



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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RESCUE OF THE MONTH: Gypsy's Tale

YOLANDA McLEAN

PLYMOUTH, MA – After the devastating loss of my first rescue hedgehog, I did not know if I would ever be able to do it again. Her loss affected me so deeply, that I felt I could never go through it again. I know that no amount of love and caring can erase the physical problems that occur because of days, months, and years of abuse, but her crossing was no less painful. Before enough time had passed to really allow me to think about my future as a ‘rescuer’, I had two instances where I had to decide whether I would become involved or if I should ‘protect’ myself.

On New Year’s Eve, there was a post to hedgehog_help from Lorraine about a post



she saw on Petfinder.com, a website maintained by the Animal Rescue League, where animals up for adoption can be listed. She had come across an advertisement that said, “Name: Hedgy, Sex: Female, Hedgehog, friendly, uses Litter Box in cage. \$75.00”. Right around the same time, another post came up from Aimee asking, “::Grins:: Yolanda, are you on this...?” I sent an email to the woman who posted the ad shortly thereafter.

I told her my name, told her that I was ‘excited’ to have found her ad on Petfinder and that I was interested in talking to her

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Hedgie Hero: Kirsten Ilsøe van Oosterhout



DONNASUE GRAESSER

One Great Dane...

or a grumpy rat-taming Swede?

VEJEN, DENMARK – Our spotlight this month is on our first European Hedgie Hero, Kirsten Ilsøe van Oosterhout, better known in the hedgehog community, simply as ‘Kis.’ Although most of us have never travelled to Kis’s homeland of Denmark, we feel very close to her through our Internet connections. However, Kis says: “Most of the Internet people do NOT know me. For all they know I might as well be an old and grumpy rat-taming Swede living in a basement. And you know what!? Maybe I am ;-)”

Along with a keen, but strange, sense of humor, and a basement full of rats to be tamed, Kis possesses a strong devotion to the welfare of European hedgehogs. She is

extremely active in rehabilitation and rescue work for hedgehogs in Denmark. In a typical day Kis answers questions via mail and phone, sends information out to new rescue

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GYPSY...

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about "Hedgy". I also asked "Hedgy's" age and added that if it was not too personal, would like to know why they were selling her. I did not hear back from her so I called that evening and left a message. The next day I had a response. The woman's name was Vicki and she wrote that they didn't know "Hedgy's" age as they had found her in their garage one night this winter. Vicki said she had gone outside to get something and heard crunching near the cat's food dish. She said she knew that it was not the cat eating so she went over and found the hedgehog. She knew it was a hedgehog because her son's friend had had a pair before and was breeding them in his basement *cringe*. They were selling her because even though her son had originally wanted to keep her, he decided that she was just another chore... and anyway, they all preferred cats. I arranged to meet them on the following Saturday, February 2nd.

I drove the hour to Vicki's house and was greeted at the door by a small boy. Vicki came into the kitchen and said she had to



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



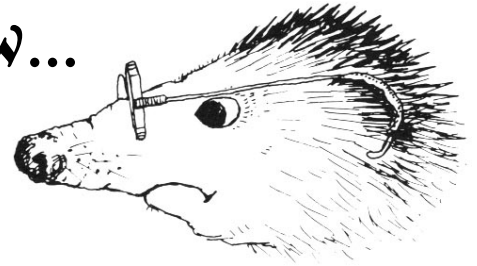
get "Hedgy" and showed me into the living room. She came back a short while later with a cat travel case. She opened the gate and pulled out a small shoebox filled with pine

shavings and a wash cloth. She asked if I wanted the gloves to pick her up and was shocked when I told her no. I braced myself, and then lifted the wash cloth. I was greeted, to my surprise, by a tiny nose snuffling the air... no hissing, no popping, no raised quills. I lifted her gently and saw that she was TINY but in decent condition. She needed a bath and a nail trimming, but other than that, there were no obvious other problems. I asked if they had taken her to the vet and Vicki said no. I asked how long they had her and Vicki said, "not long." I asked if they put out a "Lost and Found" ad and they

Books in review...

Henry and the White Wolf

by Tyler Karu & Tim Karu



JENNIFER PLOMBON

CHARLESTON, SC – Tyler and Tim Karu are a brother and sister team who wrote *Henry and the White Wolf* to help children undergoing hospitalization and chemotherapy.

Henry the hedgehog lives an idyllic life with his mother, Holly, until he becomes very ill. His mother is told that they must visit the White Wolf's den for healing, although the wolf has always been someone they were taught to fear and avoid.

The wolf tells Henry that she can help him recover, but that he must be brave and believe in his recovery. She then gives him a stone to hold for courage, while he spends many days being treated with elixirs made by the wolf. Henry becomes weak and sick and loses his fur and quills. Throughout, he holds his stone for courage. Finally Henry is allowed to return home and return to school; his friends are so impressed with his courage that his quill loss and weakness are ignored and he is treated as a hero. After a final visit from the wolf, Henry is deemed healthy and strong, and he and his mother

and his friends have a party. "And throughout the evening, clutched in his paw, was the perfect, smooth stone."

This is a wonderful addition to any hedgehog fan's bookshelf, as it succeeds on so many levels. As a children's book, it is charmingly written and illustrated; Henry and his mother look like a cross between a Euro and an African Hedgehog, and their facial expressions are priceless. As a book for children who are sick, it describes, in understandable terms, what it is like to become ill, to need treatment that is highly unpleasant, and to suffer side effects from the illness and treatment that can be scary and embarrassing. As a support system for a sick child, it comes with a smooth, perfect stone for the child who receives the book, and there is a section in the back of the book for the child to write of their own experiences, and of *The Times I Have Been Brave*; thus there will always be a stone and a diary for remembrance.

As a tool for health care providers or concerned family members, it provides an opening for discussion with a child; they can read the book on their own, and come to others with questions and concerns. As a hedgehog lover, a book lover, and a nurse, I highly recommend this book.



Henry and the White Wolf
by Tyler Karu & Tim Karu
ISBN: 0-7611-2135-8

Available in many bookstores, as well as online from Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble
List price: us\$12.95/\$19.95 Canadian

said they had heard nothing back after they showed me a copy of it. I asked if she belonged to her son's friend and Vicki told me that they had died the week before when the boy's uncle put them outside in the garage and the pregnant female had not had her young yet. All the while, this teeny little girl snuffled my hand and curled up on my lap.

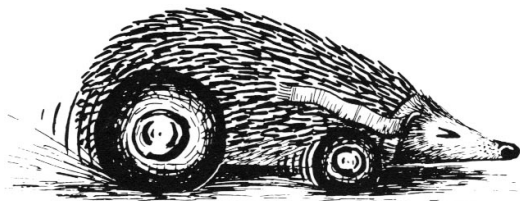
I asked Vicki if she would consider taking less money and was told that she was a single mother and so she was really firm on the price. I only had \$20s as I stopped at an ATM and she said she had no change, so I gave her \$80 instead of the \$75. I pulled out a hedgeie bag and 'Hedgy' climbed right in, as if knowing she were going somewhere. Vicki looked at me and said, "You really care about these critters, huh? What is it with them? You can't cuddle them or nothing." I gave 'Hedgy' a kiss on the nose and told Vicki that I loved everything about them and that nothing in the world was better than hedgeie cuddles. As I was leaving, Vicki said to take care of her and then looked at her son and said, "I guess I'll be having chinese for dinner tonight."

At that moment, I had a million things I could have said to her. Instead I looked at my new 'rescue', told Vicki that that was nice, and left. I almost lost it and then realized it probably would have made no difference to her at all.

I got home and later Alex arrived. He looked at me and asked where she was and what condition she was in. I took him into the bathroom where she was quarantined from Switch and picked her up. She looked at Alex, yawned and walked over to him. Alex asked what her name was and I told him that they called her 'Hedgy'. He looked at her and then at me and said, "Gypsy... because she's a little wanderer" and it stuck. She's been our little Gyp ever since.

Gypsy is the sweetest little girl. She never raises a fuss and loves to be held, cuddled and paid attention to. She is great with children. When I got her she weighed in at around 220 grams and is now a solid 330 grams. She looks great! She wheels frantically every night and cuddles with her 'kitten', a bean bag marmalade cat... She loves the hedgeie bag she was originally picked up in and fights me when I take it to wash!

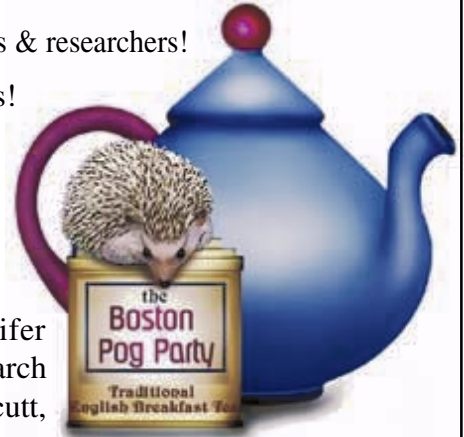
Gypsy also has quite the personality – you can always tell what she is thinking. I am not quite sure of her coloring, but think she is an African Chocolate Snowflake. Her favorite treats are wax worms and yogurt drops... which she shares with her friend, Mama Cass.



The Boston Pog Party

June 29, 2002 🐾🐾 Arlington, MA

- 🐾🐾 Seminars by Hedgehog veterinarians & researchers!
- 🐾🐾 International Hedgehog Olympics!
- 🐾🐾 Costume Contest!
- 🐾🐾 Prickle Pins Hedgehog Bowling!
- 🐾🐾 Boston area arranged tour!



Special guest speakers include Jennifer Hammock of MIT, who is doing research on hedgehog olfaction; Dr. Connie Orcutt, an exotic veterinarian from Angell Memorial Animal Hospital; and Registered Nurse Jennifer Plombon, who will tell us about caring for hedgehogs with Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrome.

*For more information & to register: <http://www.bostonpog.org>
Toll Free Phone Number: 1-(866) 249-4691 PIN# 7730
E-mail: info@bostonpog.org*



*This photo comes to us courtesy of Naomi Wikane, showing Pinny and Tiggy in anointing ecstasy. Must have been something *real* good!*

HEDGIE HERO...

(...Continued from page 1)

society members, has contacts with all the other rehabbers/rescuers in Europe, helps train new 'nursers,' and always has a house full of hedgies herself. In the Denmark hedgehog community, Kis is well-known as the one always to try new, alternative treatments, herbs and other 'natural' and 'weird' things to help her hedgehogs. As of the writing of this article, Kis has 32 hedgehogs at her rescue and is responsible for another 53 who are with nursers. During the previous year (2001), 276(!) hedgehogs passed through the doors of her rescue.

Kis and Ciko to the Rescue!

Before all those rescue hedgehogs, Kis took home her very first rescue – her husband Paul. “I found him wandering around in a wood in Holland with a guitar on his back. I figured I'd better bring him with me. That was 27 years ago.” Paul is very supportive and encourages all Kis's rescue work. In fact, Paul is responsible for her introduction to hedgehogs. He saw a note in a paper about a meeting from “Hedgehog-friends” in Denmark looking for new nursers and rescuers. She thought it was a great idea and wanted to support the organization, simply by becoming a member. That lasted until she held her first hedgehog and looked into those lovely dark eyes. She was in love! All the hedgehogs that come through the doors of Kis's rescue are special to her, from

the newborns she has to feed every hour and sleep with, to the ones that pass through for a few days with a dog-bite and get released.

In addition to all those hedgehogs, Kis and Paul have two lovely daughters, two great sons-in-law, and 4 wonderful grand-kids. The rest of her big family is very close at heart, but is spread all over the world as far as Australia, Holland, and Norway. Kis feels very fortunate to live close-by to her warm and kind parents and to keep close contact with “the very best mother-in-law” who lives in Amsterdam. They were all able to get together last year when her parents celebrated their “Goldwedding.”

Any of us who are close to Kis, know that the **most** important member of her family is Ciko, “the most wonderful, clever, sweet, and cute flat-coated retriever. She is 9 – and also known as the “Hedge-dog” and “the high-five-dog”. Ciko is a great help with the hedgehogs. When one escapes, Ciko finds it. If a lone baby is found in the wild, Ciko will find the rest of the litter.”

Writer, Traveller, Lego-consultant, Sauce-eater, and Grandma

In her pre-Grandma days, Kis worked in an animal hospital and her goal was to become a vet, but, she says, “Life wanted it different, and I ended up in Copenhagen working with actors and writers. And enjoying life in Copenhagen when it was most fun in the 60's!” She also has worked many years with abused children. When her

daughters were born, Kis decided to work at home and started writing children's books and as a consultant for Lego! She says that staying at home with the girls was “the best thing I ever did! It gave me time to find new sides of myself and it made a very strong bond between us as a family. I was proud and happy when both girls asked me to be there when they were giving birth.”

Besides her expertise in Legos, Kis has many very interesting hobbies: “Herbs and how to use them, singing, playing guitar, oil-painting, laughing out loud at least 10 times a day, eating as much sauce as possible, staying as far away from the kitchen as possible.” One of her other favorite past-times is teasing Natasha. But, Kis says her all-time favorite hobby is **LEARNING**, especially if it concerns animals.

Kis has travelled through most of the countries in Europe and has spent time in Africa. Her favorite of all the places she has been to is Amsterdam, where Paul is from, and where they have a little “garden house.” The garden house has no power, no TV, no phone, but a lot of nature and animals. Kis and Paul try to go there as often as possible. When she is in Holland and experiences hedgie-withdrawal, she can always visit a Dutch rescue and hold their hedgies. Or, she visits Els for a good laugh and “hedgehog-holding!”

Kis Stories

Almost anyone who is lucky enough to



A QUESTION FOR THE VET?

Do you have a question you would like to ask the vet?
Please send it to us either electronically at newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org or via snail-mail to HWS Newsletter c/o Kathleen Knudsen PO Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107



Lori 'Poop Queen' Keller (l) and Kis – sharing a laugh over a Coke can?!?!



*The “Great Dane” in hedgehogs’ opinion –
our beloved Kis, nose to nose with one of her little quilled houseguests.*

be one of Kis’s “e-friends” or “in person” friends, will attest to Kis’s strange, but wonderful sense of humour. One of my favorite “Kis stories” is about the time she got her drivers license: “Paul put a note in the local paper: **‘WARNING to all citizens in Vejen: My Wife Has Her Driver’s License!’** The very first time I drove alone (and the same day it was in the paper) a man in a car passing me stepped on his brakes when he saw me, put his car in reverse, and drove right into a car behind him...icks.”

And, another “must tell” story is the story of the pet duck that Paul bought for Kis: “We use to have a little pond in our garden. My biggest wish was a duck would move in there. One day, YES, a duck was sitting there. I took our last bread, and, while talking to my new friend and feeding it, our cat went sniffing to the duck. I discovered it was a phoney duck that Paul had bought at a store and put down there. I was standing in the middle of our garden laughing out VERY loud!”

European Influence

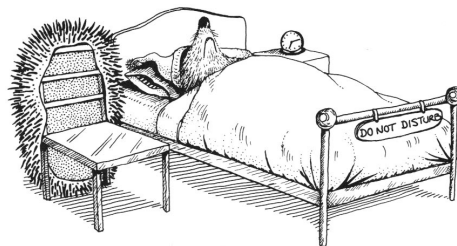
Even though her expertise is in a different species of hedgehog (and is definitely not in detecting decoy ducks), Kis always has good advice for African Pygmy Hedgehog owners as well. Her vast experience is a valuable resource to the hedgehog community, where she is a constant presence. Kis says she, “enjoys the chance to cry and

laugh with you all. I do treasure all the very good friends I have on the hedgie-lists (too bad I only met a few in person).” She wants to thank the people who “stayed” with her on ICQ many nights when she was up late with a very sick hedgie. She considers her Internet friends “a very important shoulder.” Kis says, “this community is SO special, and hedgehog people are ‘my kind of people.’” It is a mutual admiration society, and here is what this community that is so special to Kis, has to say about her in return:

”Kis is VERY special indeed. Not only does she have the healing touch for many European hedgehogs, but also touches the lives of many hedgies and people across the seas. She is always available with some words of encouragement, support and advice, for hedgies and people alike. I have had hedgies here that I can honestly say would not have made it without her. I am very blessed to be able to call her a friend.”

–*Stasi Kanyuck*

”Kis has a generous and kind spirit that crosses all boundaries. Even though she runs a busy rescue operation, she always has



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enough time to post an email to brighten someone’s day, give helpful advice, or just to show she cares.”

–*Amy Stackhouse*

“Though never having met in person, I feel Kis is a kindred spirit for several reasons: She loves, rescues and aids hedgies in need. She blends mainstream treatments with “wholistic healthcare” through the use of herbs, massaging and such. Kis is more than willing to share her knowledge and experience to better help others. She is to be commended on crossing the boundaries of language and geography to reach so many of us in such loving and positive ways.”

–*Teresa Johnson*

BUT, is Kis fooling us all? Is she really a grumpy, rat-taming Swede living in a basement? Fortunately the few people from the list who have met her in person can dispell that myth, and attest to what a wonderful person Kis is in “real lilife.”

”I spent nearly two months living with Kirsten in Denmark and am only one of maybe 3 list people who have seen her with hedgehogs. Kirsten has a special affinity with hedgehogs that goes beyond any I have ever seen. My most poignant memory is of her trying desperately to save Soren, a very, very sick young boy. She stayed up all night for several nights caring for him. She did absolutely everything, in the end just holding him under her shirt, murmuring comforting words. She had known this hedgehog maybe a couple of days, but the tears she shed at his passing revealed a deep love for his kind that speaks volumes of the loving compassion in this woman’s heart. I should also mention that although Kirsten and Paul were wonderful hosts, theirs was the first house I had ever visited where the guest bathroom was kept FREEZING in respect for the hibernating hedgehog, Rita, who lived in a box under the sink.”

–*Natasha*

”I have had the pleasure of having met Kissie in Amsterdam on a couple of occasions. There are many things about her that I adore but there is one particular ‘thing’ that really stands out. Something that I know of no-one else ever doing. I don’t mean someone saying that “oh, I can/ would/could do that.” I mean, someone that actually *does* sit and pick maggots one by one, from the very first to the very last, off a maggot-infested rescue Euro-hedgie (just the photos made me gag). I really don’t think I need give any more reasons that that why I think Kissie is tops in my books.”

–*Vicki Robinson*

And, I will end this article with that pleasant image of Kis...



'Alternatives' for healing & everyday wellness: the harmonious vibrations of crystals

TERESA JOHNSON

MARYLAND – I will start a series of articles by explaining the “how’s” of crystal, stone and color healing. For now I offer a brief intro:

Everything in the universe has a vibration frequency or pulse. On some subconscious levels we are aware of all of them. Different vibrations given by different stones can work to harmonize and balance the body... Of course, as with any healing technique, there are precautions and some stones you do not want to use in certain circumstances as the vibrations may be too intense or not at all in the proper harmonic range.

Stones do not have to actually touch a body to work. The vibration is ‘absorbed’ in a matter of speaking – just like ultrasound massage works by directing frequency waves of certain intensity to a



particular spot on the body.

There is also a practice by some to make tinctures using good clean water and

stones – Yep, soak the stones for a given period of time and then drink the water enriched with the ‘vibrations’ of the stone. You really must be careful with this as some stones are toxic if ingested! Trace minerals and such are leached from the stones. You would not want to use a tincture made from a stone with a high lead base. Too much copper, silver, iron can also be upsetting rather than helping. I personally do not recommend tinctures unless you have fully studied the stones and it’s mineral makeup.

Having stones nearby is a much safer method of use. Because stones work on the subtle energy bodies surrounding you, or your pet companion, having a few stones for general overall well being in your home will yield residual benefits to all who enter.

Hope this helps some.

HWS

“Attention, Hedgie-Shoppers!”

HWS CONTRIBUTIONS COMMITTEE

NEW HAVEN, CT – The newest option for hedgie-power-shopping is the HWS store! Whether it’s a treat for a Secret Pal, a treat for yourself, or a treat for that special hedgie-hog, you can find it at the HWS store. In addition to stocking some of the old standbys (e.g. Bramble and Clover gift items, Brisky’s treats), the store specializes in unique, hand-crafted items donated by the clever artisans of the hedgiehog community. For example, where else can you find hedgiehog-thumbtacks detailed by Susan Goetcheus? Or, Linda Edwards’ original wreaths adorned to match the season of the year? Or, a journal decorated with a Judie Peters original design? Or, an aromatic hedgie sachet, sewn with love by Naomi Wikane? You can find these extraordinary crafts and more all in one place...the HWS store!

Why buy from the HWS store?

There are lots of great hedgiehogabilia sites on the web from which you can purchase exquisite hedgie gifts. The HWS store will never take the place of these well-appreciated businesses. What we have to offer is a selection of unique, handspun items,

created from the heart by talented HWS crafters. Most items are limited edition sales. The purchase price from every item in the store is used to further the mission and goals of the HWS... to protect the well-being of hedgiehogs! Revenues from the store have been used to contribute to vet bills of rescued hedgiehogs, to promote educational seminars by and for veterinarians, and to help off-set the costs of the care-package project. Every purchase you make at the HWS is an important contribution to hedgiehog welfare.

How do I buy items from the HWS store?

There are three ways you can purchase HWS Store items. First, you can go to the store link on our internet website at <http://www.hedgiehogwelfare.org>). From there you may use your credit card to purchase items. All items are shipped within days of the time the order is placed. The second possibility is to choose your items on the website and then send an e-mail to donnasue.graesser@aya.yale.edu. Donnasue can take your order, give you a shipping price, take a check or pay-pal, and send the items immediately to you (or to your Secret Pal). The third possibility is to visit the HWS

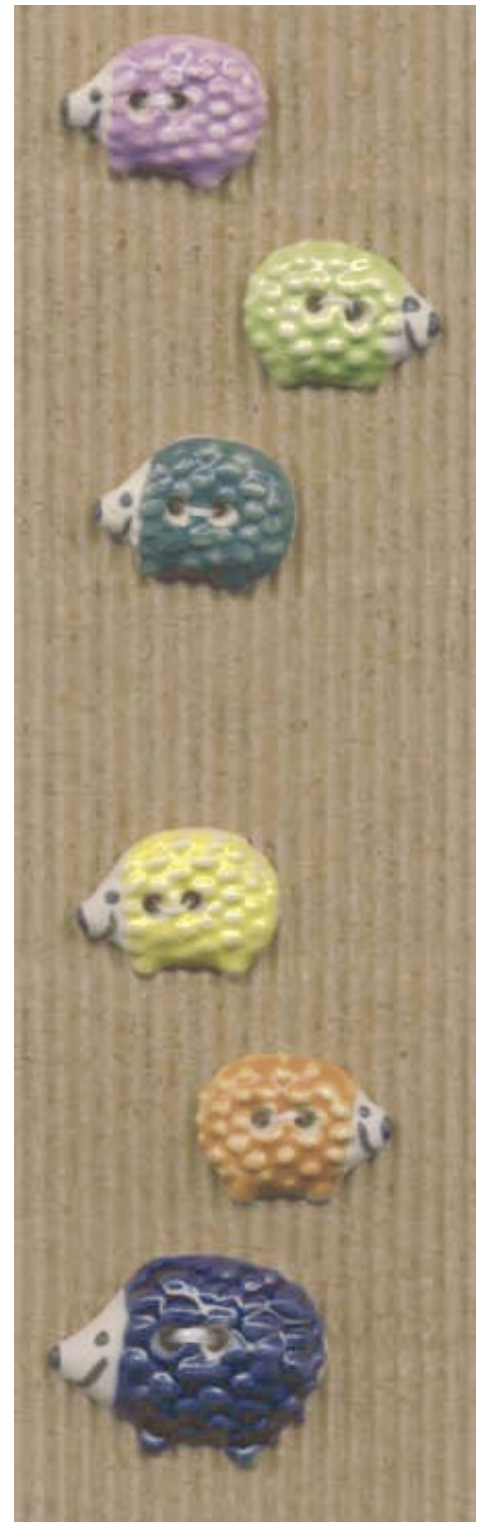


A sample of Naomi Wikane’s aromatic hedgie sachets, sewn with love.

table at an upcoming show. We’ll be peddling our wares at the Boston Pog Party



Just a couple of the HWS Store offerings:
 Above: One of Linda Edwards' beautiful seasonal hedgehog wreaths.
 Right: Hedgegie buttons – always handy to have on hand!



June 29 in Arlington, MA. Buying directly from the HWS table will save shipping costs, so if you are coming to either of these shows be sure to stop by the HWS booth!

How can I contribute to the HWS store?

Are you a whiz with a glue-gun, a graphics program, or slab of craft foam? Why not offer some of your creations for sale through the HWS store? Items for the store are either donated, or purchased on consignment, whichever you choose. Either way, contributing craft items is a monumental way to do your part to better the lives of pet hedgehogs. We have had donations of as many as 100 items, or as few as 2 items... so you definitely don't have to go into mass production to sell something on the store site. Every single contribution is very, very, welcome by the HWS and by hedgegies in need everywhere! If you are interested, please contact Donnasue Graesser via e-mail at donnasue.graesser@aya.yale.edu

A new name on the storefront?

We have to admit, the "HWS store" is a pretty boring name. Our July "members prize" will be awarded to the HWS member who submits the most appropriate, creative, catchy title for the HWS store. The winner of the "name the store" contest will be announced July 1, and will win a \$20 shopping spree in the newly named "store."

So visit the web-site, take a trip to your local craft store, put on your thinking cap for a new store name, or do all three! And remember, to hedgegies in need, the HWS is a friend indeed.



... a
 friend
 indeed!

With relatively few books on the market relating to hedgehogs, we are taking the liberty of introducing readers of the HWS newsletter to the various books we are aware of. We will feature illustrations and/or snippets from these books in each issue of the newsletter. Sketches in this issue are by Guy Troughton, and come from the book Hedgehogs by Dr Pat Morris, published by Whitted Books Ltd. ISBN 0-905483-28-6. List price: £7.99



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 HWS Newsletter c/o Kathleen Knudsen PO Box 70408, Seattle WA 98107



Hedgies' Taste Tester

PAT STORM
AND LAURA ROBERTS



NORTH TONAWANDA, NY and PUYALLUP, WA – This month's taste test is Brisky Yogurt Drops. These drops are smaller than those I have found for ferrets or other critters and seem to be a more acceptable hedgegie size treat.

These treats are of human grade, and approved for human use. The Ingredients are: Sugar, partially hydrogenated palm kernel oil, whey, non-fat yogurt, titanium dioxide, lecithin, salt and artificial (vanilla) flavor.

The guaranteed analysis is: crude protein min 17.7%/max 18.7%, crude fat min 0.2%, crude fiber max 1.8%, moisture max 3.7%.

They come in a 4 ounce jar and would make a wonderful exchange gift for hedgies, for those special occasions or special pal packages.

The Thistle Dew Hedgehogs liked these treats very much. As usual, a few refused to even try them, but they are fussy about everything, so this was nothing new. Due to their low fat content, I was able to give them more than a couple at a time. There was a high rate (93%) of those who really did like them. All the new babies once eating, also approved of them. Some that did not eat them the first day, did gobble them up the next day.

I have sent samples out to various people, and a majority has written back that their hedgies really enjoy this treat. So, as an alternative to mealies, waxies, crickets and peanut buggers, etc, here is something completely different.

The Thistle Dew Hedgies give these 4 quills up and would recommend it to any of their friends, but then you know how it is, when something tastes good, it probably isn't good for you. Laura?



Thanks Pat,

The first ingredient that jumped out at me when reading the ingredients was how artery-clogging "palm kernel oil" is. But the actual amount per drop is only 0.2% so that negated my initial worries. The first ingredient listed is sugar, which, we all know, is probably not good for a hedgehog, but, fed only on occasion, it may not be particularly harmful. I did a taste test on my 7 hedgehogs and only 2 liked them.

My other concern is the titanium dioxide. I did an online search and most of what I came up with was the information on its industrial usage. Regarding its addition to food products, the sole reason is for its whitening agents. Now, I don't know about you, but I think its doubtful that the hedgehogs care what color it is. The FDA lists what they consider a "safe" level of titanium dioxide to be, however, I would like to see the manufacturer remove this seemingly unnecessary ingredient altogether.



Hedgehog and Variations

1.

It pats the microphone with tiny palms. The hedgehog entertains some questions from the floor: ...your natural diet, and advice for your domestic care? Your quirks, dislikes, and hobbies? Please reveal what makes you tick.

It prickles, but its spines cannot deflect our curiosity. The probing paw is stung, but then it only wants to know the secrets of what stung it. (Answer me, my mystery...) The scared instinctive squeak becomes an oracle; the shar-pei frown we read as contemplation, not alarm.

2.

The Queen of Hearts, for all her grumbling, excels in many sports, but not croquet. Quite often, she sends hedgehogs tumbling beyond the court, and farther still astray. Forbidden to unroll (on pain of death), uncertain of his whereabouts, and dizzy, one snuffles cautiously, then holds his breath, outside her purview; free, but still uneasy. His sense of this new liberty dawns dimly. But as he's just a stone's throw from the wild, he pads beneath the garden's last fence primly and finds himself to nature reconciled, renouncing minor courtly privileges for slovenly rootbeds, furze, fresh hedges.

Donnasue's hedgehogs were the muse for this poem, penned by Yale Poet D. Isaac Cates. After meeting hedgehogs, what poet could resist putting that hedgehog charm into words? The poem was first read at a poetry reading featuring the work of several well-known poets. Of course, hedgehogs were in attendance at the reading.



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