In the last few years, hedgehogs have become very popular pets in South America, although the information, resources, and regulations concerning hedgehogs are not well developed yet. In North America and in some European countries there are laws about responsible ownership, breeding, and selling of hedgehogs, but for hedgies from South America the story is a little bit different.

Continues on page 2...
There are no rules regulating pet hedgehogs. Anyone can breed them, anyone can sell them and there are no expectations regarding registration or pedigree. There is no way to be certain that your hedgies are not related to each other.

Indeed, one of my hedgies was rescued from an irresponsible breeder who kept him inside a small box measuring 30 X 40 centimeters which was filled with wood shavings. His food and water were dirty and he was afraid of humans. His nails were so long they hurt his little paws and caused trouble when he walked. Fortunately, he is well today. But he is not the only hedgie who suffered this way. Many hedgies have troubles caused by ignorance, greed and lack of concern for the life of the animal. Gradually hedgehog owners are becoming more aware and perhaps a new generation of responsible breeders is developing.

It is very important for hedgehog owners to have good information about hedgehog care and health, which materials are appropriate for the construction of habitats, and which veterinarians are recommended because of their experience treating hedgehogs. For that reason, we decided to create a forum for the interchange of experiences and data among owners, breeders and people who are knowledgeable about hedgehogs.

One of our most important tasks at this time is to register as many hedgehogs as possible and to trace their ancestry back as far as possible. We need to know the breeds, the hedgies that have been bred together and the babies they have produced. We also need to track hedgehog breeders, sellers and owners. It is important for us to keep medical history records for our hedgehogs so we can determine the possibility of hereditary diseases.

We are working hard to create an online registry, to stress the responsibility of providing good hedgehog care, and to teach that one should not buy an animal just because it is cute but because one is prepared to provide love, care and a better life for the animal.

At our third hedgehog meeting in Chile, exotic animal specialists from the Buin Zoo and its veterinary hospital gave us help. Dr. Sebastián Celis gave an interesting presentation about Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrome (WHS), one of the most common and dangerous hedgehog diseases. The first case of WHS in Chile was diagnosed 8 years ago. Without responsible breeding practices, the WHS problem is expected to increase each year.

Veterinary surgeon Tania Vásquez explained the specific conditions for responsible hedgehog care, the dangers of massive use of some products, and the usual behaviors in hedgies.

We also had the opportunity to offer a presentation about Mazuri, a new food especially for insectivore mammals. The information about Mazuri was presented by the veterinary surgeon and CEO in Chile, José Echeñique. He explained the benefits of giving hedgehogs food intended for insectivores instead of food intended for cats who are naturally carnivores. He taught us ways to introduce new food to hedgies and how to avoid intestinal problems.

Our mission now is to continue leading the effort to rescue hedgies in bad conditions, to register individual hedgehogs and their relatives and to work for laws that regulate responsible management of hedgehogs as exotic pets. We want to provide better conditions for safe relationships between hedgehogs and humans.

Conditions for hedgehogs in South American can be better. Hedgies know when their human families are taking care of them. We have to be grateful for the love they give us, showing our thanks and loving them back.
Ni Hao from Phileas Hogg! In October, Phileas Hogg embarked upon the first leg of his Asian Adventure: A trip across the country of China! Phileas is currently on his second trip to Asia, visiting with Tracy Morrison in Japan.

Phileas’s first Asian adventure began with a 13-hour plane ride - over the North Pole! No evidence of Santa, but he did gaze across a clear blue sky over the white diamond-like mountains of Siberia. It was an incredible sight!

After arriving in China, Phileas spent his first two days in Beijing, where he climbed the Great Wall of China, walked through Tiananmen Square, shopped at the premiere jade factory in the world, and spent a day at the Forbidden City. The Forbidden City is the largest collection of ancient wooden buildings in the world, built from 1406 to 1420. It served as the home of the Emperor and his family from the Ming Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty, and was the center of Chinese government. A day was not enough to explore all the grand buildings of the palace. There are so many new sights, sounds, and tastes on the other side of the world! Phileas learned so much about Chinese history and tradition from our wonderful guide, Sylvia.

Although the stay in Beijing was exciting, nothing could compare to the excitement of the next leg of our trip. Phileas traveled to the Hunan province to meet Zeng Tuo – who is the newest hedgehog caretaker in the Graesser-Corra Family! Zeng Tuo is 10 years old and was raised in an orphanage in Changsha City. The visit to Hunan was filled with official paperwork, getting to know Zeng Tuo, and more paperwork! But, by the time we left, Zeng Tuo had been officially adopted. Phil was very honored to be a part of such a special occasion.

While in Hunan, Phil also visited the Provincial Museum where the contents of the Han Tombs are displayed. In 1971, workers digging an air raid shelter uncovered an enormous tomb. Amongst the thousands of precious artifacts in the tomb was buried Xin Zhui, the wife of the ruler of the Han imperial fifedom of Dai. The amazing thing about Xin Zhui is that she died between 178 and 145 BC, yet her body was perfectly preserved. Pathologists were able to autopsy her corpse as if she had only recently died. Her remains were not mummified. There is much legend and mystery in regards to how ancient Chinese morticians were able to preserve her remains. Scientists are baffled! Phileas was intrigued to see this grand old lady!

We flew from Beijing in the north, to Hunan in central China, and finally to Guangzhou in the south. Guangzhou is the Las Vegas of China – warm weather with lots of neon lights and glitz! It is also the site of the American consulate where Zeng Tuo received his visa to travel to the United States. Phileas’s hotel room overlooked a beautiful river. There was always excitement happening on the boats on the river. The entire week was full of immersion in Chinese culture, and visits to wonderful temples, zoos, tea-houses, academies, and mountains.

Photos of Phil’s trip to China and all his adventures are posted on his Facebook page (just search for Phileas Hogg and befriend him). They will also be posted on his blog at http://web.me.com/Phileashogg/Phil’sSite/Welcome.html
Emily McClellan got a call recently from a vet who works at an emergency vet clinic about half an hour away from us. He said that the morning before, his big dog carried inside what he thought was a disgusting loofah the dog had found in the backyard. But it was actually a tiny little hedgehog in very bad shape. Apparently someone didn’t want the little guy anymore so he got dumped outside. The vet checked him out. The hedgehog was in dire need of food, water and a bath. He also had several wounds and quill loss.

Now that he has been treated, new little quills are starting to poke out. He is just as cute as can be! Although he is still a little skittish, he warms up quickly and has endless amounts of energy!

"I am amazed how he lasted outside, it had been so cold and he is so young and tiny, but I'm so glad he is in a safe place now!" says Emily, who is considering becoming a rescue for the San Marcos area of Texas. Cyndy and I would like to thank Emily for taking Kuzco in and giving him a home.

To the Rescue!

Welcome New Rescue Contacts!

Susan Bennett, Indiatlantic, FL
Megan Mulleer, Abilene, TX
Crystal Smith, Farmer City, IL

Christi Chapman, Rawlins, WY
Robin Wahls, Bergen, NY

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
Our First Hedgie — A Love Story
By Margaret Myhre

We adopted our first pet hedgehog in the summer of 1997. Sugar, as her original owners called her, was purchased as a pet for a child with severe allergies. The child soon lost interest and Sugar was relegated to the garage. She lived on a bed of newspaper in a purple and pink plastic pet carrier and was fed a diet of dry cat food.

When Sugar’s family went on vacation, a friend of mine was asked to pet sit for Sugar. Since my friend was leaving on her own vacation before Sugar’s family was scheduled to return, my friend asked if we could care for Sugar during the last week of the family’s vacation. She also hinted that the family was considering finding a new home for Sugar since their daughter had lost interest in her.

When my son Andrew met Sugar for the first time it was love at first sight—at least for him. Sugar was overweight, cranky and not used to being handled. Andrew beamed at her as she rolled into a ball of spines, huffing and clicking. He pulled on the pink-and-purple gardening gloves that matched Sugar’s pink-and-purple home and picked her up. Sugar was outraged! Andrew was delighted! He wrapped her in his old baby blanket and held her as he read, played computer games and watched television. For a week his sedentary activities were usually accompanied by a background of steady huffing and clicking. Eventually Sugar would wear herself out and fall asleep in her blanket on Andrew’s lap.

When Sugar’s family returned from their vacation, the owner’s mother told Andrew that he was welcome to keep Sugar if he wished. Thrilled, he immediately changed her name to Snuffy. We began reading everything we could find about hedgehogs.

Snuffy moved into Andrew’s room where she lived in a large aquarium with a cloth cage liner, a sleeping bag, and a wheel. Her diet was changed from dry cat food to chicken sticks, veggies and mealworms.

Andrew liked to roll peas across the floor and laugh as Snuffy raced after them and gulped them down. She also loved racing around the kitchen in a plastic hamster ball as our dachshunds, Maggie and Joey, peered curiously at her from the other side of the baby gate.

Snuffy thrived in her new environment. She lost weight, exercised, played and fell in love with Andrew. She began making little chuckering noises every time he picked her up and was especially happy when he scratched her forehead. She came to love being held and eventually learned to swing from his thumb, holding on with her front paws. She sat on Andrew’s desk while he did his homework and explored the top of his guitar while he practiced. She visited his sixth grade class and was soon the subject of poems, essays and term papers.

I discovered that the notes I put in Andrew’s lunchbox were far more effective when they featured cartoon drawings of Snuffy. Soon she was reminding him to return his library books, go to his music lesson, and get his allergy shots. Eventually we had enough hedgehog sketches to fill a scrapbook. Many of these sketches have appeared in the Hedgehog Welfare Society Newsletter.

Snuffy was about two years old when she arrived at our house. She lived to an advanced age, surviving two surgeries in the process. One was for uterine cancer and the other was to remove a tumor from her shoulder. When the shoulder tumor grew back, our veterinarian advised against further surgery. Andrew did everything he could to keep his friend comfortable—feeding her by hand, cleaning her aquarium and providing plenty of clean polar fleece blankies. Then one day when Andrew came home from school, Snuffy curled up in the palm of his hand and died. She had waited all day to tell her best friend good bye.

Would you like to share the story of your first hedgehog? This is the place! Simply write it down and e-mail it to the editor at newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org.
What I first remember about it was havin’ to get a Dreaded Baff and havin’ my toenails stolen when I wasn’t even dirty! *HUFF HUFF* I wasn’t so sure I wanted to go to some place where I had to get a baff first.

Then Momma woke me up really, really early to put me in my magic Small Home. When Momma puts me in Small Home, I smell the scents of home. But when she takes me out of Small Home, I smell all kinds of new things! Magic!

After way too short of a time, Momma woke me up AGAIN and handed me to someone I didn’t know! Oh, I huffed at this person, I put up my visor quills, and I hid my face but this person just kept lookin’ at me! Then Momma told her my name is Arcturus. I don’t know why she’d say that when my name is Little Bear! *HUFF! * What kind of weird name is Arcturus, anyway?

Finally the person handed me back to Momma. I kept tryin’ to go to sleep in Small Home but I kept smellin’ too many new smells! I think I would have been more curious if I hadn’t been so tired!

After a little while, Momma took me out of Small Home again and plonked me down in the middle of a wide open space which I HATE! The person Momma fibbed to about my name came and picked me up AGAIN and looked at me real close-like! Momma kept tryin’ to tell me everything was fine but I didn’t believe her. I huffed and put up my visor quills and hid my face again. I’m not sure why but that person didn’t seem intimidated by my fierce show.

Things finally got a little better when the person put me back down on the table and I smelled another hedgie nearby! Yay! I love meetin’ new hedgies! But I didn’t get to meet him. I heard Momma say his name was Q-ball but I also heard my Momma and his Momma call him a weird name, too – I think it was Alfamail. Do all hedgies have weird names along with their normal names?

Finally Momma put me back in Small Home. But she held something else besides me – it was a pretty red ribbon. Momma said she was very proud of me, even if there were only two hedgehogs in my category. I don’t know what all that meant but I like my pretty red ribbon!

After all that, I slept through most of the day while Humans talked around me. Momma said two of the people talkin’ were Auntie Sheila and Auntie Amanda, who talked about carin’ for and rescuin’ hedgies. That’s always a good thing to talk about.

Momma and I went Outside (SO many fun new smells!) and I ran around awhile. My wheel wasn’t in Small Home so I needed to get my runnin’ in then! I sniffed here and piddled there and trotted around for a nice while. I think Momma’s scared of Outside ‘cause she’s always really close to me when we’re Outside.

Momma put me in Small Home before I was done explorin’ but she said we had to get on the road. I don’t remember runnin’ around on any roads but Momma was sayin’ all sorts of weird stuff that day. What I do remember, though, is the next time Momma took me out of Small Home, I smelled familiar scents. Momma put me back in Big Home where I hopped on my wheel lickety-split! Momma hung my pretty red ribbon on Big Home, too!

So, I got to smell lots of new smells, I got to run around Outside. I got a pretty red ribbon, and I got some yummy new kibble from Auntie Amanda. The DFW Hedgehog Show turned out to be pretty fun.

---Little Bear Kueter-Watkins
The hedgehog world is very unlike the world of registered dogs, cats, and horses because we (the “organized” hedgehog people) encourage ALL hedgehog owners to register their little ones! According to Jeanne Robtoy, Registrar of the International Hedgehog Registry, “Every hedgehog deserves their own number.”

When Robtoy presented her talk at The Rocky Mountain Hedgehog Show in October 2009, she gave an overview of the Registry’s history and goals as well as discussing the importance of hedgehog registration.

Here are the major reasons she gave for considering registration for your hedgehog:

Every hedgehog deserves to be recognized in the Registry regardless of where he or she came from. There is no such thing as an illegitimate kid because every hedgehog has both a father and a mother. There is also no such thing as a hedgehog who is not deserving of a registry number just because of how s/he came into the world or how s/he came to have a new guardian.

One thing the Registry does which is very important is to track demographics of hedgehogs, where there are more of them and areas where they are less known. This also helps track diseases that can be traced through breeding lines, such as Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrome (WHS), different types of cancers, and other illnesses. Tracking allows us to see if any of these things might be related to genetics, food, demographics, etc.

For breeders, registration is a very valuable tool for checking pedigrees and looking at lines to ensure the proper animals are bred together. It helps the breeders maintain records on their herds. It also allows them to have pride in their animals when the animals are registered and have pedigrees behind them. Some hedgehogs today have pedigrees covering a span of 20 generations!

Currently the registry includes almost 30,000 registered animals. That is an incredible number since hedgehogs were not introduced into the United States until the early 90s. According to Robtoy “We are big enough now to have a Canadian branch of the International Hedgehog Registry as well as branches in England and Ireland. These branches are all merged in the main IHA database. Maintaining the database is a time consuming volunteer job but well worth it.”

An excellent reason for registering your hedgehog is to be able to take him or her to the wonderful hedgehog shows. Although you can show your hedgehog without a registration number, your hedgehog must be registered with the IHA to collect points to potentially achieve the status of Permanent Grand Champion.

If you show your hedgehog at any IHA sanctioned show, and you want your hedgehog to be eligible to gain the rank of Permanent Grand Champion, then you must register your pet. It also is an indicator of your pride in your animal or animals. So if you haven’t already done so, please register your hedgehog(s) by emailing Jeanne at huffy-hedgie@yahoo.com or online at: http://www.hedgehogregistry.org/

Another benefit to having your hedgehog registered is the option of joining the Hedgehog Military. Their registration number becomes their serial number. The hedgehog military was established in August, 1998 with the arrival of Major General Spikers, United Hedgehog Marine Corps. He organized the Second Hedgehog Marine Division (Mechanized), whose mission it was to combat animal abuse. From those beginnings evolved not only a more elaborate hedgehog military structure, but also a hedgehog government for North America. Applicant hedgehogs who desire a commission in the hedgehog military may apply via email to MGSpikers@aol.com citing serial number (IHR number) gender, weight, date of birth (or “gotcha” date), and color. Also include special skills and attributes. All hedgehogs applying will become commissioned officers and can climb up through the ranks with time and devotion to duty. Other fur, feathered or scaled citizens (including humans) can become enlisted troops of the various military organizations. All volunteers receive their official papers showing their rank and duty station. Most of the action is seen on Pog-chit-chat, as well as hedgehog_help list servers (on www.Yahoogroups.com). Join in by registering your hedgehog(s) now!


Prickly Pile-up

Cyndy Bennett

Prickly pile-up is a fun game for the whole family. The game consists of wood pieces in the shape of our prickly little friends. The game designers call them porcupines but I call them hedgies.

The object of the game is to stack all 25 hedgie-shaped game pieces in a pile without knocking it over. You must start the game by placing three hedgies in a row nose to tail, standing on their feet. Then each player takes a turn placing a hedgie on the pile. You may not lay the hedgie on its side. Our personal best is 20 hedgies in the pile. How many hedgies can you stack?

Aside from keeping the kids amused, this game helps to develop eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills, social skills and cooperation with friends.

This game is available from many on line sources. Just use http://www.goodsearch.com (with the Hedgehog Welfare Society as the charity to benefit from the search) to find a distributor.

Jan 10    Sophie Peters
Jan 12    Babuk Miller
Jan 14    Freesia Miller
Jan 19    Little Hank Groves
Jan 20    Gardenia Miller
Jan 21    Chantilly Shamrock Miller

Feb 7     Migonette Miller
Feb 10    Alpinia Miller
Feb 11    Mei Ching Miller
Feb 13    Baylee Storm
Feb 19    Phiox Miller