

THE BEAN HOME NEWSLETTER

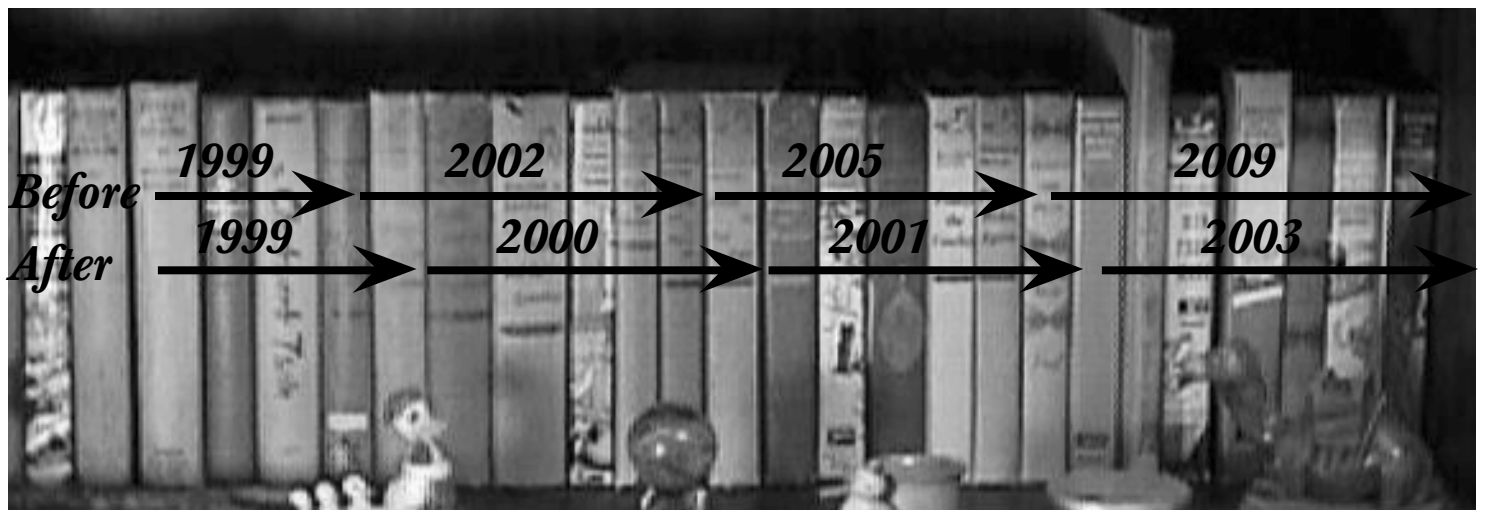
Dedicated to the memory of our friend, Walter R. Brooks

Vol. 9, No. 2

Spring 1999

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Overlook Ramps Up: Six Freddie's a Year!



Bookshelf image courtesy of "Mr. Eha.")

The difference it makes: Thanks to our friends at Overlook Press, you'll be assured of having a complete set of the Freddy books by early 2003.

Overlook Press is so pleased with the sales of the Freddy books so far that they have decided to up their pace from two books per year to two per season, which in Overlook terms means six books a year.

The new pace will start this summer, as previously announced, with *Freddy the Pilot* and *Freddy and the Baseball Team From Mars*. It will continue in the fall with *The Story of Freginald* and a compilation entitled *The Wit and Wisdom of Freddy the Pig*. Jennifer Feather

of Overlook stated that *Freginald* was picked as a reprint specifically because of the demand for it from Freddyites.

Meanwhile, the first two reprints, *Freddy Goes to Florida* and *Freddy the Detective*, have now gone into their third printing.

The Friends of Freddy have a special role to play in putting together the compilation volume. See inside for details. ☺

Bean Farm mail

From the "Happiest Pig"

I am a retired pig farmer who lives out on the gently rolling prairies of Knox County in Illinois. You can find rocks and hills in Illinois, but not around here. I've been collecting all kinds of pigs and pig things for several years and started The Happy Pig Collectors Club.

One of our granddaughters gave me *Freddy the Detective*, which had been unselected at her school library. I started to read it one evening and at 3:30 am found myself hooked on Freddy. I've been searching for the other books ever since. One of our members clued me in on the Friends of Freddy. She'd found the home page on the Internet. My wife and I joined and came to the convention in Windham. Several more Freddy books, new friendships, and a wealth of knowledge came home with us. We're looking forward to coming back in 2000.

If there are any FoF members who might be interested in the Happy Pig Collectors Club, they can write to me at:

Gene Holt
P. O. Box 17
Oneida, IL 61467
email: pigclub@net.ins.net

I would be glad to send our propaganda.
Gene Holt
(Oneida, IL)

[See Gene's writeup on the convention elsewhere in this issue.—ed.]

From the maillist

Okay, here goes. I am a 38 year old pharmacist from Kentucky. The first Freddy book I ever read was *Freddy the Detective*, sometime around 1968. Our school library had about twelve of the books and I have never been able to find or read the other fourteen. Before I went into high school I probably read each of

those twelve at least five times. There is something about the books that still seems to have a hold on me and the older I get, the more I want to go back to the Bean Farm for a brief visit. About nine years ago, Random House re-released eight of the books. I was able to find six of them, but my favorite was not among them. *Freddy Goes to the North Pole* was *always* my favorite of the books we had at the school. I haven't read it since 1970. *Freddy Goes to Florida* and *Freddy and the Men from Mars* were my next two favorites...I have those, but my favorite has eluded me all these years and I have searched *countless* used book stores for them. Until recently, I thought I was alone out here, but I ran across your web site a couple of months ago and I see I'm not alone. I've thought a lot about it and I think perhaps that the reason I love the books so much is that they each contain a small part of my childhood that I can go back and touch occasionally (the same goes for Burroughs' Pellucidar Series which I recently found!!!). Too many kids find destructive ways to escape the world these days...I'd love to be able to introduce them to Freddy...he's been a friend of mine for a long time now! Take care and *thanks!*

Eddie Duff
eduff@prtcnet.org

Great Website!! Was surprised and yet not surprised to find how many others grew up with Freddy, Jinx, and the others.

Our parents used to read the books aloud to us kids, mostly my Mom until she'd be laughing so hard she couldn't see through the tears and had to hand off to my Dad. I'm really excited that the books are being re-published, just disappointed that it will be done so slowly. [But see headline in this issue—Ed.]

My wife says, "Now you'll have something to look forward to in your declining years."

Looking forward to the convention in 2000.

Mark A. MacKinnon
(Portsmouth, RI)

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The Bean Home Newsletter is published quarterly by the Friends of Freddy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of the writings of Walter R. Brooks and his literary alter ego, Freddy the Pig. Two-year memberships are \$15 in the US and Canada (US funds only, please). All overseas members please add \$12 additional for airmail delivery. Please make your check or money order payable to Friends of Freddy and send it to Connie Arnold at the address below.

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The Wit and Wisdom of Freddy the Pig

Peter Mayer, the owner of Overlook Press, has long wanted to publish a book with just this title, to be a collection of quotes from the Freddy books that are particularly edifying or entertaining. At our recent convention, he recruited a volunteer from our midst to be the collector-in-chief (in return for a \$500 fee).

The recruit is our own eleven-year-old Sarah Koslosky who, I am told, is already hard at work, diligently reading two chapters a night and filling out 3x5 file cards as if there were no tomorrow.

Additionally, she is working on collecting interesting “Freddy Facts” to enliven the book: trivia along the lines of mentions of Walter Brooks (or Kurt Wiese) himself in the books, Freddy’s encounters with ham and bacon, and the location of the Bean Farm.

However, this is a mighty task for one eleven-year-old, and we ask the rest of you to help her out by sending in your own favorite quotes and “Freddy Facts.” Many of the good folks on the Freddy maillist are already hard at work doing so. If you want to take part as well, you may do so via email to: AUTOGRAPHK@aol.com or via conventional mail to: Wit and Wisdom, c/o Sarah Koslosky, 12908 Binney St., Omaha, NE 68164.

Unfortunately, due to the delays in the newsletter, there is little time left to contribute. If you do send something in, please do so by the end of May (and sooner if at all possible).

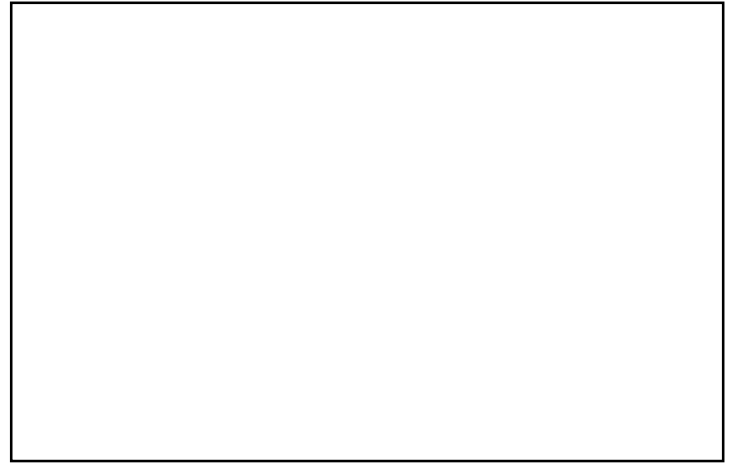
Book donation update

The Friends of Freddy have collected over \$2000 so far for donations to needy or member-specified schools and libraries. The member-specified donations have already been made, and the recipients should have received their books by now.

The money for needy schools and libraries is currently sitting in an escrow account while Connie works with personnel at the Reading is Fundamental program to determine which needy schools and libraries should receive the books. Member input is also requested: If you have any suggestions for individual schools—or even entire school districts—that would qualify as high need schools, please contact Connie. Of particular interest are schools with limited library budgets that would benefit from classroom book collections for children in grades 3 to 5.

Auction update

With Overlook Press accelerating its pace of republication, we are faced with a pleasant question: what shall we do with our biennial auction? Its original justification—giving members an opportunity to complete their collections—no longer exists. So we have several options (all of which have been suggested already): abandon it entirely, focus more on books for the serious collector (first editions, dust jackets, etc.), focus more on inexpensive reading copies, or make more of an effort to include Freddy-related books such as the Wesselhoefts that Brooks read as a child. (Or maybe something no one has thought of yet.) Let us know what you think. 🐷



Wit and Wisdom anthologist Sarah K. takes a break from note-gathering to pose for the Friends (photo courtesy of Pierce Koslosky)

Bean Farm Mail

Continued from page 2

I read Freddy as a boy and took him up again a couple of years ago. He has kept me (nearly) sane through the most trying years of graduate school, but I have frequently pined for a community of Freddy fans. I find Walter Brooks' books truly interesting, as well as fun, and I am particularly interested in finding out how different generations of young readers understood him in their day, and why so many of us enjoy returning to them as adults.

Daniel L. Watson
(Bloomington, IN)

I received info about membership in the Friends of Freddy following my request to Overlook Press.

My wife and I enjoy reading the books I obtained as a child when we are driving in the car.

Please sign me up!
Bill Westcott
(Burnt Hills, NY)

Thank you for the back issues of the *Bean Home Newsletter* and my Friends of Freddy membership card. It was a pleasure reading all the articles, and of savoring the spiritual kinship manifested in the testimonies of Freddy fans. Over and over again, I found myself saying—out loud, I fear!—YES! as I resonated with the experiences and feelings and reminiscences of so many other Friends. My guess is that the Friends have all been blessed with a particular kink in their psyches that has made it possible for them to have at least one guffaw denied the generality of the race. It has been one of life's joys for me to share that affliction! (By the way, it is not surprising to note the overlap of mentality embracing Friends of Freddy and Pogophiles. It would be an interesting study to see where else this particular kinkiness might ramify.)

The Reverend Marc K. Oliver
(Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY)

I owe a big debt of gratitude to the Friends of Freddy. It was through hearing about the FoF that I first met Freddy. You see, I never met Freddy as a child. My loss.

Some time in the late '80s, I read an article in my then-local newspaper (*The Daily Oklahoman*) about the Friends of Freddy. I became quite curious as to how and why these books would have such passionate and loyal fans. I was able to find some reprints of some of the books in the library. I read a few, and then I understood how Freddy could have his very own fan club.

Unfortunately, things did not go smoothly from there. I wanted to read more Freddy books; I wanted to join his fan club. But we had moved to Maryland, where I could not find any of the books in the Charles County library system. I also could not remember the name of the organization. I thought it was the Freddy Fan Club, or something like that. I remained out of contact with all things Freddy for far too long. All I had was an old Scholastic reprint of *Freddy the Detective*.

But then my son gave me a copy of *The Ubiquitous Pig* for Christmas. And what should I come across in there but a prominent mention of Freddy and his loyal fans, the Friends of Freddy!

I was delighted. For now, with the correct name of the organization, an Internet search turned up information on how to join! And I promptly did join, of course, and have certainly not been disappointed.

Also, we have since moved to Anne Arundel County, Maryland, whose library system does have some Freddy titles. Hooray!

A while back, I had the distinct pleasure of reading *Freddy and the Ignormus* for the very first time. (I have Overlook Press to thank for this pleasure. Thirteen cheers for Overlook Press!) When I got to the part, in Chapter Four, where it is mentioned that May Third is the anniversary of the founding of the F.A.R., I started wondering if any Friends of Freddy members had ever done anything to celebrate this important anniversary. And then I realized that this is the perfect year to celebrate the founding of the F.A.R. in a special way. This is the year that the F.A.R. marks sixty years of existence, since it was founded in *Wiggins for President*, which was first published in 1939.

To celebrate this milestone year in the history of the F.A.R., I decided to create a commemorative faux postage stamp. It features a graphic portraying the flag of the F.A.R.

"Every animal and every bird has equal rights under the flag of the F.A.R." Long may it wave!

Cheryl Rider
(Mayo, MD)

[Editor's note: Anyone wanting their own F.A.R. commemorative "stamps" is welcome to send a self-addressed stamped envelope for further information to: Cheryl Rider, P.O. Box 588, Mayo, MD 21106.]

My Search For Freddie's

By Keith Muraoka

Buy every Freddy book you can at any cost; never pay over \$50. Shop out-of-print bookstores and dealers specializing in children's books; avoid dealing with specialty bookstores. Check the Internet on practically a daily basis; never buy any Freddy books over the Internet.

The above is just some of the advice I've received over the years after talking to more than a dozen fellow Friends of Freddy members about collecting Freddy books. As you can see, advice is vast and varied when it comes to actually buying out-of-print Freddy books. The primary reason I joined Friends of Freddy many many years ago was my hopes of buying Freddy books of my own. Shoot, reading them as a child I never imagined that I could really own my own. Then, reading about proposed trades in *The Bean Home Newsletter* only whetted my appetite. My dilemma as I'm sure it is with many FOF members: how do I trade when I don't have anything to trade?

So, I delved into buying Freddy books. Suffice it to say, that it takes a lot of time, effort and - what else? - money to buy your own! I've made several dozen long-distance calls to bookstores across the country through the years. I found book dealers who insisted that ex-library copies would run from \$90 to \$200. I found several willing to do "title searches" for fees of up to \$5 per book. One book dealer offered me an ex-library *Cousin Weedly* for the cool price of \$300 - and insisted this was an excellent price. If you have access to the Internet, I'm sure you've seen Freddy books for sale. Are you getting a little tired of seeing certain dealers (you know who they are) offer Freddie's for \$200, \$300 and upwards of \$500?

I'll be the first to admit that I'm no expert. Yet, over the years I've learned the difference between ex-library editions, trade paperbacks, first editions, dust-jacketed, Gibraltar Library Binding, 1986 reprints, etc. For the most part, prices are based on condition. Whether it's a first edition, has a dust jacket or is an ex-library, condition is the primary factor in determining value!

With that said, you'll find that the vast majority of Freddie's out there are ex-libraries in pretty poor condition. When someone tells you a book is in "fair" condition, you can generally call it "poor." I've yet to find a book dealer honest enough to tell me a book is actually in "poor" condition; it seems "fair" is as low as they'll go!

Nevertheless, if you ever hope to own Freddy books you must:

- "Make friends" with as many out-of-print bookstore people you can find.
- Have your name placed on their "want" lists. And try to buy any Freddie's they offer within reason. This builds a relationship and they'll be more apt to call again.
- If you do pay a dealer to do a title search, never pay more than one dealer at a time or you may be driving the price up for yourself.
- Frequent library sales, Goodwill and the local chapter of the American Association of University Women. Your best deals will come at these book sales.

- Get to know fellow Friends of Freddy members. I've sold (and traded) my extras to many members. Even though prices even among members may appear slightly inflated, I've found that they're far more reasonable than in the outside world.

- Most of all, I now know how scarce Freddy books are and that there are plenty of people out there trying to take advantage of us Freddy collectors!

For those of you who are curious, I now go by the following game plan. Ex-library Freddie's and hardcover reissues should almost always run under \$50. Anything more, and you're being taken unless it's in very good shape, is a first edition or one of the hard-to-find editions.*

First editions shouldn't be anymore than \$85. Dust-jacketed editions are scarce and, because of this, you may have to pay over \$100 for them. (I hate to admit it, but I have paid \$200 for a dust-jacketed, signed *Mr. Camphor*). Reprints, such as the 1986 reprints, and paperbacks should always be under \$20. Finally, don't deal with anyone offering ridiculously high prices for Freddy books—it will only encourage them!

*Scarce titles. What are the harder-to-find titles? They include: *Freddy's Cousin Weedly*, *The Clockwork Twin*, *Simon the Dictator*, *Freginald*, *Bean Home News*, *To and Again*, *More To and Again*, and *Wiggins for President*. The more common titles are: *Freddy Goes to Florida* and *Freddy the Detective*. Take these titles into consideration when evaluating prices.

Keith Muraoka lives in the Garlic Capital of the World: Gilroy, CA. A former newspaper reporter, he has been reading Freddy since the third grade. His current claim to Freddy fame is selling the fabulous "Freddy float pens," described in the previous issue. ☺

More comments on last fall's convention

Our Frolic With Freddy

by Gene Holt

Reprinted with permission from *The Happy Pig*, Vol. 4, #2, Fall 1998.

Reflections

by Nancy Joroff

Friday: The Windham Arms was comfortable and welcoming, with glorious views. I appreciated all the efforts of Wray and Loni Rominger to find and secure this place for the 1998 convention. While reuniting with old friends, I made new ones. This was the sixth FoF convention I'd attended, and I met more people than ever before. The seating for meals and the pace of the convention allowed people to mix more than usual, and I enjoyed all the new friends.

Saturday and Sunday: Lee Secrest's slides of the second convention took me down memory lane and also pointed out how far the FoF has come over the past ten years. So many goals have been realized: more people know about Freddy; the books have been republished twice; club membership has more than doubled. Congratulations and thank you to those founding members for their vision and hard work!

The auction enabled me to obtain a copy of a book I would not otherwise have found. Thank you Connie Arnold for all your year-long hard work that allowed many of us to increase our collections. I am also glad to have had the opportunity to contribute to the club's new school library donation project.

Talks that enlightened, educated, and put my mind on new paths: thank you Michael, Lee, Alice, Connie, Aladdine, and Kevin; Dan's wonderful game based on endpapers, and his slide show, which I hope will be repeated at the next convention.

Monday: A visit to the Roxbury Library and Dorothy Brooks' home (Walter's home, too). Luckily, the new owners were on the premises and graciously let us see the house.

The jukebox in the fifties' soda bar room certainly was appreciated. I remember twisting with Kevin and being entertained by Victor doing his karaoke. The fifties were never like this!

I am constantly amazed at the range of people who read Freddy books. I met so many fascinating people with such varied interests that I am humbled when I recollect the early conventions when I sat in the back and tried not to laugh when people seriously discussed the genealogy of Freddy. He was a pig, for goodness sake ... a fact that members seemed to have forgotten. Now I am creating a family tree for this pig.

Now, armed with my convention t-shirt (thank you, Alice!) and inspired to read more, I started *Simon the Dictator* today. I am already looking forward to the next convention. ☁

After joining The Friends of Freddy last summer and getting their quarterly newsletter, *The Bean Home Newsletter*, my bride and I, on a whim, decided to go to the 7th biennial convention of the FOF. It was held Oct. 23-26 at the Windham Arms Hotel in Windham, New York.

We drove our trusty Oldsmobile and didn't want to rush. We left home on the 21st and made it to Barb's east of Indianapolis for her free B&B. The fall colors were in their prime. We didn't see much in Pennsylvania except trees. You had to crane your neck looking down some valley to see a farm. That part of the drive was absolutely gorgeous. Our second night was somewhere in far north east Pennsylvania, not leaving to many miles for our last day, but Windham isn't near any interstate highway so our last few miles took quite a while. There isn't a quarter-mile of straight road anyplace in that part of the country. In contrast, the road in front of our house has no crooks from one end of the county to the other.

There was no registration fee for the convention, only the request of \$5 per person for tips for the hotel staff, meals were ordered from the menu and charged to our rooms. The Freddyites dug right into their activities after supper Friday night. The agenda included nine FOF members who gave talks on or led round table discussions on Freddy books, the life and times of Walter R. Brooks, who wrote them or other authors who may have had an influence one way or the other. In addition, a banquet, a business meeting, book auctions both live and silent, raffles that included old Esquire magazines Brooks had contributed to, a scattered drawing for door prizes (everyone got one) and a ski lift ride for those more venturesome. I gave a short spiel on the HPCC and we now have 4 new members. Also the lady at the hotel desk wants a membership for her mother.

On Monday morning, we took a side trip to Roxbury, NY, and visited the Brooks house where he spent his last years. We were welcomed by the new owners even though they were in the process of remodeling. The Roxbury Library is something else. They are not supported by taxes so to keep going they have a thrift shop in the back room. Also the good neighborhood ladies came in and make lovely quilts to sell. A quilt was set up in the main room, it was partially done. Two or three ladies arrived to do more work on it. They didn't look like the kind that would ever gossip. My bride bought several chances on a quilt that was finished.

At the peak of attendance on Sat. about 50 Freddy fans were present. They count 497 members world wide and have oodles of money in the bank. Will our club be that big if we grow up to be 14 years old?

Continued on page 7

Adventures in editing

The plan was to have this issue out in March. However, I upgraded my computer in January only to find that my trusty old page layout program would no longer print.

I picked a new one (Pagemaker), had to wait for it to come in, then had to learn it (which fortunately was not too difficult).

I wonder if Freddy had problems like these with publishing the *Bean Home News*. But I think all he had to worry about was being kicked downstairs by rival editors.

I would like to mention that during this hiatus I spent too much time playing a classic computer game called Civilization. You start out with a small tribe of settlers with bows and arrows, and the winner is the first tribe to advance enough to get a spaceship to Alpha Centauri. You get to name your own leader and civilization., and for my first non-tutorial game I of course chose Freddy and the First Animal Republic. The F.A.R. reached Alpha Centauri in 1868 (doubtless assisted by Uncle Ben's ingenuity). Wins go into a "Hall of Fame" roster, in which the leader is given an appellation suitable to the degree of success. My leader went down in history as "Freddy the Clever," though I noticed that if I'd done rather less well he could have been an almost equally apt "Freddy the Glutton."

There is much going on behind the scenes. Those of you on the maillist know just how hard Sarah Koslosky (with help from her father) is working to help put together *The Wit and Wisdom of Freddy the Pig*. Many of us have contributed quotes, "Freddy Facts," or suggested topics for "Freddy Facts."

We had hoped to recruit similar support through the newsletter, but unfortunately the problems described above cut down on the time available. There is still time, but not much: Sarah hopes to be done with her share of the project by mid-May or thereabouts. So feel free to send in your quotes and suggestions, but please be quick about it.

The proposal has been made to get our own URL for our Web site, so that we can be www.freddythepig.org and not just

the arcane <http://www.outermost.com/freddy/>. We'll keep you posted on that. We have moved the maillist to onelist.com, which has proved to be a significant improvement in terms of reliability and spam over our previous location. However, we lost a lot of subscribers in the process. I hope all of you with email access who have not yet joined will consider doing so. (To subscribe, visit the FoF or onelist Web sites, or just send a blank email to freddy-the-pig-subscribe@onelist.com.) The level of activity on the maillist waxes and wanes dramatically, but we have had some entertaining discussions, particularly associated with the contents of *Wit and Wisdom*.

This new desktop publishing program is far more powerful than my old one. I have not taken much advantage of it with this issue, being happy for the time being to reconstruct the look and layout of past issues using the new program. However, once I have this rather delayed issue out, I will start to experiment, and I hope to come with some dramatic new ideas for the next issue. Wish me luck! ☺

Our Frolic With Freddy

Continued from page 6

The FOF are quite pleased that because of their dedication and consistent efforts, the books are being republished. Doing this is the Overlook Press, 2568 Rt.212, Woodstock, NY, 12498. *Freddy the Detective* and *Freddy Goes to Florida* came out last year. *Freddy and the Flying Saucer Plans* and *Freddy and the Ignormus* should be out by the time you read this. The books should be available at your favorite book store. If not, write Overlook Press. The price is \$23.95 each plus shipping which depends on how and where you want them sent. Another pet club project is getting more Freddy books into libraries.

When I sent *The Happy Pig* etc. to these new members I told them our trip to the FOF meeting was a large deposit in our bank of fond memories. They are a very warm and personable group of enthusiasts. They may come close to beating us out when it comes to their passion of their pastime. Some members like to match themselves up with the animals in the books. One man said his favorite was Simon, the rat. It was hard to take his

statement seriously. Simon was a villain. Another claimed to have had dreams in which he was Freddy the Pig.

At the Saturday night banquet the featured speaker was Peter Mayer, proprietor of the Overlook Press. He made encouraging statements on Freddy's future. Then Jaimee Joroff, age 18, played her Irish Harp which originally belonged to her grandmother, handed down to her mother and then to her. She played the tunes that young Irish girls dance to. I requested "Danny Boy." Unsure at first, she tried and gave a perfect rendition.

Walter R. Brooks wrote 26 children's books in 31 years about Freddy the Pig and his barnyard pals that lived on the Bean Farm in upstate New York. He also wrote short stories for *Esquire*, *Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines and a column for *The New Yorker*, one time working in the same office as E.B. White, author of *Charlotte's Web*, but no one knows for sure if they were pals.

Aladdine Joroff, a pretty little miss and past president of the FOF has been quoted as saying she read the books as a child "for the story line." Later it was the "laid back humor" and now, studying political science at MIT, she finds that the politics of the books "is one that grows on me." ☺

Back to the Bean Farm: Rereading the Freddy Books

Freddy and the Bean Home News

by Kevin W. Parker

WARNING: These articles are written assuming that you have already read the story in question. If you haven't, skip this article unless you don't mind spoilers.

Last time I did the last book in the series; this time I will do the last book in the series *for me*. Yes, I led a deprived childhood: none of my local libraries had copies of either *Flying Saucer Plans* or *Bean Home News*. The former I tracked down at the local library when I lived out in Illinois, but the latter had to wait until I joined the Friends of Freddy and Connie was willing to loan me her copy. So I have read *Bean Home News* only two or three times, as contrasted with dozens for most of the rest of the books.

Not knowing the book halfway by heart already leads to some pleasant surprises: I had no recollection of the plot to get Mrs. Underdunk to donate the iron deer on her front lawn to the war effort, nor many of the other interesting elements in this book. Brooks is in fine form once again with his offhand (and offbeat) ideas: mice as enthusiastic gossips; Jerry the lazy ant and his pet beetle, Fido; Jinx's unique, catlike means of collecting metal (he howls under people's windows and grabs what they throw at him); and Old Whibley's "yawn" defense of Freddy, where the owl gets Mr. Garble to go to sleep and thereby lose his case.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's return to the plot, which not surprisingly involves Freddy becoming a newspaper publisher. Seems that the dark forces in the town of Centerboro (i.e., Mrs. Underdunk and Mr. Garble) have conspired to take over the local newspaper, and they have no interest in animal news. So Freddy gets together with the former editor and starts producing a newspaper that's far more interesting than the *Centerboro Guardian* is now. Underdunk and Garble of course don't appreciate this, and there begins to be quite a competition and argument between the two sides, with the sheriff of course on Freddy's side and therefore in some risk of losing his job.

Charles gets a little overexcited on the side of good and directly attacks Mr. Garble, who inflates the attack *a la* Falstaff into one by multiple animals in which he barely escapes with his

life. As an indirect result of this and an unfortunate encounter with Mrs. Underdunk a warrant is issued for Freddy's arrest, and he puts on his sailor outfit for the first time and hides out at the jail. He is finally discovered there in an entertaining scene in which Mr. Garble wants to take away Freddy and confine him, and the sheriff of course points out that Freddy is already where he's supposed to be, in jail.

Freddy persuades Old Whibley to be his defense lawyer, and Whibley develops the aforementioned yawn defense, in which Mr. Garble is kept up several nights in a row by noisy animals, then all the animals in the courtroom yawn in his presence, which eventually puts him to sleep so that he can't prosecute the case. So Freddy goes free.

Next is the set-piece whereby the animals get Mrs. Underdunk's iron deer, with Freddy impersonating Senator Blunder (some good names in this one) and announcing the donation. The deception is soon uncovered, of course, and the animals only just make away with the deer, with Hank's brief impersonation of the statue providing a needed delay. However, Freddy is captured and is threatened for the first time with transportation to Montana. (Someday we should have a Freddy convention in Montana—it seems appropriate, somehow.) He is rescued in the nick of time, however, and engineers his escape and the resulting treatment of Mr. Garble (who is about to be arrested for stealing him) in such a way as to—remarkably—earn the gratitude of the haughty Mrs. Underdunk and the interest of Senator Blunder in employing him. However, Freddy turns down this opportunity to enter politics and instead goes off to try to get Emma to teach him to quack.

I realize in that summary I've left out the subplot of the animals collecting metal for the war effort as part of a Centerboro-area contest that they hope to help Mr. Bean win. They do, of course, with Mrs. Underdunk's deer putting them over the top.

That's one of the interesting things about the books: the definite period feel, with talk of the war effort and how it affects the everyday lives of the humans and animals. Even as a kid I found that added an interesting flavor to the books.

I noticed in passing that this story doesn't jump right into the plot the way so many of the other books do. In *Wiggins for President*, for example, you're not to page ten before the animals are talking about forming a government. In *Perilous Adventure*, Alice and Emma are talking straightaway about doing something more interesting. And so on. Brooks usually wastes no time getting the plot going. Here, though, he has a whole chapter with Charles first pretending to be sick with a cold then overextending himself and actually coming down with one. Not sure what to make of that, but it is an interesting contrast.

So what do I think about the book as a whole? Well, it seems to be somewhere in that great middle area. I don't think it belongs up with the best of the series with titles including *Wiggins*, *Ignormus*, and *Cowboy*, but neither does it seem to go down toward the bottom with *Spaceship* or *Dragon*. As with all the books, there are very funny, entertaining moments, and I think more in this book than most, and there is a reasonable plot, just not as strong a one as the best books. So let's put this one in the second rank, not too far below the first. 🐾

The Kids' Page

Freddy and the Bean Home News

1. *Matching.* Match each name to the type of animal:

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| J. BANTAM | MERRYTHOUGHT • | • PORCUPINE |
| JERRY | PETERS • | • PIG |
| ABIGAIL | • | • FROG |
| CECIL | • | • BEETLE |
| ERNEST, JR. | • | • ROOSTER |
| THEODORE | • | • HEN |
| FIDO | • | • ANT |

2. *Who said it?*

- “Yes, dear.”
- “Everybody likes compliments if they’re true.”
- “No country can fail to win its wars when even the animals are patriotic.”
- “Politics ain’t news.”

3. *Why, What, How, and Who.*

- Why did Mrs. Wiggins not bring Freddy the file when he was a prisoner in the cellar?
- What is the name of the newspaper Mrs. Underdunk owns?
- How was Jonas Harrington, after falling off a ladder and breaking his leg, able to hop home with the broken leg under his arm?
- Why did Freddy slide off the chair in Mr. Dimsey’s parlor?
- Who was looking for Aladdin’s lamp?

1. J. Bantam Merrythought-rooster, Jerry Peters-ant, Abigail-hen, Cecil-porcupine, Ernest, Jr.-pig, Theodore-frog, Fido-beetle.
2. a. Charles. b. Freddy. c. Mrs. Bean. d. Mr. Bean. 3. a. She had no bread in which to put it; Mrs. Bean didn't bake until the next day. b. The Guardian. c. It was his wooden leg. d. The chair was upholstered in horsehair and was slippery. e. Bill, the goat.

Poetry Corner

The Party

by Victor Manjarrez

Mrs. Church for her party had planned a surprise;
She had asked her friend Freddy to wear a disguise.
So that no one will know, don a suitable rig.
“I’ll use one of my costumes,” said Freddy the Pig.

Thus a Mrs. O’Halloran swept through the door,
And with studied aplomb glided out on the floor.
Mercy, how could she dance such a fine Irish jig?
“Cause I’m light on me trotters,” said Freddy the Pig.

Now the punch was Old Hemlock, a stout Irish brew.
When the ladies drew round for a smidgen or two:
“If you’ll pardon me, Madam, I’ll take a wee swig,
Only wettin’ me whistle,” said Freddy the Pig.

But the Hemlock proved strong when he’d tippled it down;
At the top of the staircase he tripped on his gown.
Then he rolled down the stairs and alas lost his wig.
“I was niver a lady,” said Freddy the Pig.

Up ran old Mrs. Peppercorn wielding a broom;
She would drive this “strange animule” out of the room.
But the broom his a picture whose frame was too big.
Oh my, down fell the painting on Freddy the Pig.

At this point Mrs. Underdunk heard Freddy groan,
Saw his snout through the canvas and thought it her own.
“That’s my portrait just lying there, how infra dig!”
“Still, I see the resemblance,” said Freddy the Pig.

Tell me how did our Freddy escape from it all,
With so many surrounding him after his fall?
“Well, I’m tired of this nonsense, I don’t care a fig,
You can write your own ending,” said Freddy the Pig.

The Friends of Freddy

by Victor Manjarrez

How smoothly smiles the moon tonight, her beams
Enlace the trembling Pond with milky strands.
The sprinkled stars with silver dust enrich
The air, and light the farm as day. The Pig
Thinks on his friends: the Cat, the Cow, the Beans;
On Leo, Mr. Boomschmidt, and the rest;
Even on Simon, though of him he thinks:
“Let me have those about me that are fat;
Sleek-bodied pigs and such as sleep o’ nights.
Yon Simon has a lean and hungry look;
He plots too much; such rats are dangerous.”

Do they survive, these friends of Freddy? Look!
What lights on yonder Eastward mountains loom,
The dawn, with russet mantle clad to walk
On Wyndham, Fleischmanns, Cooperstown, and Rome?
Not so! These lights shine with a rarer glow:
The smiles of new-made friends come from afar
For fun, affection, stimulating talk,
To live again the friendship, humor, love
So wise. And while the Friends of Freddy live,
This paragon of porkers and his friends
Will never die.

Victor Manjarrez is a retired math professor living in San Diego with his wife. He started reading Freddy in high school, when there were only about ten of the books available. Years later, he returned to the series when a friend told him about the Friends of Freddy and was pleased to find the series had expanded to twenty-six. He came to our Rome, N.Y., convention in 1990 and has been a convention stalwart ever since. Victor’s primary claim to fame within the Friends of Freddy is that his favorite character is Simon the Rat, a view Victor will champion with characteristic wit.

Mentions of Freddy

Freddy Drops Acid?

This is my candidate for the most unusual mention of Freddy in print so far. It's from the Bulletin of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, volume VIII, no. 4, Winter 1998/99. Here is an abridged version of the account:

One of the special pleasures of directing MAPS is meeting members and learning about what motivates them to participate in our shared adventures. As a result of my recent move to Belmont, Massachusetts, I was contacted by a MAPS member who, conveniently, now lives only a few blocks away. He and his wife invited me to bring my family over for lunch to get acquainted. We gladly accepted their kind invitation.

Shortly after arriving, we learned that our new neighbor's interest in psychedelics stretched over thirty-five years. During lunch, we learned that he had also been an anti-war activist during the late Sixties and had worked as a draft counselor. I quickly surmised that his psychedelic experiences had played a major role in motivating him to social action. This assumption confirmed my own estimation of the potential value of psychedelic experiences and affirmed the choices I had made in my own life's direction. All very reassuring.

After lunch, we went walking nearby. During our walk, I asked what motivated him to do his social justice work, even though it was obvious to me already that psychedelics must have played a decisive role. Imagine my surprise and disappointment when he told me that psychedelic experiences actually had made no major contribution to the development of his values and goals. He smiled and said that a more important formative experience was, as a child, reading a series of books about a character called Freddy the Pig, who he said was unconventional, original in thought, moral, and kind.

I was stunned, not only because of the vast distance between psychedelics and Freddy the Pig, but because I had just rediscovered a cherished missing link to my own childhood, a link I had been searching for unsuccessfully for many years. I, too, was a fan of Freddy the Pig, though the name of the characters had receded into the mists of childhood despite several efforts

to recover the memory. Several years ago, right after the birth of my first child, I had gone to the children's section of the local library searching for some books about pigs, hoping to find some clue as to the series of books that had enraptured me as a child. No luck. I kept this search in the back of my mind but gave it up, with sadness, as a lost cause. Yet in that conversation, Freddy became present in my life again, rather like a dramatic insight during a psychedelic experience.

From this I drew two lessons: it's important to refrain from making rash and simplistic assumptions about people's motivations, and, when people confound my assumptions, what I learn can be more valuable to me than what I thought I really knew.

Thanks to Scott Teitsworth (a FoF and MAPS member) for spotting this and sending it in. Scott wonders in his cover letter "what transformations the Bean Farm might have gone through in the Sixties!"

Freddy Goes Hollywood

Longtime member Carey Conaway reports a remarkable sighting of Freddy: in the recent movie *You've Got Mail*, Meg Ryan plays the owner of a children's bookshop. If you pay attention to the background during the many scenes that take place in the bookshop, you can spot a copy of the Overlook Press version of *Freddy the Detective!* 🐷

Jungian Archetypes and Semiotic

is *not* the title of this talk. I realize that many of you will be disappointed, having waited for years for this groundbreaking monograph. Well, you're going to have to wait a little longer. Instead, I decided to work on something with more mass-market appeal. I went to my local bookstore to check out the possibilities and came up with several.

Chicken Soup for the Freddyite Soul? Kind of an awkward title, plus I'm sure Charles and Henrietta would squawk.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Freddy the Pig? I've been wondering what sort of person would cheerfully march up to the checkout counter with a bunch of books whose titles start with "The Complete Idiot's Guide." I don't want to find out.

Finally, I did come up with a title that was both appropriate and had mass-market appeal. Therefore, without any further ado, I would like to read to you some passages and notes from the current draft of what I'm sure will be a *New York Times* bestseller: *Everything I Need to Know I Learned from Freddy the Pig*.

I had to start by thinking about Freddy for a bit, which was really remarkably tough. I mean, I've known Freddy since I was eight years old. How can you start to describe someone you've known that long? It's like trying to describe your parents. Hey, they're your parents. They're kind of, you know, parentish. They're the standard you go by.

I can say that certain people are like Freddy, and all of you would know what I mean. But what is Freddy like?

So let's go to the books and see what we can find out.

(Let me just say parenthetically that I had a heck of a time with this. Writing the book reviews for the newsletter is one thing, but actually trying to analyze the books and pick out particular aspects is very, very difficult, at least for me. I'll sit down with my notepad and one of the books, and I will very diligently open it up and start reading. I'll make about half-a-dozen notes on the first chapter, a couple on the second, and one on the third—if I'm lucky. At that point I'm caught up in the story and am not paying attention to what I was supposed to have been paying attention to. It's taken me two or three readings, usually, to tease out what I was looking for in the first place. So one of the reasons that this talk is going to sound as if I'm reading notes to myself is because I only started on this about a month ago and that's as far as I've gotten. I finally got into my stride the night before the convention, but by then it was time to pack up and

get ready to go.)

But anyhow let us move on. Our first experience with Freddy is in *Florida*, when we are told that he is "the smallest and cleverest of the pigs." My impression is that only half this description holds for the rest of the series, and that's the clever part. And we all know that: he comes up with ideas, he writes poetry, he does a creditable imitation of Sherlock Holmes, and so on.

And of course he's not only clever, he's resourceful: he can always, it seems, come up with an idea to get himself out of whatever trouble he's gotten into, and it's frequently a pretty imaginative idea. I think my all-time favorite is the climax of *Freddy the Cowboy*, when he rouges himself up to look—more or less—like a salesgirl before blasting Mr. Flint with the cheap perfume. Talk about necessity being the mother of invention!

We're also repeatedly told he's lazy, but I'm not sure that's entirely accurate. I think the best concept for Freddy is that of inertia in the Newtonian sense: objects at rest tend to remain at rest, and objects in motion tend to continue in motion. There's a great passage from *Pilot* that reflects the same idea:

Freddy always admitted frankly that he was lazy. And yet the more he had to do, the more he seemed to accomplish. He explained it this way: He said that when a lazy person once really gets started doing things, it's easier to keep on than it

is to stop. He said it was as much of an effort to stop working and sit down as it was to get up and start working in the first place.

Freddy is not really terribly brave, or maybe it's really better to say that he's not fearless. He'll do what he has to do in order to keep his promises, save face, or help his friends, but he has to be forced into a corner in order to do something dangerous. If he doesn't have to do it, he won't, and even if he's being forced into a corner he'll try to squirm his way out of it. Witness his

Density in the Freddy Books

A transcript of my talk at last autumn's Friends of Freddy convention.

reluctance to ride his bicycle in *Wiggins for President*: he comes up with all manner of other things that need doing beforehand. And how many of us have done the same? Isn't it amazing how messy your house becomes right before you have to fill out your tax return? Heck, how could you possibly concentrate with that mess staring you in the face? Better clean it up first.

He's a bit egotistical, and he'll cover up his faults. He'll claim he was thinking when he was actually sleeping. He'll claim to have an idea when he actually doesn't. But he always seems to come through with an idea in the end.

He has a perpetual conflict between the way he thinks of himself and how he actually appears:

"You don't know what it is to be fat. I *can* dance well, and I can swim, too, but everybody laughs when I do it. I want to look romantic—like Jacob, here—sort of dark and dangerous-looking. And I *am* romantic—I'm just full of romance inside."

I think one way of summing all this up is to say that Freddy is a commensurate hero. I apologize for using such an Ollie Groper word, but it's the best one I can think of. What I mean is that we can identify with Freddy, and we can compare ourselves with Freddy. We can imagine being like Freddy.

Compare that with, say, James Bond, who is—for me, anyway—an incommensurate hero. I know if I jump out of an airplane with no parachute, it's just going to be splat, goodbye Kevin. Likewise, if Freddy jumps out of an airplane with no parachute, it's going to be splat, goodbye Freddy. And Freddy knows it. But James Bond, you know, he's going to get the parachute off the bad guy, or he's going to have a fountain pen that turns into a hang-glider when you twist the cap just right. So he's not going to go splat. And he knows it. But as much as I enjoy watching James Bond, I know I'm never going to be him.

I don't know what it says about me that I can identify more with a talking pig than with a suave British gentleman, but I'm not going to go there.

So, since Freddy is a commensurate hero, we really ought to be able to learn some lessons from him. Let's see if we can.

1. (To paraphrase Loretta Lynn). **Stand by your friends.** You had to know that one was coming. If there's one lesson in the Freddy books, it's the power and worth of friendship. And it's

really pretty neat. You think of the key triumvirate: Freddy, Jinx, and Mrs. Wiggins. They're really very different people, with all they have in common is that they are basically decent people. But they're fast friends, and they'll stick together no matter what happens. The best single example may be Freddy defending Jinx in *Freddy the Detective* even though the evidence appears to be very much against him.

In fact, he even goes a bit further in standing by his friends than I'm comfortable with. The particular example that bothers me is in *Pilot*, when Freddy would apparently rather have the Army buy a defective bombsight than betray his friend, Uncle Ben. I kind of hope that he was expecting Uncle Ben to fix the bombsight and was just temporizing until he could. But obviously he is extremely loyal.

2. True bravery is going on even when you're scared.

How brave is James Bond, really? How much courage do you need if you *know* you're going to win, or if you don't have the imagination to realize what might really happen to you? Freddy *has* that imagination, and I think I maligned him when I said he wasn't all that brave. Freddy can imagine all the perils that he's facing in painful detail. In fact, he's got so much imagination that he can make the perils seem far worse than they are, as in this example when he's walking in the Big Woods and imagining the Ignormus:

But up here in the queer gloomy silence of the Big Woods it was easy to believe almost anything. He began to wonder what the Ignormus could be like. It would be big, and it would be ferocious, he thought, and it would have sharp claws and narrow yellow eyes. The longer he imagined it, the more awful it got. He added horns and tails and wings until he had an animal beside which a Bengal tiger would look as gentle and harmless as a pussy cat. And of course he got more and more scared. He tiptoed

along, being very careful to make as little noise and to keep as well hid as possible, for undoubtedly the Ignormus, besides being very sharp of hearing, would have a very short temper.

Later on, he and Charles have started rallying the animals, when he realizes that he has painted himself into a corner:

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Semiotic density...

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Freddy had started something, and he wasn't at all sure that he could finish it. He thought of the enormous white shape that had floated down towards them in the darkness, and he shivered. He thought of that shotgun pointing at him from the window of the Grimby house, and he shuddered. He thought of the big family of Simon's kin, lurking under the Ignormus's protection in the gloom of the Big Woods, and he shook.

But then he pulled himself together. These animals, no one of whom would have stepped a foot inside the Big Woods an hour ago; many of whom were even leaving their homes for fear of the Ignormus,—they would follow him right up to the door of the Grimby house. Their fighting spirit was aroused; they were in a mood to tackle twenty Ignormuses. Some in the crowd had already raised the Marching Song of the F.A.R.

And Freddy then returns to the Grimby house with only Randolph the beetle for company, to disarm the shotgun there so none of the animals so primed for the assault will get shot. Frankly, I think it may help that he's so concentrated on this mission that he doesn't have much time to think about the dangers involved. But let's have no more talk of Freddy not being brave. He doesn't take foolish chances or unnecessary risks, but you can count on him when you need him. He's as brave as he needs to be. We can give Brooks the last word on this (from *Cowboy*):

He was really quite a courageous pig. I don't mean that he wasn't scared; he was so scared thinking about it sometimes that his teeth chattered and his tail came completely uncurled. But he didn't propose to let being scared interfere with what he intended to do.

3. Serious matters must be treated seriously. I am thinking of Freddy calling for the meeting of the First Animal Republic toward the beginning of *Ignormus*. He laboriously writes a formal petition. Why?

Of course Freddy could just have gone over to the cowbarn and said: "Simon's back. How about a meeting

tonight?" But affairs of state are not conducted in such an offhand manner. Mrs. Wiggins as a friend who had just knocked him into a barberry bush, and Mrs. Wiggins as president of the F.A.R. were two very different people. Freddy might, and probably would, talk the matter over with her as between friends later, but now he was addressing her as president of a sovereign state of which he was a citizen. He had to put on a lot of dignity, because if he didn't, none of the others would either, and pretty soon when Mrs. Wiggins gave an order no one would pay any attention to it.

4. (Which seems somewhat related). **Take your responsibilities seriously.** Freddy actually has to learn this lesson himself. You might remember in *Wiggins for President* that he sees a pig running a bank as something of a lark. Then he almost loses control of the bank to the woodpeckers before regaining it. By the time of *Ignormus*, he has taken the role to heart, as in this passage just after the bank is robbed by the minions of the Ignormus:

Freddy didn't sleep very well that night. The faces of all those trusting little animals who had brought their treasures into his bank for safekeeping crowded reproachfully into his dreams. For a poet to be president of the bank had always seemed to him something of a joke. For the first time he realized that it was a serious matter to be responsible for other people's property. But if he didn't catch the robbers, he'd make it good—down to the last kernel of corn.

5. On the other hand, have fun. Freddy has the advantage of being a gentlepig of leisure. I think there's some phrase about a pig's only job is to be a pig, which doesn't seem terribly onerous. (We'll gloss over the usual fate of pigs on farms, as Brooks does.)

Anyhow, Freddy certainly does enjoy himself for the most part. It's worth noting that the first two adventures are instigated by the animals looking for something interesting and enjoyable to do.

6. Anything worth doing is worth doing right. When Freddy gets into one of his hobbies, he really gets into it. He doesn't just play at being a detective, he goes into business. And of course when he gets a horse, he doesn't just learn to ride, he becomes a cowboy with all rights and privileges thereunto pertaining:

When Freddy set out to do something, he was never satisfied with just halfway doing it. To have a horse and a cowboy suit and a gun belt with two guns in it would have been enough for some people. But not for him. He was determined to learn how to ride and shoot and handle a rope as well as any real cowboy. And because he wanted to learn, he learned quickly. He had a good teacher in Cy, and within a few days he could stick tight to the saddle while the pony whirled and crow-hopped and bucked and reared. Of course Cy didn't really try to throw Freddy. He could have done that easily. But he tried to give the pig as much as he could take, and Freddy could take a little more every day.

Freddy also takes out Mr. Bean's guitar and tries to learn how to play it.

7. Be careful of what sort of reputation you develop because you'll have to live up to it ever after. Again from *Freddy the Cowboy*:

Freddy had no intention of getting into a fight if he could help it, but he had a reputation to keep up. That is the trouble with a reputation. You go and build up a reputation for bravery, and then the first thing you know, there's a fight on your hands. And maybe you don't feel specially brave that morning. But you've got to act as if you did.

Or *Perilous Adventure*, when Freddy's bravery is impugned in front of the sheriff:

...the sheriff said with a laugh, "Afraid? My friend Freddy afraid? I guess, Golcher, you don't know much about this pig's record." And he went on to make a list of Freddy's brave deeds for the benefit of the balloonist.

And as Freddy listened he began to perk up. It's true, he said to himself; I really have done all these courageous things. I guess I can't just back down now. That's the trouble with a reputation for bravery: you have to live up to it. Oh dear, I wish I wasn't such a fearless character!

8. Appearance counts. This entry was inspired by Freddy "suing up" before boarding the balloon in *Perilous Adventure*.

Of course pigs don't wear regular clothes [at least not usually], so all Freddy had to put on was an expression when he got up in the morning. And on important mornings it often took him longer to dress than it would you or me. For he had a good many different expressions. When he went down to the First Animal Bank, of which he was president, he wore the "serious-pig-with-grave-responsibilities-on-his-

shoulders" expression. When he was doing detective work, he wore the "keen-eyed-pig-who-misses-nothing" expression. And when he was writing poetry the one he put on was the "dreamy-poetic-pig." This morning he hesitated between the "intrepid-pig-who-scoffs-at-peril" and the "pig-who-is-about-to-go-up-in-a-balloon-and-thinks-nothing-of-it." They were a good deal alike, so he combined the two and wore them both.

The resulting expression was one of such iron determination that it greatly impressed the animals with whom he talked that morning. "Why you aren't scared at all, Freddy" said Mrs. Wiggins, the cow. "Land sakes, you wouldn't get me to go up in one of those contraptions."

"Pooh, you wouldn't be any more scared than I am," said Freddy truthfully.

(Now we're getting to some of my sketchier notes.)

9. Putting something in writing makes it more believable. I am thinking, of course, of Freddy writing himself a note that reads "There isn't any Ignormus" and taking it out at key moments when he approaches the Big Woods.

10. You can be honest and misleading at the same time. I've always been impressed by the mottoes that Freddy comes up with for his detective agency and the bank, with the former being particularly impressive:

"Not a loss to a client in more than a century."

Mrs. Wiggins objected at first to the last sentence. "We haven't been in business but a week," she said.

"What difference does it make?" asked Freddy. "It's true, isn't it?"

She had to admit that it was. "But, don't you see, it sounds as if we'd been detec-

tives for a long time."

"That's just the way I want it to sound," replied the pig. So Mrs. Wiggins didn't say any more.

11. Poetry is better after a good meal. Or maybe it's easier to write poetry after a good meal. It's easier to do a lot of things after a good meal. We're really winding down here.

12. There really ought to be some sort of conclusion that can be drawn from Freddy's assortment of disguises, but I haven't come up with anything yet. Suggestions are welcome.

Well, I think that's enough about Freddy for now. But there are other characters of interest as well. I figured if I did this for

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real I'd have a couple of chapters for Freddy, a chapter for Jinx, a chapter for Mrs. Wiggins, and then a chapter or two for a couple of the minor characters. For example, I think there are a few things we could learn from the ducks, Alice and Emma. And maybe the owls, Hank... You can probably suggest a few others.

One character, however, really surprised me. I absolutely did not expect to be able to learn anything from that "silly rooster" Charles. But...but...Charles *makes things happen*. He begins the very first adventure in the entire series by coming up with the idea of the animals going to Florida. He singlehandedly gets the animals ready to lynch Aaron Doty in *Freddy Plays Football*. And, in what may be the darkest hour in the entire series, when the animals are actually leaving the Bean Farm because of their fear of the Ignormus, he not only stops the exodus but inspires them to join in an attack into the very heart of the Big Woods.

So what is it about Charles that makes things happen? He gives speeches, and maybe his speeches aren't quite as empty as they are usually described. In short, I think we can learn one big lesson from Charles, and it's a very appropriate lesson for a literary society, and that is this: **words really do matter**.

And I think I've had my share of words for now. Thank you.

In his mortal guise, Kevin Parker is a computer scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. Despite what Connie says about his driving, that is his only resemblance to Uncle Ben. ♻️

What else can we learn from Freddy?

And now it's your turn: We've got a lot of Freddy readers out there. What have *you* learned from Freddy and his friends? I'm sure there's much more than what little I've covered. Send in your comments, and we'll compile a follow-up article.

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