Milwaukee Hedgehog show: "When Should I See the Vet?"
By Cyndy Bennett

Guests at the Milwaukee Hedgehog Show in October had the opportunity to hear several wonderful and knowledgeable speakers covering a wide range of topics. Dr. Paul M. Gibbons (DVM, MS Diplomate, ABVP) offered a presentation called “When Should I See the Vet?” which was particularly helpful.

First he discussed the importance of getting to know your hedgehog while he or she is healthy. You should regularly take note of your hedge’s normal activities, appetite, weight, personality, vocalizations and behaviors. Careful observation of your hedgie will make you more aware of changes and will alert you when something could be wrong with your pet.

Dr. Gibbons also covered the signs of general illnesses that are specific to hedgehogs. When these start appearing, a vet visit is needed. It is very important to find a veterinarian who is knowledgeable about hedgehogs before an emergency arises. Whenever you get a new hedgehog you should visit your vet for a wellness checkup to get baseline information about your particular animal. This visit will also help you build a good relationship with the staff at your veterinarian’s office.

Perhaps the best part of Dr. Gibbons’ presentation was when he encouraged members of the audience to describe issues presented by their own pets. He was very interested in what people had to say about their experiences with hedgehog health. This stimulated a lot of participation and interesting discussions.
With the seasons changing and winter fast approaching, it is time to start thinking of temperature and your hedgehogs. Since the indoor temperature usually changes gradually when it starts getting colder outside, sometimes we don’t realize how cool it actually is. But your hedgehog might. The rule of thumb for most hedgehogs is no cooler than 70 degrees without drafts. Some, however, do require warmer temperatures than that. If you can’t keep your hedges’ room that warm, please be sure to provide them with another heat source in part of their cage so they can move to it if they get cold. This can be either an electric heater under the cage with a thermostat to turn on and off, a space heater or something that you warm up in the microwave like a Snuggle Safe or a Cuddle Pup. Whatever you use, be sure to cover it so that your hedgehog does not get burned. A few extra blankets in the winter would also be helpful.

Also, please have a plan in case you lose your electrical power. Even gas furnaces usually have an electric start on them. Just remember hedgehogs must be kept warm even if that means moving them somewhere else if you don’t have some kind of generator or alternative heat source like a fireplace. Some of you may remember that last winter Gioia was without electricity for a week or maybe a bit more when a storm went through her area. You need to be prepared! With hedgies, getting chilled is not just uncomfortable. It can be a matter of life or death!

Hedgehog Rendezvous Military Discussion

By Linda Woodring

As most of you know, there is a hedgehog military dedicated to stopping animal abuse around the country. Standing Bear was at the Milwaukee Hedgehog show to talk about the military, how it started and its purpose. We were lucky enough to have the head of the military, Major General Fred Akwekon in attendance. He performed his last official task at the hedgehog show. We were saddened to hear that he crossed the Bridge on his way back to his home base in Colorado.

There were several new appointments announced by the Major General since the Combat Command B (north), 4th Hedgehog Armored Division has been relocated from New York to Wisconsin. The new appointments are:

Lolly of Superpogs, Colonel of Armor, Commanding Combat Command B (north)

Precious of Superpogs, Lt. Col. of Armor, Executive Officer

Dorothy of Superpogs, Lt. Col. of Artillery, Operations Office (S3)

Theodore of Superpogs, Lt. Col. of Infantry, Commanding the 51st Hedgehog Armored Infantry Battalion

Two promotions announced were also announced:

Orbit the Spy of Wyoming has been promoted to Colonel and Commanding Officer, 173rd Hedgehog Airborne Brigade

Major Wizard of Illinois has been promoted to Lt. Col. of Armor as Commanding Officer, Hedgequarters, 35th Hedgehog Tank Battalion

Congratulation to everyone on their appointments and promotions.
Recently many of us were intrigued by photos of a beautiful baby long-eared hedgehog that were posted on Flickr (http://flickr.com/photos/22338198@N07/). No doubt some of us were surprised to learn that long-eared hedgies exist. Here is some more information for those who would like to expand their knowledge of hedgehog varieties.

Long-eared hedgehogs inhabit deserts and steppes in countries such as Egypt, Afghanistan, Turkestan, Mongolia, southeastern Russia, and parts of India. They are nocturnal and like to spend the day-time hours hiding in hollows or under rocks. They also burrow under small bushes and shrubs.

The head and body of this hedgehog measures from approximately 120 to 270 millimeters in length, the tail can be 10 to 50 mm long. The tummy is covered with white or cream colored fur and the quills are banded with dark brown and white. So far this sounds like a description of most of the hedgehogs we know. But wait, the distinguishing feature of this hedgie is the size of its ears which may be longer than half the length of its head! This characteristic may have developed as a means of coping with heat radiation in the desert. As you might expect, this hedgehog’s sense of hearing is very acute and quite helpful in detecting predators and live food.

Like other hedgies, the long-eared hedgehog is omnivorous. It prefers grasshoppers, beetles and other insects and also eats fruit, veggies and sometimes small lizards or snakes. During the night it may wander for long distances in search of food. It is able to go without food or water for a surprisingly long time. In laboratory tests long-eared hedgehogs have survived for as long as ten weeks without food or water! I have no record of what laboratory put poor defenseless hedgehogs through this torture.

This variety of hedgehog digs its own single-opening burrow which is usually about 45 cm long. It may also make use of burrows made by other small animals. It is solitary (no surprise there!) and in summer may experience periods of torpor characterized by reduced metabolism, heart rate, respiration, and body temperature. In colder areas the long-eared hedgehog may hibernate in winter.

Sources:
Acupuncture for Hedgehogs!

By: Kristen Zorbini Bongard

You would think that with all its quills, needles would be the last thing a hedgehog would need! However, According to Dr. Dean Beyerinck, Chief of Staff at the Silver Spring Animal Wellness Center, it is sometimes exactly what the doctor ordered. Acupuncture is an ancient medical practice originating in China that uses the insertion of needles into various parts of the body to restore the body’s life energy and balance (called Chi). According to Chinese medicine, the insertion of the needles can help to move stagnant energy that may be the cause of illness, stress or pain around the body. In western medical terms, acupuncture has been found to stimulate the production of endorphins, the “feel-good” hormones. This may explain, in part, the positive effects many patients experience from acupuncture treatment.

Trained as a veterinarian, Dr. Dean Beyerinck has combined his knowledge of animals and his knowledge of Chinese medicine to bring alternative therapies to animals. He gave an excellent presentation at the Milwaukee Hedgehog Rendezvous. He reported that most animals, including hedgehogs, respond very well to acupuncture and can receive both short-term and long-term relief from soreness, arthritis, mobility problems, and a host of other ailments.

Hedgehogs, he explained, are particularly well-suited to acupuncture since the special acupuncture needles (only slightly thicker than a human hair) can be inserted even when the hedgehog is curled into a ball. The trick is to quickly insert the needles and then place the hedgehog back inside his or her enclosure under some blankies for the prescribed amount of time (10 to 20 minutes).

While some may wince at the idea of sticking needles into any animal, as an acupuncture patient myself, I can testify that I usually can’t feel the needle being inserted at all. Dr. Beyerinck explained that sometimes when you hit the right spot there is a little “zing” that will fade as the needle is left in place. This “zing” could be because the acupuncture points, mapped centuries ago by the Chinese, accurately map the nerves in the body. Many acupuncture points correspond with these same nerves.

I have to say, I was very impressed with Dr. Beyerinck and would not hesitate to treat a mobility-impaired animal with acupuncture to improve his or her quality of life.
I’ve been asked to put quill to ink and pen a few words about the show that took place here October 10-12. It was a wonderful weekend, with 67 humans participating and close to 90 hedgehogs in attendance. Sixty-seven hedgehogs were on the Saturday conformation show table and fifty-five appeared on the Sunday conformation show table.

Guess I’ll open (and then close) with two of my biggest news flashes. I came home with a new baby sister. She is from Ohio and she’s 10 weeks old as I write this article. We’ve named her Samantha (Sammie for short) and her condo is right next to Molly’s. She’s pretty shy right now but she’s slowly starting to feel at home. Now, back to the show.

Friday night was a fun night. Mom placed my traveling condo right on the registration table, which was next to the table where hedge health checks were going on. This gave me a great opportunity to greet everyone and catch up on the latest hedge news. Folks settled in and the vendors set up their tables. All the Moms and Dads had pizza and stuff for dinner (I must admit, it smelled great) then settled in for a couple of talks. After the talks, the real fun started when the competitors were called to the table for the costume competition. There were some great costumes and a lot of laughter. Our very own newsletter editor Jennifer was the judge.

Saturday morning there was an early talk on genetics and colors presented by Bryan Smith who was also the conformation show judge that day. Competition was stiff with a lot of very good looking hedgehogs on the table. Everyone was grateful for the lunch break. Then the sporting events began. Again, much laughter ensued as us hedgehogs did our best to make our Moms and Dads proud. Snuggles Bennett was the shining star - - that girl is fast!

The best thing about Saturday night’s events, was that they didn’t involve us hedgehogs. We could rest comfortably back in our condos! The evening program was started off with presentations from two more speakers, this was followed by a very nice banquet for the humans. Then The Music of the Night was played and Standing Bear gave a talk that once again brought much laughter from the audience. All of our comrades who have crossed the bridge were fondly remembered during the Rainbow Bridge Celebration. Then some serious money was raised for hedgehog causes when the auction bid sheets were tallied and the live auction began. It was run by my very own Mom and Kristen ZB. I thought Kristen was fabo in those hedge slippers.

Sunday morning found us all back in the show room for another conformation show.

Partying until the wee morning hours occurred on Saturday and Sunday nights with Sunday night’s antics occurring in our room. I finally got tired of waiting for everyone to leave so I got up at midnight and just started running on my wheel. I mean really folks - - a little privacy would have been nice!

I’ll close with my other big news flash. Showtyme, Patsy, and my very own big sister Molly, all earned enough points during the weekend to become IHA Permanent Grand Champions! You should see all the ribbons we brought home for Molly. They really brighten up her condo and our home.

Until next time dear friends,
Phil meets many interesting people on his journeys.
He wanted to introduce you to some of his newest friends.

This is Ray & Helen (AKA: Trudy & the Beast).
Phil met them at the WGA Geocaching Picnic.

Phil gets treated to a facial by Kip, the owner of Barney’s Brother in Milwaukee, when he was staying with Deb W.

Phil took pilot lessons so he could go visit Hot Lips by Hot Air Balloon whenever he wanted to.

Phil’s newest love—Hot Lips.
Gimme a kiss!

Kristen is helping push Phil’s knee-cap back in place.
Ouch! That physical therapy hurts!

Phil helped Dr. Kohli fix Jennifer’s knee.
What’s with the drill, Phil?!?

Phil met his idol, the FONZ!
A-a-a-a-y!

Pat W. Was teaching everyone about Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery at the Des Moines Zoo.
Hedgehog Holly

By: Jennifer Plommon

With the winter holidays approaching, some information about the lovely holly plant seems appropriate. One very unique holly species is the Hedgehog Holly, *Ilex aquifolium 'Ferox Argentea*. Unlike other holly species which have spines only on the leaf edges, Hedgehog Holly has spines on the top surface of the leaves as well. This produces a very spiny, prickly plant, much like our huffy hedges. The leaves are also variegated with white. The entire plant is very attractive, producing red or white flowers in the fall. Since it is a male clone, it does not produce berries but many gardeners grow it with berry-producing species of holly to create a colorful display.

Just as our hedgehog friends come from a very ancient line of mammals (the insectivores), hedgehog holly comes from an ancient line of plants. It is said to be the oldest cultivar of holly still grown. It has been traced back to the early 17th century.

Hedgehog holly can grow to a tree as tall as 15 feet high by 8 to 10 feet across. This holly may also be grown as a hedge or as a group of trees for screening purposes. It is sturdy and long-lived, tolerates drought once it has been established, and prefers full sun over partial shade which might cause leaf spot disease to take hold. It is recommended for USDA zones 6 to 9, which includes minimum temperature ranges of -5 to +30 degrees Fahrenheit.

I am currently growing one plant outdoors in far-northern Washington State (zone 8), where it is doing just fine, and one plant in a pot on my balcony in Minneapolis, Minnesota (zone 4), which I need to bring indoors in the winter. If you can find one to grow for yourself, you will have a gorgeous and unusual holly that pays tribute to our gorgeous and unusual hedgehog friends.

There are some fun facts and legends about holly. Europeans believed that holly could repel evil. “Holy” (holly) boughs were thus often brought into the house in the winter to attract good fairies or Santa the Elf King. Druidic belief said that the Holly King was a giant who carried a club made of holly. He morphed into the Green Knight of Arthurian legend who challenged Sir Gawain with his “solitary branch of holly.” In Scandinavian legend, holly was associated with Thor (the Thunder and Lightning God) and Freya (the Thunder Goddess). Thus it was believed to be protective against lightning strikes and was planted near homes for that reason. Recent research shows this belief to have some basis in fact, as holly’s prickly leaves do indeed conduct lightning through the plant and into the ground better than almost any other plant known and with the least amount of damage to the plant itself. Holly should be both a female and male Goddess/God’s plant, since it comes in both male and female varieties. A Germanic belief says that when a household’s Christmas wreath is made of male holly (which does not have berries), the male of the house will be the “ruler” for the coming year. If the wreath is made of female holly (which it usually was for the sake of the beautiful berries), the female of the house will rule. Another version of this legend says that whoever brings the first holly branch into the house will rule the house for the coming year. Whether these legends are true or not, holly decorations for the holidays are always beautiful and long-lasting.
Hedgehog Rendezvous Show
Milwaukee Wisconsin
Show Results

Saturday, October 11, 2008
Judge: Bryan Smith.
Hedgie (owner).

Grand Champion Juvenile Male Table
Gimley (Ortolano) – Grand Champion
Copernicus (Beamon) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Adult Male Table
Zephyr (Shore) – Grand Champion
Prickulls (Standing Bear) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Senior Male Table
Harvey (Beamon) – Grand Champion
Theodore (Aprill) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Juvenile Female Table
Snowflake (Ortolano) – Grand Champion
Phoena-Cupcake (Ortolano) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Adult Female Table
Nyquil (Beamon) – Grand Champion
Showtyme (Sandoval) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Senior Female Table
Molly (Weaver) – Grand Champion
Patsy (Standing Bear) – Reserve Grand Champion

Best of Show Table
Gimley (Ortolano) – Best in Show
Nyquil (Beamon) – Reserve Best in Show

Sunday, October 12, 2008
Judges: Laurel Sedgwick and Bryan Smith.
Hedgie (owner).

Grand Champion Juvenile Male Table
Gimley (Ortolano) – Grand Champion
Copernicus (Beamon) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Adult Male Table
Pina (Gosdeck) – Grand Champion
Prickulls (Standing Bear) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Senior Male Table
Harvey (Beamon) – Grand Champion
Theodore (Aprill) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Juvenile Female Table
Juniper (Reetz) – Grand Champion
Bella (Ortolano) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Adult Female Table
Showtyme (Sandoval) – Grand Champion
Nyquil (Beamon) – Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion Senior Female Table
Patsy (Standing Bear) – Grand Champion
Molly (Weaver) – Reserve Grand Champion

Best of Show Table
Showtyme (Sandoval) – Best of Show
Gimley (Ortolano) – Reserve Best of Show

Molly and her ribbons