commitments also includes mealie-time, wheel scrubbing, and bonding with our hedgies.

Involving a child in the daily care of pets can help to teach responsibility and commitment, as well as how to deal with illness and the death of a beloved friend. But, beyond the obvious lessons in care-taking, hedgies bring many special blessings to our children and to our relationships with our children. My son always wants to be involved with whatever mom and dad are doing, so he considers taking care of the hedgies together the same type of “quality time” as playing Candy Land with Mom or tossing a ball around with Dad. Memories of this quality time will last a lifetime and are far more meaningful than the memories of a trip to Disney Land. Caring for living beings together creates a bond that is indescribable.

One of the greatest blessings we can give to our children is to open them up to the special connection we share with our hedgehogs. Becky Fleming, mom to Joseph, describes her son’s unique connection to his hedgehogs: “Joseph is particularly proud of the fact that we allow him to handle and play with the hedgies but do not allow any other children to do so (they can touch while we hold them and watch the gang running around but not hold or handle). Also Joseph was particularly enamored of Knarla Pog since she had food allergies like he did. Her story always made him feel that he could be brave like her.”

Kids learn behaviors and values from their parents. If you honor and respect the animals in your family, your children will learn honor and for respect animals. If you are responsible in caring for your animals, hopefully they will emulate that behavior. In the process, you will be giving your children the incredible gift of a lifetime with hedgies!
Welcome to Pog-Chit-Chat...
Where hedgies tell it like it is.

Pog-Chit-Chat Band by: Barbie

This is Barbie, reporting for The Pog-Chit-Chat Band.

OM Gosh! I am like so totally psyched to be The Pog-Chit-Chat Band’s reporter! I get to like report on like what’s new with the band and stuff! This is like so totally awesome! For sure!

I so totally have to say a big thank you to Molly, our US band manager. She has been like the best at getting everyone and everything organized. And OM Gosh! You so have to see the band’s website. Pinelope has been working like really hard to add the band info and band pictures and OM Gosh! Pictures. I like so need to have pictures for this article and I go like Mom I like so need to get my quills and nails done like before the pictures and my mom goes like you look fine Barbie and I go like yeah right. I’m sure. I’m like freaking out. She like so doesn’t get it. Bummer. Anyway, there are also like band bios and stuff. To see the website, you like type www.thepogchitchatband.com.

Okay. So I like got on the phone and I like interviewed Q-ball, the band’s rhythm and acoustic guitar player. OM Gosh! I think he’s like really hot! Anyway, the interview went like this...

Barbie: OM Gosh! Hi Q-ball!
Q-ball: Howdy, and a big howdy to y’all in pog-land.
Barbie: What do you like most about being in the band?
Q-ball: Gettin’ to know more ’bout the others in the chat group, not just who don’t likes baffs. I mean, we can all agree on that, but we keeps gettin’ new ideas & opinions when we’z talkin’ ’bout music. Also, I’z gettin’ to spend more time with Mom helpin’ me learn guitar. It’s hard for my little feets to hold down 3 strings while strummin’, but I is getting better!

Barbie: Are you worried about all the girls, like chasing after you and stuff?
Q-ball: Worried? No. Well, (digging in toes) maybe just little, but in a good way.
Barbie: Do you have a girlfriend?
Q-ball: Nope. I’z never met any girls hedgies ’cept my ma & 3 sisters. I mean, I talks to them all the time online, but it’s different bein’ in the same room... *blush*

Thanks Q-ball for a totally awesome interview!!

Anyway, like the band’s music? Like, the music is so totally going to be like tubular, you know. We have like so much super-super songwriting and musical talent. There is like one song already done. It’s on the website. You like mouse over music, click on remixes, click on “Mealies” by Paul, click on the mp3, and OM Gosh! You like hear Cassie_da_Great sing!

Now let’s talk about clothes. You know, like t-shirts and stuff. Margaret is the band’s official illustrator and she is doing some like totally awesome designs. OM Gosh! I can go shopping! I so totally love to shop! For sure!

So, like that’s all I have for now. This is Barbie, reporting for The Pog-Chit-Chat Band.
Hedgehog Trivia:
By: Margaret Myhre

Did you know that the name sea urchin is derived from an archaic word, yrchoun or urchoun, meaning hedgehog? When you look at a sea urchin, it’s easy to understand how appropriate the application of the term hedgehog is.

Sea urchins are hard-shelled, spiny marine invertebrates that live on coral reefs, rocks, and the ocean floor. They can be found in shallow water along the shore and also at much greater depths. There are about seven hundred different species of sea urchins. The largest is the red sea urchin (Strongylocentrotus franciscanus); its body—minus the spines—measures about seven inches in diameter.

The sea urchin has a globular body covered with long spines which are used for protection and locomotion as well as for trapping drifting algae snacks. Tiny tube feet—five paired rows of them—can be found among the spines. These assist with movement, gathering food and holding on to the ocean floor. Tiny stingers, or pedicellaries, help the sea urchin defend itself and hunt. A claw-like mouth is centered on the underside of its body. The mouth consists of plates, resembling teeth, which point inward. The teeth scrape food into the mouth as the sea urchin moves slowly along the ocean floor. Sometimes the mouth is referred to as “Aristotle’s lantern” because the philosopher described the sea urchin’s mouth as looking “like a horn lantern with the panes of horn left out” in his work The History of Animals.

Sea urchins come in a wide variety of colors including pink, dark red, blue, and royal purple. The spines that cover the animal’s shell, or “test,” range from one to three centimeters in length and are one to two millimeters thick. One variety, Diadema antillarum, which is found in the Caribbean, has thin spines measuring from ten to twenty centimeters in length!

Sea urchins eat kelp, algae, sponges, mussels, barnacles and decaying matter. Major sea urchin predators are crabs, snails, sea otters, fish, and some birds as well as some humans.

Sources:


Illustration courtesy of The Coloring Spot <http://thecoloringspot.com/ocean-life/>
This month we hear from Elaine B. of Houston, Texas. Next issue – we’d like to hear your testimonial of how the HWS helped you. Just send your story to Sheila Dempsey at SexyTexy@comcast.net. Can’t wait to hear from you!

From Elaine:
When I first brought Q-ball, I only had experience with more standard pets: cats, dogs, fish, and rescued lab mice (OK, a little credit for being different on that one). The shelter had given me a quick rundown of basics: No cedar shavings, no fatty foods, give him low-fat kibble, insects, a wheel and something to hide under. OK, I can handle that...

I had no idea until I started talking to others in the chat room that I was supposed to clip nails or bathe him. While he wasn’t hurt by my ignorance, and wasn’t especially happy that I learned these things - he might have suffered foot problems if I had not learned about proper hedgie hygiene. I also had no idea he could be litter box trained but he was already halfway there by not messing in his sleeping or food areas. Since the shelter did not use fleece blankets, I was slightly ahead of the curve by giving him a small piece of cloth for nesting. But he was VERY happy to see the rescue kit blankets, sack and hat. His igloo fits perfectly under the hat or into the sack so they can alternate while I do laundry. He also very much enjoyed the sample foods and treats. I had a hard time tracking down a retailer for Felidea, but, a year later, it is still his favorite kibble. Roasted wax worms are another sample item that he still loves. From others on the list I found out all the different people foods I could give him to sample. I also learned how many more ways I could interact with him from the chat, and I have bonded with him more because of the amount of time we now spend together.

I watch the Houston Craigslist postings for hedgies. When someone posts a hedgie for re-home, I send them our links and try to match them with “hedgie wanted” postings--sort of like a matchmaker. Today I also sent this to the shelter nearby that has Felix:

“I just wanted to let you know we have an easy to print care sheet you can send with his new caretaker at: http://www.hedgehogwelfare.org/

Please also let them know there are lots of us out here in a hedgie chat room that can answer any questions they may have. These are people who love to hear about and look at pictures of new hedgies. http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/hedgehogwelfare/

Thanks, Elaine”

Finally, something that benefited me more than my hedgie. During the last year, my dad was hospitalized repeatedly -- several times in touch and go situations. Keeping up with the HWS and pog chat lists gave me something completely removed from my Dad's condition to focus on. I can't tell you how many times I got up when I couldn't sleep at night to read the postings or just look at everyone's cute pictures until my mind was cleared of the worry. So, thank you from both of us for all the help over the past year!

Elaine and Q-ball
The Hodgeheg

Author, farmer, teacher and great-grandfather, Dick King-Smith is perhaps best known for his book *Babe the Gallant Pig* (originally published in the UK as *The Sheep Pig*) which was made into the movie, *Babe*. But he has also written books about many other kinds of animals including hedgehogs.

*The Hodgeheg* features a young male hedgehog named Victor Maximilian St George Hedgehog, or Max for short. He lives with his parents and his sisters, Peony, Pansy and Petunia, in the garden of Number 5A in a row of semi-detached houses in a British suburb. The Hedgehog family longs to visit the park directly across the road from their home. Unfortunately, traffic has increased to the extent that they are afraid to cross the road. In fact, as the book opens, Pa Hedgehog is informing Ma that “Your Auntie Betty has just copped it.” Not only that, Auntie Betty is the third member of the Hedgehog family to meet her demise on the same road!!!

Max is determined to reach the park and carefully studies how the people in his neighborhood manage to cross the road safely. Eventually he discovers crosswalks which, in his suburb, feature zebra-striped pavement and checkered light poles topped with glowing orange lights.

However, what Max fails to realize is that while crosswalks do make the streets safer for people, they don’t necessarily make them safer for hedgehogs. As he races across the road he is struck by a bicyclist and bangs his head into the curb! Dazed, he manages to stagger home guided only by his sense of smell. When his family gathers round him to ask where he has been, his thoughts—and his speech—are muddled. “I got a head on the bump,” he tells them. “Something bot me on the hittom and then I headed my bang. My ache bads headly.” (p.21). Eventually, however, Max is able to reverse his speech problem and complete his quest to visit the park.

This funny little story is part of Puffins’ “Young Puffin” series designed for children who are beginning to read chapter books. The text is very British, easy to read, yet very funny at the same time. Many very appealing pen-and-ink illustrations are included in this little story. The illustrator, Linda Birch, obviously observed many hedgehogs before creating the drawings for this charming tale of hedgehog life in the suburbs. This book has not been published in the United States but used copies are available through Amazon (http://www.amazon.com/) and the Advanced Book Exchange (http://www.abebooks.com/). Another book, *A Hodgeheg Story: King Max the Last*, which appears to be a sequel to *The Hodgeheg*, is also available.

Watch for up-coming auctions to benefit WHS research!

The more you bid, the more we find out about the cause and treatment of this dreaded disease.
At the end of 2007, our hedgehog-caretaking community lost a long-standing, beloved member and I lost a friend.

Judy Burcham, proud caretaker to the Manly Hedgeboyz of Texas (NO WIMMENZ ALLOWED!!!), Quilting Participant, and an all-around wonderful woman, had life-support removed and died on the morning of December 30th, 2007, following a brief illness. I feel comfortable speaking for the hedgehog community here: We were all in shock and mourned her death but I, and others, found comfort in knowing that Judy was met, on the other side of the bridge, by the many hedgehogs and other animals that she had cared for, tended to, and loved, and who had made that last journey before her. I have no doubt that she was greeted with many snuffles, huffles, and hedgie licks.

For me, Judy was more than just another contributor to the hedgehog lists, offering support, knowledge, and insight; Judy was my friend. I never met Judy in person; I never saw her smile; I never heard her laughter; I didn’t know her voice; and I was never enveloped in her hugs. But I knew and loved her all the same. We exchanged many emails, over the years, on topics ranging from hedgehogs (the joys, the challenges, the sorrows), to recipes, to crafting (she was talented, I’m all thumbs), and to books. She once owned an independent bookstore and we liked many of the same authors and also introduced each other to new works. She shared the joy she felt raising her granddaughter, Cara, of whom she was deservedly proud. It’s odd to think that someone I never met was a friend, even a close friend, but that is what Judy was to me and I miss her fiercely. I still can’t bring myself to remove her email address from my address book — that would be admitting that I will not be meeting her on this side of the bridge again.

I miss my friend.

When Judy’s death was made known to the on-line hedgehog discussion lists, an outpouring of memories and condolences were posted. I would like to share some of those messages here:

To the family of Judy and her friends, you are in our hearts and our prayers and may you find comfort in this journey and look upon this as a sunset and peace be with you all. - Bonnie and Merle Stubbins, Sir Snuffy’s Hedgehog Sanctuary

I’m so sorry that Judy is leaving us. May her passing be gentle. My heart goes out to her family and friends. - Hedgie love, Jan

I’m keeping Judy and her family in my thoughts. – Rachael Sherfield

Oh, what a sad, sad day for the hedgie community. Judy was such a wonderful friend and supporter. Her hedgies are legendary!

I will have so many nice memories of Judy -- most of which are the beautiful quilt squares she made. I collected the squares a few years ago, and Judy placed each one carefully in between fresh, tissue paper. She was meticulous in packing up her handi-work!

Judy was also a blast to work with on newsletter articles. She wrote fun stuff about the Manly Hedgeboyz and about the rescue she took in from Hurricane Katrina.

Right up until the end, she was supportive of the HWS. She ordered a 2008 calendar only a few short weeks ago.

Judy was a warm, fun, classy lady. I can’t believe she will no longer be here on the lists. - Hugs to all of us, Donnasue

Many prayers for Judy, her human family, and her hedgies. – Cedar
My condolences to Judy's family. May her passing be peaceful. – Elaine

With me losing loved ones these last two years my heart and gentle warmth goes out to Judy as she reaches the end of her life's journey path. May her crossing be easy and painless. To her family a warm loving touch to help stay strong with the days that come. Remember the life Judy lead with joyful memories. - Jenn M & Family All the Poogs at Hedgie Haven

I wanted the family to know that Judy is in my prayers. – Pat

I too am so sorry to hear about Judy and will be praying for her human family and friends, as well as her little quilled ones. – Helen

Carl, Judy’s husband, wrote the following to the lists: Judy’s hedgie and quilt friends were the mainstay of her hobbies and projects. She spent hours measuring, cutting and sewing. We met in college in 1963 married in 1965. Judy managed a bookstore for 26 yrs. Of course reading was another of her passions. Thanks again to you and all the hedgie community - Carl Burcham

I'm truly sorry. My thoughts and prayers are with your family. – Vicki

Oh, no, that's awful! Judy was always such a special person on the list. – Linda W.

Mellisa….I can't help with the hedgies (I live in NY and can no longer care for hedgies) but I can send you love and prayers to help at this difficult time as Judy passes to peace forever…..Naomi

I will be keeping her and the whole family in my prayers. Hugs – Cyndy

I've never known HWS without Judy and the Manly Hedgeboyz of Texas. I had had several occasions to email with Judy regarding rescue reports and she was always friendly and cheerful. I always enjoyed her posts. Sometime last year she posted something about her and Carl moving to Mineola, Texas. That is near where my Mother lives. So I dropped Judy an email and told her I knew where she was talking about. That email led to another and another as we discussed Texas and my plans to move back some day soon. Judy wanted to be kept posted on our moving plans, not just so we could plan a meeting, but because she knew of a "headhunter" that might be able to get me a job. I was touched that she wanted to help. But I think that was just the way Judy was - helpful and kind.

We bid and won the 2007 Hedgehog Quilt, which has 2 Judy Burcham designs for a total of 4 squares. We feel honored to have this quilt and all the love that has gone into it, not just by Judy, but by all the artists who quilted pieces for it and by Cindy D. who assembled it.

Judy - we miss you!
Sheila Dempsey & Murfi Jackson

I would like to share with all in the community some photos of my hedgehogs enjoying the lovely hedgie bags that Judy sent to them as a surprise – that's the kind of woman Judy was – kind and giving and thoughtful.

She is missed.
Hi everybody! My name is Phileas but my friends call me Phil. For those of you who don’t know me, let me introduce myself. I’m a hedgie who loves to travel so I have an arrangement with members of the Hedgehog Welfare Society (HWS) to spend time traveling with them. Most of the time, I stay with someone for a month. My hosts take me to places, take pictures of me sightseeing, help me write stories for my blog, and buy me a few souvenirs. Every six months or so, my “loot” is auctioned off to raise money to help rescued hedgies. When I’m finished with my travels, there will be a musical CD made with all my travel photos. We will also sell that to raise money for the HWS.

I want to tell you all about my trip to Florida. I had never been there before so it was quite the adventure. I’m staying with Linda and Jim right now outside of Chicago. Well, Jim’s brother was getting married in Florida so we went down there for the wedding. It was a three day affair with a dessert get together on Friday night, the wedding on Saturday and a brunch Sunday morning. The wedding itself took place in a park. It rained pretty hard but not until the ceremony was over. Good thing because I was worried about my tux getting spotted from the rain.

After the brunch, we went over to the swamps and took a ride on one of those boats with the big fan on the back that makes the boat just kind of skim over the water. That was a lot of fun except that I almost blew out of the boat. Whew…glad I didn’t because we saw alligators out there!

We spent the next three days at Disneyworld. That was so much fun. The first day we went to Epcot. We went on the test track which is the longest and
fastest ride at Disney. Wow…that was fun! The next day we went to the Animal Kingdom which was really cool! They even had a tenrec there. We went on the safari and got real close to all the animals and then went on the Mt. Everest roller coaster which was a lot of fun, too. The third day we went to the Magic Kingdom and went on Space Mountain and the runaway train roller coaster. I also got to meet Stitch, Donald Duck, Goofy and Pluto and had my picture taken with all of them. There was also a parade and fireworks. Linda bought me a pair of ears and a tee shirt with Mickey Mouse himself on it. I just loved it there!!!!

Then we went off to the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral. We stayed in Cocoa Beach and decided to go on another boat ride…this time on something called a pon-toon boat. It was just us and the driver so he took us to a place where he knew there were a lot of manatees. They came right over to the boat to say hello to us and were playing with the anchor rope. One of them fell asleep with the rope between her flippers. We had to wait until she woke up to leave!

The next day we went to the Space Center. We looked at a lot of rockets and stuff and saw an IMAX movie where we had to wear the same funny glasses we wore at Disney. But then they wouldn’t let me ride in the shuttle simulator because I was too short. Hmpff!!!!

After that we were on our way to St. Augustine and stopped at a place called Daytona Beach. Linda told me that there was a really big car race there in February but we didn’t go to the speedway. Instead we ate on the pier and saw all kinds of dolphins jumping in the water. Then we got to drive our car on the beach. I was looking out of the window and people were waving to me. I think they must have mistaken me for a movie star or something (maybe like Brad Pitt?).

Then we went to St. Augustine which is a really old city. We took a trolley ride and went on a tour of the old jail. I’m sorry to say I got myself arrested. I told them I was Sheriff Bronco Phil and they threw me in the clink for impersonating an officer. They even put me in solitary! Well, Linda and Jim weren’t real happy when they had to come up with bail money for me. I knew I should have brought my badge!

After that we went on a trolley ride around the town, went shopping in the old town area, toured the old fort and the lighthouse (once again…too short to climb it), and got to drink water from the Fountain of Youth. I brought some home as a souvenir, too. Finally, we went to a really cool zoo for crocodilians. They had so many alligators there…even some white ones. And they had different kinds of crocodiles, too. You could walk through the swamp area and actually feed the alligators. Linda fed them. I was afraid they would try to eat me so I just walked. The swamp is also a nesting place for egrets. There were hundreds of them. A lot of them had babies in their nests and you could see their fuzzy little heads popping up.

Well, that’s about it for now. If anyone would like me to visit, just get in touch with my travel agent, Miss Donnasue. I’m trying to make it to all 50 states by October of 2009.