The response was positively overwhelming. I was thrilled to think that I would actually have a Christmas tree filled with hand-made hedgehog ornaments! That first year we had 25 participants and over the subsequent years the numbers have fluctuated, usually hovering around 30.

The process is basically the same as it was the very first year, except that two additional ornaments are now made for fundraising purposes. For example, with 25 participants, each person is required to make 25 (plus two for auction) hedgehog-themed ornaments. The ornament sets are all sent to me, and I return a complete set of the 25 unique ornaments to all participants.

Many participants begin making their ornaments as early as January, pacing the work accordingly so that they meet the mailing deadline of September 1. After I



receive all the ornaments, if not already done, I place each one in a small plastic baggy, sealing it shut with a label identifying its creator. I then place one of each of the ornaments into a box and mail it back to each participant. In the past, we have been very fortunate to have the skillful assistance of Lori Keller and Aimee Hassler hosting auctions for the extra sets of ornaments, in order to raise desperately needed funds for various rescues and organizations, including the Hedgehog Welfare Society.

Occasionally, a member finds it necessary to withdraw from the project partway through the year. Instead of suffering the loss of those ornaments, I try to make extra sets to fill the vacancies. This actually results in our having more than the original two sets to auction off or donate to auctions at one of the hedgehog shows.

It's hard to believe that we have just wrapped up our eighth consecutive successful year of the "Hedgehog Ornament Project"!!!! What's even more amazing is that each year has been as fresh and exciting as the very first. A select few of you have faithfully participated every single year. Others have drifted in and out making special guest appearances.

We've exchanged ornaments from Canada, the USA, South Africa, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Every imaginable medium has been used to create the ornaments, and every imaginable size, color and shape of hedgehog - each one a unique treasure!

Most of us are not professional craftspeople, although some of you may be. My criteria has always been "if it's good enough to hang on your own tree, and you would be proud to give it as a gift, then it's good enough for us." I've never been disappointed and the participants never cease to amaze me with their creativity, talents, and the love they mold into their ornaments.

It is such a thrill for me to have the privilege of hosting this project and I enjoy each step of the journey. There's the initial yearly announcement, which stirs up a lot of excitement as I begin to recruit members. Then

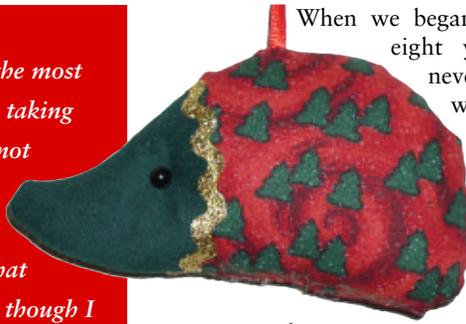


there's the monthly "cheerleading" (OK, sometimes it's called harassment) to make sure everyone is on track. Then one by one, I get e-mails notifying me that the ornaments are in the mail. I excitedly come home after work each night wondering whose box of ornaments will await me next. The excitement is also shared by Gary as we, like two children on Christmas morn, sit down on the floor and frantically, but carefully, tear apart the packaging to reveal the contents and marvel at the various creations. Once they are all received, I methodically line them up on my living room floor.

Then, Gary and I form an assembly line, carefully repackaging each box and bringing them to the post office. Our excitement is echoed by e-mails announcing

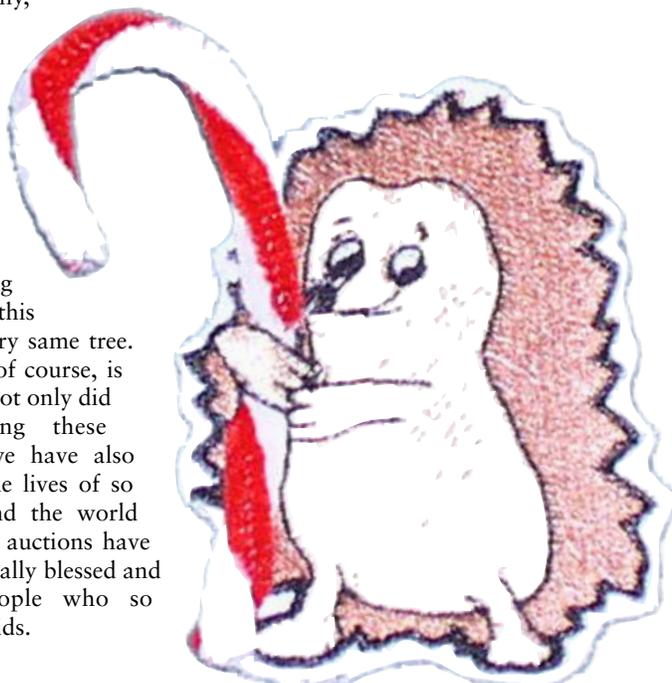
The 2004 ornaments were the most special for me. Since I was taking chemotherapy and could not participate, I was saddened not be able to make or receive any ornaments. But that was not to be the case! Even though I had not made any ornaments everyone got together and sent me the collection anyway! That was one of the highlights of my Christmas and I'll never forget it. I missed out on a lot of things during my treatments and to not be able to participate in the ornament exchange was just another of those things that I would have missed out on. I thank all who were involved in the process.

Love Deborah Kirksey



the safe arrival of ornaments. Once I am sure that all the packages have been successfully delivered, a new wave of excitement washes over as we anticipate our fundraising efforts, wondering how much money we will bring in and how many hedgehogs can we can help.

I know that this project may mean 25 different things to 25 different people, but personally, placing each of these heirloom treasures on our tree is like hanging a little part of each of you on our tree as well. The part that we all have in common - our love of hedgehogs. It's a magical feeling knowing that someone else in this world is sharing this very same tree. The icing on the cake, of course, is to revel in the fact that not only did we have fun making these ornaments, but that we have also made a difference in the lives of so many hedgehogs around the world with the funds that the auctions have generated. We are especially blessed and grateful to those people who so generously place their bids.



When we began this project eight years ago, I never dreamed it would be as successful as it has been or that it would still stir such an interest. I also didn't

anticipate the many friendships that have evolved because of this project. Together we grieved the losses of our hedgies, and many have grieved the losses of our parents, spouses, children, or other family members. Many of us have become engaged, married, divorced, grown our families, moved to different parts of the world, achieved career goals, lost employment opportunities, acquired homes, lost homes, faced serious illnesses, and endured many natural disasters, etc. Through it all, we've kept on making our ornaments. When I look at each ornament, that's what I think about and that's what I see. I envision the contributors, sitting around their kitchen tables with their kids, or whomever, dealing with daily challenges, yet still channeling their devotion and love of hedgies into these ornaments. We have shared all those happy, sad and difficult moments together as a family. That is the true spirit of what the "Hedgehog Ornament Project" is all about. With your help, I look forward to many more successful years!

Annabelle's Big Day



by Tawana and Annabelle Hanamann, Appleton, Wisconsin

On June 4, 2005, the Fox Valley Humane Association held its 26th annual fundraiser, known as "Bark in the Park," to raise funds to help keep our doors open to serve the homeless animals of all species we see each year. We raised over \$47,000! Traditionally, past and present canine alumni, their human counterparts, and animal lovers attend this event. There are local "celebrity" judges, vendors, the one- or three-mile walk, and of course contests for the animals. This year's theme was "Viva Las Vegas" and there was no shortage of Elvis sightings!

Seeing how I do not have a canine member of my ever-growing "zoo," Annabelle and I decided we better make sure the noble breed of hedgehog was represented. We entered three contests this year: The Sexiest Walk (which Annabelle captured at last year's event), The Shortest Legs, and The Most Unusual Animal. Annabelle recaptured her title of the "Sexiest Walk"! Who says you can't be big and beautiful?

Annabelle is donating her cash prize to the Hedgehog Welfare Society in memory of two of her hedgie brothers, Wally and Tico, who now reside at the Rainbow Bridge.

I asked Annabelle if she wanted to say anything else. This is what she told me to write: "I just wanna help other hedgehogs who need to find good homes like I have. And, I'm already getting ready for next year's event. I've got to defend my title."





The Continuing Adventures of Phileas Hogg II: Frequent Flyer

Greetings Hedgie People! Please allow me to share with you the highlights of the last two months of my journey:



Celebrating with Judie and Bruce Peters on their 30th wedding anniversary, in South Carolina. The waiters at the country club thought I was a stuffed bear! How rude!



Bonding with the Manly Hedgeboyz at the campfire during the Mile High Hedgehog Show in Colorado.



Most of all, being united with my new travel companion. She is a lovely poodle named Sweetie Pie. Maybe I'm not such a Manly Hedgeboy after all??



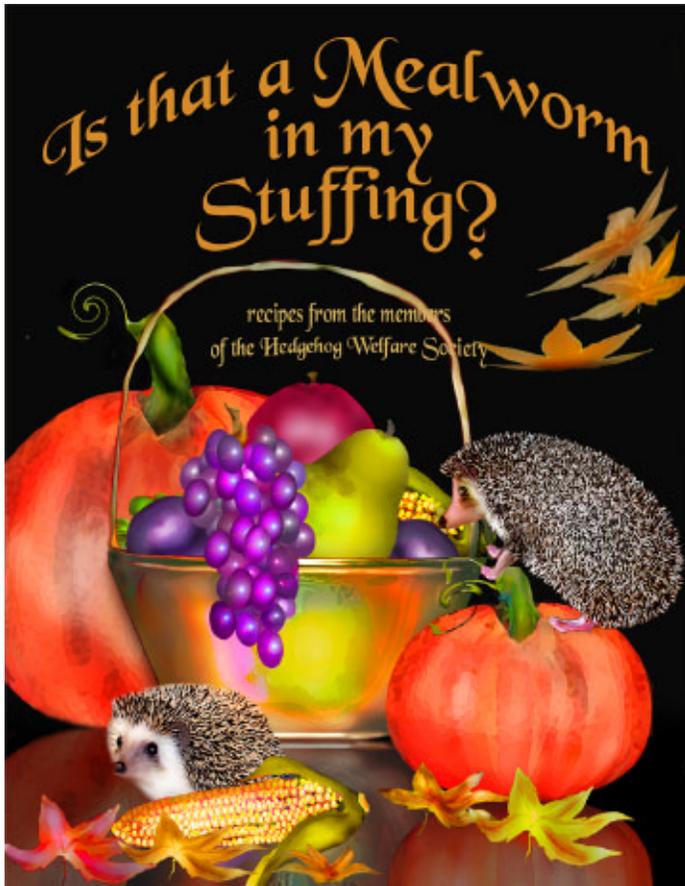
Hanging out with my new friends, the mooses, in South Carolina.

Phileas' Travels



Next stop: Austin, Texas, and then on to Seattle, Washington.

I have many amusing stories to share. You can read them all at <http://www.phileashogg2.blogspot.com>



Is That a Mealworm in My Stuffing??

The second cookbook in the "Hog Heavenly" series is now available.

This edition contains over 200 recipes compiled by members of the Hedgehog Welfare Society. From Jello, to Stuffing, to Pies... all the recipes you'll need for a Hog Heavenly Christmas.

The HWS would like to thank Cindy DeLaRosa for her tenacity in collecting recipes all year long, Maurita Plouff for patiently formatting the cookbook, and Judie Peters for her fabulous cover art. The artwork on the cover alone is worth the price!

All the proceeds from cookbook sales go to help rescued hedgehogs in need of veterinary care. The cost is only \$20.00 (including shipping). Orders can be placed by PayPal (donations@hedgehogwelfare.org), or by sending a check to: Hedgehog Welfare Society, PO Box 242, Chaplin, CT, 06235.

Don't be a Scrooge! Get your cookbook in time for Christmas!



*A question for the page?
Favorite Rescue Story?
Favorite Photo(s)?
Letter to the Editor?*

Submissions for the Newsletter Welcomed!

Please send it/them to us either electronically at newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org

or via snail-mail to
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