Index Now Available!

The recently completed index to the Hedgehog Welfare Society Newsletter is now available on the HWS homepage. While it’s not exactly scintillating reading, the index is a great tool to have when you want answers to what has, and has not, been covered in previous issues of the newsletter.

Do you want to know if a specific book has ever been reviewed by HWS?

Check the index under the heading BOOK REVIEWS.

Did you ever wonder how many articles a newsletter contributor has written?

Check the index under the contributor’s last name.

When did HWS begin presenting Wheel-A-Thons?

Check the index under the subject heading WHEEL-A-THON.

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Mr. Packie came to live with us in August 2005. His previous caretaker gave him up at the age of seven and returned him to Jeanne, the caretaker of Packie’s mother Sweet Needles. He was actually part of the last litter that Needles produced. Mr. Packie was a true Wonder Hedgehog. We know of no other hedgie, young or old, who has the agility, love and gentleness that Mr. Packie had.

On Saturday July 25, 2009, I received a voice mail from Jeanne asking if I would write a story for the IHA newsletter on Mr. Packie celebrating his upcoming birthday on September 1, 2009. Never ever did I think that the very next evening it would become a story of tribute. On July 26, 2009, Mr. Packie crossed. He did not pass alone. It is never ever something one wants to believe. How could he pass? Not Possible! Mr. Packie will live forever. Well he almost did, and in a way he will live forever in all our hearts.

Four years ago, Merle and I were given the honor of having this gentle hedgehog become a part of our family, yet we feel he belonged to us all. He was the hedgehog for all people and all hedgies.

I know what he would say if he could tell everyone what he wished for. It would be that we could all learn from him, no matter what color, what size, no matter whatever. With love, kindness and gentleness in our hearts, we too could be like Mr. Packie. He accepted whatever occurred in his life, he rolled with it (no, not in a ball), whatever came his way, always. We want to thank Jeanne for giving us this wonderful experience and this precious hedgehog.

To know Mr. Packie was to love him and we know his love for all was unconditional.

We pay tribute to him, Forever.

I wrote the following poem very late on the evening of July 26, 2009, after he had passed:

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To Our Beloved Mr. Packie

What a precious little life
The words, the words
Cannot be heard
Mr. Packie you dear
Came and you are gone
The tears are flowing
A river long
We thought we knew
Forever, for you
So special in our hearts you grew
What will we do, without you?
Quietly you left, forever you are gone
But in our hearts
Your journey was long
Goodnight sweet prince
Your sleep is long
We will see you one day
We will be along
Come running to us
Forever will be
Mr. Packie, Mr. Packie
Our long-lived little man
Strong and sturdy
How fast you ran
Your chickie sticks
Four sassy companions
You did pick
You made history
Our little man
Your wish for all
“live as long as you can”
It is a sadness hard to explain
If only we could have Mr. Packie again
Our lives were enriched

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We learned so much
You stuck our hearts
With your quilled touch
To have you forever
Mr. Packie our dear
We have now shed tear after tear
All for you as we say goodbye
We forever cherish you
Our long-lived little guy
Our love for you is eternal and we will miss
You so much, keep our love in your heart
Remember our touch
Mr. Packie you have been the most amazing hedgehog
We will be with you again one day.
With all our love your devoted parents,

Daddy Merle and Mom Bonnie
Mr. Packie 09/1998 to 07/2009
To the Rescue!

Welcome New Rescue Contacts!

Kara Gniewek, Greenville, NC

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

Announce your hedgie’s birthday here by sending their name and birthday or gotcha date to ...

hedgiemom@comcast.net
This beautifully illustrated children’s story describes a large black bear’s experiences with inter-species adoption. Bear is minding his own business at the lake one day when he discovers three gosling eggs. Concerned, he spends a long time waiting for someone to come and tend to the eggs. When no one arrives, he carefully carries them home.

With coaching from his good friend Hedgehog, Bear builds a grass nest for the eggs in his den. Hedgehog warns that the eggs need to be kept warm and offers to sit on the nest. But, insisting that Hedgehog is too prickly while he himself is soft and warm, bear very carefully lies down on the nest and falls asleep.

When he awakens, three hungry gosling chicks are staring at him, tweeting softly. Coached by his faithful friend Hedgehog, Bear teaches the babies to swim and helps them find food. Day after day he protects the chicks with plenty of advice and support from Hedgehog. When it is time for the chicks to learn to fly, Bear and Hedgehog go to extreme measures to train the youngsters in a skill neither adult possesses.

The large, colorful illustrations by the authors are beautiful and expressive. Co-star Hedgehog is one of the most successfully illustrated hedgehogs in children’s literature, second only to those created by Jan Brett.

This lovely story by Ingrid and Dieter Schubert was originally published in the Netherlands by Lemniscaat b.v. Rotterdam under the title *Dat komt er mou van!* The American edition was printed by Front Street & Lemniscaat of Asheville, North Carolina in 1999. Although it is out of print, used copies are available inexpensively through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Alibris and Advanced Book Exchange.

If you have suggestions or ideas for items you would like to see in the newsletter, e-mail the editor at newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org.
What do a multiple counted cross stitch award recipient and a country western recording artist have in common? They are our Hedgie Heroes this month. You know them as Sheila Dempsey (who’s won many blue ribbons for her cross stitch handiwork, including a Best of Show) and Murfi Jackson (the recording artist). They have been partners for 12 years and together they run A Tru Chance Hedgehog Rescue & Rehab.

Let’s start by rolling back the clock a bit. Texas is Sheila’s home state. Her family currently consists of her Mom, older sister Sandy, younger sister Robin (her best friend), and her niece Amber and her family - - all living in Texas. Another older sister, Brenda, lives in Arizona. Then there’s her nephew Jimmy and his family who live in California. Murfi doesn’t claim a home state. She was born in Texas but grew up an “Army brat” and spent her childhood living all over, including in Germany. Murfi has three older brothers who are spread out across the country. They are Patrick, Mike and Frank. Stacey, her younger sister, lives in Arizona. There are also nephews and a niece as well as great-nephews and nieces.

Sheila and Murfi initially met in an on-line chat room. When Murfi landed in McAllen, Texas for a job, a mutual friend encouraged the two of them to meet. They met up in Dallas one weekend and it was love at first sight. In this day and age, 12 years is quite a run! When asked what their secret is, the ladies responded with this:

The secret to our happy relationship is never forgetting the love that we felt in the beginning and remembering to respect each other. It certainly helps that we have a lot in common and enjoy each other’s company very much.

They currently reside in Waldorf, Maryland along with cat Meshach and dog Piper. Oh yes, and hedgehogs, lots of hedgehogs! Sheila is the family bread winner, working as a legal secretary in Washington DC, while Murfi, due to serious health issues, is a stay-at-home Mom.

Sheila is probably best known in our hedgehog community for her work in the rescue arena. She was elected to the Hedgehog Welfare Society’s Board of Directors in 2006, and currently serves as the co-chair of the very busy Rescue Committee. Cyndy Bennett, her Committee co-chair says of Sheila:

Working with Sheila on the HWS Rescue Com-

mittee is great. She is always ready to jump in and help even if things are busy in her personal life. We stay in contact with each other by e-mail, snail mail and telephone. Her love and commitment to hedgehogs and their care shines through every thing Sheila does for Hedgehog Welfare Society. If they could talk, all the hedgehogs that come under her care would testify to this. She is just an all around wonderful person.

One project Sheila and Cyndy recently worked on was reviewing the HWS database of rescue contacts and adoption applications. New applications for both have been drafted and will be implemented along with revised guidelines.

Elaine Becker says of Sheila: “Sheila was one of the first people I had contact with when I joined HWS and inquired about obtaining a rescue animal. She was as nice as she could be. When I got Q-Ball she sent him some blankies.”

When Sheila works with new rescue contacts and potential adoption applicants, she knows what she’s talking about. All of Sheila and Murfi’s personal hedgehogs have been rescues. First was Asti (named for his champagne color), followed by Leo (well known to those who follow the pogo antics on the Pog Chit-Chat Yahoo! list), then Tru, Chance, Ziggy, and most recently Nook.

Sheila and Murfi also have taken in many hedgehogs with Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrome (WHS). Murfi provides the hospice care needed to give these animals the best possible life they can have as they battle this terrible disease. Indeed, Asti their first rescue was also their first WHS hedge. Since then Pincecone and Cletus (sisters), Ferdinand, Mr. Prickles, Amy Rose, and Sonic Tohanna have all received tender and loving care from Murfi.

Sheila and Murfi have also taken in, nursed back to health, and re-homed many hedgehogs. This list includes Addison, Isobel, Hefty, Herbert, Houdini, Sharpie, Baron, Chip, Butters, Cookie, Spike, Sega, Rosie, Ollie, Alpha, Beta, Angle (and her three babies), Clairissa (and her three babies), Cindy and Clairebelle.

Linda Woodring said of Sheila:

I have known Sheila pretty much since I joined the hedgehog chat groups and I’ve worked with her for four years on the HWS Board. She’s a super per-
son, always willing to help with whatever needs to be done. She's done so much for hedgehog rescue including taking in many hedgehogs herself (some with special needs) and being one of the primary contacts for folks who are trying to find a hedgie. She screens everyone and tries to keep in touch with them after she places a hedgehog with them. We are so lucky to have her. I consider her a friend.

Sheila and Murfi’s take on all this? “Each rescue has his or her own personality.” Sheila responded, “They have taught Murfi and me to give with our hearts because even when you have bad times, there are good times to follow.” She continued, “Hedgehogs just seem magical. They look so rough on the exterior and then you get to know them and they can be so soft and fragile. We love the way they run on their wheels and the way they pull down their visor quills and make a mad face.”

In addition to rescue work, Sheila helped to develop the materials and the campaign for HWS’s Share With A Shelter initiative. In fact, Murfi developed the art work for the written materials. For the past four years Sheila has been in charge of designing HWS’s yearly calendar. Murfi reports that picking the wes for the 2010 calendar was especially tough for the two of them. Sheila also takes care of the calendar sales, helping to raise funds for HWS. She’s also active on the Yahoo! chat groups and she currently serves on the Newsletter Committee, after having previously served on the Fundraising and Public Relations Committees.

During non-hedgie times you can find these two reading the latest mystery novels, working crossword puzzles (Murfi), and listening to an iPod (Sheila). Murfi still picks up her guitar and sings when she’s feeling well enough. As musician and composer Murfi Lane, she has recorded her own music. She’s also opened on the road for Marty Stuart, John Anderson, ShaNaNa, Jerry Reed and Tanya Tucker.

Sheila recently became involved with the Washington Regional Transplant Community as a volunteer. Her interest in this topic sparked when Murfi suffered liver failure last spring. She is currently waiting to be added to a transplant list. Once Sheila is fully familiar with the facts and figures of the organization, she plans to go out to events and speak about the need for everyone to be an organ donor (see www.unos.org for more information about organ donation). This past June both Sheila and Murfi traveled to the Eastern States hedgehog show, where they delighted in face-to-face meetings with all the folks they’ve become friends with online.

Jennifer Plombom said:
Meeting Sheila and Murfi in person was a highlight of the show for me. They were as fun and funny and sweet and wise as I had suspected they were. The HWS is blessed to have Murfi and Sheila in our organization.

Many people have certainly benefited from Sheila and Murfi’s involvement in our hedgehog community. Tonya Thomas says of them:

They are kind and sweet. We are blessed to know them and be a part of their family. They are always ready to help a hedgehog in need no matter how busy they are. Sheila ROCKS when it comes to getting things done in the hedgie community.

Donnasue Graesser adds:

Sheila and Murfi are two of the most extraordinary women I know. I remember when Sheila first joined the lists, she would sign her posts “Blessed Be”. I feel that I am blessed beyond words to have these two incredible women in my life. They care deeply about animals and other human beings, and their profound love comes across in all they do and say.

When asked to say a few words about each other, both ladies echoed almost the same words. Murfi said “Sheila’s my backbone. She works so very hard for us. She’s a very giving, and forgiving, person. I simply treasure her.”

Sheila responded with:

Murfi means the world to me. She is my rock. Whenever my day is crazy or I’m feeling blue or overwhelmed, she’s there to make everything alright. She faces her own problems head on and always has a smile and a kind word for everyone.

Both ended their comments with “She is my hero”. Indeed, you are both heroes to us all!