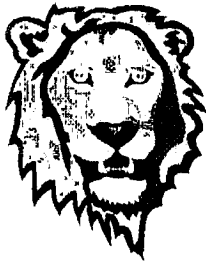


The Aardsma Weekly

September 17, 2006

Editor: Rachel Aardsma



The Family Zoo



We have lots of animals around here... in the house... in the barn... everywhere. Most of them are pretty average animals, but others... well, some of them are pretty strange. Like our newest addition to the zoo: a dog.

I have already talked about him before, so I will not go into much detail. Freckles is a great dog, though he does have some strange habits. We live right next to a train-track, and about fifteen trains go by a day. Every time one goes by, Freckles howls a low, groaning howl. (It scared all of us half to death the first time he did it! We thought he was dying!) Also, some nights, Freckles turns into a wild, crazy creature. He runs around in circles, refuses to be caressed, snaps at everything, growls at invisible creatures, and will not do what you want him to. However, as these nights are few and far between, we live with it.

Our second most recent addition is a gray and white mouse called Biff. Biff is Timothy's mouse, and, I have to admit, is fun to play with. Biff is about two months old, and a little shy, though he is slowly getting used to grimy hands stuck into his cage at all hours of the day and night.

We also have three cats. The 'mother cat', as we call her, has been with us for years now. She is calico, and a sweet cat. We 'adopted' her about five or six years ago. She has had about four litters of kittens now. We have kept two of her daughters from her last litter. The mother cat is getting older, but still manages to keep the mice down around the property.

Matthew and Rebekah raise pet cockatiels and love birds and sell them, so, out in the barn, is a room in which they keep at least seven or eight birds.

Matthew also raises rats and mice (that is where Timmy got Biff from), and has three big cages in which he keeps the mice and the ugly rats. He sells these to pet stores around here.

In his room, Matthew has a fish tank, in which he has several fish, a crayfish, and a few small clams. The crayfish is neat to watch, and the clams are also cool to see opened up. Out in the barnyard, we have a flock of 30-odd turkeys that run around the yard, show off to each other until they are blue in the face, and eat everything they can get their beaks into. (They especially like the tomatoes, which they eat off the vine.) They also love to chase our cats. They surround a cat and peck at it until it flees for its life, and then they

lower their heads and charge. It usually ends in the cat climbing at tree or something and the turkeys going away unsuccessful.

We have several different flocks of chickens. We have egg-layers in one coop, meat chickens in another, and lots of Bantams that roam the yards. Several Bantam hens have raised chicks. At the moment we have one small hen with twelve chicks, and several other hens with anywhere between one and twelve. (One hen is trying to raise a family in the garage, but has not been successful yet because Mom strongly discourages her efforts.)

We also have pigs. Four, to be exact. Three of them are normal, healthy, dirty pigs, but one of them is very unusual. It is stunted. It is still the same size it was when we got it in the spring. It eats all day long, and never gains an ounce. It is funny to see the odd little thing running around, ducking under the others and running between their legs.

Hopefully he will have gained a little by butchering time...

The Weekly Bible Verse

1 Samuel 16:7: But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

David: A Man After God's Own Heart

A Fictional Series Based On First and Second Samuel

By Rachel Aardsma

Part 1.

"David! David!" David looked up as his brother Eliab came running towards him, breathless and excited.

"David!" he gasped. "Come quickly! The prophet Samuel has come... a new king... Father sent for you... none of us... but you! Come, hurry!" Eliab tugged on David's arm.

David, who had not understood much of Eliab's jumbled sentence, was thoroughly confused.

"What is happening? What about Samuel? And what did you say about a new king?"

"Oh, hurry up, boy! Just come along!" Eliab gave him a push, and David stood up.

"But what about the sheep..." David began, glancing at his flock of peacefully grazing sheep.

"Who cares about the sheep?" Eliab cried impatiently. "Honestly, David! Here you have a chance to become king of Israel, and you talk about the sheep! Come along, and hurry up!" David's head was in whirl as he followed Eliab down the hill, with one last backward glance at the sheep.

Why did Samuel want him? What was the great prophet even *doing* at his father's humble home? And what was this business about a new king?



A Word About The Weather



This week the weather has varied from day to day. Heat, rain, and wind take their turns. At the moment, it is just right: a slight breeze and just the right temperature. There is no rain in the forecast, but since we do not need it, we are fine with that.



A Word of Wisdom



Whipped cream in a can is no longer edible after being open for longer than two weeks.