



# IHA NEWS

JULY - AUGUST 2009 Volume 11 Issue 3



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PROMOTING HEDGEHOG EDUCATION,  
RESEARCH, REGISTRATION & RESCUE WORLDWIDE

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## Weighing In

by Z. G. Standing Bear

### Weight Variability in Hedgehogs

A popular question frequently raised in hedgehog discussion groups is “How much should my hedgehog weigh?” The answer, of course, is “That depends.” The ideal weight for a hedgehog depends upon a number of factors centering around “body habitus,” that is, the bone structure, musculature, length, and height of the hedgehog, much in the way ideal weights are determined for humans. Even within the relatively small confines of a football field, a petite cheerleader may be considered having an ideal weight of 110 pounds, as would the likes of “Refrigerator” Perry, weighing in at over three times as much.

Probably the most authoritative contemporary source on hedgehog weights is the comprehensive textbook “Hedgehogs” by British author Nigel Reeve. Unfortunately out of print, this 300+ page work is the definitive scientific work on hedgehogs around the world. Reeve makes numerous remarks about hedgehog weights and, true to the scientific nature of the work, cites many scientific sources, including numerous references to the works of Konrad Herter, a notable hedgehog researcher in Germany in the 1930s. Reeve makes several important observations generally throughout his text. First, of the four genera of hedgehogs, the European (erinaceus) genera (consisting of two species) tend to be a little larger and heavier than the other three genera (African, Desert, and Eastern)(atelerix, hemichinus, and parachinus)(consisting of the remaining 12 species). Second, Reeve observes at several points in his book that weight averages

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**Our Goal: To promote and improve the care and quality of hedgehogs by means of education and exhibition**

## The Royal Quill



Born around the time of hedgehogs long journeyed on, I can imagine the reception that Mr. Packie (IHR Number 1200) received by his contemporary, Major General Spikers (IHR Number 1248): “Where, on Earth, have YOU been?” And I can imagine the response, “Ahh, General, so many fair ladies and so little time.” This issue, just as the issue of the IHA News exactly one year ago, commemorates and celebrates the life of the hedgehog to live the longest in recorded history. Were he a human, Mr. Packie would have been right up there with those Russian mountain goatherds that reportedly reach 140 years of age. In hedgehog terms, it seemed that he would live forever, and indeed he does, in our hearts and minds. Travel on in comfort and grace, Mr. Packie, as you have beautifully acquitted yourself of your earthly duties.

The Eastern States Hedgehog Show in Schoharie, New York was a major success in a beautiful and historic setting. Naomi Wikane, who lives there and has been a hedgehog friend and supporter since as long as we can remember, was the anchor that held this very substantial ship in harbor. Many thanks to the folks of the Hedgehog Welfare Society that engineered the event, as well as to our very own Master Judge Sherry Songhurst and Show Secretary Cindy de la Rosa. The show results appear in this issue.

This issue of the news is also “weighty” in another way, as the dedicated weight-recording devotee pens at article devoted to heftiness. His contention is that our human caretakers cannot ascertain much about hedgehog weight changes because they (humans) are so poor at estimating hedgehog weights due to the vast size differences between hedgehogs and humans. He may have a point there. Weight trend changes may well indicate a health problem needing prompt medical attention. I’m not going to argue with the guy on this. Keeping a daily weight record is essential! Just ignore the photographs, comparing me with a dwarf baby hedgehog is just rather silly.

The Woodring Boys are a unique bunch of hedgehogs, always mischievous, adventuresome, and downright, well, for lack of a better term, creative. Any time spent on the Pig-pog-chat Yahooogroups list-server will give you a dose of their antics. Yet, in spite of their tomfoolery, they are amazingly effective in bringing everyone together in a spirit of cooperation, imagination, and harmony. I suppose that is why the senior hedgehog military commanders recommended the promotion of Wizard Woodring to the rank of Colonel and placed him in command of a Combat Command of the 4th Hedgehog Armored Division. Now, in this issue of the News, enter yet another of the Woodring fellows, Baxter, or, better yet, Baxtermoto. Read it for yourself, as the entire piece defies description.

I remain, as my loyal predecessors before me, your most humble servant and Keeper of The Original Instructions.

HRH Queen Sable the Serene, IHR 16234  
Hedgehog Monarch of North America



Dwarf baby hedgehog Sabinaya follows HRH Queen Sable into the Royal Hall for an audience.  
(Image by Patrick Besant-Matthews)

# Getting A Little Respect

by Baxter Woodring



Baxtermoto  
(Image by Linda Woodring)

We hedgehogs are, fortunately, not so culturally limited as are our human friends. So, when one particular society treats us unkindly, we can easily embrace another that will be more benevolent, even adoring. That's what being around for some 65 million years will get you.

The last straw came for me on my last visit to the physician for four-legged citizens, commonly called a veterinarian. Now, granted, I've picked up a few grams along the way, but to be called an O-Beast was a little over the top. That called for some drastic action.

So, I looked around for a culture that was not so hung up on being skinny. Across the seas my journey took me to the far away land of Japan (well, it's not far away to the Japanese, just to us). Finally, a place where not only was weight respected, but also admired! Indeed, arguably the oldest sport in the world is practiced there to the cheers of millions of adoring

fans - and the more substantial the contestants are, the more they are admired. Sounds like my kind of place. O-Beast, indeed! That's how I decided to become a Sumo Wrestler. I feel much better now.

Being a Sumo Wrestler is a fun job. Eat all you want, drink lotsa beer, take long naps, and the wrestling bouts are usually over in a minute or two - as soon as you can throw the other guy out of the ring. Figure a little momentum and a good head quill butt oughta do it.

力士 = Sumo Wrestler

神風 = Kamikaze Pilot

Just a little word of caution, though. If you are planning to adopt yourself into a different culture, be sure to get yourself familiar with the language and symbols of your newly embraced society. Mistakes can be dangerous!

Leaving the O-Beast behind, yours truly,  
Baxtermoto.

# Tribute to Mr. Packie

## “The Grand Old Man”

September 15, 1998 - July 26, 2009  
(IHR Registered Hedgehog Number 1200)

*by Bonnie and Merle Stubbins*

*Editorial Note by Orbit the Spy, Ministrare Temporalis, Advisor to The Crown*

*Mr. Packie, whose birth was documented as September 15 1998, was the longest-lived hedgehog officially recorded anywhere in the world, so far as we know, having lived to an amazing eleven years, ten months, and eleven days. Perhaps the Guinness people would like to know about this. As he approached his tenth birthday, he was featured in an IHA News special issue on hedgehog longevity (Volume 10, Issue 4, July/August, 2008). He was the son of Jeanne Robtoy's very first set of hedgehogs in her now well known breeding endeavor, Needles (IHR #664) and Pickles (IHR #663). His final home was with Bonnie and Merle Stubbins, of Oldsmar, Florida, the caretakers at Sir Snuffy's Hedgehog Rescue. What follows are their fond reminiscences of this very special and inspirational “Grand Old Man.”*



Packie Wheeling at Age Ten! (Photo by Beth Hatch)

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 (Robtoy), who was the caretaker of Needles Sweet Needles and the mother of Mr. Packie. He was actually part of the last litter that Needles produced. Even at that time, at the age of seven, he was quite a unique hedgehog. Even though hedgehogs are portrayed as loners, Mr. Packie did not enjoy being alone.

Jeanne was the caretaker of Mr. Packie's mom, Needles, her first hedgehog. I had the good fortune of hedge-sitting Needles for Jeanne and what a thrill that was. At the time it was the only hedgehog I had ever known who would roll over while holding her to have her tummy rubbed. She was a gentle and sweet hedgehog, so it is not hard to figure out where Mr. Packie got his gentle temperament.

Well, Jeanne gave Mr. Packie a cage-mate. Her name was Dorie. Even though one familiar with hedgehogs might say a male and female together would pose a problem of mating, this case among the geriatric set was an exception. Mr. Packie had a mindset to woo and could peep, whistle, and sing as well as any young male, however, the rest was but a dream. Dorie did not mind, as he was so handsome and gentle and sweet as could be, and they slept side by side.

Mr. Packie was in great shape, too, as he loved to wheel each and every night. His appetite was voracious at that time. Jeanne then had a situation in her life causing her to move. Where she was moving to was a state where hedgehogs were not legal to keep. I knew she was sad and torn as she would not be able to take her beloved Mr. Packie with her. Prior to her having to move, Mr. Packie's cage-mate crossed over the Bridge. Mr. Packie mourned the loss of Dorie beyond what most would believe. Jeanne tenderly picked him up and tried to console him but Mr. Packie had to say goodbye his way. So for a short while she put Mr. Packie back in the cage with her, and he went round and round her, sniffing and whimpering, and then lay down in front of her nose to nose. He knew she was gone, and he was truly in mourning.

Jeanne knew he would and could not be alone. She contacted another hedgehog owner who lived nearby and pleaded to have one of her females to please come and be Mr. Packie's cage-mate. All were concerned whether he would accept the new lady, Ivan. Well, he did.

When Mr. Packie started peeping and dancing around and sniffed Ivan, he then lay down beside her. Everyone sighed as Mr. Packie settled in with his new "wife."

There came a time when the owner of Ivan wished to have her hedgehog back home. At that particular time we were at Jeanne's house and another breeder who had a retired hedgehog mom that we all felt would be a good companion for Mr. Packie, seemed to be a good candidate. Her name was Hydra, and she was a large, fluffy girl. Mr. Packie did not mind as he loved all of his lady companions, so it seemed. Once again, he peep'd and went round and round her, sniffed, and fell in love yet again.

The time had come and Jeanne had to move. She called Merle (my spouse) and me, and asked if we could give Mr. Packie and Hydra a forever home, along with Charlie Dorito the tenrec. As it was her last three kids, it was hard to let go. We both told Jeanne we would be honored to give these three a forever home. So in they moved and our journey with Mr. Packie began.

He was such a funny little hedgehog who got so excited when it was mealie time and time to run in his wheel. He loved Hydra and even though she was three times his size, he protected her from any harm. If we had to give baths, it had to be together. When nail clipping was due, Mr. Packie never minded. However, Hydra did not like it and the vet had to do hers. So when that happened, every 3 months (the nail clipping), one of us had to hold Mr. Packie until Hydra returned home, as he hated being alone. So, Merle would take a group for nail clipping and I held and rocked Mr. Packie until Hydra returned. At cage cleaning time I held them both together, never apart.

Then we had to move to a new home ourselves and even then as they were all transported. Mr. Packie and Hydra came together, remaining in their cage.

Then, in time, we lost Hydra late at night and both Merle and I were in a panic, as now we had to remove Hydra, clean out the cage and make a rather hasty decision, who of all our hedgehog girls would be most similar to Hydra? At this time in Mr. Packie's life his sight was not good as he had cataracts in both eyes and was virtually blind. We knew another hedgehog girl would not have Hydra's smell but we also knew that we had to find him yet another wife. So while Merle redid the cage and buried Hydra in our yard, yes at night in the dark, I held and rocked Mr. Packie. He peeped and peeped, and he sensed that something was different. So we decided that our fluffy Albino, Rowdina, would be our first choice. We

put her in the cage for a short time (she previously was with two other females) and then we put Mr. Packie in and we both held our breath for a while. Well he sniffed, went round and round and then we sighed with joy, HE PEEPED, and started to fall in love again!

Well we stayed up for another hour and as we checked in, there he was with his furry little belly up against her back of quills, sleeping soundly.

Rowdina protected him and even helped him get to his food dishes and to his wheel that he also clearly loved. The only time we had to watch was the evening mealworm times. Rowdina too had a passion for mealworms and sometimes would steal from his bowl. Merle, then, every night stood at their cage to be sure, since Mr. Packie was now sightless, that he got his food.



Packie and His Rowdina (Photo by Beth Hatch)

Eventually, in his last year Mr. Packie's teeth were dwindling due to age, and he could not chew as he once had. So Merle and I bought a coffee bean grinder and Merle ground his kibble for him. Then we started him on Chickie Sticks. Each night, Merle lovingly skinned each one and cut the ends off and cut them into tiny pieces and the rest he sliced and mashed for him. Mr. Packie loved and ate them still with a voracious appetite.

Mr. Packie was a true "wonder hedgehog" and to our knowledge, we do not know of any other hedgehog, young or old, to have the agility, love, and gentleness that he did.

Saturday, July 25, 2009, I received a voice mail from Jeanne asking if would I write a story on Mr. Packie, celebrating his upcoming Birthday in September, 2009 for the IHA newsletter celebrating his eleventh birthday. Never ever did I think the very next evening it would be a story of tribute, as on July 26, 2009, Mr. Packie crossed over the Rainbow Bridge. He crossed silently, peacefully and, yes, with his little butt touching Rowdina's. 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, yet he will, in all our hearts.

Merle and I were given this honor four years ago to have this gentle hedgehog become part of our family, yet, we feel he belonged to us all. He was the hedgehog

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hedgehog today at  
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Quality of the Species."***

for all people and all hedgies. I know if he could tell everyone what does he wish it could be?

It would be that we could all learn from him, no matter what color, what size, no matter whatever.... with love and kindness and gentleness in our hearts, we too could be like Mr. Packie. His acceptance to 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 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 this very late after he passed the evening of 7/26/09.....

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  
We learned so much  
You stuck our hearts  
With your quilled touch

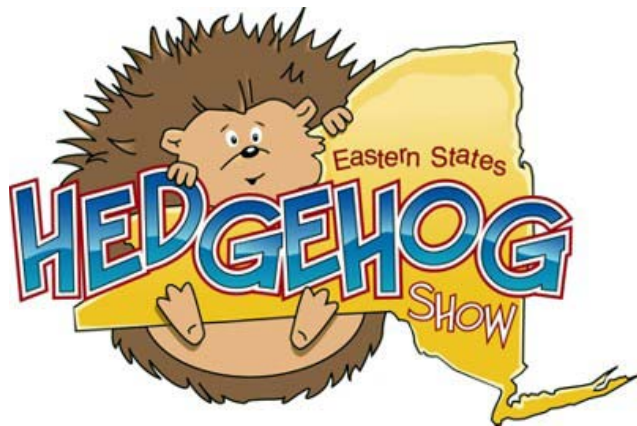
To have you forever  
Mr. Packie our dear  
We have now shed tear after tear

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



# Eastern States Hedgehog Show Results June 27, 2009

*Judge: Sherry Songhurst  
Secretary: Cindy DeLaRosa*

## **JUVENILE MALE**

### **Standard (1 entry)**

1st - Canoe.....Katie Peters

### **Apricot (0 entry)**

### **Snowflake (0 entry)**

### **White (0 entry)**

### **Albino (0 entry)**

### **Pinto (2 entry)**

1st - Hornswoggle (Gunnar Doyle)

2nd - Gideon (Hannah Goerner)

### **AOC (0 entry)**

### **Grand Champion Juvenile Male**

**Grand Champion** – Hornswoggle (Gunnar Doyle)

**Grand Champion Reserve** – Canoe (Katie Peters)

## **ADULT MALE**

### **Standard (4 entry)**

1st - Pistol Pete (Heather Marshall)

2nd - Winceton (Beth Hatch)

3rd - Mace (Beth Hatch)

### **Apricot (0 entry)**

### **Snowflake (2 entry)**

1st - Barbadou (Martina Weihs)

2nd - Igor (Skylor Moyer)

### **White (1 entry)**

1st - Frazor (Beth Hatch)

### **Albino (0 entry)**

### **Pinto (2 entry)**

1st - Wedgie (Beth Hatch)

2nd - Bristles (Colby Wold)

### **AOC (0 entry)**

### **Grand Champion Adult Male**

**Grand Champion** – Barbadou (Martina Weihs)

**Reserve Grand Champion** – Wedgie (Beth Hatch)

## **JUVENILE FEMALE**

### **Standard (1 entry)**

1st - Coconut (Ashley Tanski)

### **Apricot (0 entry)**

### **Snowflake (0 entry)**

### **White (1 entry)**

1st - Yeti (Adrienne Zicht)

### **Albino (0 entry)**

### **Pinto (1 entry)**

1st - Juliet Hannah Goerner)

### **AOC (0 entry)**

**Grand Champion Juvenile Female**

**Grand Champion** – Juliet (Hannah Goerner)

**Reserve Grand Champion** – Yeti (Adrienne Zicht)

**ADULT FEMALE**

**Standard (4 entry)**

1st - Barbabella (Martina Weihs)

2nd - Diesel (Adrienne Zicht)

3rd - Jabitha (Beth Hatch)

**Apricot (2 entry)**

1st - Juniper (Hannah Goerner)

2nd - Sunshine (Beth Copper)

**Snowflake (1 entry)**

1st - Gigi (Martina Weihs)

**White (1 entry)**

1st - Velma (Diana Darling)

**Albino (1 entry)**

1st - Jacquiline (Beth Hatch)

**Pinto (3 entry)**

1st - Harlequin (Adrienne Zicht)

2nd - Crimefighter (Sheila Dempsey)

3rd -Chance (Sheila Dempsey)

**AOC (0 entry)**

**Grand Champion Adult Female**

**Grand Champion** – Barbabella (Martina Weihs)

**Reserve Grand Champion** – Gigi (Martina Weihs)

**BEST OF SHOW**

**Best of Show** – Juliet (Hannah Goerner)

**Reserve Best of Show** – Barbabella (Martina Weihs)

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## WANT TO HOST A HEDGEHOG SHOW?

Always wanted to host an IHA sanctioned hedgehog show but wasn't certain where to start? Here is how you can get started!

1. Contact the IHA Show Committee: Susan Morrison ([twinksusan@hotmail.com](mailto:twinksusan@hotmail.com)), Deb Weaver ([deborah.weaver@marquette.edu](mailto:deborah.weaver@marquette.edu)), Floyd Aprill ([faaprill@msn.com](mailto:faaprill@msn.com)) and/or Pat Storm ([thisledew@yahoo.com](mailto:thisledew@yahoo.com)).
2. Request sanctioning. Send your request to Susan Morrison, or Deb Weaver and we will send you the paperwork. Sanctioning requires a form to be filled out by the Show Organizer (who must be an IHA member) and requires an IHA approved Judge (See list of current judges listed below)
3. Find an organized and detailed-oriented show secretary and form a committee
4. Put together a budget. Shows pay for Judges expenses, travel, hotel meals, passes
5. Create sponsorships and advertise your show. The IHA can be asked for a sponsorship.
6. Order Ribbons. Contact the Show Committee, the IHA has a supply of standard ribbons and can help with creation of a show book.

**IHA Approved Judges**

Chief Judge: Bryan Smith

Master Judges: Sherry Songhurst, Z. G. Standing Bear

Senior Judge: Dawn Wrobel

Certified Judges: Floyd Aprill, Sarah Shore

Provisional Judges\*\*: Cindy De La Rosa, Jan Ernst, Kari Espelien, Deneen Foelker, Elizabeth Hatch-Reichert, Kim Miller, Chuck Perrine, Brenda Sandoval, Laurel Sedgwick, Martina Weihs-Werner

\*\* Provisional Judges require a Master (or higher ranked) judge to supervise the event.

Weighing In, continued from 1

may be skewed by combining the weights of wild caught hedgehogs and those that have been harbored in captivity. The wild hedgehogs generally tend to be of lower weights due to the vagaries of fending for themselves in the wild rather than having the opportunity to dine at a restaurant continuously. Third, wild hedgehogs that can hibernate (excluding our Central African and Algerian hedgehogs, who lost their ability to hibernate some 20 million years ago), always try to bulk up on weight coming into the Fall so as to survive the long winter's nap. In that sense, it is not unusual for a European hedgehog to go from 600 grams in the spring to double that by Fall.

In the delightful book "Dearest Prickles: The Story of a Hedgehog Family," by Christl and Walter Poduschka (once again - out of print) this German couple took in four orphan baby hedgehogs and nursed three of them to health so as to allow them to hibernate in the fall (one died in infancy). One of the hedgehogs, Snowy, really took bulking up for hibernation seriously and weighed in at 1,750 grams just before taking the Big Snooze.



Dwarf baby hedgehog Sabinaya addresses HRH Queen Sable in the Royal Hall.

(Image by Patrick Besant-Matthews)

When African hedgehogs were imported into the United States from primarily Lagos, Nigeria between 1991 and 1994, someone (unknown) attached the name "pygmy" to them so as to differentiate them from their customarily larger European brethren. However, African hedgehogs do not qualify for the label "pygmy" based upon the common definitions of the term.

Even within the two non-hibernating species kept as pets in North America and some other parts of the world, there is a great deal of weight variation in hedgehogs considered "normal." However, there are some averages in weight range where the majority of our African hedgehogs fall, and that average range is 350 to 450 grams (454 grams equals one pound and there are 28 grams to the ounce). Most of us weigh our hedgehogs in grams because it is a more exacting measure than ounces. Even so, there are outliers that may also be considered of a healthy weight ranging from just under 200 grams all the way up to 1,000 grams. Indications of an overweight hedgehog may be an inability to completely roll up into a protective ball of quills and/or evidence of fat pads appearing on the upper legs. Underweight hedgehogs frequently look gaunt and may display an unsteady gait due to dehydration and/or starvation. Often, the hedgehog's sides appear to be caved in just forward of the pelvis.

### **Making the Case for the Daily Weigh-In**

It is desirable to weigh hedgehogs "often" so as to monitor weight trends. There is really no good way for a human to determine weight gains or losses in an animal that only weighs around one pound or so. Yet,

weight gains or losses may be an early warning of health problems. Diagnosis and timely treatment of health issues is essential in an animal whose life unfolds roughly twelve times faster than a human life. So, how often should a hedgehog be weighed? I recommend that a hedgehog should be weighed not less than daily, preferably around the same time of day. In that way, weight trends may be adequately monitored. Although a single poop/pee episode (see below) may change a hedgehog's weight significantly, the variation should not be major over several days on average. If the hedgehog is only weighed once a week, trying to ascertain a weight change trend is difficult, as only four weighings in a month translate to a year of age in human terms. Naturally, such daily observations need to be recorded in a ledger in the hedgehogs health records so as to document the weight trend.

Weight gains may indicate fluid retention, intestinal blockage, or fast growing tumors. Weight loss indicates that the hedgehog has gone off of her/his food and/or water. Lack of appetite may be the result of intestinal bacteria overgrowth, certain cancers, dental problems, abscesses, and a host of other ailments. Noting an exceptional weight loss is often a good early warning that something is amiss.



Dwarf baby hedgehog Sabinaya listens to advice from HRH Queen Sable in the Royal Hall.  
(Image by Patrick Besant-Matthews)

In certain special circumstances, weighing a hedgehog more than once a day at specific intervals may be in order. Such circumstances include some post-surgical situations, baby hedgehogs that have difficulty taking nourishment, and some circumstances where dietary changes are made.

### **Poop Measurement and Melanie the Hedgehog**

Melanie the hedgehog came to us from a Colorado pet store and was about 5 weeks old upon her arrival, weighing in at 94 grams. She grew rapidly and had a delightful personality. At that time, we had a large group of females housed together and when I did the daily cleaning of their condo, I came to snatch up Melanie last because she had developed the habit of pooping and peeing in the scale gondola as if it was her own personal toilet. This turned

out to be “handy” from a research point of view. I could weigh Melanie prior to pooping/peeing, thus getting a pre-poop weight and then empty and clean the gondola and get a post-poop weight. Her record was 28 grams of pee/poop in “one sitting.” I performed a mathematical extrapolation and realized that Melanie's record was about the equivalent of a 150 pound human evacuating 12 pounds of poop in “one sitting,” so to speak. Impressive, huh? More typically, though, she would let loose with about 16 to 22 grams. There is a humorous story about the time that I discovered her running around the condo when I started the condo clean-up and weighed her in first (rather than last)(and went through the usual poop/pee measurement ritual). As the clean-up went on, I was interrupted by several phone calls and at the end of the evening, I had forgotten that I had already weighed in Melanie. So, I gathered her up again at the end

(which was customary) and inadvertently weighed her again. She looked up at me as if I had lost my mind. She stared and flinched. She hunched over and stared up again. She looked down and hunched over again. Finally, she hunched over and shuddered and out came a tiny little turd - then she relaxed. She had to know that this was our ritual! During these weigh-ins, her weight was steady between 365 and 385 grams.

Melanie went on to win a Best of Show award at Hedgehogs Northwest in October 1999, at just over a year old and weighing in at 378 grams. That next March (2000) she won the Reserve Best of Show at Hedgehogs Northwest, where the judge was Jennifer Young of California, an original inventor of the Hedgehog Bucket Wheel. Jennifer got me aside after the show and gave me some very disturbing news. She told me that she could not put her finger on it, but she sensed that something was terribly wrong with Melanie, that she hoped she was in error, but she thought she should tell me. Two months later, Melanie began to exhibit the symptoms of degenerative myelopathy (wobbly hedgehog syndrome). She remained a valiant trooper through all of the trials of that disease, which slowly robbed her of movement. She hung in there for 7 months after the symptoms first became apparent, even returning to the Hedgehogs Northwest show with me, now completely paralyzed, in late September, 2000. She was in a padded cradle perched up on the rescue truck dashboard, looking out the windshield. At the show, she made up a part of the WHS educational table hosted by Laura Ledet. She was fed and cleaned constantly as her life neared its end and she died quietly in my lap at 2AM on October 28, 2000 at age two years and 2 months. With the progression of the illness, her weight ever so slowly diminished.

### **Conclusion**

The wide variations in “normal” hedgehog weights make absolute weight a matter of little concern as long as the telltale signs of overweight or underweight are not apparent. The key issue of importance concerning weight are weight changes that may indicate a health problem that needs prompt veterinary attention.

Z. G. Standing Bear is a criminologist and forensic scientist, and avocationally has administered The Flash and Thelma Memorial Hedgehog Rescue for the past eleven years. The Rescue has provided permanent homes to over 260 hedgehogs.

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We have never been convicted in any court of animal cruelty, abuse, and/or neglect. \_\_\_\_\_

A registered non-profit IRS 501c(3) status charitable organization, the IHA is dedicated to improving the care and quality of hedgehogs worldwide by means of supporting rescue, education, research and exhibition.

By becoming a member in this international organization, you will be helping to support the many projects that are presently underway to help hedgehogs.

Benefits of membership include a 1 full year's subscription to this newsletter, a member's only publication.

You can use PayPal to join. Simply to go <http://hedgehogclub.com>

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Vet/Vet Clinic	\$15.00
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## Membership Service

Need to change an address or your email information?

Send an email to [MGSpikers@aol.com](mailto:MGSpikers@aol.com)  
or mail your information to  
IHA membership services  
P.O. Box 1060  
Divide, CO 80814

**Our Goal:** *To promote and improve the care and quality of hedgehogs by means of education and exhibition*

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