

The Happy Pig



The Official Publication of the Happy Pig Collectors Club

*A Club Dedicated to People Who Collect Pigs,
So That They May Gain More Enjoyment from Their Hobby
and to Meet and Mingle with Others
Cursed with the Same Strange Affliction*



Volume 1, Issue 4

Spring Stories 1996

Official Call to Our First Annual Meeting/Convention July 6th, 1996

Your Chance to Meet and Mingle with Others Cursed with the Same Strange Affliction

Where:

Ramada Inn, 29 Public Square-
Downtown Galesburg, IL., and
Holt Farm-RR-Oneida, IL.

Charge

\$16.00 Per Person
4 yrs to 12 yrs \$8.00
up to 4 yrs old Free

*From Woodhull-Exit on Interstate
74. Exit 174 and go east on Rt. 17
through Woodhull. At the East edge
of town Rt. 17 curves Right (South).
After 1 mile Rt 17 curves Left BUT
you leave Rt 17 at the start of the
curve and keep going South 3-1/2
miles. You'll notice hog buildings
and a wind break on the right side of
the road. This is it, you didn't get
lost.*

When:

Saturday, July 6, 1996

Directions to Holt Farm:

*From Galesburg-From the square in
downtown Galesburg, go west, cross
Santa Fe RR and on to the 1st stop
light. Turn Right and continue on
Henderson St., Rt. 150, out of town.
You are going North. After 7 or 8
miles you cross a RR track,
CONTINUE 1 more mile to Rio
Corner. (Tavern and gas station on
NW corner) Turn RIGHT (EAST).
Go 4 miles to a stop sign. Turn Left
and continue 1/2 mile. You're here,
you didn't miss it.*

Agenda:

Morning

View Gene Holt Pig Collection
Limited Tour of Farm Farrowing
House *See babies 0 to 3 weeks old!*

Noon

Pork Chops at Farm

Afternoon/Evening

At Ramada Inn

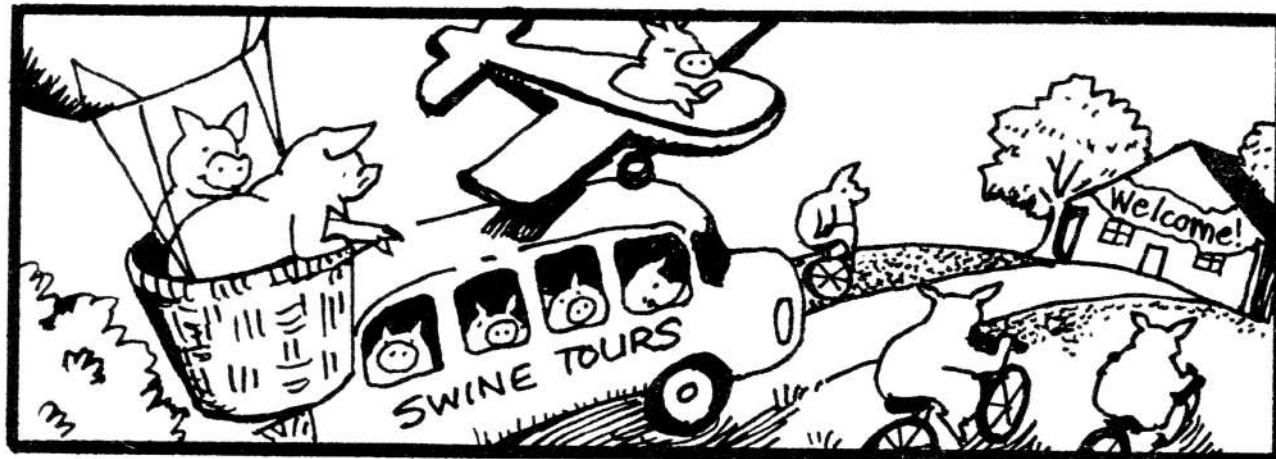
2:30 Short Business Meeting

3:00 Show and Tell Session

6:00 Evening Meal - 2-Meat Buffet

7:30 Entertainment

**Use The Enclosed
Registration Form to
Save Your Spot for
This Fun-Filled
Function**



Who's Who and What's What at The Happy Pig

Founder and Chief Storyteller

Gene Holt

Editor

Mary Bjorling

Layout

Betsy J. Holt

Art Editor

Michelina Nicotera

Officers of the Happy Pig Collectors Club

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Betty Lou Holt, Treasurer

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Lowell Bjorling

Mary Bjorling

Gary Main

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The Happy Pig Collectors Club is a not-for-profit corporation in the State of Illinois.

Annual dues are \$20 and they entitle the member to newsletters and laughs. Maybe someday in the future we can all get together and know each other personally, but until then we can share through this newsletter.

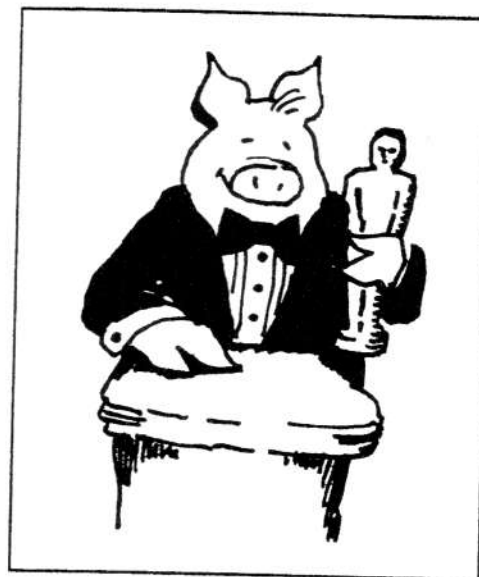
Please send your dues and stories and photos and ideas and advice and comments to The Happy Pig Collectors Club, c/o Gene Holt, P.O. Box 17, Oncaida, IL 61467

And the winner should have been...

BABE

At least according to the Denver staff of the *Happy Pig Collectors Club Newsletter*, who were all ready to pay homage to the best pig movie of the year.

Oh well, we guess that the Academy just doesn't get it — at least when it comes to pigs!



We could almost hear the oink of the crowd as Babe collected the honors

NARY AN OINK WAS HEARD

*from the Star Courier, Kewanee, IL
Written by Dave Clarke*

We missed it again! It didn't occur to me until about Tuesday that a week ago yesterday, Friday, March 1, was National Pig Day.

Chamber of Commerce exec Mark Mikenas and historian Bob Richards had both reminded me to do something special so people here in the Hog capital wouldn't get caught with their bibs down like they did a few years ago.

That was the time the big Quad City TV station did a "man on the street" here on March 1 asking Kewaneeans at random what day it was. Of course, none of them knew and the TV types snickered at us on the 6 p.m. news for living in the Hog Capital and not knowing it was National Pig Day.

This year the day apparently came and went without any ambushes from the out-of-town media, but I feel bad about forgetting to take note.

To soothe the swilling masses, I do have a story about pigs.

There's a woman in Mira Loma, Calif., who has a collection of 1,833 pigs to remind her of when she first met her husband and where he comes from - Kewanee, IL.

Freddie Ballentine, wife of Kewanee native Harold Ballentine, was recently featured in an article in the local paper on her passion for pigs.

She has a pig mailbox, telephone, toy box, stapler, dining wear, Calvin Swine jeans and a 6-foot wooden pig planter.

She picked up several items in her collection on trips back to the celebration.

She lists and numbers her collection in what she calls her "Hog Log." Pig items are displayed on shelves, walls, the refrigerator and in shadow boxes.

Relatives here in Kewanee say she'd like to get a real pig, "but uncle Harold says no."

I AM A HAMPSHIRE BREEDER

by George Johnson, Jr.

I am a Hampshire breeder
And mighty proud to be;
For through the years this belted
breed
Has meant a lot to me.

A lot of names flash through my
mind
As we've gone along the way;
For these breeders' thoughts and
dreams
Have brought us to where we are
today.

Summer conferences when the kids
were young
Was always a family time;
For Dort and the kids would do their
things,
And I, of course, did mine.

I'd hitch a ride to barns in the
mornings
So Dort could have the car;
Then go down the aisles, greeting my
friends,
Who had gathered from near and far.

Type discussions were always a treat
As everyone there would find a seat;
Then take to the mike to disagree,
With a placing that they just couldn't
see.

It's been fun watching all the young
breeders,
Who work their way to the top;
The popularity and progress of
Hampshires
Just never seems to stop.

They've put many kids through
college,
Paid for farms and trucks and cars;
We may not have grown rich
But we've reached for the stars.

Let us remember the friends we have
made,
And the memories that we share;
When our last Hampshire is sold
These friendships are gold,
And the memories will always be
there.

*Taken from the book WRITER'S
BLOC HARVEST*

*George
Johnson, Jr., and
his wife Dorothy,
farm six miles
east of Alexis, Il.
They are the
parents of five
grown children.
George is active
in farm and
conservation
groups and is
well-known in the
area for his
singing ability
and the poems he
writes for special
occasions.
George has been
published in
periodicals.*



FROM THE HEART OF ILLINOIS

LeRoy is right in the heart of Illinois. Good things come from there. I'm the proud owner of 5 of the pig miniatures designed by Virginia Builta. If you like attention to detail there is no better. Following is a short story she included in a letter.

"Back in 1985 there were some customers from Nebraska of McLean County Hog Service, Inc. that were "shirt-tail" relation to Ronald Regan. They got invited to the inaugural reception. They wanted to take something representative of the Midwest as a gift and asked us if we would donate a "Courtship" (our first piece of a girl by a farrowing crate). We did and we received a personal thank you from President Regan, which is framed and hanging on the office wall. I always like to think that maybe the "Courtship" was some where in the White House for a while!"

IMAGES OF COUNTRY LIFE

LeRoy Woman Casts Light On Rural Scene

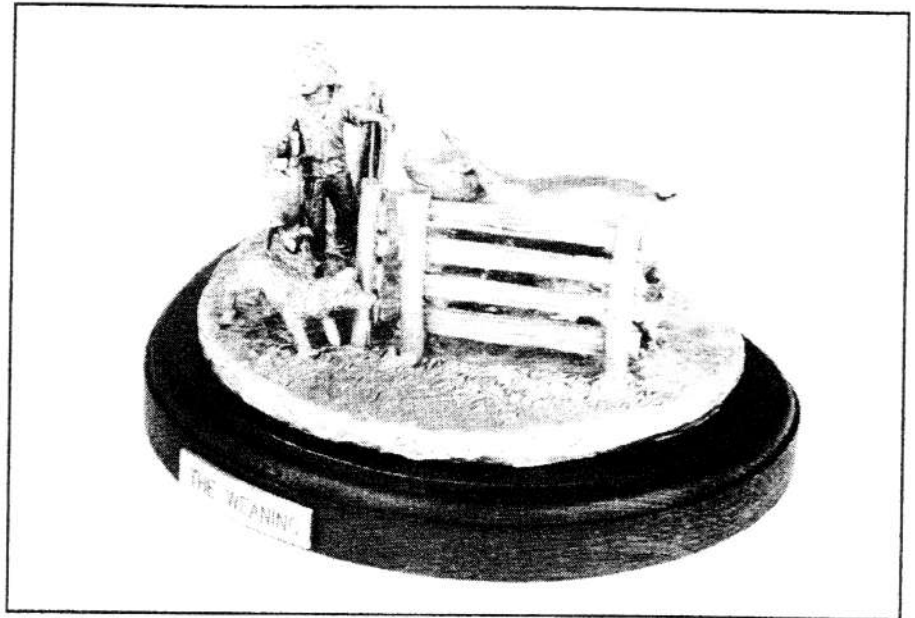
*From the Pantagraph of
Bloomington, Ill.-*

by Chris Anderson, Farm Editor

"It all began 14 years ago with a pig-shaped tie tack meant as promotional giveaway.

Several people began asking Virginia Builta if they could buy the trinket, and ideas for pewter miniatures have filled her head ever since.

Creative thoughts turned into products marketed through Country Images, Inc. in rural LeRoy, a limited edition pewter collectible company with 7,000 regular customer scattered throughout the world.



"The Weaning" by Virginia Builta is very true to life

Mrs. Builta actually has her husband, Robert, to thank for Country Images' beginnings. The tie tacks were giveaways for Builta's business, McLean County Hog Service, Inc., a hybrid leasing and contracting business founded in 1957. Country Images is a subsidiary of the hog service.

Mrs. Builta and her husband exhibit her designs made by a Rhode Island Pewter firm at nearly 25 trade shows each year, and do the rest of the business via mail. Each piece is copyrighted and numbered. The most recent pieces are accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.

"I thought if Coca Cola could sell promotional items, then I could too," said Mrs. Builta, who sketched the original designs and then commissions artists to bring the drawings to life in pewter. "The hog

industry has been very good to us, and in terms of agriculture, we're sitting in the right county."

Her hog connections prompted her to design the first limited edition miniature in 1983. Called "The Courtship," the piece features a girl kneeling beside a sow and her litter in a hog crate.

The piece originally sold for \$35. Because all 400 limited editions sold, the piece is now worth more than \$250.

Since then, Mrs. Builta has designed and sold ten other pieces which have been sold out. Her 11th hog design in the series was released last year.

Mrs. Builta first sketches the design in her office occupying part of a 100-year-old barn remodeled around its original beams and hayloft in 1979. Then she sends the artwork to one of

four artists she commissions at two Rhode Island Pewter companies.

The artists hand-fashion each design by first molding plaster around wax figures. The wax gets melted leaving a cavity in which to pour the pewter, a mixture of 95 percent tin and antimony, a metallic chemical used to harden the tin.

Finally, the figures in each scene are welded together. They get a coating of blackening agent to accent textures of clothing and hair, for example.

"We have always wanted the pieces to be realistic," said Mrs. Builta, who fashioned a piece called "The Beginning" after a top quality hybrid boar owned by her husband. "And we've wanted them to be affordable."

While the latest swine pieces sell for \$72-\$85., her new smaller dairy and beef pieces cost \$45-\$50. More than 100 of her first beef miniature have already sold.

Although she get calls for sold-out editions, Mrs Builta said limited means just that. Once a piece is sold out, no more will be made.

"It's been real fun. Most buyers are producers and people with farm backgrounds," said Mrs. Builta, who gets help from part-time employee Linda Bruning of LeRoy, and daughter Merry Wilson and granddaughter Rachel Crider of Arrowsmith. "In the last nine months, I've become very diligent about the business. I have a neat idea for a grain farmer series that should be out this summer."

From Gene Holt:

There are lots of neat small pigs and things in her catalogue. Send to: Country Images, Inc. RR#2 Box 96 LeRoy, IL. 61752



Virginia Builta, owner of Country Images Inc in rural LeRoy, displayed seven of ten miniature pewter limited edition swine series collectibles she has designed since 1983. She has recently branched out into a smaller series of beef collectibles.

DAD, YOU HAVE TO SEE THAT CAROUSEL PIG!

My daughter, Margaret Karbeling, who lives in Polk City, Iowa, saw the "Iowa Corn Pig" at the Iowa State Fair. She visited with its creator, Alice Porter of Ogden, Iowa, later giving Alice's business card to me. Pictured on the card is a high stepping carousel horse. At the top is printed "Original Carvings and Paintings— Carousel Reproductions and Restoration".

When the '93 National Pork Expo was on, the "Iowa Corn Pig" was in the art show and I got a good picture of it. No luck meeting the artist. She couldn't be there that day. In March, this year we had a good excuse to spend two days in Iowa. I made arrangements to visit Alice at her home out on the prairie, east of Ogden. I brought my bride along as a chaperone (also to take notes). The newsletter had been sent to give a clue to what I was all about. Checking things out on the phone the day before, Alice said she had carved a pig for me.

In her art filled home, she lives with her husband, Max, a big English Bulldog and some cats. Outside pets are another dog, more cats, goats and horses left over from 4-H projects of their now grown up children, two

girls and a boy. They also enjoy 3 small grandchildren and another is on the way.

Her first perfected talent was painting. Portraits, landscapes and animal pictures cover the walls of the living and dining rooms. One picture of zebras had been on a show tour around Iowa. It had been selected in a contest including both amateur and professional artists. In the living room is a magnificent carousel horse. It is a show piece and not meant to be part of a carousel, stands 70" tall. Along the side of the saddle is an elaborate eagle holding a flag. This would make it hard to sit on, the grandkids love to anyway. This horse is a replica of an antique and looks like it should be in the Smithsonian Institute. It's perfect in every way. It was built coffin style (hollow inside). Inside in the corners are 4x4's and it has 2x4's for braces. This work of art required 800 hours of labor and 150 board feet of 2" thick basswood lumber. The head and legs are solid. The tail is the real thing. In a nearby hallway stands a 40" high camel, another favorite for the grandkids to ride.

Alice's love for carousels was born when she was child in Venice,

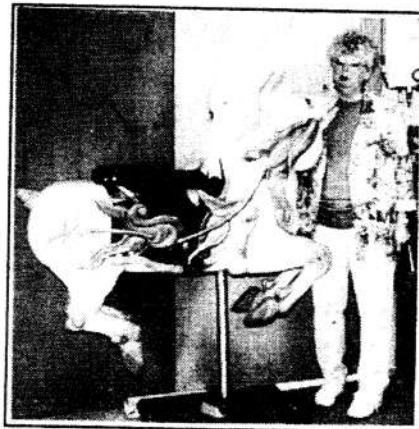
California. She remembered a carousel that went so fast that the riders had to be strapped on.

Alice showed us Indians she had carved from walnut and rosebud cedar. This cedar came from the high elevation of Pine Ridge, North Dakota. The tree was over 100 years old and had been dead for 50 years. There was no sapwood. This cedar is less likely to chip than ordinary cedar. These pieces looked like they had been stolen from a fine arts museum. The wood appeared to be hard as rock. I asked if it was tough to work with? Alice said she used some pneumatic tools to save some elbow grease.

Another interesting work was an old porch corner post cut off about 3 feet high. The top 1/3 had been carved into a Santa Claus brightly painted red and white.

The pig Alice had carved for me is a six sided basswood box, three and three quarter inches high and five inches wide. The words "The Happy Pig" are carved into the front panel. The next two panels on each side have one of the dancing pigs (club logo). Into the top is carved the picture of "the mother pig and the little pig who stayed home". (See page 50 in the winter *Happy Pig*). That box will be a treasure to me as long as I live.

After becoming a successful



painter, she started carving wood and for 10 years did only miniature carousel horses. She had only three or four carving tools when she created her first horse. Everyone encouraged her to continue. She prayed if this was the direction God wanted her to go with her talents, then please help her to acquire more tools. Very soon, she heard of a nearby high school that had been given a large private grant to build and furnish a new woodworking shop. She was able to buy some of their old tools reasonably. Then after Des Moines was flooded, she found tools that were marked down because the water had taken the varnish off the handles. Some of the best tools are made in England-Ashley Isle and in Minnesota-Stubai.

Her husband, Max, the top maintenance man for Archway cookies, has been her main supporter and cheerleader. He's remodeled an old shed into a roomy well-lit shop for her and has recently started carving some on his own. The "Iowa Corn Pig" was in her shop and dominated the scene. At the World

Pork Expo in '93 it won 1st place and drew a constant crowd of spectators and people wanting pictures taken with it. At the Iowa State Fair it placed 3rd, the judge said it should have been a horse. Another 1st at the Waterloo Carvers Show. It is also built coffin style, weighs 150 lbs. and contains 100 board feet of basswood lumber. It is put together with glue and dowels only.

Basswood lumber comes from a Linden tree. Figure that one out. I'd think you'd get Linden lumber from a Linden tree and Basswood lumber from a Bass tree. Anyway, the basswood lumber is air dried at least a year. Buckeye and walnut are also used. Walnut takes longer to dry.

Also in her shop were several three foot high carousel horses that had topped many shows. The smaller ones are solid taking 6 layers of laminated wood.

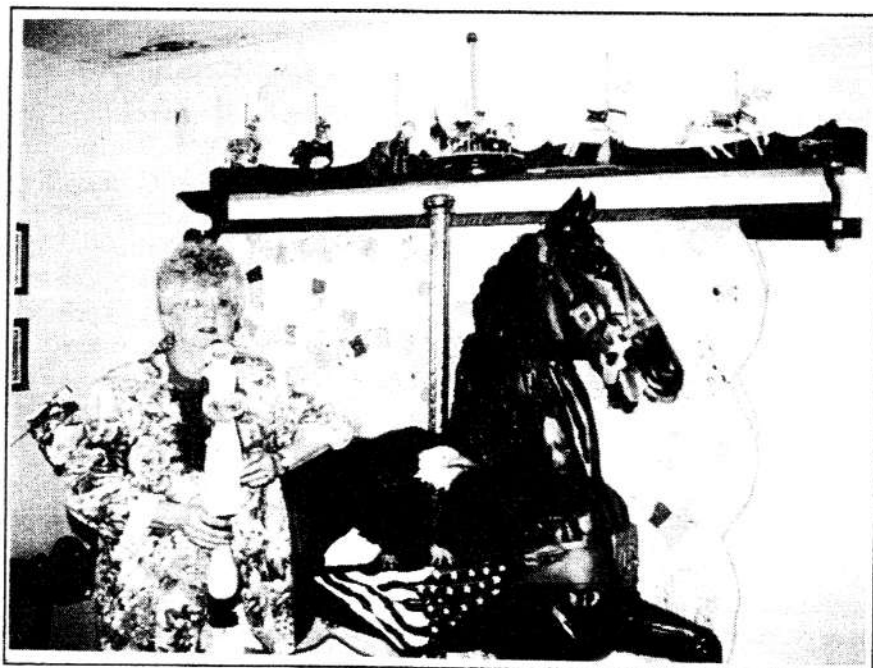
In the past, Alice has been a beautician and a tour guide on the scenic train excursion from Boone, Iowa. She's very knowledgeable of the local history. Her schedule now includes teaching a wood carving

class at Ames, Iowa, and driving a schoolbus for special needs children. You would have to be a special person to handle that job. She's also busy enjoying her grandchildren.

Part of the deal of our visit was that we would "do" lunch. We took a round about way and stopped to photograph the Kate Shelley Railroad bridge, the longest and highest double track railroad bridge in the world. It was named after the young hero in the true story of another railroad bridge that was not far away. If you're not familiar with the story it's worth your time in the library looking it up. At the ChitChat Cafe in Ogden, we had some of the best BBQ ribs ever.

If you've been needing a carousel pig to round out your collection, now you know where to get the best. A one-third size "Iowa Corn Pig" would be about \$1,500. That's not unreasonable when you consider all the skill and labor one takes. Alice will carve almost anything for you. This is a good time to put in an order for next Christmas.

By Gene and Betty Lou Holt



From the far left:

Alice Porter: You name it, She'll carve it

The "Iowa Corn Pig" is saying gimme a kiss . . .

And it gets what it wants

Finally, Alice Porter is holding a Santa with the magnificent carousel horse in her living room.

IN HOG HEAVEN

By Dale Koppel
from the Sun-Sentinel,
Boca Raton, FL

What can you say about two people who fill up an entire condo with porcine paraphernalia? Their romance is, well, a pig story.

There's no better day to tell you about our collection. After all, today is National Pig Day and my husband, Don, and I collect pigs. No, not real pigs, although the idea of one of those cute Vietnamese potbellied pigs has crossed our minds. But then, we're in enough trouble with our condominium association as it is.

And anyway, there's no room left in our condo with the extent of our collection. There's hardly enough room for the two of us and Elaine, our "faux" (but don't call her that) pig, the size of a 6-to-9-month-old baby. How do we know? Her OshKosh B'Gosh outfit that she arrived in two years ago Christmas - a gift to me from Don - gives the size on the label. So do all the other clothes we've bought for her. After all, a baby pig needs a wardrobe too.

Sure, people collect cows and owls and frogs, but collecting pigs seems different somehow. When you tell people you have a cow collection, they say, "Oh, that's nice." When you tell people you collect pigs, they laugh. Then they say, "Pigs? How did you ever start collecting pigs?"

Our collection started quite unexpectedly on a Saturday night in November almost 20 years ago when I lived in Boston and was dating Don. We had a party to go to, and he was late. When he arrived at my door, I expressed my annoyance. He had an explanation. An article in a National

Geographic magazine had detained him.

"The article was about pigs," he said. "I couldn't put it down." It dispelled everything he had ever heard about swine. (Hey, this was years before Babe got nominated for an Oscar.) This fascinating article indicated that pigs were extremely clean, not dirty; they were extremely intelligent, not stupid.

"You can even toilet train a pig," Don said. Like I really cared. I just wanted to get to the party; then I'd decide whether this relationship had a future.

That Christmas (my motto: If you're going to break up with someone, at least wait till after you cash in on the presents), Don and I sat in my living room in front of the tree and opened our presents. Don discovered I had bought him a piggy bank; I discovered he had bought me a ceramic pig.

That was the start of our collection - reserved for holidays and special occasions at first. Before we knew it, the collection had taken on a life of its own. No matter where we went, we were looking for - and found - pigs to add to our collection. We found them on Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale, in mail-order catalogs and on our trips to London, Charleston, S.C. and at Fastback Freddie's in Key West.

Today, we have hundreds. Everywhere. We have moved from a huge, 10-room Victorian home outside of Boston where our pigs could spread out in luxury and our pig weather vane had a place of honor on our roof to a 1,300 square-foot condominium where our pigs vie for space on shelves, on tables, on

the floor on the walls. (The weather vane is in our attic; someday we may have a house again.)

We have pig clocks, pig napkin rings and pig pillows. My pig pins are displayed on a pig jacket that hangs on a pig hanger on our bedroom door. Elaine has pig rattles and pig puppets and a pig cup and cereal dish set - from Tiffany's.

There are pig face cloths and a pig soap dish with pig soap in it in the bathroom. Pig bookends hold up our books - *The Three Little Pigs*, *The Ubiquitous Pig*, *Pig Appeal*, *Pigs in Heaven*, *Trying to Save Piggy Sneed*. A pig eyeglass holder holds my reading glasses.

While others who live in identical condos covet open spaces, we've been forced to build walls just to house our porcine treasures. What was once a typical open, L-shape combination living room/dining area is now a rectangular living room separated from the dining room by a floor-to-ceiling wall of shelves. We tell people it's because we wanted a formal dining room in which to eat, but all they have to do is look at the shelves filled with pigs - and the table with nary a telltale crumb - to know that we're just making that up.

Anyway, collections are supposed to be enjoyed. They're to be seen and sometimes even heard. (When we squeeze the palm of our stuffed Christmas pig, he sings *Jingle Bells*.)

Interior decorating be damned. When people come over for the first time, I tell them, "If I visited a place like this, I'd be appalled." But we are very proud of our collection.

It has gotten so large that a friend of ours once pointed out that we have sub-collections the size of the

average person's collection - enough pig dishes to feed an army, enough pig candleholders to burn down the place, enough pigs with wings to start an airline. Of course, there are cross-over collections - like pig-with-wings Christmas tree ornaments. (Yes, our Christmas tree only has pig ornaments.)

Often I'll group our pigs together because of their similarities. All the pig teapots here; all the pig salt and pepper shakers there. Sometimes the similarities are obvious. Or are they?

Then there's the T-shirt hanging on the wall with the sculpture next to it. Whenever I look at them - and I look at them often - I remember Don's trip to Phoenix about 10 years ago. We had a big blow-out the night before, and I could barely say goodbye civilly when he left the next morning.

A few days later, I found myself in a store and saw the ceramic sculpture. Incredible, I said to myself. It was Alice in Wonderland with her flowing blond hair, blue dress, and black high-buttoned shoes. Like the whimsical Lewis Carroll illustration from the book I remember reading as a child, she was holding a pig on her lap.

It was signed, one-of-a-kind piece. Very expensive, but I thought, why not? I found myself missing Don. This could break the ice when he returned a week later.

When he did, he had a gift for me too. We exchanged boxes. "Open yours first," he told me. He seemed so excited. I opened the box. I held up the gift. "Don't you like it?" he asked me when he saw the expression on my face. "Yes," I told him. "Open yours." Then he understood.

The gift he had given me was a T-shirt - illustrated with Alice in her blue dress and black high-buttoned



shoes and her blond hair flowing. And in her lap was a pig. We knew this relationship had to last.

Dale Koppel is a free-lance writer who lives west of Boca Raton.

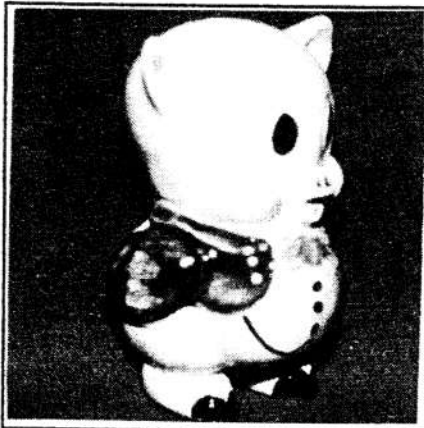
Above: Some of the treasures that find their home with Dale and Don

PIG BANKS

There's a real neat couple in NW Arkansas who are really into Piggy Banks, so this story is dedicated to them.

I must have been about 10 years old. There was a dime in my pocket and it was the first time I had ever gotten loose by myself in Galesburg. A dime was a pretty good chunk of change for a kid back then. It could have paid for a double dip ice cream cone or a giant size Babe Ruth candy bar, one that would cost 99 cents now. We always parked the car in the Farm Bureau lot on Seminary Street and walked from there. I ended up a couple of blocks west on Main St. in the W.T. Grant Five and Dime. I looked over everything in there. In the far northwest corner was a table loaded with all the odds and ends, **MARKED DOWN**. I found a piggy bank with a 10 cent price tag. That was "good-bye" dime. It says "Japan" on the bottom of it's right foot. He could be one of Porky's brothers, they look alike. Was I predestined to become a pig collector? Was this the first clue? Should I have been taken to a shrink

The first one. Did he start it all?



to have this nipped in the bud? I accumulated lots of kid possessions growing up but that "Piggy Bank" was the only thing that stuck with me. Well, I'll take that back. When I was 2 or 3 my older brothers cut across the section on their way home from school and raided a junk pile. They brought home a cast iron elephant bank with wheels. I still have it. I remember pulling it on a string, round and round the kitchen table. Being the last of eight kids I guess my mom couldn't hear the noise anymore. So much for the good old days that really weren't as good as some try to tell you.

The most recent piggy bank followed me home from an auction. It's cast iron and mechanical. The bottom reads, "Reproduced from original in collection of the Book of Knowledge. Made in USA". If it had been an original I would have gone to the sale as spectator and taken a picture of it. It's a strange looking man sitting in the grass with a pig between his knees. The pig is sitting straight up, on it's bottom, with his back to the man. The highest part of the pig is his nose which is flat. It's the same height and an inch or so away from the man's mouth. A coin is placed on the pigs nose and when a

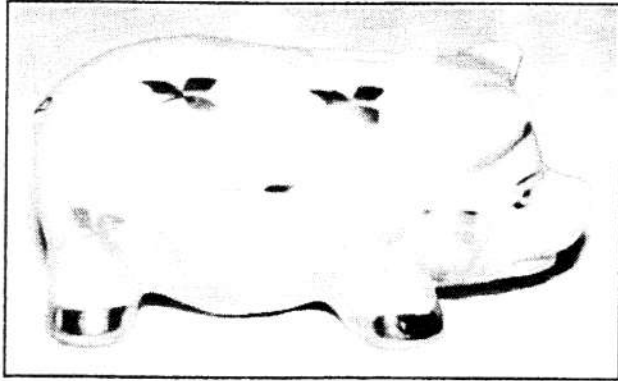
This one followed me home from an auction



lever sticking out of the man's back is pressed down the action starts. The pigs front foot swings up and strikes the coin. At the same time the man's mouth pops open, his purple tongue sticks out, his eyes roll upward and the coin disappears down his throat so fast you can't see it go. This bank was part of a large estate, one half of a 3 x 8 table was covered with mechanical cast iron banks. This was the only pig. As the sale started one of the helpers who I happened to know was holding up the banks. One would sell and then things that the other helpers held up would be sold. The banks were bringing \$20 - \$25. That's cheap, I thought. This is my lucky day! I was in the back of the building and wasn't dead sure which banks were being sold. I went up the side and told my friend to be sure and let me know when they were going to sell the pig. He said, "Well, show me which one it is." I did and he picked it up to sell when his turn came next. The auctioneer said something like, "Let's quit on the banks till later". My friend paid no attention and held onto the pig. I bought it for \$35. I sort of wondered, that auctioneer knew I liked pigs. An hour later they went

Pennies "socked" away





Above: The Almost Tea Leaf Pig

Right: They're 2 ft. high. I think they would hold a ton 'o money



back to the banks. This time selling choice to the highest bidder. Different story now. They went to \$90. Then I KNEW it was my lucky day. I would of had to bid \$90 or more to get my choice and taken the pig.

That night at home I was playing with my new toy and decided it worked a little dry and stiff. WD40 will fix that. It came apart by one main screw in the center. That was a near disaster. Some of the works hinged on the main screw. About 20 minutes later it was back together. It was still my lucky day! There is a medium sized china closet upstairs with 2 1/2 shelves crammed with piggy banks. I've told people don't give me any more. Of course, I'm always interested in something special. Not far away is one beside my Harley Davidson pig doll. It's shaped and painted like a Harley gas tank, another is a flat ceramic pig head with an open mouth. A striped sock fits snugly around the outside edge. When we feed it pennies, they were "socked away". When it was getting full the sock stretched so much that I was afraid it would split.

It was placed into a nine pound lard can for support. Everytime the grandkids came we would go feed the pig. It was over two years before it could eat no more. Those pennies were all I wanted to carry into the bank, over \$70.

Soon after I came out of the closet and admitted collecting pigs, some dear friends gave me a bank/music box combination. It's been the favorite of our grandkids ever since. Made in Japan and out of paper, this thing can't last. Well, I was badly mistaken. More than 10 years later, it works perfectly. It's sort of like a big tube with a window in the end. Behind the window is a fat pink pig. When a coin is dropped into the slot on top the pig dances to the tune of 'Old McDonald Had a Farm'. One of our kitchen counters is over at one side. This piggy bank has claimed a permanent spot there beside a pot of pennies. Ever since the grandkids were big enough to sit on a stool they have developed their co-ordination stuffing pennies into the coin slot. It's been the greatest.

The Almost Tea Leaf Pig Bank:
My bride decided to accumulate

some Alfred Meakin Tea Leaf dishes like she remembered from her childhood. They are very old white ironstone with a copper luster leaf arrangement painted on them. She had a nice start but didn't have any cups. We just couldn't find any near home. Carolyn Nickerson, a nice lady in Missouri, had some and we made arrangements to stop by her house. While we were there, I noticed a piggy bank that had copper luster markings that are very similar to the marking on Tea Leaf dishes. Carolyn said she would sell the pig to me for \$12. I declined because we bought two cups and they don't come cheap. Two or three years later we met Carolyn and her daughter, Cheryl, at the Tea Leaf convention in Amana, Iowa. I asked if she still had that piggy bank. She said it was at home but she had given it to Cheryl. I would have to ask her if she wanted to sell it. When asked she didn't seem to be too crazy about the idea. Some doll dishes were in the auction that night and Cheryl is nuts about them. She bid \$90 to get what looked to me like

(Continued on page 68)

Letters From Members

Dear Gene,

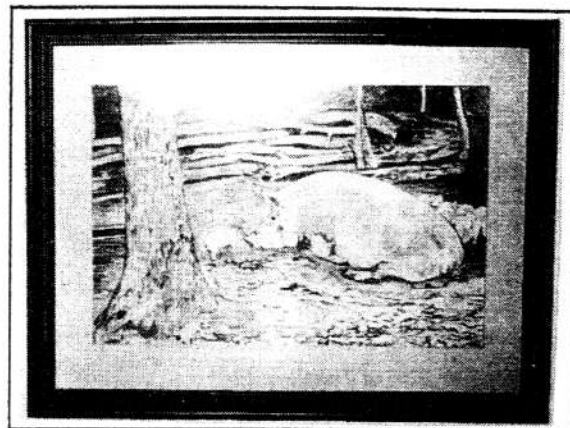
I received your packet of information and enjoyed reading your newsletters. If I come across any news that might be of interest to others, I'll pass it along.

My husband, Paul, and I farm 1500 acres with our son and his wife and family. We also farrow and sell about 1500 hogs a year. Paul loves to farm and may never retire. We have 3 children, two boys and a girl. Our 2 sons live close to us and our daughter and family live in

Indianapolis. We also have 8 beautiful grandchildren. We feel blessed to have 6 of them nearby.

Our church is a very important part of our lives. We spend alot of time there.

I started collecting pigs almost 20 years ago. I have purchased alot of them and friends and family have



contributed to my collection. Also, I don't really know how many I have but not nearly as many as you. My husband took the pictures of part of my collection. That's me on the couch with the pig pillow on my lap. The picture of the mother pig with her babies was painted by my aunt. She painted it from a slide picture of

one our pigs. That was years ago when we still farrowed pigs in the woods.

I don't know Mary Kessler from Ingraham but she is only about 10 miles from us.

Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Carolyn Kermicle
Dundas, Il.

New Collector:

My name is Sommer Meyers. I'm 14 years of age. I just started 2 months ago, collecting pig items. I have a very small collection. Do you or some one you know have extra pig items you willing to part. I would greatly appreciate it. And many more corresponding. Later I will send you gifts from Hawaii.

Until I hear from you, write back soon.

Sommer
87-2131 Helelua Pl.#08
Waianae, Hawaii 96792

I'M ALL EARS WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU

I saw your ad for your quarterly newsletter "The Happy Pig". Before I married my husband, Bob, in 1976, I had to learn to castrate pigs because my father-in-law was going to have shoulder surgery and no one else would do it. From that time on, people remember me with anything that is swine related. And-I love it!

I am anxious to receive my first copy of the "Happy Pig" just to see how happy it really is.

Thank You!
Darlene Immel, Fond deLac, WI.

P.S. Bob says I'll be castrating pigs 'til I'm ninety as long as I don't get too shakey.

(Continued from page 67)

a small toothpick holder. Then she came over to me and asked if I really wanted that pig. What was the price? \$35. I said, "OK". What's the morale of this story? Like the sign in the antique shops: Buy it when you first see it or Don't be taken in by the charm of a pretty girl. I have to smile when that piggy bank catches my eye. I've seen two others like it since then, one natural and the other had a blue tint like mine. They weren't priced quite that high.

If I saw your piggy banks, I'm sure some would match mine, many would be different. This is what makes it so interesting.

— Gene Holt

From My Pen to Yours

Dear Mr. Holt,

I enjoyed reading the story about you in the Galva News a few weeks ago. We, too, are hog farmers (in the over 50 age category) and over the years have developed quite a collection of pigs and things with pigs on them. My kitchen and office are the main rooms where these items are on display. I didn't intend to start a pig collection—it just sort of happened. I purchased some things myself, but many were given to me and I love them all. We farm about 800 acres of corn, beans and hogs. Our hog operation is all done in the field (no confinement). We average around 260 sows that farrow twice a year. Our son, who is married and has a 2 yr. old boy and is now buying his own farm, has a percentage of the hogs raised on our farm. He and our full-time hired man who is about his same age do most of the work involved. Our daughter-in-law has also started to display pig items in her kitchen that have been given to her. We have a 1000 lb. concrete pig that proudly stands in our front yard which has become quite a conversation piece as well as a significant landmark when telling people which farm on our road is ours.

I have enclosed \$20 to be a part of the pig collectors club that you have formed and look forward to reading your newsletters. It sounds like this has turned into a good hobby for you in your retirement and something enjoyable to keep you active.

All the best,
Elaine Warner,
Galva, Il.

ALOHA, FROM HAWAII

Dear Mr. Holt,

My name is Jeanie Dobbels, my husband is from Woodhull, IL. My father-in-law lives there, he has a pig farm. When I first met the family I was so excited. I am from Idaho and don't have a lot of pig farms there. But, anyway, I finally got to have a tour of one of the family's pig farms. One uncle took me into this big barn, there I saw so many baby pigs and they put a 6-day-old piglet in my hands and that's when I knew I was in love. It was the most beautiful little thing.

This is when I started collecting pigs. I changed my whole house into country and I have a lot of friends that send me things from all over the world. Mostly pigs now. I have some from Hong Kong, China, Australia and of course, Hawaii. I would like to get into your club. Please send me some information.

Thank You

Jeanie M. Dobbels, Honolulu, HI.

FOR SALE, PIGS

Dear Gene,

I saw your letter in the *Successful Farming* magazine. I have collected pigs for many years. After we quit farrowing, we bought some sheep. Then my family and friends started giving me sheep. I spin wool and do other things with it, so I've really gotten into sheep. Now my pig collection is in boxes and I've started a sheep collection.

I would be interested in selling my pig collection. I have over 200 pieces from cookie jars to figurines, to planters, to banks and lots more. Do you have a "For Sale" section in your magazine? I have no idea what they are worth. I would be willing to

sell the whole collection or one piece at a time. If you are interested or know of someone who is, please let me know.

Teri Ashe Phone 612-967-4305
1090-160th Ave. Se
Raymond, MN 56282

HELP, HOW ABOUT BACON BITS

Gene,

I'm curious to know if any of your readers have a recipe for bacon bits and I'm wondering if they can be stored for a reasonable period of time in an airtight container without refrigeration.

Sheila Domenick
1223 Rock City Rd.
Ridott, IL. 61067

AND A FINE LADY FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Dear Gene,

In reading my husband's *Successful Farming* magazine I saw your article on "The Happy Pig Collectors Club". I had to laugh because I am also one that is cursed with this same strange affliction. Although I have gotten a lot of pleasure and fun trying to find pigs that I like.

I was born and raised on a cotton farm in Alabama and my father had pigs, for our own use...not to sell. Some 50 years later I find a hobby, collecting pigs...I would like to hear from different people that do the same thing.

Enclosed is a check for membership to your club. I would like very much to hear from you.

Mary Walters Gyger
West Chester, Pennsylvania

HOG -WILD COLLECTOR

from *The Elkhart Truth, Elkhart, Indiana*

By Marshall V. King, Truth Staff

Richard Bostic's wife thinks he's "one piglet short of a litter." Nadine Bostic could make a case. Her 75-year-old husband "collects collections", as she has said, He's hog wild about one of them in particular, hog oilers.

Ask him what a hog oiler is, he'll tell you, "Something you oil a hog with."

Ask him why you'd want to oil a hog, he'll tell you, "To keep the bacon from sticking in the skillet."

If you keep rooting around, he'll finally explain that earlier in this century, necessity gave birth to a litter of contraptions known as hog oilers.

Around 200 patents were issued for machines that held lubrication for the skin of hogs. By rubbing against chains, springs, belts, wheels or rollers, pigs are able to get the oil that kept mange and lice off their skin. There is, after all, more than one way to grease a pig.

After he's done telling you about hog oilers, he might talk about capital punishment, the menace of drug dealers, taxes or how he wishes he had spent money on hog oilers rather than farm equipment.

Sanitation and technology have changed on pig farms, requiring fewer hog oilers. Bostic even remembers making a hog oiler on his father's farm. As a youth, he wrapped a post in burlap and doused it with oil. When the Depression came, the medicated oil was replaced with used engine oil.

Ten years ago, he found a hog oiler, had it sandblasted and painted

it like an eight-ball. Now his collection includes one that looks like a watermelon and his favorite: Hog Joy is painted like an ear of corn.

He points to one that sold for \$6.75 years ago. Now it might bring several hundred dollars. He won't sell them though. He'll buy and trade them, but never sell them. He's still employed, working as a cement finisher. "Bout the time I want to quit I run across another hog oiler," he said.

Bostic is leaning on a neighbor to sell him a rare hog oiler. He finds others at flea markets, junkyards and gas engine shows. About 25 collectors across the country search for the contraptions, Bostic estimates.

"It'd be a shorter story to tell you what I don't collect," he said. He has one of the state's most complete license plate collections and every National Geographic since 1914. He also collects dog tags, corn planter lids, antique lawn mower wheels and horse licenses.

"I even collect outhouse seats," he said, adding that he's itching to display them somewhere. But his wife has said that would be grounds for a divorce.

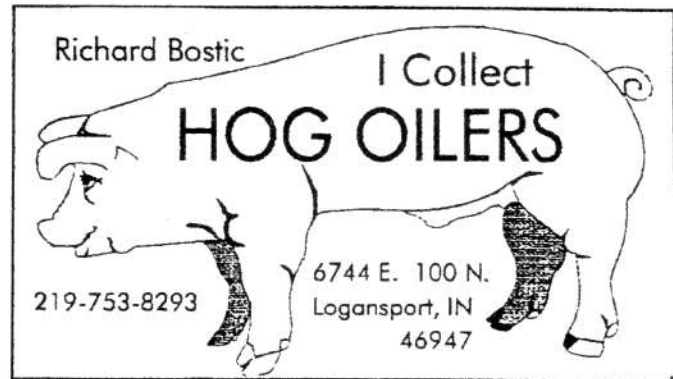
During his trips to shows or to display his collections, his wife of 54

years tends to her hobbies- reading and watching "Matlock".

He said his six adult children think he's a little crazy.

He doesn't seem crazy. There just aren't many people who delight in a hog ringer patented in 1840. But Richard Bostic has that piece of history and couldn't be prouder.

But he might trade up for a hog oiler.



Would like Hog Oillers:

Read about the club in "Successful Farming". I have a few "little pigs" that I have gathered. But actually I collect "hog oilers" and I was hoping your members might be helpful in leading me to some new discoveries for adding to my collection.

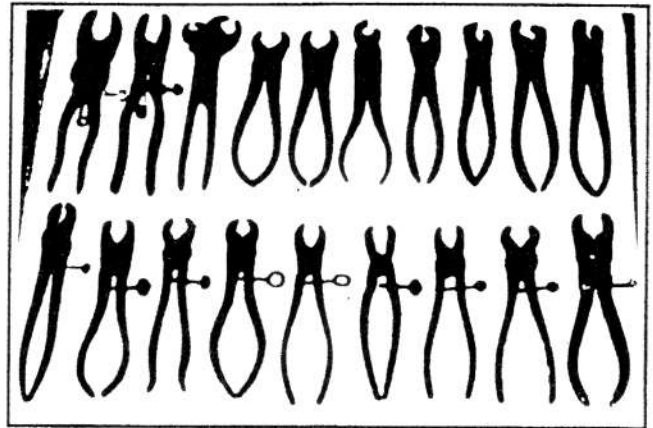
Happy Collecting,
Shirley Herlihy
17855 Bridle CT.
Jupiter, Florida 33478-4756

MORE GREASY PIGS

Robert Rauhauser of Thomasville, PA., is a long time collector of hog oilers. He says they have gotten out of his price range but still adds smaller hog related items to his collection. At the present time he is doing some research on the patents of hog oilers.

He enclosed two business cards in his letter. Each tells of his interest in hog oilers and pliers. Also farm machinery, wrenches, calf weaners and dairy items. The other side of one card lists 15 things he is interested in as a hay tool collector. The back side of the other card tells of many corn items he gathers. This guy is what you call a serious collector.

— Gene Holt

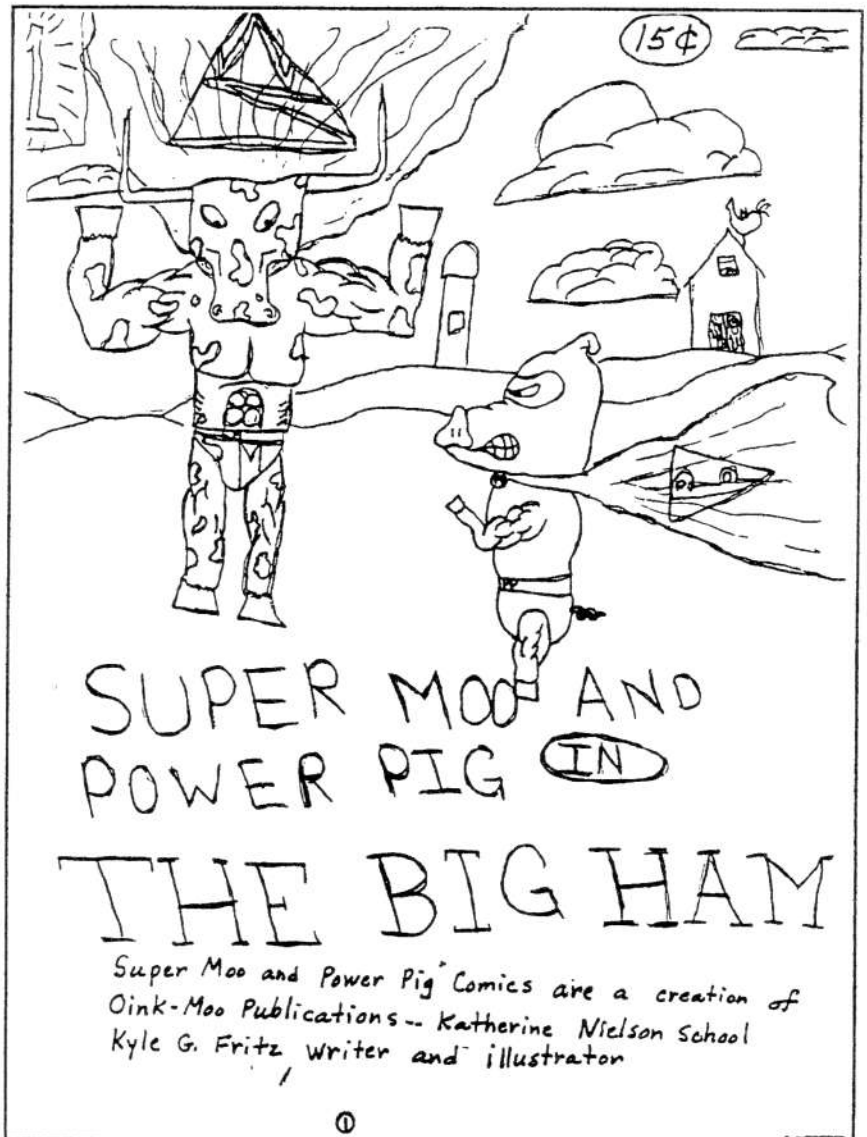


Pliers collected by Robert Rauhauser. They were used to place rings in the noses of pigs. The rings would make the pig's nose sore if it decided to root up all the sod in the pasture

NO TIME TO CLEAN MY ROOM, MOM

Kyle Fritz likes to draw, when he's not occupied practicing his piano lessons or singing in the Carl Sandburg Jr. College Children's Choir and he does take time out to go to school. Shown here is the front cover (sorry, Kyle, we had to shrink it) of a 6 page comic book he wrote and illustrated. The proud grandmother of this 5th grader is Patty Fritz, my sister-in-law. Mom and Dad are Debbie and Greg Fritz. Stephanie is his older sister who he loves to tease. They all live in Galesburg, Il. The thriller incorporates a truck accident, a chemical waste spill, a computer, radar and a ray zapper. (That's what you call the whole ball of wax.) A note at the end reads: Next month Super Moo and Power Pig meet up with Bully Bully, Super Moo's Arch Enemy.

— Gene Holt



A Pigs Tale

This is a tale of a near perfect pet,
A pot bellied pig is the one to get.

If your in the mood for a little TV,
She'll cuddle beside you as calm as
can be.

Or just grab a book and make a lap
And she'll settle down for a nice long
nap.

But, the kids home from school all
laughing and gay-
She'll be off like a shot to romp and
play.

Seniors and kids, dogs, cats and
others
To a pot bellied pig - we're all sister
and brothers!

If you've errands to run and are gone
for a while,
She'll be at the door with a wag and
a smile.

If you really want to make her ears
sing,
A ride in the car will be a favorite
thing.

Clean, smart and friendly; loyal and
true
No matter what, she'll always love
you.

So, if you need a small friend With a
heart that is big,
You just can't do better than a
pot bellied pig!!

*By Carol Klaus
from "Pot Bellied Pig" Journal/
Fall Issue 1991*

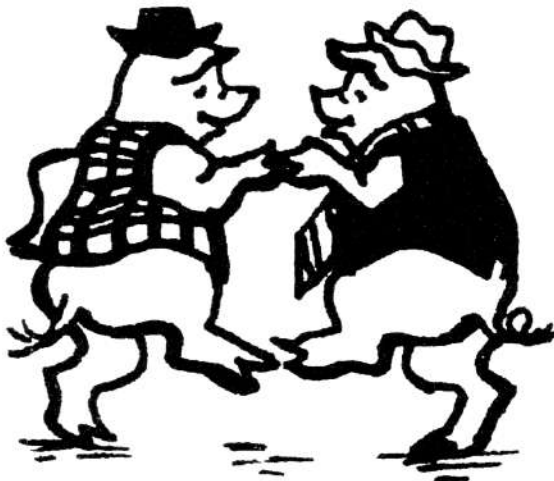
FRUSTRATION BUT FUN AHEAD

Memberships came in
so fast
Wasn't sure my brain
would last
Got antsy about
newsletter
To be late, hadn't better.
Convention time we'll
have a blast.

by Gene Holt

The Happy Pig Collectors Club

c/o Gene Holt
P.O. Box 17
Oneida, IL 61467



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*Don't forget to send your dues, your stories, and
the names of other similarly afflicted friends!*