

CALIFORNIA POTBELLIED PIG ASSOCIATION, Inc.



# CPPA eNEWS

HOLIDAY 2014

**Inside Edition spreads the truth  
about "teacup" pigs**



In what we can only hope will start a trend in TV news, a recent episode of Inside Edition blew apart the breeder-perpetuated myth that potbellied pigs only weigh 40lbs when fully grown. We could tell you all about it, about how they interview CPPA'ers Mike and Lauren and later catch an unscrupulous breeder in the act, but why not [watch it for yourself?](#)

If that's not enough, National Geographic also ran a story on potbellies recently, which you can read [here](#).

# Frankie makes his literary debut

We've talked before about Frankie, CPPA member Bonnie's certified therapy pig. Now, Frankie has made a cameo in the book Love Comes on a Leash, a cute little "day in the life" story about a therapy dog and his diverse cast of theraputic friends. You can get your own copy [here](#).



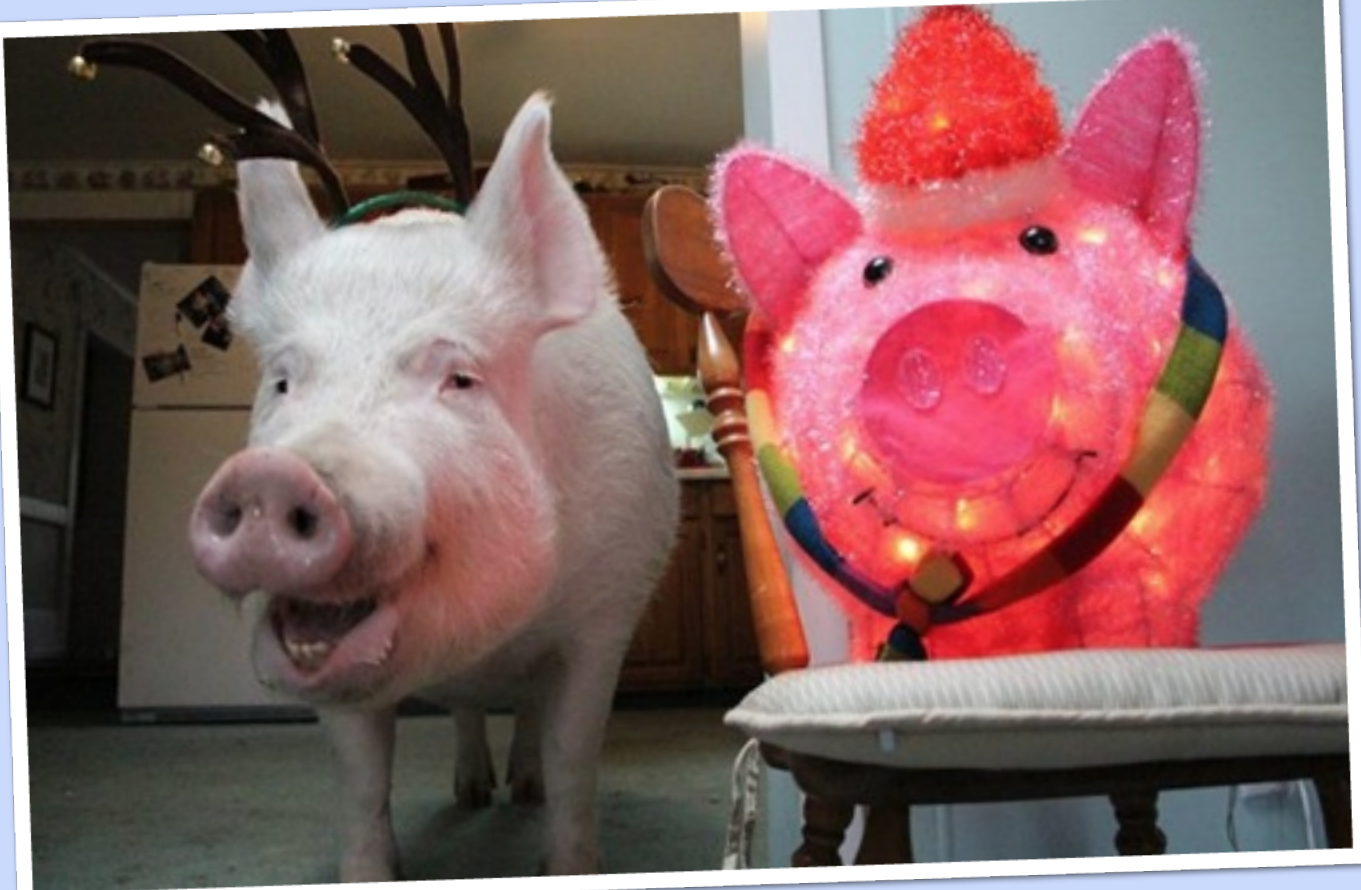
## Meet Ernestine, the world's oldest potbellied pig



The Guinness Book of World Records keeps track of all sorts of unusual things, from teh liver-crushing "Most pubs visited" to the straight-up ridiculous "Most Smarties eaten in one minute while blindfolded and using chopsticks." However, there's also a record for "Oldest potbellied pig ever", and it has a new owner. Ernestine, a potbellied pig living in Calgary, Canada, turned [23 years old](#) in mid-2014.

Congratulations on your accomplishment, Ernestine! And congrats also to your family, who clearly enjoy living with such a big-time celebrity.

## New Sanctuary Happily Ever Esther opens for pig-ness



Just a quick congrats to facebook superstar Esther the Wonder Pig on moving to her new home—where she just happens to be helping her dads find a brand new sanctuary, [Happily Ever Esther](#). We'll have more on Esther and her sanctuary in a future issue. It looks to be something special.

### Video Break: Thimble and Big Belly put on a show

We introduced you to CPPA-er Punim and her pigs Thimble and Big Belly awhile back. Here they are working on their repertoire of tricks from their home in Thailand. [Check out their curly tails!](#)



## Video Break: Pigs are Friends, Not Food



Every potbelly “owner” knows pigs are clever little butterballs, and [this quick-and-cute video](#) by our friends at Farm Sanctuary reminds us of it with stop-motion animation mixed with hard science. Awesome.

## Forget popcorn chicken. We have popcorn TURKEY.

Kelli from [Sloppy Seconds](#) sanctuary is a world-class animal enrichment expert. Just look at these popcorn-filled, paper-bag turkeys she crafted for her pigs. And just like that, our menu for next year's Thanksgiving is done.



# Sanctuary Spotlight: The Pig Preserve

This issue debuts what we hope will become an ongoing series of features showcasing various pig sanctuaries across the US (possibly the world). This issue, we're starting off big with a look at The Pig Preserve, which has to be pretty much the most incredible place in all of Tennessee. It's a free-range preserve, in which pigs of all breeds and sizes roam freely across acre upon acre of woodland.

Below, please enjoy an excerpt from an article titled 10 Questions for Richard Hoyle, Founder of The Pig Preserve, which the blog My Non-Leather Life has kindly allowed us to reprint. If you like what you see and read (and how could you not, really?) [head to the blog](#) to check out the rest of the interview. Then track down [The Pig Preserve on facebook](#). Their ongoing stream of photos is amazing, inspiring, and often hilarious.

Note: All photos are from the facebook page of The Pig Preserve (many taken by Anita Krajnc of [Toronto Pig Save](#))



MNNL: I read somewhere that you said your wife had always been interested in pigs, and you guys first got a potbellied pig as a pet. Do you know what drew your wife to pigs her whole life? And what did you think of the idea at first?

Richard: Yes...Laura has always been a pig lover. Our home had always been a repository for all kinds of "pig knick knacks". I'm really not sure what caused her to fall in love with pigs

at an early age...but I have since met hundreds, maybe thousands, of people who feel just as she did. I never thought much about it until it actually became possible to buy and own your very own miniature house pig. But, being a woman of singular purpose and fully capable of putting me under severe duress until she gets what she wants, I quickly realized that my life was going to be a living hell until Laura got a pig.

My conversion to pig lover was probably the strangest and most bizarre event in my life. Something about Paddy Murphy [their first potbelly] and her partner, Damien, just got to me. Suddenly the thought of eating ham and pork products became abhorrent to both of us. And, within a short time, we were both vegetarians. The transition from owning a couple of pigs to running a sanctuary just seemed like a natural progression for us.



I don't recall us ever arguing about whether or not to start a sanctuary...it is just something that both of us felt we had to do. Did either of us realize that the pigs and the sanctuary would grow to consume or entire lives, all our money and every minute of our time? No...I don't think so. But I know that neither of us have ever had a moment's regret. The only regret we have today is that we can only rescue such a precious few and we keep striving to find ways to do more for a greater number of pigs.

How did you get the brilliant idea to make your sanctuary be a place where pigs can be as free as possible and come and go as they please. Were you nervous the pigs wouldn't know how to fend for themselves?

The concept of The Pig Preserve probably began as a germ of an idea in my mind several years before it became a reality. I spend a great deal of time simply observing and watching the pigs. They are fascinating creatures...even more so when they are in groups. The more I watched and the more I came to understand these marvelous creatures the more I realized

that they are nomadic by nature. Pigs also have a desperate need to be part of a social group. More than any other animal, pigs are happiest when in a group of other pigs. And, when given the opportunity, they love to roam, forage, investigate their world and enjoy the companionship of other pigs.



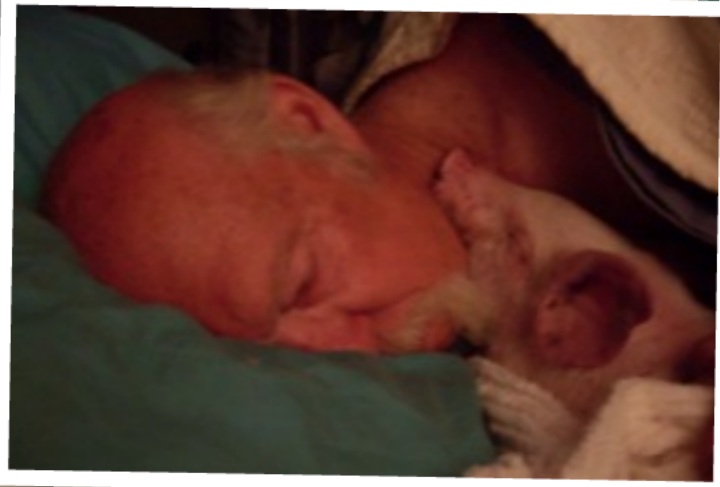
I saw where people who rescue other animals had used the preserve concept with good results. They were caring for happier, healthier and more social animals. I began to wonder why the same concept could not apply to pigs. The “experts” all told me that farm pigs could not live like that...that they had been genetically engineered to the extent that they were no longer really pigs. They told me that various breeds of pigs could not live together...especially the miniature pigs and the farm pigs.



When I told people about my preserve concept many “pig people” accused me of wanting to create a situation that would allow only for the survival of the fittest pigs. I believed, though, that rather than a survival of the fittest, the preserve would give them the gift of freedom. But transitioning from the traditional sanctuary model where the pigs are pretty much contained and constantly supervised and monitored was a hard one at first...and a bit scary. But I have gotten used to the fact that the pigs will spend the bulk of each day on their own and in the company of other pigs doing what they want to do.

I do still make it a point to physically see and touch each and every pig every day to make sure that each pig is sound and healthy. The easiest time for me to do this is every evening at feeding time. That is why feeding takes me between three and four hours each day and why I feed each social group of pigs individually.

I still have to maintain a relationship with each pig here. I need for each pig to be comfortable enough with me so that if the pig becomes ill or injured, they will let me work on them and render care. That is easier with some pigs than with others. Some pigs are much more "people friendly" than others. Plus, we have a long history of taking in "problem pigs"....pigs who were passed through several homes or through several sanctuaries and who were deemed "aggressive" or "hard to handle". The problem pigs often become my favorite pigs. Not because I enjoy the challenge, but because there is no such thing as a problem pig. When given the proper environment and the proper understanding and respect the "problem pigs" often become my biggest love mooches.



After almost 8 years now, I can honestly say that our pigs are as healthy, safe, happy and secure as any pigs I have ever seen. Our potbellied pigs routinely live to be 20 years old. We were told that farm pigs would seldom live past 10 or 11 years of age. I have a large population of farm pigs who are 16-18 years old and who are still going strong. The preserve concept works. When pigs are provided with an environment that contains sunlight, fresh air, the opportunity for exercise, the ability to socialize with other pigs, the ability to graze, forage, roam, swim and play along with a nutritious diet of all natural grains they are simply healthy, happy and, consequently, long lived.

This is not rocket science. We are simply creating a sanctuary where the needs of the pigs are paramount. We tailor our operation of the sanctuary to the pigs' needs rather than what is the easiest or most convenient for us.

The "downside" to the preserve concept is mostly in the worries that it brings to me as their caretaker. We worry about the coyotes and bears that frequent the property. We worry about the pigs getting bitten by a venomous snake. We worry that someone will try and sneak in and shoot one or more of the pigs for meat. But we keep a number of rescued dogs and cats here at the sanctuary as well. The dogs are a great coyote deterrent and the cats help keep the snake population at bay. Actually, the pigs are pretty adept at killing snakes themselves. And I spend a great deal of time roaming the sanctuary and the woods making sure that



fences are still intact and that nobody is getting any ideas about sneaking onto the property to try and hunt any of the pigs. The fact that we are so remote and surrounded by hundreds of acres of deep woods helps a great deal.

In the media you always hear about how smart pigs are, and even how loving and sensitive pigs are. Do you have any examples you could share about that from your preserve?

You can see a pig's soul in its eyes. They are not only intelligent creatures but they carry with them a great range of emotions. I have watched with awe the grieving process when one of the pigs in a particular social group dies. Each pig in the group comes up to pay their respects. They cry and grunt as they prod the dead pig with their snouts. And the alpha pigs in the group will not let me approach to move the body until the group has finished saying their goodbyes. It is something that I have grown to respect. The group will not be the same for several days and, often, the closest companions of the dead pig will go off by themselves for several days without eating. I believe they are simply grieving.



A sick pig is never alone. There will always be one or two of their social group with the sick pig. They rotate from pig to pig, but a sick or dying pig is always in the company of one or more of their group. And if I approach the pig to give it a shot or try and bring food or water to the sick pig, I have to be very careful around the "sentries" as they are very protective of their sick herd mate.



Pigs do not respond well to corporal punishment or correction. Usually, all I have to do is raise my voice and, occasionally, give the offending pig a shove on the flanks to correct their behavior. It is important that I correct them in the same way a more dominant pig in their group would elicit compliance. Pigs understand this. And I must maintain myself as the "alpha" pig in the group or working with the pigs would become chaotic and dangerous. Once in a while a pig (almost

always a miniature pig) will challenge me. It is important that I not back down and once in a while a shoving match will ensue. Eventually, the challenging pig will retreat, although not without a great deal of grumbling and grumping.

I occasionally get bitten and more frequently get “tusked” by a male pig. But never have these injuries been inflicted intentionally by a pig. They are not aggressive creatures by nature. I do have to be very aware, when working around the pigs, that these are very large animals with a very poor understanding of how big and long they actually are. It is very easy to be injured when several pigs get a bit rambunctious around me or when I am trying to coax a sick or injured pig into a stall or trailer. Bumps, bruises, pratfalls and the occasional tusk slash are all part of dealing with animals this large.

That's the end of our excerpt. But please do go to My Non-Leather Life for the [full interview](#). And be sure to visit [The Pig Preserve on facebook](#) for many more gorgeous photos and stories.



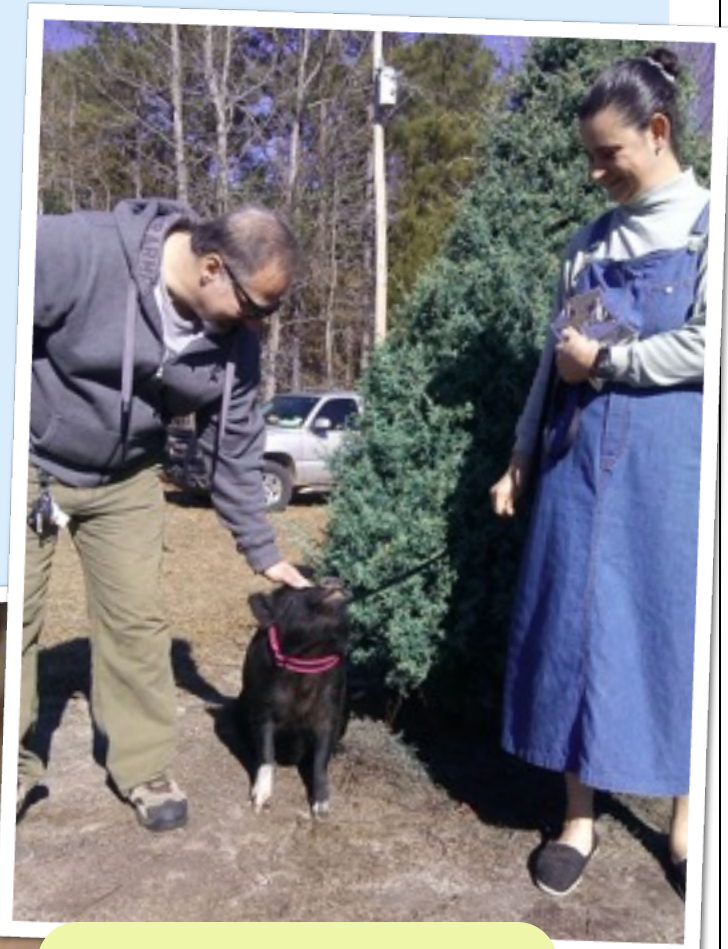
## Mailbag: Piggy picks a Christmas tree

We'll admit we're often skeptical of new holiday traditions—turducken, anyone?—but CPPA-er Anita recently told us about a tradition in her family that we can absolutely get behind.

"We have a tradition that whoever's first Christmas it is gets to pick the Christmas Tree. So me and my sexy, magnificent, piggy headed to the Christmas tree farm. Of course it took hours to get outta there because she has a piggy following (yes, my piggy has 'groupies'). When we could extricate ourselves from the crowd, we walked around...her admirers watching us...Piggy meandered through the fields inspecting the potential trees. She clearly picked one. How? Well, she went up to it, then pawed a little bed under it and waited. All the staff saw it and came over in amazement at the way she picked the perfect tree. Uh huh. It WAS beautiful, too. The ONLY one of it's kind. Only one problem: it was 12 ft tall and we have 8 ft ceilings.

I am not sure which is crazier, 6 people seriously standing around analyzing said tree to determine if there was any way to make a 12 ft tree into an 8 ft tree, or the fact that I would buy the tree if we COULD make it work. LOL.

Anyway, I had to have one of our intellectual discussions (because, you know, pigs are smart) about ceiling heights. I explained how since she didn't have a neck she couldn't see the ceiling she just had to trust me that it was there...and then we had to proceed to a more space-conscious tree.



Piggy proudly showing off her tree selection, and later modeling her angel wings.



# Treat Box!

The last thing most of us want to do after the holidays is “more shopping”. But not only are these holiday-themed goodies adorable, ordering one will also give you the perfect excuse to put off packing your holiday decorations until it arrives.



## Pink Portly Pig Ornament

Portly, yes, but pigs are supposed to be round, at least in ornament form. And at an economical \$11.99 at [bronnens.com](http://bronnens.com), this little guy won't break the bank.



## Lucky Ducks Flying Pig and Pig with Hearts ornaments

These beautiful blown-glass ornaments are about as classy as you'll find anywhere. Granted, at \$49 apiece, they kind of have to be (we were hoping for a post-holiday sale, but so far, no luck). Still, whether you choose the piggy with [angel wings](#) or the one with [heart-shaped glasses](#), you'll find yourself with a larger-than-you'd-expect ornament (2.5 inches high) made with impressive craftsmanship.

