To protect the well-being of pet hedgehogs through rescue, research and education of the people who care for them.

Dizzy, a rescued hedgehog, visits “Santa Paws”!
(Photo by Homer Animal Friends)

Santa Paws Meets Dizzy the Hedgehog

By Dianna Hahnlen

Our local charity, Homer Animal Friends, of Homer, Alaska, presented a Christmas fundraiser in which, with a donation to the organization, pets could be photographed with "Santa Paws"! The donations help fund the shelter’s expenses as well as programs such as a low cost spay and neuter clinic and animal outreach in Homer. It’s a wonderful charity.

They were soooo excited when I brought my girls to the shelter. They had never had hedges visit the shelter before and some had never even seen hedgehogs before. Dizzy is very shy, but she LOVED Santa, almost as much as Santa loved her!
2015 HWS Calendars Available

Grover, Baby Molly, Kirby, Violet, Badger, Little Big Man, Pip, Jool, Dyson, Harriet, Günter, Emmy, and Wally are the pin-up hedgehies featured in the 2015 calendar created by the Board Members of the Hedgehog Welfare Society.

Board members Deb Weaver (Chief Volunteer Officer), Linda Woodring (Vice Chief Volunteer Officer), Tina Winchell (membership chair), Laura Dunklee (Health Research and Education Co-Chair), Jennifer Plombok (Advocacy-Pet Store/USDA Liaison Co-Chair, Rescue Care Packages Chair and Quills and Comfort Coordinator), Kristen Zorbini Bongard (Advocacy-Pet Store/USDA Liaison Co-Chair and Public Relations Co-Chair), and Margaret Myhre (Newsletter Editor) all contributed photographs to the project.

The startling October photo came from Brett Mitchell, whose hedgehog, Günter, was the winner of a Halloween contest presented by Carolina Storm Wheels. I have been assured that no hedgehogs were harmed in the production of this photo!

The calendars are 11” X 8” with white pages and plenty of room for important dates and notes. They are now being sold for $23 each and may be ordered via PayPal (donations@...) or check (payable to HWS and mailed to Tina Winchell, 1365 W M 55, Tawas City, MI 48763).

Money earned from calendar sales will help support the Hedgehog Welfare Society.
What is the Right Weight for My Hedgehog?

By Laura Dunklee, HWS Co-Chair for Health and Education

One of the most common questions asked by new hedgehog owners is “What’s the right weight for my hedgehog?” The answer is not simple: it depends.

Like humans, the “right” weight for an individual hedgehog is based on a combination of genetics, early nutrition and care, and the hedgehog’s overall health, activity level, body shape, and age. Therefore, a healthy hedgehog can be full grown and at the right weight at 200 grams and a healthy hedgehog can be full grown and at the right weight at 700 grams.

The question that should be asked is: “Is my hedgehog at a healthy weight?”

Hedgehog Body Shapes

Before talking about determining whether a hedgehog is at a healthy weight, we need to look at the different body shapes for hedgehogs. Generally speaking, hedgehogs have three basic body shapes: long and lean, teardrop, and round.

Long and lean hedgehogs are lighter, often in the 200 to 300 gram range, and smaller. They have narrow bodies, usually as wide at the shoulder as the rump, and they tend to be very active. Some are cuddle bugs, but most would rather be off exploring or wheeling, often for hours at a time. These hedgehogs usually have a good appetite, but may have a higher metabolism and caretakers may struggle to put weight onto their pet, feeding extra fresh food, snacks, and kibble mixtures higher in fat.

Teardrop-shaped hedgehogs are pointed at the head and then their body widens toward the rump, resulting in a teardrop-like appearance. This body shape is often what people think of when they envision hedgehogs and is the most typical shape for wild European hedgehogs. Teardrop-shaped hedgehogs are healthy and active, with some being more active than others. Their weights are usually in the 300 to 600 gram range, with outliers at both ends.

Round hedgehogs are just that: round. They may be a little less active, or they may be very active and just large-framed. The round hedgehogs may be prone to obesity and show more interest in food, but not always. As with humans, there are larger skeletal structures that can handle, or even need, more weight. Weights for round hedgehogs are typically between 400 and 700 grams. As with the other hedgehog body shapes, there are always outliers.

Continued on page 6
How to Tell if Your Hedgehog is at a Healthy Weight

If you are concerned that your hedgehog is underweight, place them in front of you and look down at their body from above. You should not see an indentation or concave shape between their ribcage and their hips. If there is an indentation, your hedgehog is likely underweight and you need to help them put on weight, gradually, using full-fat foods and more proteins. You can also increase their favorite snacks, including insects.

If your hedgehog is round and you are concerned that they are overweight or obese, the most accepted way of determining that is to hold your hedgehog on their back and see if they can roll into a tight ball. If they can fully enclose themselves, with no belly fur showing, they are okay. If they cannot completely roll up, then they likely need to be put on a modified diet and have their activity level increased. Another telltale sign of obesity in hedgehogs are fat deposits in the armpits, which appear yellowing under the skin. Again, a change in diet and increased exercise will help the hedgehog lose weight.

Weighing the Hedgehog

Any significant change in your hedgehog’s weight (other than gradual weight gain in a growing hoglet) is cause for concern. It’s not easy to detect gradual weight changes by visual exam, so it’s important that you regularly weigh your hedgehog.

To monitor your hedgehog’s weight, you need to purchase a digital kitchen scale, which weighs in grams. These are available online and at many large stores such as Target and Wal-Mart, in their kitchen goods section, and usually run between $15 and $30.

To weigh your hedgehog, place the scale on a flat, solid surface, set the weight to display in grams instead of pounds, and place your hedgehog on the scale. Make note of the weight and you’re done. If you have a wiggly hedgehog who is not interested in remaining still or who keeps scampering off the scale, you can place a bowl on the scale and zero out the weight, then pop the little one in and record the weight.

You will need to weigh your hedgehog regularly, at least once a week, though daily or every couple of days is preferable. Also, it is important to weigh your hedgehog at the same time of day, either pre-bathroom trip or post-bathroom, as hedgehogs can excrete upwards of 10- to 15-grams of urine and feces at a time. Use a weight chart to track your hedgehog’s weight, and take it with you when you take your hedgehog to the vet, as it provides valuable information.

There will be variances in your hedgehog’s weight, 10 to 15 grams a day is normal, but if you notice a significant weight gain or weight loss, especially if it’s a trending change or something very dramatic, you need to get your hedgehog to the vet see what’s happening with your little one.

Hedgehog Weight Chart

You should record the weight on a chart, noting the date, time, and adding other notes, such as the hedgehog’s appetite, appearance and amount of urine and feces, behavioral changes, and so forth. This is all good information to have, and you can take it with you when you take the hedgehog to the vet, so the vet can easily see what’s been going on.

Don’t worry about a blanket “right” weight for hedgehogs. Your little one is an individual: You need to figure out the right weight for him or her, specifically.
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Hedgehogs and Surgeries

By Laura C. Dunklee, HWS Co-Chair for Health, Research, and Education

Sometimes hedgehogs need to have surgery. No matter the reason for the operation, the process can be nerve-wracking for caretakers. Being prepared, and having the information you need beforehand, will help you relax a bit.

Understand that nothing in this article is meant to substitute for your veterinarian’s experience, advice, or directions. Double-check with them on EVERYTHING suggested below.

PRE-SURGERY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR VET

As a hedgehog caretaker, you’re going to need to work closely with your vet. This involves asking lots of questions. It’s best to make a list and write down the answers. Ask these at the visit prior to the surgery. Your vet will give you discharge instructions, but they may not cover everything.

— How long will the surgery last? Understand, though, that surgery doesn’t always go as expected, so the vet will likely provide you with a time estimate.

— Provided everything goes according to plan, when will you be able to bring your hedgehog home? If they want to keep your hedgehog overnight, is there a staff member onsite at all times to monitor your little one?

— What are the potential complications of the surgery? Anesthesia always carries some risk. However, there may be additional issues related to the hedgehog’s age, overall health, and the cause for the surgery.

— Should you bring in some of the hedgehog’s regular food to have available following surgery? Is there anything else you should bring along when you drop the hedgehog off, like a clean cuddle sack or blankets?

— Does your vet have an after-hours emergency number? If not, what vet clinic(s) do they recommend for after-hours emergency care, should there be complications? If your vet recommends another clinic for emergency care, print out the phone number and driving directions to have on hand.

Also ask if your vet can supply you with needle-less syringes. One cc and three cc size are best for syringe feeding, as are curved-tipped syringes. You will want several of each, as the rubber stoppers on the plungers tend to stick with repeated use and cleaning.

If your vet does not carry curved-tipped syringes, you can sometimes find them at drugstores, in the dental section, labeled “dental irrigation syringe”; they are usually 12 cc sized, which is fine. You may need to trim off the end to make the opening wide enough to move food through.

A Note on Additional Medications

Many oral pain medications and antibiotics can lead to stomach upset. Talk with your vet about offering probiotics to your hedgehog to help maintain a balance of good bacteria in the animal’s gut. One readily available option is Bene-Bac Small Animal, available in powder and gel formulations from some pet stores. Many vet offices also carry it. Ask your vet when it should be given relative to when the antibiotics are administered.

In addition to the probiotics, talk with your vet about Sulcrafate (brand name Carofate in the U.S.). It’s a prescription medication that coats and soothes the stomach. However, it cannot be given at the same time as the other oral meds, because it can prevent absorption.

Continued on page 7
HOME PREPARATIONS, PRE-SURGERY

Assuming your hedgehog’s surgery has been scheduled in advance, there are some things that you can do to prepare for your little one’s homecoming.

Foods

Stock-up on basic syringable foods for your hedgehog, in case they don’t feel like eating for a day or two following surgery. Plain chicken baby food, sweet potato, and apple or pear baby foods are all good. Also, powdered baby cereal, preferably multi-grain, for added fiber. Mix together two jars of the chicken with ½ jar each of the sweet potato and apple or pear, and then add between one and three teaspoons of the powdered baby cereal, to get to a syringable thickness.

You can purchase canned Hill’s a/d® canine/feline critical care from your vet, as that is easily syringed. Also, the vet may have Carnivore Care, which is a powdered food that you add water to. Hopefully you won’t need to syringe feed, but if you do, it’s best to have everything on hand.

If possible, make the baby food mix a few days before surgery and offer small dabs to your hedgehog at night, in addition to their regular food, to get them used to the taste. Same goes for the a/d; hedgehogs are notorious for not being receptive to new foods, so it’s good to have some familiarity.

Habitat

The morning of the surgery, assuming everything has been scheduled in advance, you’re going to need to modify the hedgehog’s habitat. You will want to do the following:

Put down light colored liners in the habitat, so you can monitor your hedgehog’s urine and feces, as well as see if there is seepage from the incision. This is essential: you need to know that everything is normal or “to be expected,” and that nothing is off.

If you regularly use particulate bedding, such as recycled newspaper or wood shavings, remove those. They will hide your hedgehog’s waste and any seepage from the incision, making it difficult or impossible to monitor, and the particles may adhere to an incision. If you use any kind of litter in a litter box for your hedgehog, remove it and replace with layers of folded, white paper towels.

If the habitat has a second level, remove the ramp or tube leading to the top. Anesthesia medications can linger in the hedgehog’s body for some time, leaving them unsteady on their feet. You do not want to risk your hedgehog starting down the ramp or tube, losing their balance, and tumbling, sliding, or falling.

Set-up an additional heat source or make sure you can provide adequate additional heat. During recovery, some hedgehogs need a warmer environment. This makes sense, as they need to expend their energy in recovering, not trying to maintain their body temperature.

You can purchase a pet-safe heating pad for their sleeping area, such as the K & H Heated Resting Mat for Small Animals, or increase the ambient temperature in their habitat through a ceramic heat emitter or space heater. If you do choose to use a heating pad or mat, make sure that it’s under only part of your hedgehog’s sleeping area, so they can move on or off it as they desire.

IMPORTANT: If your hedgehog is groggy or unable to move easily following surgery, do not leave them unattended on a heat source!

You may need to remove your hedgehog’s wheel. Most vets recommend no wheeling for at least 24-48 hours following a surgery. This ensures your hedgehog is putting energy into healing. However, some hedgehogs become frustrated and agitated without their wheel, so this must be discussed with your vet.

POST-SURGERY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR VET

When you pick-up your hedgehog after surgery, there are more questions you need to ask. Remember to write down the answers.

Were there any complications during the surgery?

If a tumor was removed, does the vet recommend sending it for pathology and were there clean margins?

Continued on page 8
POST-SURGERY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR VET

— Has your hedgehog had anything to eat or drink since recovering from the anesthesia? Has the hedgehog gone to the bathroom? Most vets won’t discharge a hedgehog until all of these have happened, although some will.
— What kind of care needs to be given to the surgical site, if any?
— What medications are being sent home with your hedgehog? You’ll usually be given antibiotics and pain medicine. Do the medicines need to be refrigerated? How much needs to be given and when? Has the hedgehog already had the first dose? If not when should it be started? What are common side-effects of the medication, such as changes in feces, changes in appetite, or drowsiness? What are the signs that indicate the hedgehog is having issues with the medication?
— What are warning signs and symptoms that the recovery is not going well? When should you call your vet or take your hedgehog to an emergency vet?
— When can your hedgehog resume normal activities, such as wheeling?

BRINGING YOUR HEDGEHOG HOME

You’ll feel much better having your hedgehog home with you. You’ll need to be attentive to your pet for the first 72-hours or so, as that is when most complications happen, if there are going to be any.

Put your hedgehog in it’s habitat, make sure there is easy access to regular food and water, and let your hedgehog sleep. Your pet has just been through a major medical experience, on top of the anesthesia and pain medications, and will likely want to be left alone to rest and recuperate. Make sure the room is toasty. You need to regularly check to see that your hedgehog’s stomach is warm and that your pet is not showing signs of distress.

Your hedgehog may not eat each much the first night following the surgery. It is important they have some food in their stomach, though, before giving most medicine: many antibiotics and pain medications can cause stomach upset without food as a buffer. If they don’t eat anything, syringe three to five ccs of food into them, or more if they want it, to make sure they have something in their system. Be patient with the feeding and proceed at their pace.

Areas of Concern

Watch your hedgehog’s urine and feces. Make sure the hedgehog is urinating and defecating. You can expect the feces to look “off,” due to stress and the new medications. They may smell different, or be harder or softer than normal, and even different colors. If your hedgehog produces feces that have mucous in them, are bloody or show even a very small amount of blood, are watery or liquid, or are black and tarry, you need to contact your vet immediately. These are all signs of gastrointestinal issues and your hedgehog needs to be evaluated, ASAP.

Watch your hedgehog’s energy level and awareness. It’s normal if the hedgehog is tired and wants to sleep a lot, but if your pet is lethargic or limp, or slow to respond to touch, then you need to contact your vet or emergency vet immediately.

If your hedgehog is sleeping in the open, rather than in its normal, enclosed sleeping area, you need to speak with your vet. Many long-term hedgehog caretakers have noted that when a hedgehog suddenly starts sleeping in the open, it is a sign of a health issue.

Monitor your hedgehog’s incision area. Make sure it’s not hot to the touch, inflamed, or weeping any fluids. While there may be some bruising of the tissue, there should not be extensive bruising.

You also need to keep close tabs on how much your hedgehog is eating. It’s normal that the appetite is a little low for the night following the surgery, but the hedgehog needs to be eating by the following night, 24-hours post-surgery. Be prepared to syringe feed, if necessary.

YOU CAN DO THIS

Most hedgehogs come through surgery with flying colors. They are hardy animals and usually make a swift recovery.

One final note: Do not be surprised if, one to three months following the surgery, your hedgehog experiences a dramatic quilling episode. Regardless of their age, this is a very common occurrence and is tied to the stress of the surgery.
Thoughts from the CVO
Deb Weaver

Happy New Year everyone! Hope you all had a festive holiday season filled with the things and people you love most.

As the hoopla and lights fade what’s left? The final clean-up (how did that bow get stuck to the bottom of the sofa??), getting those outside decorations down before the neighbors start pointing, or will it be pulling the last of the tree needles out of the carpet? It’s sure a lot more fun getting in to the season than getting out, isn’t it?

Then there are those holiday bills. Did $100.00 bucks really need to be spent on each of your friends? Or perhaps you went on that much needed “get away vacation” and now your savings account is $1,000 leaner. My personal weakness is eating out, especially when I’m on vacation.

The question I’ve been asking myself lately is, “How can I be more responsible financially”?

In today’s society, the answer to that questions seems to be “don’t be, just ask others for money”. The movement of crowd funding (sometimes called crowd sourcing) is alive and well. Want to move to California? Pay for your hobby? Pay for a new car? Adopt a child? Just create an account and ask people to pay your way! I find this simultaneously amazing and appalling.

Whatever happened to each of us being responsible for ourselves? How did it become acceptable to ask other people to financially support us?

I’ve sat down and taken pencil to paper, listing in detail my expenses and income and deciding how I can better spend - - and more importantly save - - my money. I and I alone need to take control of my money. Emergencies arise, certainly, and sometimes we do have to reach out and ask for help. And I certainly remember my early 20s when poverty and I were well acquainted and daily living was a struggle.

Organizations that again and again ask me for money annoy me. It makes me want to tell them to sit down and take a look at their big picture and to live within their means, just like the rest of us have to. If you can’t afford it, whatever it is, don’t do it. Save up for it (it’s called delayed gratification). Don’t expect someone else to bail you out for your poor choices.
Preparing to Evacuate

Laura Dunklee, HWS Co-Chair for Health and Education

(Please note that this article is directed toward hedgehog caretakers, but much of it also applies to any other animals in your household.)

Emergency situations happen every day: floods, fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes, are all in the news. Sometimes you have hours or days to prepare for evacuation; at other times, you have just minutes to grab your animals and evacuate. Your animals, hedgehogs and others, are your responsibility, and they depend on you to get them to safety. You must always be prepared. Luckily, it isn’t difficult to do.

ESSENTIAL – CARRIER, HEAT SOURCE, FOOD

Carriers

You must have enough carriers to house each of your hedgehogs, unless you have some that live together. The carriers need to be hard-sided with adequate ventilation and they need to be assembled and ready to go. A hard-sided carrier is safest for your hedgehog:

— It will not collapse and potentially flatten the hedgehog
— It will protect the hedgehog from any unfamiliar animals who might possibly harm them
— It is easily recognized by emergency personnel and others as likely holding a living animal
— They can be stacked and secured in a vehicle.

Next, label the carrier. Use a permanent marker and print the information. You can use a large sticker placed on top of the carrier. Include the animal’s name, species, your phone number, the contact information for your veterinarian, and contact information (name and phone number) of a friend.

Prepare the carrier: Use a liner, such as a puppy pad, then cover that with several layers of fleece, for insulation, comfort, and to provide the hedgehog burrowing opportunity, should it be needed. Do not assume that you are going to have time to assemble your carrier. You may not.

You can also take a towel and wrap it in several puppy pads, to provide both a softer surface for the hedgehog and for insulation. If you’re a crafting person, you can sew carrier liners, which are usually several layers of fleece, cut to fit the base of the carrier.

Heat Source: Hand Warmers and Socks

Hedgehogs are temperature sensitive. If they get chilled, you could be dealing with a hibernation attempt and even death. Therefore you must have a non-electricity-dependent heat source. I recommend the Mega Warmer air-activated warmers. On Amazon, these are listed as “Grabber Warmers Grabber 12+ Hours Mega Warmers, Maximum Heat, 30-Count” (for a box of 30). The smaller hand and foot warmers do not produce heat for as long and may only last for an hour or two. These warmers are air activated and non-toxic / non-combustible / odorless.

All you need do is open one of the individually-sealed warmers, place it in a sock, tie off the end of the sock, and the heating will commence. You will need to check and replace the warmer when it begins to cool. I’ve never had one last for the promised 12 hours, eight hours seems to be the average.

Place several unopened warmers (I usually have six) in each carrier, include a sock in which you can drop the warmer once it has been opened.

Food

Keeping your hedgehogs on their usual diet will help them during an evacuation. If your hedgehogs are on a blend of kibbles, you can search online for sample sized packets of the specific brands that you feed. Also, some pet stores, especially independent ones, often have small sized bags of kibble available at a low price. Or you can contact the manufacturer to see if they will sell you samples. If you can find sample sizes of your regular mix, grab them. They’re excellent to have on hand. If you can’t, each time you make your kibble mix, toss some into a zippered bag and tape it to the interior roof of the evacuation carrier, so it’s always there and ready. If you are using a homemade mix and not sample packets, swap out the kibble mix, for fresh every month, to make sure the kibble stays fresh.

Continued on page 11
IMPORTANT BUT NOT ESSENTIAL

The following items are important but you can get by without them, or prepare them after you have taken care of the carrier, heat source, and food.

Basic emergency kit: for a bare-bones emergency kit you’ll need:

— Two or three jars of plain chicken baby food
— Two jars of sweet potato baby food
— If your vet carries it, also include two or three cans of Hill’s a/d cat food and a plastic snap on lid to cover an open can.

Also have:

— More hand warmers
— Nail clippers and styptic powder or a small container of flour to stop bleeding
— Baby shampoo and a couple of hand towels
— Hypoallergenic baby wipes (store them in a zippered plastic bag, with the air squeezed out, or else they will quickly dry out)

Toss all this in a small duffle or other zippered bag with a strap, so you can grab and go. If you get a larger duffle, you can add in the bedding, documents, and dishes, too.

Bedding: Liners, puppy pads, snuggle sacks, hedgie hats, and fleece blankets are all good things to have, because hedgehogs tend to soil their bedding if they’re grabbed from their cage, thrust into a carrier, and then moved into an unfamiliar environment. Along with the extra bedding, zippered plastic baggies are good to have, since hedgehog “stress poops” can be very smelly. Include some type of baby wipes for cleaning-up the hedgehog, too. The unscented, hypoallergenic ones are the best, but, depending on the packaging, can dry out fast. Storing them in a zippered plastic bag with all the air squeezed out, is a good call.

Documents: A list of local veterinarians and emergency veterinarians, along with phone numbers, addresses, and maps of their location; list of local hotels and motels that allow animals, along with phone numbers, addresses, and maps of their locations; copies of any paperwork from your hedgehog’s breeder.

Food / Water Dishes: Not essential, as you can always improvise, but if you have spare food and water dishes, they are very handy to keep at the ready in case you do have to leave your home.

Collapsible Housing: There are some wonderful, collapsible “dog play pens” available on sites like Amazon, which are fabric and collapsible, and can be purchased for under $50.00. They are easily stored and transported.

Being Prepared is a Good Thing

Hopefully you will never have to go through an evacuation, but being prepared and having everything ready to grab and go means a less traumatic experience for your hedgehog and for yourself. It really doesn’t take long to put together everything you need, and it’s not expensive, either. Take an hour or two to do this: It could make the difference between life and death for your hedgehog.
“Dear Mr. Hedgehog” By Karen DeBiasse  1/3/14 ©

A tiny animal’s birth
Appears on planet earth
His name is Mister Hedgehog
He wears a prickly shirt

Through brush and rocks and termite mounds
This Hedgehog he does go
His wobbly legs
His sticky spines
His pointy black tipped nose

Hello there Mister Hedgehog
You’re out so late tonight
I slept all day and now I’m off
To go out for a bite

Where will you go this morning
Once dined on grubs and worms
Be resting in my burrow
Where I choose to be alone

He waddles through a garden
He waddles past a tree
His teeth are pearly white
His black eyes barely see

Come catch me if you can
May make a nice warm friend
I’m not so hard to tame
And even like to bathe

Am playful if you’re nice
If not take my advise
Beware my pointy spines
To them I will resign

To them I will resign
I pick him up and there he rolls
A tight neat little ball
I hold him very precariously
Afraid that he might fall

This adorable little hedgehog
In the palm of my own hand
Opens up and kisses me
He doesn’t even stab

Oh Dear Ol’ Mr. Hedgehog
I hope your life is long
You’re fun and sweet and oh so cute
A treasure to us all

Just go on with my business
Get by without much strife
I dug a cozy home
I live a simple life

I’m happy down here resting
Will stay here all day long
He tucks his tiny head in
And rolls up in a ball

His quills stick all around
Pin cushion he is crowned
And on his soft warm bed
Appears as if he’s dead

I’m just a spiny Hedgehog
A shrew can’t you see
I’ve been around forever
For all eternity

Come catch me if you can
May make a nice warm friend
I’m not so hard to tame
And even like to bathe

Am playful if you’re nice
If not take my advise
Beware my pointy spines
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Karen DeBiasse is the lead singer in the band “Girl on Top.” She is also a voice teacher with a four octave range who studied with Dante Pavone and is certified to carry on his methods. She offers vocal lessons to students of any age, level or vocal style using Pavone’s world-renowned breathing and vocal techniques which will protect the voice. Her lessons are available in person or via Skype. For more information go to: http://www.karendebiasse.com/
2015 Wheel-a-Thon

By Linda Woodring

Winter is upon us, so you know what that means. It's almost time for the Hedgehog Welfare Society's annual Wheel-a-Thon. It's held every year on Hedgehog Day, February 2. We're hoping this year's Wheel-a-Thon is bigger and better than ever. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, so we'd like as many people as possible to participate or at least make a donation to one (or more) of the teams that are participating.

It's very simple to do. You just sign up your hedgehogs and then get pledges from your friends, relatives, co-workers, neighbors, etc. for your hedgie(s) running that night. You can even have a team name if you wish. You collect a flat amount, so it doesn't matter if your hedgie has an off night. Sponsors can either write a check to the HWS or can pay through PayPal. If you would like to participate, please send an e-mail to Linda Woodring at hedgiemom@comcast.net, and you'll get a pledge sheet and the rules.

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

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<td>Mr. Quillby Kirkland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Moonflower Clark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Fergus Hannigan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Tiegan Sikorski</td>
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The photograph of this beautiful plate comes to us from Naomi Wikane. The plate is one of the few items she was able to rescue from her home when most of her belongings were destroyed during a flood in 2011.

The plate is one of a set of six limited edition plates designed by Norma Carter for Davenport Pottery of North Staffordshire, England. The plates were issued in support of St. Tiggywinkles, part of the Wildlife Hospital Trust.

The plates in the *Our Country Companions* series are:

- *Resting in the Grass* Plate No. 02300G (badgers)
- *Cuddling under the Oaks* Plate No. 01574E (foxes)
- *Snuggling by the Waterside* Plate No. 00897F (fawns)
- *Foraging in the Woods* Plate No. 00569E (otters)
- *Nestling in the Forest* Plate No. 02953B (hedgehogs)
- *Nuzzling under the Brier Roses* Plate No. 08785A (squirrels)
Arugula is a hedgehog, a very particular hedgehog, who aims for perfection in every thing she does. Her quills, which are brushed forward all the way up her back to her forehead, must have just the right bounce and shine. Her house is clean and bright — always! There are no weeds in her garden—ever! She expects perfection in everything she does. Nothing else will do! Quite frankly, Arugula is PERFECT!

One morning as she is brushing her teeth to perfection, she decides to have a party. All day long as she practices her yoga, mows her lawn, mops her kitchen, and dusts her furniture, she plans the details of the party. There will be tea, cucumber sandwiches and a beautiful strawberry cake. Everything will be perfect!

The next morning she begins shopping for her party and inviting everyone she sees to the event. That is everyone, except Fidget. Fidget is an active little squirrel who wears his baseball cap backwards with the bill pointing down between his shoulders. Arugula does not think Fidget is perfect. In fact, she thinks Fidget is irritating.

Arugula spends days cleaning, planning the menu and cooking. Finally the day of the tea party arrives. Arugula greets each guest at the door. She reminds Pistachio the rabbit to wipe his feet, tells Basil the Raccoon to handle the antique tea pot carefully, and hands a coaster to Parsley the Bear so she won’t leave a ring on the table. Pansy the mouse is admonished for getting crumbs on the carpet, Forsythia the skunk doesn’t cut the cake neatly enough, and Clover the beaver is reminded to be very careful with the fragile teacups.

Arugula may be having fun! But her guests are miserable!

Suddenly someone bursts into the room, yelling "Hey, everybody! Let’s get this party started! Who wants a cream puff?” Fidget has arrived.

The ice has been broken and the everyone begins to have good time. At first Arugula is devastated, but soon she realizes that her guests are having fun. She immediately changes her opinion of Fidget and, finally, everyone has a good time!