Snowball Nastuk says, “ENOUGH OF THE SNOW AND COLD!”

I’m sure we all agree when we say they should have stuck to hedgehogs instead of switching to groundhogs to determine the weather.
Thanks to Dennis Price of Eternal Idol.com for alerting the Hedgehog Welfare Society about this information and website.

The Stonehenge Riverside Project is a seven-year major archeological study of Stonehenge, the ancient structure on southern England’s Salisbury Plain. The project, supported by the National Geographic Society’s Committee for Research and Exploration, is focusing on the development of the Stonehenge area in Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain. A number of discoveries have been made at Stonehenge but one in particular should be of special interest to members of the Hedgehog Welfare Society.

While digging at a location known as the Palisade Ditch just west of Stonehenge, project archeologists unearthed a human skull which was clearly that of a small child who was approximately three years old at the time of death. A chalk figurine was found near the top of the pit where the child was buried. When viewed from the front, the object resembled a floppy-eared pig. However, after examining it from several angles, many have concluded that the object is a hedgehog!

The 2,000-year-old “Stone Henge-Hog” may have been intended as an offering of some kind or perhaps it was a grave marker. Some speculate that it was intended as a toy or in memory of the child.

According to archeologist Joshua Pollard, of the University of Bristol, evidence of toys in Bronze Age British history is “extremely scant.”

Animal figurines became more common in Iron Age Britain, between 700 and 800 B.C. Dr. Pollard says that if the figurine actually is a hedgehog, it is “the only known prehistoric depiction of a hedgehog from Britain.”

Fay Vass, a representative of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society who was quoted in the Daily Mail, had this to say about the discovery: “We are very excited to hear about this find. It shows humans have taken hedgehogs to their hearts for a very long time.”


Thinks from the Chief Volunteer Officer

Deb Weaver

Valentine’s Day occurred last month, the day all about love. I bet many of us included our hedgehogs in our celebrations.

So, what’s the greatest act of love we can give to our hedgehogs? I think it’s the gift of helping them to pass from this earth when they can’t break the ties themselves. Many of us have had to make this decision and many more of us will have to do so in the future. My first hedgie, Gracie, had a wonderful vet who looked me in the eye one day as I was struggling to make the decision to help Gracie to cross over and said, “It’s about quality of life - - not your life but the animal’s. You need to always remember that.” What defines our hedgehogs quality of life? I think some of the benchmarks to look for are running their wheels, eating and drinking on their own, sleeping soundly, breathing easily, and being able to move comfortably.

It’s not an easy decision to make by any means. But it is one I think we ought to be a bit quicker to move towards. I’ve had four hedgehogs die and three needed me to help them. In the first two cases, I feel that I waited too long to make the decision and my hedgehogs needlessly suffered because of it. With my last hedgie, Molly, I made the decision before she was on death’s door. In fact that day that I helped her cross, was a very good day for her. But I knew, it was only a matter of another 2, 3, or 4 days before she would be in distress (respiratory failure in her case). So with that first vet’s words echoing in my ears, I helped my beloved girl leave me and this earth-bound world.

A hedgehog owner once said, “The greatest act of love we can show our hedgehogs is to take their pain and make it our own”. And, when you think about it, it’s all about the love.

Every month, Maisey travels the world to find the latest and greatest in fashions for hedgehogs and is showcasing her finds here in Maisey’s Costume Corner.

Send your pictures to hedgelmom@comcast.net
To the Rescue!

Welcome New Rescue Contact!
The following individual has become an active rescue contact, opening his heart and home to hedgies in need.

Zug G. Standing Bear, Flash and Thelma Memorial Hedgehog Rescue
Divide, CO
http://hedgieflash.org

If you are interested in becoming a rescue contact, simply write to Sheila at SexyTexy@comcast.net for an application.

Thank you for your support!
Sheila and Cyndy

March
Mar 10  Snuggles Bennett
Mar 19  Arcturus Kueter-Watkins
Mar 19  Nimrod Beard
Mar 19  Goliath Beard

April
Apr  29  Inky Goertzen
Did you ever wonder what goes on after the lights go off and you go to bed? Did you notice that before you can even make it to the bedroom your hedgies are stirring? Did you ever wonder if your hedgehog really uses that wheel for anything other than a fun bathroom?

For those new to hedgehogs, I am sure you brought your little one home and anguish that he or she didn’t seem to want to come out and say “hello” to you during the day. And if he did come out, he was probably only interested in what kind of treat he was going to get for showing his cute little face.

Then the first few nights you probably lay awake listening to all the sounds coming from the hedgehog condo and wondering what he could possibly be doing. There’s the crunching of food and the banging of a water bottle. These are sounds which are pretty easy to identify but what are the other sounds? Is he playing with one of the many toys you’ve given him? Is he actually running in that wheel he’s been looking at strangely? Is he rearranging the bedding to suit his needs? Or maybe if you have a Molly Girl, she is totally redecorating because you put something out of place or she doesn’t like the colors you’ve chosen for her.

Well, I can tell you from experience, that a lot of a hedgehog’s time is spent running in the wheel. We have been putting odometers on all of our hedgie wheels. First we did this out of curiosity but then we did it because we feel it is important to know their habits and their “norm” in case they get sick. A change in running habits is an indication that something might be wrong with your little one I can tell you they run a lot farther than you would think. All of our hedgies have run at least 1,000 miles in their lifetimes...some a lot more. Baxter is 2 1/2 and just crossed that 1,000 mile mark. We have found that the average hedge probably runs from 2 to 5 miles per night. Of course most do slow down a bit as they age and there are some that run considerably more like Snuggles Bennett.

I’ve had a lot of people ask just how you “hook them up” to measure how far they are running. All you need is a good bicycle odometer. We prefer the wireless type and are now using a Model #CC-MC100W made by Catseye. The most important thing is to calibrate it properly for the size of the wheel. Jim has written some detailed information on how to calibrate the wheels. You simply attach the counter part to the upright on the stand and the magnet to the back of the wheel (assuming you have a bucket wheel), and then just set the readout outside the cage either above or behind the wheel.

If you go to the trouble of rigging a bicycle odometer to your hedgie’s exercise wheel, you will need to check it periodically to see that it is working correctly and accurately. Errors can occur if you make a mistake in entering the wheel circumference into the odometer set-up or if the sensor isn’t picking up every revolution of the wheel. Adjustment is critical as the sensor has to pass within about 1/8 of an inch of the magnet to trigger a count.

Misalignment can happen when the wheel is removed for cleaning. The clearance to the magnet should be checked each time you put it back in the cage. Give the wheel a spin to see that the speed display is triggered.

Also, the system should be calibrated periodically to verify that the data displayed is accurate. Basically, this involves spinning the wheel for a couple of hundred revolutions, calculating the distance traveled and comparing it with that shown on the meter. Although it is not necessary, it is also interesting to use a stopwatch while the wheel is spun and compare the stopwatch time with the time shown on the speedometer.

Turning the wheel a couple of hundred times while counting can be pretty tedious. Hubby Jim has a system he thinks is as handy as sliced bread. He uses a pencil sharpener to...
make a point on a small wooden dowel or pencil about 2 1/2 inches long. This is pushed into the center of a solid rubber ball about 1 1/2" diameter. The dowel is then mounted in a variable speed drill. Holding the ball on top of the wheel causes it spin easily at 2-3 MPH. A nice 300 revs can be made in less than 5 minutes. A piece of contrasting tape must be put across the outside of the wheel so the revs can be counted easily. Slick!

So now your wheel is ready. What do you do with the information? We have sheets made up for each month that we put on clipboards by each cage. Every morning we read the meters. The sheets show the date, total running time in minutes, number of miles that day, total miles, MPH, and maximum speed. We also leave a column for miscellaneous information such as something unusual going on (stayed up late, had company, gave baths, went to vet, etc.). This will sometimes account for less or more running than normal. I also leave a space to record my hedgehogs' weights which I usually do once a week unless I feel there's a reason to do it more often.

We then enter all the data into an Excel spreadsheet on the computer. Jim periodically graphs the information (sample graphs included). I always take the graphs to the vet and he always studies them before the exam, especially if a hedgehog is going in because of a potential problem rather than for a routine check.

I hope this helps those of you who have asked about tracking their hedgies' running habits or for those who were wondering if it could be done. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, and one of us will guide you through it.
Hedgehog Trivia: Pycnacantha

By: Margaret Myhre

Just when I thought my supply of hedgehog trivia topics had been exhausted, I discovered a new realm of creatures known for their resemblance to hedgehogs—Spiders!

Pycnacantha is a genus of spiders whose distinguishing characteristic is an abdomen covered with numerous spines which—in a spidery way—resemble the quills of a hedgehog. Although on at least one occasion this spider has been described as bearing “a wonderful resemblance to a dead thistle head (Royal Entomological Society of London, 1933),” the Pycnacantha has earned the common name “hedgehog spider.”

The hedgehog spider is golden brown with darker markings. It is “medium large” (eight to fifteen millimeters) with robust, spiny front legs. It spins a small orb type of web among blades of grass or sometimes in woody bush.

The hedgehog spider resides in, on or under grass and other low base vegetation and has a sedentary, web-bound lifestyle. During the day it sits in vegetation without moving. At night it is known to hang by its back legs from a silk trapeze using its well-developed front legs to capture moths.

*Pycnacantha dinteri* is southern African species of the Hedgehog spider which is found in Namibia. Another variety, *Pycnacantha tribulus,* is found in South Africa where a postage stamp has even been issued in its honor. It may be viewed at a website called Spiders on Stamps [http://www.spiders.hystrix.be/spiders.asp?c=30&s=9]


This book is part of the Animal Neighbors series from PowerKids Press, an imprint of the Rosen Publishing Company in New York City. The 15-volume series was designed for elementary school students in grades K through 5 and is written at a third grade reading level.

The text opens with a “Meet the Hedgehog” chapter that offers a world map showing where hedgehogs are likely to be found and a large diagram with descriptions of the hedgehog’s spines, legs, feet, underside, ears, eyes, nose and teeth. Although there are seventeen species of hedgehogs alive today, the book is devoted mostly to the European hedgehog. Chapters describe the hedgehog family (including cousins such as moonrats and star-nosed moles), birth and growing up, early development, habitat, defenses, hibernation, food, and mating. Back matter includes a glossary, suggested books and web sites as well as an index. Also featured are a diagram of the hedgehog life cycle plus a list “hedgehog clues” that might indicate the presence of a hedgehog in your neighborhood. The clues are: Dens, sniffing and snuffling noises, footprints, and droppings (a close-up photograph with measurements is provided).

One fascinating feature of this book is the use of boxed “sidebars” containing random hedgehog facts which are scattered throughout the chapters. For example, did you know that the first hedgehog appeared 30 million years ago? Or that there was once a giant hedgehog known as Deinogalerix? It was the size of a badger and became extinct about 5 million years ago.

This is a book that I can enthusiastically recommend to curious kids and adult hedgehog owners. It is well organized and beautifully designed. The book was originally published in England by Hodder and Stoughton in 2005. The American addition was published in September 2008. Hedgehog is available in hardback for $23.95 (ISBN 978-1435849983) or paperback for $10.35 (ISBN 978-1404245754).

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.
On December 24, 2008, I noticed that my hedgehog, Cuddles, had a distended abdomen. The vet clinic was closed and would not open again until December 26. She was still eating, drinking, playing and pooping. She was having trouble urinating and, if she did go, it was a very small amount.

On December 26, I brought her in to see one of our vets. Cuddles’ physical exam was good except for the abdominal distention. She was placed under anesthesia for a more thorough exam of her abdominal area. While she was under, our vet tried to assess her bladder but could not due to the distention of the abdominal area which felt spongy and fluid filled. X-Rays of the area showed that it was indeed filled with fluid.

The vet took a one milliliter syringe and easily aspirated one milliliter of serosanguineous fluid. He then took a three milliliter syringe and easily aspirated more fluid. Then taking a 20 milliliter syringe he easily aspirated 14 more milliliters of fluid! He stopped aspirating even though there was a lot more fluid to take out. He attempted a blood draw, but was unable to complete it because Cuddles, who has a long history of not doing well under anesthesia, was showing signs of respiratory distress. Shortly after the anesthesia was discontinued, she was alert and moving around.

Our vet asked permission to send the serosanguineous fluid out to be analyzed. He told me that he really wished he could have obtained a blood sample so he could be more specific with Cuddles’ treatment. I agreed to have the fluid analyzed hoping we could have more data to help not only Cuddles but future hedgehogs as well.

X-ray pictures and lab report::
Fluid analysis:
Specific Gravity: 1.020
WBC 140 /uL
RBC 77,000 /uL
Protein 2.0 GM/DL
Cytology:
Source: Peritoneal fluid
Description: Direct and sediment preps of the submitted fluid are of moderate to low cellularity consisting of a mixture of mature neutrophils, erythrocytes, rare small lymphocytes, a few macrophages and interspersed mesothelial cells. No etiologic agents, neoplastic cells or inflammatory infiltrates are observed. The cytologic findings and physical parameters of this fluid are consistent with a modified transudate.

Microscopic findings: Modified transudates within the peritoneal cavity usually develop secondary to chronic portal venous hypertension. Similar fluid accumulations are commonly associated with right sided cardiac failure, chronic hepato-biliary disease with hepatic capsular leakage and primary portal hypertension. Space occupying lesions within the mesentery, anterior abdomen and caudal mediastinum can also produce both lymphatic and venous obstruction resulting in the spilling of a mixed cellularity and protein content fluid into the peritoneal space. Imaging of the right ventricle, caudal mediastinum, liver, anterior abdomen and mesentery is warranted to identify the primary cause of the suspected portal hypertension.

At this time, Cuddles is on Lasix to help keep her abdominal fluid level down. She would not take the oral Lasix three times a day so we switched to SQ injectable Lasix twice a day. The amount given depends on her weight.

When hedgehogs are being treated with diuretics for any type of heart failure, it is very important to closely monitor weight changes. You should weigh the hedgehog twice a day at the same time each day (once in the morning and once in the evening). If you see a steady increase in the weight, call your vet and discuss new dosages for the diuretic. Your
Right-sided Heart Failure...

(...Continued from page 9)

Hedgehog may be on *Furosemide* which is a loop diuretic and or *Spironolactone* which is a potassium sparing diuretic. Hedgehogs with right-sided heart failure tend to fill up with fluid in the abdominal area. The accumulated fluid puts pressure against the diaphragm causing the hedgehog to have respiratory distress. Abdominocentesis can be performed to relieve the pressure. This is done by giving the hedgehog some gas, which has risks. Then the abdominal area is shaved and cleansed where the needle is to be inserted to decrease the chance of introducing bacteria into the sterile abdomen. Our vets aspirate the fluid using a butterfly infusion set with a 60 ml syringe attached. The rule of thumb is to aspirate no more than 10% of the hedgehog’s body weight. You may see a small amount of leaking from the site for a few hours after the procedure.

Cuddles was brought back into the vets’ office for an assessment on January 31st. I told my vets to let her go if she had respiratory issues while under or if they felt she had declined to the point that she needed to go. Our vets felt she had a lot of positive signs and did another abdominocentesis easily removing 83 milliliters of serosanguineous fluid.

On the morning of February 2nd, I noticed that food was sticking to the inside of Cuddles’ mouth. I put her drinking water in a plastic spoon and got her to drink some. The food loosened up and came out of her mouth. Later that morning one of our other vets called me. He said the white frothy stuff was probably due to dehydration. I asked about the food sticking to her mouth. He responded that the diuretic was probably the cause of that also. He stated that her gums and the inside of her mouth were probably really dry causing the food to stick to the roof of her mouth. He suggested soaking her kibble, and watching her eat to see which kind of kibble was the least sticky and using that kibble. He also cut her dose of diuretic in half again. In a couple days he plans to take her off the medication to see how she does.

Cuddles is stable at this time. We will help her cross when her quality of life changes if she does not cross on her own. We do not want Cuddles to suffer and that is why I told my vets to be totally honest with me. We have to keep in mind that our pet’s quality of life is what matters.

The first annual Eastern States Hedgehog Show will be held in Schoharie, New York (near Albany) on June 26–28, 2009!!

We have applied to have a fully sanctioned IHA conformation show, but the event will also include:

- A seminar by noted hedgehog ecologist, Nigel Reeve, Director of the Royal Parks, London.
- Assorted other Hedgehog competitions including costume contest and sporting event.
- Banquet dinner including an educational presentation on the history of the Schoharie area.
- Vendors, Auctions, and other opportunities to accumulate hedgehogabilia.
- Reception and general merry-making for hedgehogs and their guardians.
- Area site-seeing to the Howe Caverns and/or the Baseball Hall of Fame.

All events will be held at the Holiday Inn Express, Schoharie/Cobleskill. http://www.hospitality188.com/

For room reservations, be sure to mention you are with the Hedgehog Show. The web-site is under construction, and registration information will be available soon.

See you in Schoharie!
Hedgehog in the Fog
By Margaret Myhre

Hedgehog in the Fog is a short children’s film written by Sergey Kozlov who also published a book by the same title. The 1975 film was produced in the Soviet Union by the Soyuzmultfilm Studio in Moscow. In 1976, it won best animated film awards at the Teheran Children’s Youth Film Festival and the All-Union Film Festival in Kyrgyzstan.

The story features Hedgehog and his friend Bear who meet in the evenings for conversation, tea, and star counting. One evening Hedgehog is passing through the woods on his way to Bear’s house. He carries a container of raspberry jam bundled in a white dotted handkerchief. The night is foggy and soon Hedgehog passes a white horse standing in the mist. Some rather frightening creatures emerge from the fog including a large owl and bats. Hedgehog eventually loses his way until a friendly dog and an underwater creature, perhaps a fish or turtle, rescue him and help him find his way to Bear’s house.

The film was meticulously animated by Yuri Norstein (sometimes spelled Norshteyn) who is married to artist and collaborator Francesca Yarbusova. Refusing to use a computer, Norstein relies on a slow and painstaking animation technique which has earned him the nickname “The Golden Snail.” He creates handmade figures, like paper dolls, which are filmed on multiple glass panes. The fog effect was created placing tissue paper on top of the scenes and slowly lifting it up toward the camera, frame-by-frame, until everything behind it looked blurry and white.

Norstein’s latest work is an animation of Nikolai Gogol’s short story, The Overcoat. He has been working on the film for twenty years and has yet to finish it. He is a highly respected animator, considered by some to be the best animator of all time. You can see Hedgehog in the Fog on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRsXU4Q6a0Q. In 2006, Norstein published his own edition of Hedgehog in the Fog listing himself as an author along with Kozlov.


I recently had the opportunity to act as quilly ambassador to the Walworth County Courthouse where my mom works as a Public Defender. Since she started working there as a criminal defense attorney for poor people, people have known that she works with the Hedgehog Welfare Society. In fact, her nickname at work is “Hedgehog” or “Hedge” for short. It turns out that some of the other people who work at the courthouse, the judges and the District Attorneys (the people who prosecute criminals) and clerks, have never met a hedgehog! Mom knew right away that I would be the perfect girl to introduce them to our kind.

Unfortunately it was not as simple as walking in the door. As with many courthouses, the Walworth County courthouse has a metal detector and x-ray scanner that you have to clear before you can enter the building. It’s like what they use at airports. How was I going to get through without getting x-rayed?? Well, mom talked with the District Attorneys and they talked to the security guards and everyone agreed that I could come into the building without being x-rayed. I was a very special bag that day and I was very glad!

Our first stop was the District Attorney’s office. My mom’s friend the Assistant District Attorney wanted to meet a real live hedgehog. Well, it turns out that all the secretaries, assistants and interns in the office wanted to meet me too! Mom was holding me and explaining to a crowd of people what we hedgehogs are, what we eat, how fun we are to have as pets, and how my sister and I came to live with her. All of a sudden, one of the judges came in, too! Talk about intimidating! It was a little awkward when mom had to correct the judge, who thought I was a rodent (can you imagine?). She wanted to make sure that everyone there learned something that day.

Needless to say, I was a huge hit. One of the court reporters who came to visit even brought my mom a little beanie baby hedgehog that she bought because it reminded her of my mom! Everyone was very impressed that I was so friendly and relaxed. They thanked mom for bringing me to visit. After all the excitement, I was very tired, and fell asleep with my head tucked into mom’s elbow. Then all they got to see of me was my pink butt.

And that is my quilly courthouse adventure!

Yours truly,

Bianca ZB, the hedgehog