Hi everybody! Phileas here. As you know, there’s a certain groundhog in Punxsutawney, PA that thinks every February 2 is his day. Well, we all know that February 2 is Hedgehog Day, so when I was given the opportunity to travel to Pennsylvania with Linda and Jim Woodring in August, well I jumped at the chance.

The main reason for going was Jim’s 50th high school reunion, so we started out in Meadville PA, home of the Meadville Bulldogs. We stayed at a very nice Bed & Breakfast called Wynken, Blynken & Nod. It was owned by one of Jim’s classmates and her husband. We met some of Jim and Linda’s friends there... Alan and Nancy and Ted and Priscilla. It was kind of interesting. Alan is a scientist type like Jim and he brought a huge container of liquid nitrogen

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with him. They were traveling in a little sports car, so I'm not sure where they put their other stuff. Anyway, one night we had instant frozen margaritas and instant frozen ice cream. I sat a bit close and almost got lost in the fog.

The night before the reunion, there was a get-together at the Elks’ Club, but I decided to get some sleep instead of going to that. On Saturday afternoon we did a bus tour of Meadville with stops at Allegheny College, the local wildflower farm (which looked like weeds to me) and a stop for lunch at Eddie’s Foot Longs.

Saturday night was the reunion at the Iroquois Club which is right on a lake and very pretty. I must say I was voted best dressed in my tux. Alan and Nancy brought some genuine Kentucky moonshine with them which made me a bit tipsy.

Sunday and Monday we visited with some friends in Meadville, and Monday night went out to celebrate Ted’s birthday. After dinner we went out to a cottage on the lake that Alan and Nancy had rented for a family reunion that week. More moonshine... I really don't remember going back to the B & B.

Tuesday Linda and Jim took me to the Crawford County Fair. I met one of the horses that was at the fair. His name was Joe, and he let me take a ride on his back. We missed the big earthquake... didn't feel a thing although we heard that some people in the area felt it.

Wednesday we left for Punxsutawney. We were going to take the back roads but ran into all kinds of construction and closed roads, so it took us a lot longer to get there than expected. Linda and Jim are, should I say, directionally challenged, so I had to help with directions or we would have never gotten there. We pulled into town, and Phil the Groundhog’s picture was EVERYWHERE. There are painted Phils all over, and he has his own souvenir shop. Imagine that?!?!?! We stopped and bought a few souvenirs and then drove out to Gobbler’s Nob where they have the big celebration every year. I looked in Phil’s little house, but he didn't seem to be home. You wouldn't believe this place...stands for the handicapped, press boxes, shuttles to the park... all this for a rodent!!! We finally found Phil. He was at the library... sound asleep on his back with his two buck teeth showing. The boy really does need to see a dentist! Well, no chance of talking to him that day.

Thursday morning we went back to the library and, you

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guessed it, Phil and Phyllis (his lady friend) were both still fast asleep. Jim finally asked the librarian when they got fed. She didn’t know but suggested we go ask at the Chamber of Commerce (which conveniently is near Phil’s souvenir shop). The lady at the C of C tried to call his handler, but he wasn’t home. He needs a handler? Geeeeezzz!!! Okay, so we went off to the Weather Museum, since the whole town buys into this idea that Phil really knows weather. I have to say, it was a nice museum, and I did get to see a cool storm-chasing video.

After a quick lunch, we went back to the C of C, and the lady said she had gotten in touch with Phil’s handler, Ron, and that we should call him which Linda did. He said he would meet us at Phil’s enclosure. He took Phil out so we could have our picture taken. Well, the poor old guy is just milking it for all it’s worth. He kept telling me he’s 125 years old, but I don’t believe that for a minute. I tried to explain to him the true origins of Groundhog Day, but he wasn’t listening to any of it. Can’t say that I blame him. The guy’s got it made. He works a couple hours a year, has a nice place to live with his girlfriend, and ummm, obviously is well-fed. So I’m thinking next year on Hedgehog Day, he’ll come clean and tell everyone in Punxsutawney the error of their ways. In the meantime... WE know the truth!
Are you a fan of comics? Do you ever dream of the day when a hedgehog will be featured in an on-going comic strip? Sure, Sonic the Hedgehog has been around since 1991. But he started out as a video game character and, let’s face it, if Hedgehog wasn’t part of his name you might never know that he is a hedgehog! I mean, really, where are the quills? Sonic just doesn’t do it for me.

Luckily there’s a new hedgehog in town! Sir Rupert Tennyson Bollingsworth the First has a recurring role in an online comic strip which was launched last March. The Chapel Chronicles features the adventures of Chapel Smith who describes herself in the comic’s introduction:

I am 11 years old and I have big red ponytails, granny glasses, and freakishly huge feet. I always wear a little black dress. I love having wacky adventures and dressing up in outlandish hats. I always have a lot of things to say, and you’ll be able to get a peek into my brain by reading the thoughts that go around my head.

In this strip I play games against my arch enemy Fred, suffer through my chores, idolize Lady Gaga, take comfort in my pet hedgehog Rupert, and maybe even fall down the rabbit hole. Why don’t you come along?

The Chapel Chronicles are available online at www.chapelchronicles.com. New additions are added every Friday. The Chronicles are divided into chapters: Chapel VS Fred, Chapel’s Chores, The Gaga Saga, The Elegance of the Hedgehog, etc. Rupert, as you might have guessed, makes his first appearance in Elegance of the Hedgehog.

So who, you may be wondering, is the artist behind Rupert and The Chapel Chronicles? Emma T Capps, of San

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San Carlos, California, is just fourteen years old! She has had a life long interest in writing, drawing and comics. The idea for Chapel came to Emma one night when she was eleven years old. Soon she made a birthday gift for her mother which consisted of a poem illustrated with drawings of Chapel.

Last year Emma’s elementary school required eighth graders to complete a “Recital Project.” Each eighth grader chose a passion and pursued it during the entire school year. Emma’s project was to create a line of greeting cards featuring Chapel. She began using the Internet site Zazzle to market her cards as well as pins and other gift items. Soon she progressed to creating her own web comic. She drew a strip every day for a month, then began serializing The Chapel Chronicles in March of 2011.

In April of 2011, Emma displayed copies of her Chapel Chronicles comic book at the annual MoCCA Festival in New York City. This comic book convention raises funds to support the city’s Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art. Emma sold around 80 copies of her comic book at the festival and donated her earnings to 826 Valencia, a San Francisco-based writing center where she has taken classes. Copies of this 44 page hand-drawn color comic may be purchased for $5 from www.chapelchronicles.com/catalog. Shipping is free. The book contains the first 31 strips from The Chapel Chronicles. Prints of individual strips may also be purchased.

In May Emma returned to New York where she received a gold medal at the 2011 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, a program for young artists and writers in the United States. She won the award for her other comic book, Jam Days, which tells the story of a girl hunting for cherry plums.

Since graduating from the eighth grade, Emma has decided to home school her way through high school so she can devote more time to developing her artistic career.

In this issue you will find four strips which explain how Chapel acquired her hedgehog Rupert. We hope to feature further episodes in coming issues of the Hedgehog Welfare Society Newsletter.

Sources:


The Elegance of the Hedgehog

Viva la Persistence

Chapel, do you want anything for Christmas?

Yes, a puppy from the shelter!

What’s your New Year’s resolution?

Get a puppy.

Chapel, are you giving up anything for Lent?

Yes, I’m giving up NOT HAVING A PUPPY.

Any choices for your birthday?

What do you think? A puppy! Jeez!

©2011 Emma T Capps
Chapel, hold it! Stop the marching!

Chapel:

Huh?

We've been thinking...

Crap, I'm in trouble.

Puppy or Bust

Puppy or Bust

We've decided to let you adopt a puppy.

Puppy or Bust

What?

I love you Mom!

I will never say anything bad to you. This is the best thing ever ever. I love you. Thank you so so so much to make up for it. I'll do the dishes from now on and I'll always be good and nice so when are we going?

©2011 Emma T. Capps
The Elegance of the Hedgehog

Love at First Prickle

This is the best day of my life! I must find my soulmate puppy!

Humane Society PUPPIES

This one's adorable... but so are the others.

They ALL need homes - how can I choose?

I doubt I'll ever find my... OH MY GOD.

©2011 Emma T Capps
The Elegance of the Hedgehog

Change of Heart

Chapel! Did you pick out your puppy?
What's on your head?

My new hedgehog.

Your new...? I thought we were getting a DOG.

Not anymore!

We're NOT getting a hedgehog.
Oh, wise choice, young lady! So few folks show compassion for our specialty rescues. Mrs. Smith, you must be SO proud of your little humanitarian!

We'll take all the necessary accessories, of course.

I can't believe you just got me to agree to all that, Chapel.

Hey, don't second-guess the Humane Society, man.

©2011 Emma T. Capps
Carolina Storm Hedgehogs is holding a Christmas photo contest for hedgehogs, again this year. Pictures should be taken with a Christmas theme in mind. One entry per household and no Photoshop please!

The deadline for submitting pictures is December 21st. There will be a poll where everyone may cast a vote but a panel of judges from the USA, UK and Canada will make the final decision to prevent cheating.

The polls will open December 22nd and close on New Year’s Day. The top 20 vote getters and two wildcard picks will move on to the judging round. Winners will be declared on January 2, 2012.

Pictures may be sent to: dukencbaab@yahoo.com

When submitting pictures please include your name, location and hedgehog’s name.

The 1st place winner may choose a Carolina Storm Wheel or a Storm Bucket Wheel with free shipping. 2nd and 3rd place winners may also choose between a Carolina Storm Wheel or a Storm Bucket Wheel but must pay for shipping.

Everyone who enters the contest is entitled to a $5 discount off either wheel they choose to buy.