



Northwest Miniature Pig Association

Northwest Pig Tales

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www.nwpetpigs.org

Presidents Page...

Another year arrives and it's already got all the markings of a busy and eventful time for the NWMPA. We've got a handful of events already planned and ideas galore. All of which takes volunteers and money. Which reminds me...now is the time of year to renew your membership! Club dues are \$18.00 for a family membership. One membership per family will provide you with one vote for officers, one vote at monthly meetings, and a year's subscription to our club newsletter, Pig Tales.

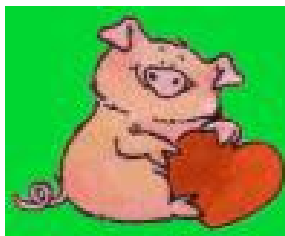
Sometimes I hear people say "I won't join because I can't attend meetings and can't participate in events..." Well "Hogwash I say!" No member is required to attend meeting or participate, but there are benefits to membership. Membership provides you with a network of other local pig owners, contacts for questions and support whenever needed as well as information on health, grooming, diet, and training (we all need a little help in this area from time to time).

Your dues of \$20.00 also provide the NWMPA with a means to function. As a non-profit organization, we must keep liability insurance coverage and we file the necessary tax forms. Our primary mission is to "Educate the Public" concerning Potbellied Pigs and your dues help us to purchase educational materials and to fund our events such as educational "pigs as pets" events held at local pet supply stores, provide equipment for vet clinics (digital walk-on-scale, clippers, lights & extension cords) and operational costs for the club like postage fees and supplies for the newsletter and new member packets.

The bottom line is that your membership dues help us to keep the network of pet pig owners connected and communicating. So even if you live outside of our local area, or a busy lifestyle makes for participation difficult, or maybe you don't even own a pig but want to be connected to those who do, **YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS!**

Wishing all of you (and your pigs) a happy and healthy year!

Patty Hill
(President NWMPA)



Northwest Pig Tales

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Editor: Sharie Van Wells
svanwells@outlook.com
Assistant Editors: Patty Hill /
Melissa Maxwell

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Submit articles via e-mail to
Sharie Van Wells
svanwells@outlook.com
Patty Hill
pattyrocs@msn.com

You may also submit articles by mailing articles to
Northwest Pig Tales c/o NWMPA
(address is given above).

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Current NWMPA Officers

President: Patty Hill
(503) 253-8768
Vice President: Melissa Maxwell
(503)639-3901
Secretary: LoRayne Evens
971-349-2589
Treasurer: Alyssa Ledesma
(503) 462-5809

The Year of the Pig

1911, 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019

People born in the year of the Pig are warm, sociable, and sincere. They are resilient, inquisitive, and intelligent. But they can be impulsive, sensitive, and stubborn. Though they may seem to take their time and enjoy themselves, the generosity and courage of pigs are qualities to treasure!

For nearly 5000 years, the Chinese culture has organized time in cycles of twelve years. This Eastern calendar based upon the movement of the moon (as compared to the Western which follows the sun), and is symbolized by the zodiac circle. Each year is traditionally represented by an animal that embodies unique qualities. Therefore, people born in the year of a particular animal are thought to share a certain personality and identity with their sign. Now more and more people worldwide celebrate this two week long festival in the early spring, and enjoy the start of another Chinese New Year.



Meeting Location:

The NWMPA meets on 3rd Saturday on every 3rd month:
January/April/July/October

Ron & Patty Hill's House
Call or email for address
pattyrocs@msn.com
503-253-8768



Please arrive by 2:30 for a 3:00 meeting start time.

What Made You Decide to Get a Pig???

By: Glenn Driscoll

Whenever I tell someone that we own a pot-bellied pig, I can usually expect one or more of the following questions:

1. What made you decide to get a pig?

Four reasons: they are very clean. They don't smell and they don't get fleas like a dog or cat. Like any pet, they do need an occasional bath. Pigs are highly intelligent so they tend to learn quickly. Being a herd animal, they're used to being with their own; however, their human owner can bond with them quite easily and they make wonderful, loving companions. Finally, training is not a problem; they'll have YOU trained in no time!

2. Does it live in your home?

Absolutely. Because they are so intelligent, potty training is usually no problem. We trained both of ours to stand by the back door this way, we knew they had to go out to go potty or just to graze.

3. What do pigs eat?

They'll eat anything (this is why they are called pigs!!!). A proper diet is fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and pellets that are made especially for miniature pigs. No "people" food. The idea is not to let them gain too much weight because of the strain on their short legs.

4. How long do pigs live?

This can vary. If they come from a strong mother and father and they are fed properly, they should have a fairly long life. Until recently, the longest I had heard of was 15 years but George Clooney recently lost his beloved Max at the ripe old age of 19. He had owned Max for 18 of those years and rumor has it that he slept in the actor's bed, which could explain why Clooney is a bachelor! Pot bellies are not for everyone. They aren't like a dog or a cat. They require a little more time and patience but the results are well worth it. You will be rewarded many times over. I've never made a lot of money. I don't have a college education. I've has a lot of jobs; some good, some not so good. I would never be mistaken for Tom Cruise (come to think of it, that's probably a good thing!). One thing I can say with pride is that I own a potbellied pig and I love these little critters with all my heart

Through the good times and the not-so-good times, our little Precious is there with unconditional love. She gave so much and expects so little in return. A couple of good square meals and a warm place to sleep is all she requires. We have been blessed to have had two piggies—one we lost last July due to liver failure, but every day with Precious is a blessing that hopefully we will be able to enjoy for many years to come.



Vietnamese Potbelly

Also Known by: *Pot Belly, Vietnamese Potbellied*

Vietnamese Potbelly pigs are a dwarf swine breed which was developed in the 1960's from the Ĩ breed of [Vietnam](#). They were originally brought into [Sweden](#) and [Canada](#) and have since moved into a number of countries.

Back in the early 80's, when Canadian Keith Connell imported the first potbellied pigs into North America, he had no idea what he had started. Originally, he intended to supply the pigs to zoos, but a private buyer interested in the pigs as pets started the porcine pets on their way to worldwide distribution and fame.



In 1986, when the first potbellies were sold into the U.S., their market price ran well into the thousands of dollars. Recently, as the breeder market became satisfied, the price of pets has come down to match that of pedigreed dogs and cats, making them an affordable alternative to canine and feline pets.

These pigs came to the United States from Canada. The original Canadian pigs averaged 250 lbs. and, therefore, were miniature pigs when compared to domestic swine that weigh 600-1500 lb. Full grown potbellied pigs weigh an average of 90-150 lb. with some reaching 200 lb. or more; they average 3-ft. long and 15-inches tall. Full growth is not reached until about 3 years of age. Colors range from solid black to solid white, with a variety of spots in between.

People ask, "Which make better pets, males or females?" We have found that as long as either sex is neutered or spayed, it really doesn't matter. Unspayed females suffer from "PMS" and strong mood swings; intact males produce a pungent odor in addition to displaying other unpleasant traits- neither are desirable pets. A neutered male is called a "barrow," an intact male is a "boar," a female that has never had babies is called a "gilt" and a female that has given birth is a "sow."



Most people who purchase these pigs want them as pets, but these pigs do not necessarily stay small, cute, or cuddly. As stated above, their average weight is close to 100 lb., and they do not like to be picked up or held. Unlike cats and dogs, pigs are prey not predators, so being lifted up or restrained causes them extreme alarm.

At three months old.

For Additional Information:

[North American Potbellied Pig Association](#)

References: Don Harper, *Whistling Wings Farm Inc., Biddeford, Maine* Mason, I.L. 1996. *A World Dictionary of Livestock Breeds, Types and Varieties. Fourth Edition. C.A.B International. 273 pp.*

Ten Steps to a Happy Adoption

An excerpt from: pigsaspets.org

1. Check out the persons/place doing the adopting or placing.

Ask lots of questions. Find out how many placements they do in any given time frame, like a month or year. Are they a sanctuary or do they just do rescue and placement? Don't be afraid to ask questions.

2. Ask for references and then check them out.

Get at least three or more references of pigs they have placed and then call and speak with the people and again, ask lots of questions. Check within the local community and also within the pig community.

3. NEVER adopt a piglet under the age of 6 weeks.

No piglet should be adopted before the age of 6 weeks and 8 weeks is better. Make sure the piglet has been wormed and either spayed or neutered or that arrangements are made to do so. No reputable sanctuary or rescue person will adopt out a piglet that is not at the right age and healthy. If you are asked to take a piglet that is younger, this should throw up a red flag. Be prepared for large medical bills and possibly losing the pig at a later date. Also it is hard to tell if the piglet is mixed or a full miniature at a young age. You might be getting one that is a mixed breed and could become larger than you expected.

4. NEVER adopt a pig that is sick or looks sick.

Again, no reputable sanctuary or rescue place/person will ask you to adopt a sick pig unless a full explanation is given well in advance. Ask questions and also find out if they are willing to help cover the cost of any and all medical bills for the life of the pig(let). Most reputable sanctuaries, rescue/person will want the pig healthy before

adopting it out. This is their responsibility if they have taken on a sick pig or have a piglet whose mother is sick or has died.

5. Make sure you have a witness to the adoption. Don't depend upon their adoption witness.

Bring a friend with you who is at least 18 yrs of age or older. Have them sign as a witness on the contract. Even if the place or person has a witness, they should also allow for your witness to sign. Also, you may want to take pictures as a safeguard, both of the pig and the signing of the contract. Just be sure and date the pictures so they match up with the signing of the contract and/or adoption.

6. Make sure that there is a clause in the adoption contract that states that they will take the pig back should anything happen and that if you have had to pay for medical bills within a reasonable length of time of adopting, you will be reimbursed.

Most contracts state that they will take the pig back, but as an added precaution, it should state who is responsible for the medical bills if the piglet is sick or gets sick within the first few weeks. Although most people are willing to cover medical bill son a much loved pet, it should be your choice and not forced upon you to do so.

7. If you are making a donation or paying an adoption fee, make sure it is legal within your state and ask to see financial records of past adoptions and adoption contracts.

Some states require that each organization be registered with their Division of Consumer Services. Any reputable organization will be glad to show you their records or give you a number to call for their state to check them out.

8. If you are adopting from a sanctuary, be sure and check out the place for cleanliness and that all pigs are disease free.

Look around and see if the place is kept clean and is moderately odor-free. Check for sick pigs or for pigs with hog mange. Check to see if water bowls are clean and if pigs have proper housing and bedding. Ask to see their quarantine pens for their sick or new arrivals. If they don't have one, be careful as then there is not way to separate the sick from the healthy and you might be getting a pig that has been exposed to other swine illnesses.

9. Be sure you are zoned where you live for a pet pig!

10. Legal Counsel - If you need legal counsel, make sure it is with one who has handled animal questions and problems before and/or has animals themselves. Never take anything for granted.



What to Expect from a Pet Pig

By Lianne McLeod

Although some people would never consider sharing their home with a pig, there are many people who are charmed by intelligence and the personality of their pet pigs. There is no doubt that given the proper expectations as well as care and training, a pot bellied pig can make an interesting and much-loved addition to the home. However, many people find that pigs are demanding pets and are overwhelmed by their needs - as shown by the abundance of shelters overflowing with pigs.

Before discussing the negative aspects of pigs, it must be noted that pigs have several desirable qualities. They are intelligent, readily trained, affectionate, curious, playful, clean, generally quiet, odor free, and usually non-allergenic.

Many owners consider their pigs an integral part of the family and involve them in all their activities. However, there are a few things potential owners should know. Pigs are complex creatures and require an owner who understands their needs.

Pigs are very intelligent. This is usually a positive trait, and in fact pot bellied pigs are quite trainable, much the same as a dog (i.e. can be house trained, leash trained, and will learn a few tricks). However, their intelligence can make them a bit of a handful, too. They are curious and playful, but also head-strong and sensitive. Without appropriate stimulation, they will become easily bored, and possibly destructive.

Pigs are also unrelenting in their quest for food - and can learn to open the fridge, cupboards, pantry - wherever food may be lurking. They can become demanding, begging for food, and even getting aggressive with kids that have food. Pigs also "root," or dig/explore with their snouts - and in doing so may overturn items in the house, including wastebaskets, and can disrupt the landscaping. This is instinctual, so an area of soft dirt should be provided in the yard so they can fulfill their need to root.

Another problem some have encountered with their pigs is aggression. Pigs can be territorial and have a drive to be dominant ("top pig"). Unless shown that the humans in the household are number one, pigs can exhibit a form of aggression known as dominance aggression (also seen in dogs). Pigs need to be taught to respect their owners, but setting rules and boundaries, teaching the word "no" and using gentle but firm discipline. Pigs respond well to positive reinforcement (e.g. using praise and treats when the pig is doing something desirable), and do not do well at all with physical punishment. From day one, the owner should be setting the rules and enforcing them. Consistent rules, praise for good behavior, and correction/redirection with lots of repetition and patience will help produce a well mannered pig with a good relationship with its family.

On a more basic level, a pig will live an average of 12 -18 years, estimates range up to more than 20 years. Although often called miniature pot bellied pigs, the term miniature is relative - they are smaller than most pigs kept for food production, but they still usually weigh 125 pounds or more when fully grown. Responsibility for their care is not to be taken lightly, with respect to time or finances. Pigs should be obtained from conscientious, reputable breeders, and will need a good quality pig food, regular vaccinations, hoof and tusk trims, and will also need to be spayed or neutered. Regular access to the outdoors for exercise is a necessity as well. Pigs are social animals so needs lots of attention and interaction, and if feasible, owners should consider keeping more than one pig. Of course, as with any other exotic pet - an owner needs to check local regulations to make sure pot bellied pig ownership is permissible.

For people with appropriate expectations, a pot bellied pig will make a rewarding, entertaining, much-loved pet. www.exoticpets.about.com .

THINKING ABOUT A PIG? A Final Word...

A pig is a beautiful commitment for 12 to 18 years or more.

Having a pig in the house is a lot like having a 3 year old child that is well behaved, but never gets older. For the most part they are well behaved, very clean and learn very quickly.

Periodically they will attempt to deviate from what they know is best and test you. It is up to you to gently guide them back into socially acceptable ways. They learn the good and the bad. What is cute when the piggie is 30 pounds is downright assaultive at 125 pounds or more! They are very fast learners.

The house must be "pig proofed" and you will learn new things like not leaving your purse on the floor where a pig could get into candy, cosmetics, pins or medicine.

A pig can use a doggy door to go outside at will to a safe fenced, dry and clean potty and exercise area. Young children must be made to understand that a pig is not a stuffed toy, but truly an animal to be respected. The animal has a huge mouth, a hard head, tusks that grow over time and hooves that can be hard and sharp.

Sometimes what could be perceived as rough play with another child or even a dog is, to a pig, threatening and he won't like it and might lash out which is natural for them to do when they don't like something.

Youngsters and pigs, everything goes into their mouths. Everything from dropped cereal and cookies to small toys and game pieces. So as the kids outgrow the putting things in their mouths stage, a pig never does. This makes you into a most fastidious housekeeper.

Commitment, training, gentle guidelines or discipline, support from a group of pig people to work through challenges are all things that you will need.

Make sure you are zoned to have a pig!!!

In order to assure that the animal has only one thing on his mind (being your pet) have him spayed or neutered ASAP. Do you have a back up system for his care during vacations and time away from home? Many kennels are not equipped to provide quality care for the pet pig.

Is there a veterinarian in your area who is knowledgeable in pet pig care?

What about career moves or a change in lifestyle? The average family moves every 3 years or so. Are you committed to researching the new location to find a pig friendly community? Pigs are the best companions in the world for the right people in the right circumstances.



Photo: Dayna Gibson / Teacup Pigs, The Myth / Facebook

Please don't fall for the teacup micro-mini teensy-weensy pig scam. Do your research, for yourself and for that adorable, intelligent, exasperating, willful bundle of piggyness that you want to bring into your home.