

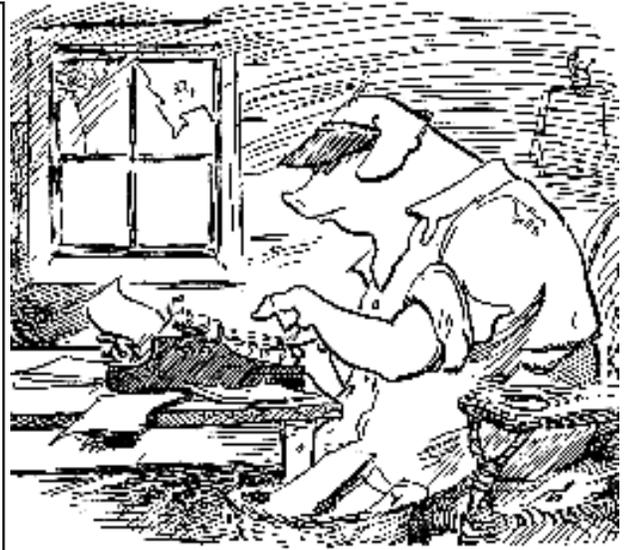
THE BEAN HOME NEWSLETTER

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

Vol. 25, No. 1

Winter 2018

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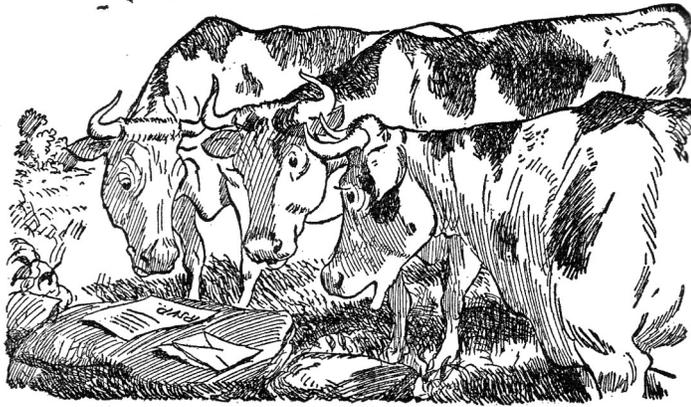


2018 Con to be in Seneca Falls, NY, this October. See page 4 for details!



The Ganonoque Gang: Standing: Norman Gee, Susan Lynch, Howard Phipps, Randy Cepuch, Kevin Parker, Henrik Tamas, Peter Tamas, Dave Carley, Chris Redmond, Jeb Rong, Glenda MacFarlane, David Haas; Seated: Alice Tracy, Nancy Wright, Connie Arnold, Mary French.

From the Mailbag



I was amazed to find from the map that there is one of those little book sharing houses in my town. I have purchased Freddy books at rummage sales, etc. since I got hooked as a child. I have the complete collection and would not let them out of my sight. I am trying to get my grandchild to become a Freddy fan as my son is. My son is now 46 and I am 81. Since I could not resist a used Freddy book even if I already had that one, I always felt like I was saving them from some horrid fate. I had been wondering if the Friends of Freddy, of which I am a proud member, would want some of my duplicates to use as prizes or whatever at one of the conventions. Now I have a new way to share them. I will have to do a drive by the collection center and see what it looks like. We are in the middle of a huge flood problem, so I would want to be sure that the structure is waterproof.

When I was growing up we had a very kind children's librarian who would call me if a new Freddy book arrived at the library. I only lived a block away and would hurry up to check it out and then read it slowly, or maybe fast, twice. I still enjoy re-reading the books. I think my favorite was *Freddy and the Ignormus*. Very scary. One of the book sellers sent a large Freddy poster to the school where I taught one time with the words "It's Freddy's World" on the front showing Freddy tossing pancakes with his coon skin hat on. She knew I was a Freddy nut and gave it to me. I have it framed in my bedroom.

Such great memories we all have. Keep up the good work. Love
The Bean Home Newsletter.

Betty Carbol
(Lake Forest, IL)

Thank you very much for your efforts and for sending *The Bean Home Newsletter*. I was reading about Freddy in the middle to late '50's, and love the books as much today as ever I did. My wife, whom I met years later, also was reading Freddy then, and we have most of the books on our book cases now. A lifelong love of reading and excellent story-telling!

Again, thanks for all you do. The newsletter enriches our lives, and I hope someday to be able to attend the Freddy get-togethers.

Ron Keffer
(Homer, AK)

Last night I couldn't get to sleep so I begin counting sheep. Then it struck me. Where there any sheep in the Freddy books? If not, why not? It seems a strange omission. There was a goat, wasn't there?

Rob Fagerlund
(Ann Arbor, MI)

A good question! Actually there were sheep on the Bean Farm though they're never mentioned in the text. However, if you'll look at the Kurt Wiese illustration on page 11 of Freddy Goes to Florida, you'll see there were at least two sheep. Also, in Freddy Rides Again, there were two sheep who had "come all the way from Seneca Falls" (site of our next convention, by the way.)

As for goats, there was Bill, who appears in several of the books. — Ed. ♻️



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Address changes may be sent to either the email or postal FoF address.

Newsletter submissions should be sent to Michael Cart at the address below.

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From the Editor

by Michael Cart



So is our friend Freddy a classic? The answer – as both a character and an eponym for the series bearing his name -- is a resounding YES! I make this claim as I buff my bona fides as a book reviewer and literary critic of nearly fifty years standing (not that I'm immodest or anything; heaven forbid!) But you don't need to be a professional observer to come to the same conclusion. Freddy is simply inimitable. His first appearance in 1927's *To and Again* (later retitled *Freddy Goes to Florida* to reflect his pride of place in the series) was a breath of bracing fresh air in the sometimes musty world that was American children's literature of the time, the 1920s. It was a triumph if in no other way than in bringing an authentic American voice to a literature that was still largely derivative of British children's literature in both topic and tone, a literature that took itself *very* seriously.

The Freddy books wore their salutary impact lightly with a figurative wink and nod even as they helped usher in modern American children's literature with their impeccable American voice and tone, their lightly satirical touch and their enduring humor that seemed to say "Let's not take ourselves so seriously." The language their creator Walter R. Brooks used generally sounded – not like a bad English accent – but like the way people actually talked in the United States of the time. Not that this was always welcomed. In her review of *Freddy the Detective* one librarian sniffed "Slang of the comic strip type and bad grammar are frequently found in the conversational parts, Libraries can do without *Freddy the Detective*." Happily, others were more perceptive. The great Anne Carroll Moore, head of children's work at the New York Public Library and leading children's book reviewer of the day, praised the book for the "ease and naturalness of Mr. Brooks's writing." Moore had earlier praised *To and Again* as a "story all children will enjoy, full of just the sort of humor and adventures they appreciate."

One reason they appreciated them was the fact that their author, while taking his work lightly, took his young readers seriously, never writing down to them, once observing of *To and Again*, "I used the same language in telling the story that I would have used in telling it to grownups. Why not? Children are people – they're just smaller and less experienced. They are not taken in by the smug playfulness of those who write or talk down to them, as if they were dull-witted and slightly deaf."

Which perhaps explains another memorable hallmark of the books: their multigenerational appeal. Veteran children's book critic Phyllis Fenner commented on this in 1960: "Yes, the Freddy books are to be reckoned with. They are loved by all ages, from the little ones in school to those in Junior High. Parents tell me they don't mind reading them aloud because they enjoy them so much themselves. There is quite a bit of satire which parents get as they read."

And speaking of satire brings us back to the books' humor, a foundational reason they are classics when viewed in the larger context of American children's literature. Indeed, I devote an entire chapter of my book *What's So Funny? Wit and Humor in American Children's Literature* to the series and could have devoted more, for there is no shortage of material in its context.

To take us back to the 1920s when Freddy made his first appearance, consider this: In 1939 Anne Carroll Moore (remember her? The New York Public Library lady?) assembled a 27-page list of "representative books published (for children) 1926-1938. Of the 134 titles listed, 31 were published in the 1920s. Of that 31, only one, *To and Again*, could accurately be described as humorous!

However, Brooks himself could seem deceptively serious. "I'm not continually trying to be funny, thank goodness," he told a reporter in 1938. "My fun is confined to my writing."

So let's talk for a bit now about that fun, the books' humor, that is, which is their fundamental attribute. Literary critics would say they are in the classic humorous mold; they begin with order, move to disorder, and revert to order. It's in the disorder that the humor is to be found, presented using a variety of humorous devices.

We've already mentioned satire. Walter loved poking fun at the pompous, the elevated, the high flown. Anyone in authority. Sometimes his target was Army officers (see *Freddy the Pilot*); sometimes it was bankers (both Walter's Grandfather Stevens and Uncle Jim were bankers!) usually in the person of Mr. Weezer, whose glasses fall off whenever a sum larger than ten dollars is mentioned. But more often his target was politicians, beginning with the very first Freddy book in which the animals stop on their way to Florida in Washington, DC to visit their senator, who, of course, seizes the moment as an opportunity to make a speech. "Friends and constituents," he bloviates, "I am very sensible of the honour which you have done me today. To welcome a delegation of the home folks to the Nation's Capital is one of the few pleasures that cheer the burdened brow of those whose stern duty it is to keep their shoulder always to the wheel of the ship of State. And that reminds me of the story of the two Irishmen."

"He told the story, and the animals laughed politely, although they did not see anything very funny about it, and that is why it is not written down here. Nor is the rest of the senator's speech written down, for the animals did not understand much of it and I am not at all sure that the senator did either. But all agreed that it was a stirring speech."

Of course, the same will be said many times later in the context of the speeches of that arch bloviator Charles the rooster.

Walter loved playing with language as evidenced in the characters of the hotelier Ollie Groper, who is a walking dictionary, unabridged ("I've always had a predilection for this here sesquipedalianism; I mean . . . big words. They were kind of a hobby. Which it is bad. It habituates you to imperspicuity.") and then there is Mr. Condiment, the comic book magnate, who is a traveling thesaurus. "Be quiet, you nincompoop," he snarls in *Freddy the Pilot*, "you blatherskite, I mean,

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President's Corner

It's time to sign up for the 2018 convention!

by Randy Cepuch

Not long ago, I stumbled onto this remarkable scene in *Freddy the Pilot*: Mrs. Wiggins is masquerading as a countess riding in the back of a limo. She sees Freddy and figures she'll have a little fun jerking his chain by yelling insults including, "You're the editor of the *Bean Home News* that prints terrible lies." There we have the President (of the First Animal Republic) accusing the media of bad behavior!

I've spent much of my life toiling as an ink-stained wretch and a strong believer in the First Amendment, and I think the "mainstream media" gets things right the vast majority of the time. In general, you can trust what you read in an old, established publication with high standards – such as, say, *The Bean Home Newsletter*.

Every once in a while, though, somebody (in this case... um... me) errs in print. The Fall 2017 issue included Part 2 of my "Accept No Imitations" comparisons of our Freddy to others by that name. Originally, I'd said that while Fred Mertz of *I Love Lucy* was the stage name for William Frawley, our Freddy had NO aliases.

Wrong, as several of our eagle-eyed reviewers quickly pointed out, noting that Freddy the Pig's alter-egos included Mrs. Winfield Church (*Clockwork Twain*), Mrs. Bridget/Bridie/Patrick O'Halloran/O'Houlihan (*Politician, Baseball Team, Magician and Ignormus*), Aaron Doty and Mrs. Aaron Doty (*Football*), Dr. Henry Hopper (*Camping and Simon*) and Mr. Arquebus (*Baseball*).

That was humbling, but perhaps just the tip of the iceberg. I've since discovered that in *Magician*, the prestidigitating porker goes by the name Professor Frederico, that he purports to be a Martian called Captain Neptune in *Space Ship*, and that he attempts to pass himself off as "old Mrs. O'Brien" in *Baseball Team*. And after I submitted the draft of this column to our esteemed editor, Michael Cart, he added two more to the list: Lorna del Pardo in *Pilot* and Zelda the fortune teller in *Flying Saucer Plans*!

Gosh, shouldn't there be someplace where you could simply look things like this up – a Wikibeania, perhaps?

With that in mind, Michael and I are going to try to put together a dynamic online repository of Freddy facts and figures – starting with Michael's own story summaries and similar existing materials and gradually growing with authoritative contributions by members. As presentations at our conventions over the years have proven, clever Friends have sliced and diced the Freddy books in any number of ways and the Wikibeania will help to preserve and share their collected wit and wisdom. (Ideas and contributors welcome: send me or Michael a note!)

And speaking of conventions and presentations, make your reservations now for our 2018 gathering at The Gould Hotel in Seneca Falls, NY, over Columbus Day Weekend. The leaves should be spectacular!

Seneca Falls (mentioned on page 89 of *Rides Again!*) is a Centerborish small town in the Finger Lakes (a notable wine region), less than an hour from the airports in Syracuse or Rochester. It offers plenty of sites for those who might want to arrive early (or stay late) and



explore – including the Women's Rights National Historical Park, the Seneca Museum of Waterways, the Erie Canal, the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House, the National Women's Hall of Fame, the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge and the *It's A Wonderful Life* Museum. (The town is reputed to have been the model for Bedford Falls and it's not hard to see why.)

Our general membership events will be held on Sunday, 10/7 through Monday evening, 10/8. We'll have our business meeting – open to all members who'd like to attend – on Tuesday morning, 10/9. (Note: The Columbus Day holiday and Canadian Thanksgiving are celebrated on the Monday, although not all schools or businesses are closed.)

Preliminary program plans include:

- An Appreciation of Jinx, the Cat
- Women in Freddy's World
- What Sorts of Kids Like Freddy Books?
- An Investigation Into the Treatment of Canadians in the Freddy Books (and maybe even a Canadian Thanksgiving dinner!)
- Who Said That? Quotes from women in the Freddy books
- and much more (especially if YOU do a presentation!)

The Gould Hotel is holding a block of rooms for Friends of Freddy members at a rate of \$99/night (including breakfast) for the Sunday and Monday nights – a whopping discount over the usual \$189-259/night rate. What's more, if you want to arrive on Saturday, they have a limited number of rooms available (first-come, first-served; they'll be hosting a wedding group that night that's taken most of the rooms) for \$159.

The hotel itself is a "boutique" establishment featuring 48 very comfortable rooms on four floors (served by an elevator – something more than a few of you specified!) with an excellent restaurant (food was on your wants lists, too!). Take a peek at <http://www.thegould-hotel.com/>

Reserve now by calling 877-788-4010 and specifying the Friends of Freddy rate. (Notes: The online reservations tab doesn't provide access to the special rate, and our block for the rooms expires three months before the event. We'll remind you early and often!) ☺

Minutes of Friends of Freddy Mini-Convention

Gananoque, Ontario, Canada

November 10-12, 2017

by Connie Arnold, Secretary and Historian

On a chilly Friday afternoon, 17 intrepid Freddy fans blew into the Centerboro-like metropolis of Gananoque, a short drive from the U.S. border. After a relaxing dinner at the Gananoque Inn's pub, FOF members gathered in our meeting room. President Randy Cepuch introduced Alice Tracy, who explained that this first official FOF meeting held outside the U.S. would include members reading selections from their favorite Freddys or reminiscing about some aspect of Freddy's impact on their lives. These would be taped for posterity and posted to YouTube.

Dave Carley, our Founder and VIC (Very Important Canadian) led with a reading from *Freddy Plays Football*, Connie Arnold from *Collected Poems of Freddy the Pig*, Henrik Tamas from *Freddy and Mr. Camphor*, Chris Redmond from *Freddy the Detective*, and Kevin Parker finished the readings from the book we all know is his favorite, *Freddy and the Ignormus*. Then David Haas reminisced about "How I Met Freddy in Canada," and Randy Cepuch on "Growing Up On Freddy in Rochester, New York." Charmed by these reminiscences, Connie Arnold

CANADIAN BACON



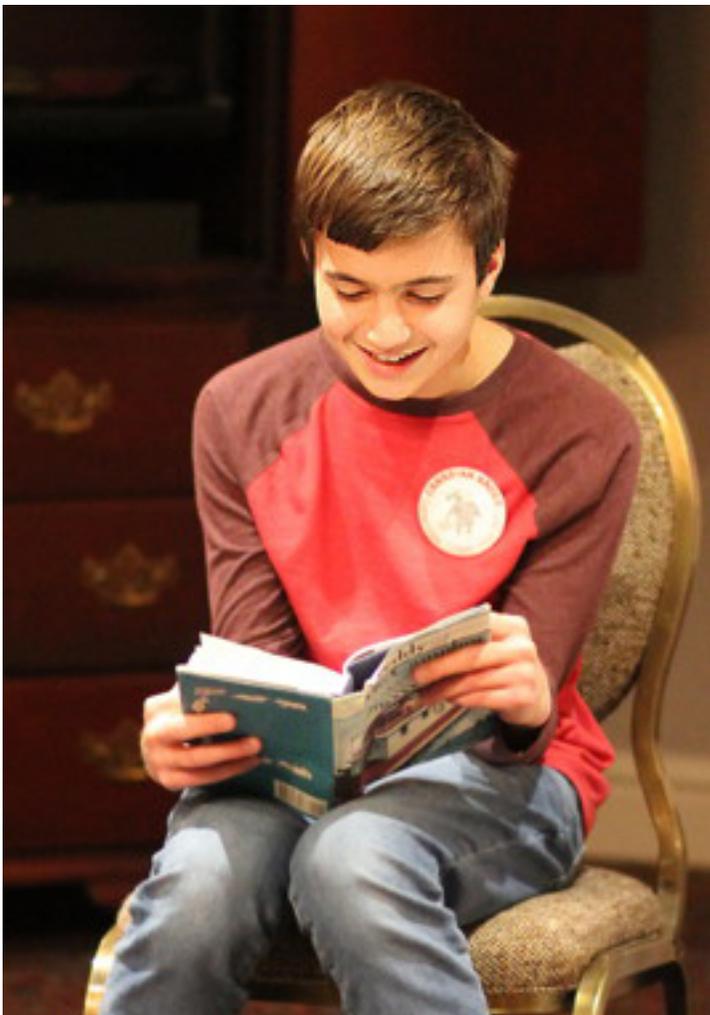
Friends of Freddy GANANOQUE, ONTARIO Nov. 10-12, 2017

dove back in to recall how she first met The Pig in her fourth-grade classroom in Washington, D.C., and decades later became a Founding Member of the Friends of Freddy, thanks to her greedy (though failed) plan to collect the entire series in one fell swoop, directly from Mrs. Brooks' private library.

On Saturday morning, November 12, we reconvened with the State of the Barnyard and Treasurer's Report, presented by Randy Cepuch. The First Animal Bank positively overflows with nuts and berries, topping out at \$34,938.86 (before convention expenses, which were modest). Membership stands at about 275.

At the 2016 convention at the Winter Clove Inn, charter member and retired librarian Dusty Gres alerted FOF to the potential of distributing Freddy titles through Little Free Libraries' network of outdoor book stands. Overlook Press very generously donated 225 paperbacks, and more than 100 Little Free Libraries were thus enriched with Our Favorite Pig's adventures. Titles went to Arizona, California, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana (yikes!), New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Virginia – 15 states plus the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Alberta. Books were often distributed to LFLs in neighborhoods where FOFers live, so let's hope that neighborly chats turn up some new Freddy fans.

California member Renee Shepherd had offered FOF a generous donation of \$500 to be matched for a school library program using



Henrik Tamas reads from *Freddy and Mr. Camphor*.

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Ganonoque Minutes

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the Freddy series. Member donations matched the \$500 almost immediately, so Michael Cart and Connie Arnold arranged a special program for school librarians in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Seven schools each received eight hardbound Freddy titles, plus reading activities developed by Michael Cart. We thank our members for their continuing generosity, and please be in touch if you'd like to fund a special program to promote Our Pig!

Randy reminded us that Freddy now has a Twitter account! Check out [@RealFreddyThePig](https://twitter.com/RealFreddyThePig) for Freddy's homespun wisdom and some FOF photos. Note that if you just search for Freddy the Pig, you'll find a Twitter account devoted to someone's dearly beloved (and deceased) guinea pig.

FOF is attempting to ramp up our visibility, beginning with our existing venues. The Yahoo email-list group offers opportunities for chat with other Freddy fans, as does our Facebook presence. Join in, please! And many, many thanks to Alice Tracy for revising our Freddy website! Check out the website (www.freddythepig.org) for updates on All Things Freddy, especially conventions.

Freddy has had some pretty famous fans over the years. One, Clint Eastwood, told *GQ/Gentleman's Quarterly* (in 2006) that he loved the Freddy books as a kid.

At our last convention, and among FOF exec members, there has been talk of a statue immortalizing Our Pig. Peter Mayer of Overlook Press has suggested Washington, DC, where Brooks worked and in fact wrote the first book in the series, *To and Again (Freddy Goes to Florida)*. Others have suggested Roxbury, NY, where Brooks lived later in his life and produced a Freddy book every year. The Roxbury Library might be interested in adorning its edifice with a Freddy statue. However, right now this is just talk, in part because commissioning a statue would be an expensive investment of Freddy's funds.

Many members have suggested alternate convention locations, as Upstate New York is not a convenient site to reach. The most popular suggestion has been California, where approximately a quarter of our members reside, and we are planning to hold a mini-convention at the Arne Nixon Center for Children's Literature on Cal State's Fresno campus. This offers a great opportunity to view Brooks' personal papers, donated by founding member and Brooks' biographer Michael Cart, who is also editor of the *Bean Home Newsletter*. Mark



Freddyites gather around the Ganonoque Little Free Library.

your calendars for 2019 – though we haven't yet set a date.

Finally, Randy presented charter member (and jack of nearly all trades piggish – from President to Newsletter Editor to Newsletter Production to Membership Coordinator, and... and...the list could go on forever!) ... drum roll, please! ... Kevin Parker with a special award acknowledging his steadfast and stupendous and colossal work for FOF over more than 30 years. And in acknowledgment of Kevin's techie skills (without which we'd never have had even a computerized mailing list!), it's the Uncle Ben Atomic Station Wagon Award – perfect for the FOF volunteer with a day job at NASA!

Almost immediately, that's translated to more work for Kevin, who accepted the role of Digital Archivist for Friends of Freddy. Meanwhile, Connie Arnold agreed to be our Historian.

FOF founder Dave Carley next spoke, describing how he began to notice the disappearance of Freddy's from his local library back in the 1970's, discovering they'd largely gone out of print at Knopf. In 1983, Dave obtained Brooks' widow's address (Dorothy Brooks) in Roxbury, New York, and Dorothy kindly furnished him with the addresses of six people who'd written her over the years. These include current members Connie Arnold, Lee Secrest, and Michael Cart, who were joined by others obtained from publicity efforts (*The NYT Book Review*, *Washington Post Book World*, and others) so that 100 members had come out of the Beans' woodwork for our inaugural issue of the *Bean Home Newsletter* the following year.

One of our musically talented members, David Haas, displayed a different talent – historian! With slide show and short lecture, David shared fascinating insights into U.S. Influence on Canada's History. Among topics covered were: our sometimes shared, sometimes diverging, colonial history; the movement of Americans to Canada (not only the Loyalists in 1783!); the influence of the U.S. political model; and finally, the impact of American culture on Canada, which of course continues today.

The business meeting then adjourned, with members visiting an LFL box in Gananoque to donate two Freddy titles. Then our attendees joined the public ceremony in Gananoque observing Canada's "Remembrance Day," which is honored (as in the U.S. Veterans' Day) on 11 November, and especially focuses on Canada's tremendous sacrifices in World War I. A hundred years ago now, the Battle of Vimy Ridge (which caused tremendous loss of life among valiant Canadian soldiers) is considered a formative event in Canada's



Kevin Parker receives the Uncle Ben Atomic Station Wagon Award.



The performance of "General Pike at York."

national consciousness, so the ceremony in 2017 (which also happens to be Canada's 150th birthday – the Confederation was formed in 1867) was especially heartfelt.

After lunching at the Riva, an Italian restaurant in Gananoque, we reconvened for some fun and frivolity.

David Haas presented an original play, "The Tragedy of General Pike, at York," featuring another bit of Canadian-American history of which most Americans are unaware. In April 1813, America's General Pike lost the Battle of York, during the War of 1812. (FOF historian side note here: Historical 'truth' is mainly in the eye of the beholder. To wit: Americans are taught that we were fighting the British again in the War of 1812, and again threw them out. Canadians are taught that Americans invaded Canada and were decisively defeated by Canadians, who threw out the Americans! No expert on the War of 1812, this American historian nonetheless suspects that the truth is somewhere in between these two diametric opposites. Note that my hometown, Washington, D.C., saw the White House burned down by those British Canadians, while Francis Scott Key was composing The Star Spangled Banner in Baltimore, Maryland, as those British Canadians raged through his hometown!)

CASTING for David's play, however, did not discriminate on the basis of national origin, with Kevin Parker as the doomed Brigadier-General Pike, Mary French as Lieutenant Fraser, Glenda MacFarlane as Elizabeth Powell, Chris Redmond as a Canadian Sergeant, and Susan Lynch narrating. Alas, General Pike lost not only the battle, but his life. Stupendous, and sometimes colossal, sound effects were supplied by Director David Haas.

Alice Tracy then took the stage in celebration of *Freddy and the Perilous Adventure*, published in 1942 and now a venerable 75 years old. Alice read 11 humorous snippets, making a strong argument that *Perilous Adventure* has the most LOL moments found in the entire Freddy canon. Readers, however, must decide for themselves, so this is a good time to revisit one of Brooks' best Freddy titles!

Next, Peter Tamas, joined by son Henrik, offered some tantalizing thoughts in his talk, "How Wodehouse and Brooks Used Butlers and Aunts." Of course, two of the memorably amusing aunts, as well as butler Bannister in the Freddy series, are part of millionaire Mr. Camphor's entourage, but these characters fit neatly into the 1930's-40's oeuvre of gentle satire of the non-working wealthy class. Specifically, P.G. Wodehouse's Wooster and Jeeves parallel Mr. Camphor and Bannister, while a pair of aunts (Agatha and Dahlia) pair with Aunts Minerva and Elmira. Brooks was a fan of Wodehouse,

so it is not surprising that similar humorous devices and characters appear in Brooks' writing. In fact, Brooks was quite fond of aunts generally, and modeled Alice and Emma, the duck sisters, on his own two aunts, who helped raise him after his parents passed away.

Peter also shared with us that he's working – with help from several other members – on a concordance of the entire Freddy series, so he'll be harder to beat in future trivia contests.

Next, Christopher Redmond (a noted Sherlockian) spoke on "Sherlock Holmes and Freddy: Two Great Detectives." Likely it was no serendipitous accident that Brooks published *Freddy the Detective* early in the series (1932). Arthur Conan Doyle's books were still wildly popular, and Brooks most certainly intended to capitalize on this with Freddy's first solo adventure in the series. While it was the first of Freddy's many enthusiasms, The Pig continued to don his detective cap right through Brooks' final book, *Freddy and the Dragon*. Chris also noted that *Detective* is in many ways the 'purest' Freddy book, and remains both a critical and popular favorite 85 years later.

Finally, Randy Cepuch asked attendees for thoughts and suggestions on a variety of topics, from increasing our membership to enhancing/augmenting our current activities. With no admonition beyond "Be Nice," Randy opened the floor for discussion. Some of the questions/suggestions were:

- Whether our renewal rate (and membership level) is too low, and how to increase both. Alternatively, is membership growth a goal, anyway? Should it be?
- Jeb Rong suggested a lifetime membership payment of perhaps \$100. This would be at least a partial solution to lower membership renewal rates than we'd like. Note that we don't send out many renewal notices, and memberships are based on a 2-year cycle of 8 newsletters, so some members may not realize their memberships have expired.
- Might we encourage members to sponsor, or at least provide tax-deductible match challenge gifts for, targeted gifts of Freddy books (following the models used for our Little Free Library and California schools programs)?
- Should the *Bean Home Newsletter* still be 12 pages per issue? Would 8 pages suffice?
- Should FOF encourage local volunteerism? For example, might FOF members enjoy reading the books aloud to children in school or library settings?
- Susan Lynch suggested we need some research on identifying what key factors in the Freddy canon would still attract young readers today. (I will send her Michael Cart's activity sheets, which can be used by teachers, librarians, parents, etc., to spark discussion and interest in the Freddy's.)
- Perhaps Reading Specialists in public schools would be interested in partnering with FOF, if we provide Freddy's and suggested activities for read-alouds with children. FOF members should feel free to check with their own local schools. Let us know if this is feasible in your school district, and if donated books are needed.

Randy introduced the notion of a Wikibeania as a dynamic repository of Bean barnyard knowledge, with specific topics TBD. He, Michael Cart and Kevin will put it together – starting with existing materials such as Michael's plot summaries for each of the books – but contents will come largely from contributions by members. (If you're an expert on, say, owls, consider putting Whibley in perspective for posterity!)

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Ganonoque Minutes

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The business portion of the meeting then closed, and some more frivolity launched, with “Readings from (Children’s) Books Other Than Freddy.” Perhaps these were some of your favorites, too: Randy Cepuch, *The Cricket in Times Square*; Alice Tracy, *Harriet the Spy*; Kevin Parker, *The Boxcar Children*; and Chris Redmond, *Sherlock Holmes* (naturally!)

Finally, attendees enjoyed a very special treat that (thankfully) will be repeated at the 2018 FOF convention: Nancy Wright and Jeb Rong presented the entire plot of *Freddy Goes Camping* in well under an hour through a rollicking combination of illustrations, puppets, sound effects, and musical accompaniment! It was a splendid and memorable way to end a splendid and memorable weekend in The Big Woods of Canada. 🐾



Two scenes from Nancy Wright’s “pop-up book” adaptation of *Freddy Goes Camping*.



Freddyites joined what seemed to be the entire town of Ganonoque in the local Remembrance Day ceremony Saturday morning.



In Memoriam: Janice McLeod [Hodges]

Janice McLeod - known to us as Janice Hodges - passed away on November 26, 2017. A very active member in the 1990s, she later moved on to other interests but left us with one shining legacy: she and then-husband David Hodges (who ran an Internet company) created and hosted the initial Friends of Freddy website. It went live in August of 1996 and began attracting new members just a month later. For most of the time since, it has been our primary source of new members.

She joined the Friends of Freddy in September 1994 and attended



With beloved daughter Robin on a cruise in 2012.

our tenth anniversary convention the next month. For the next issue of the newsletter, she contributed a poem that read in part:

Of favorite characters, what feelings imbued.
We talked of old friends with new friends that we met,
Jinx, Mrs. Wiggins, the Webbs, Henriett-
A great banquet, book trade, bedtime stories, and more.
A time to be treasured in 1994.

Two issues later she announced that “By January, 1996, I hope to have a home page of the Friends of Freddy on the Internet” and asked for comments, suggestions, and feedback. She joined us again at the the 1996 convention to demonstrate the website to attendees. The official announcement came in the Winter 1997 issue of the newsletter, when the website as well as an online mailing list were both revealed to the entire membership.

David writes, “We both loved the Freddy books and read them to our daughter as she was growing up. On long car trips, the one of us who wasn’t driving would read a Freddy book to our daughter.”

Born on August 24, 1948, she was an occupational therapist in her everyday life. She is survived by daughter Robin, husband Bill, and a plethora of stepchildren and stepgrandchildren. Her official obituary is at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/hartfordcourant/obituary.aspx?pid=187389875> . 🐾

From the Editor

Continued from page 3

you ninnyhammer.” Similarly, Sheriff Higgins has great fun with the ornate language of the law, which “is pretty terrifying to guilty people. But there is one great trouble with the language of the law. The sentences are so long that very few people except judges can get through them without stopping to take a breath in the middle. And, of course, this spoils their impressiveness.” And speaking of impressiveness, let’s not forget eagles who revel in the most ornate reaches of the language. “Welcome, oh, pig, to the starry upper spaces of the blue empyrean.” No simple howdydo here.

Walter also loved inventing comic and archaic-sounding exclamations and regionalisms. “Well, set fire to my coat tails”; “Well, perfume my handkerchief”; “Well, pickle me and preserve me”; “Well, dye

my hair” (yes, that’s Leo the lion talking); “Well, fry me in butter”; “Great potatoes” and more.

Walter uses many devices other than wordplay, of course, though we don’t have space to deal with them adequately here. There is incongruity, for example (a lion who gets his mane permed; a pig who rides a bicycle), slapstick (Freddy falling headfirst into a rain barrel), irony (the sheriff, driving his old car at all of, perhaps, fifteen miles an hour, is greeted by the eagle Breckenridge thus: “But who is this who approaches at such reckless speed?”)

Speaking of irony: humor is not only the crowning glory of the series but also its downfall, for, as the great humorist E. B. White has observed, “The world likes humor; but it treats it patronizingly. It decorates its serious artists with laurel and its wags with brussels sprouts.”

Too true, alas, but what White doesn’t add is that vegetables are good for you. And so are the Freddy books! Classic, indeed. 🍌

In Memoriam: Rob Loud

Rob Loud, a popular and longtime Friends of Freddy member, died peacefully at home surrounded by his family on December 28, 2017. He was 84.

Rob first became involved with the Friends in a happily serendipitous way. Some years ago Friends of Freddy member Kevin Parker visited the Concord, Massachusetts, Public Library. As was any Friend’s wont, he checked the card catalog to assess the Library’s holdings of Freddy books. He was surprised to discover cards for unfamiliar Freddy audiobooks which he found were made by a man named Rob Loud. Upon investigation, he learned the tapes were of Mr. Loud’s reading the Freddy books aloud to his two young daughters. Several local Friends then tracked him down – it wasn’t hard; he lived in nearby Lincoln – and introduced him to the Friends. He enthusiastically joined the organization and the rest, as they say, is history.

Rob became a fixture at our biennial Cons, enlivening the proceedings with his joie de vivre, a radiant smile that made you happy just to see it, and, oh, his voice. He had a magnificent tenor voice – he had sung with the Harvard Glee Club when he was student there and, as an adult, with the Harvard-Radcliffe Chorus – and to our unending delight led us in singalongs. Friends past president Nancy Joroff especially recalls his spirited version of “Mrs. Wiggins Marching Song,” his voice, as she puts it, literally rising to the rafters: “Hail, all hail, to Mrs. Wiggins”; “Hip hooray for Mrs. Wiggins” and so on. He set our feet to marching with his booming voice. Also a gifted thespian who acted with the Lincoln players, Rob cheerfully entertained us with read-alouds from the Freddy books and participated in our puppet shows and plays adapted from the Freddy books. His Mrs. Wiggins was particularly Oscar-worthy!

With an MAT degree in music education, Rob taught music at the Hawken School in Cleveland, in the Sudbury public schools, and at the Cambridge Friends School where he met his soon-to-be wife Gwyn. The couple had two daughters, who also attended our gatherings, at least once with Rob’s grandchildren in tow. Meanwhile, in 1969, Rob elected a mid-life career change, studying for a Master’s degree in library science at the University of Denver. Degree in hand, he then worked at the Concord and Hudson Public Libraries before settling in as librarian for twenty years at St. Elizabeth’s School of Nursing in Brighton.

Always gregarious, Rob loved driving visiting Friends of Freddy around to see the sights, serving as part chauffeur and part tour guide. Unfortunately, the tour guide part quickly took over and the car, forgotten for the moment, headed for the nearest ditch! But all was forgiven and forgotten when it was pointed out that Walter R. Brooks was a similarly er, *eccentric* driver! Walter’s friend Pauline Hopkins once told me that driving with Walter was like being on Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride at Disneyland . . .

Nancy and her daughter Aladdine, another Friends past president, attended Rob’s memorial service and reported an overflow crowd, evidencing Rob’s deep roots in his community and his active participation in local affairs.

He was, Nancy writes, a family man, a community man, a Freddy fan, and a friend who had a voice bigger than life with a heart to match.

To which one can only add that our gatherings will be notably less lively without him. A genuinely dear man and gallant gentleman, he is sorely missed. 🍌



Rob makes a horrifying discovery during one of his many, many readings at Freddy conventions.



State of the Barnyard Address, Gananoque, Ontario, 11 Nov 2017

Ladies and gentlemen, animals, birds and insects (if any)... Good morning!

If we haven't already met (or even if we have), I'm Randy Cepuch, current president of the Friends of Freddy. Thanks to all of you for being here.

In case you're not already wearing something Freddy-ish, I have these buttons to give to everyone to help us identify each other – and to warn the locals when they see us coming.

(hand out Canadian Bacon buttons)

In the next few minutes, I'm going to try to sum up where we're at these days in a State of the Barnyard Address.

I hope we can minimize the shouts of "You lie!" while, of course, maximizing the standing ovations.

I'd like to start by observing that Canada is mentioned ten times in the Freddy books. It's in *North Pole (aka More To and Again)*, published in 1930, three times.

But after that, 26 years passed before Walter Brooks once again invoked the big country not at all far to his north – once in *Simon the Dictator*, in 1956.

Then it turned up three times in *Flying Saucer Plans*, in 1957, and three more times in *Freddy and the Dragon*, in 1958.

In fact, Canada is mentioned on the *very last page of that very last book*, so in a sense we're picking up where Brooks left off.

Some of the Canada mentions are fleeting, but I'd like to read you two of the more substantial ones this morning. Let's start with *North Pole*, where there's this bit as the animals head north:

One night they crossed the Saint Lawrence River by a long bridge, and then they were in Canada. They had some trouble crossing the bridge because customs men lie in wait at each end and make travellers pay a tax on certain articles. These articles that can't be brought into a country without paying are called dutiable.

Of course, the animals didn't have any baggage with them, but the Canadian customs man thought some of the animals themselves were dutiable, so he held them up. 'Let's see,' he said. 'Milk and feathers and beef and hides – I dunno but there's a duty on all of 'em.' And he took out a little book and licked his thumb and began looking through the pages to see if he could find out what the duty would be on Mrs. Wiggins and Charles and Henrietta.

Things looked bad for a minute, but Ferdinand whispered in the goat's ear and then flew straight at the man and knocked

the book out of his hand. The latter stooped to pick it up, and as he did so, Bill put his head down and charged at him. The goat's hard head with the strong curving horns hit the seat of the customs man's trousers with a smack and shot him into the ditch at the side of the road, and before he had even begun to pick himself up, the animals had galloped off into the night.

I imagine some of my fellow US residents may have had a similar experience getting here.

Many years later, in *Flying Saucer Plans*, Freddy and Jinx are planning a riding adventure but can't agree on a destination:

Freddy had argued for Cape Cod, where he could get some sea bathing. But Jinx, who although he could swim well enough, didn't enjoy the water much, voted for Canada. He wanted to visit Montreal and Quebec, where he could hear people speak French. 'I want to see if they really understand each other when they make those queer sounds,' he said. 'Personally, I think it's just double talk. I've heard it talked on the radio, but nobody can make me believe that that stuff means anything. You and I could get up, and I could say: 'Ollicky piggiebob foozle?' and you could nod your head and say 'Mealy toofer condensation,' and we could say we were talking Sanskrit and everybody'd believe us. That's what I think French folks do when there are foreigners around. When they're alone they probably talk as good English as we do.'

Okay, then. So much for feline political correctness.

Our Treasurer (ahem) reports that as of the end of September, we had \$34,938.86 in the First Animal Bank.

We have about 275 members.

Since our last convention in October 2016, we've accomplished several things:

- We've distributed 225 Freddy paperbacks, donated by our friends at The Overlook Press, to more than 100 Little Free Libraries in 15 states – Arizona, California, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana(!), New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah and Virginia – plus Canada.

- We've coordinated a series of individual donations used to buy more than 50 Freddy hardcovers for distribution in school classrooms and libraries in Southern California – a program kicked off by a member who simply wanted to share the joy she gets from Freddy books.

- We were able to get Broadway Video, the owners of the merchandising and performance rights to Freddy, to respond – finally – to inquiries about a potential licensing arrangement.

In the end, they said no before terms were even discussed and what that means is anyone's guess. Meantime, we're exploring other avenues to breathe new life into our pig.

- At the request of our Overlook contacts, we've established a Twitter presence: @RealFreddyThePig. Interestingly, there was already a Freddy the Pig page – apparently set up by someone tweeting very occasionally on behalf of a beloved guinea pig pet.

Our Twitter feed doesn't do politics, doesn't seek global attention at obscene hours and adheres to the code of behavior on our Yahoo group maillist: Be Nice. Our Tweets are pretty much pithy quotes from the books and pictures of Little Free Libraries with Freddy books in them.

• Our other digital media – the Yahoo group, our Facebook page and our own website – have often featured similar material plus other contributions from members. While we're here, Alice and Jeb will be doing some video interviews we hope will find a place on our website and possibly other places as well – maybe YouTube.

• We've tried to make hay with apparent celebrity connections. Clint Eastwood told GQ a decade or so ago that he loved the Freddy books as a kid. I tried sending a letter to him, introducing us, a few months ago. I tried two addresses; one letter was returned as refused. [A few weeks after the meeting, we received an autographed photo from him but nothing else – no acknowledgement of his affection for Our Pig.]

Clint was a guest star on the *Mister Ed* TV series, which of course was based on short stories by Walter Brooks. There's a *Mister Ed* page on Facebook. I've posted about us on that page, hoping that readers are open to talking animals other than just Wilbur Post's friend.

• Intermittent talk about raising a statue to our pig remains just talk. Peter Mayer at Overlook had suggested we might consider Washington, DC, as a site for one, given Brooks' time there plus Freddy's occasional visits and contacts in the US capital. Amazingly, I discovered there's already a pig statue in Falls Church, VA – commemorating a pig farm owned by the ancestor of a car dealer now at the same location. The folks in Roxbury, where many of the Freddy books were written, would love to have a Freddy statue, perhaps outside the local library.

But contacts with sculptors have been discouraging: they don't call back if you want to spend less than five figures.

There may be alternatives: one or more hoofprints, or a pig-shaped weathervane.

• Last spring, I surveyed executive committee members about ways we might spend our acorns. It was clear that a few items had little to no support, so they haven't been pursued – for instance, establishing a scholarship for study of children's literature and contributing toward funding research into pig-human relationships.

• Meanwhile a survey of the membership at large revealed that the single most important thing we can do to increase attendance at our conventions is... to hold one in California, where roughly a quarter of our members live!

So we're planning a meeting there in 2019, at the Arne Nixon Center for Children's Literature, on Cal State's campus in Fresno – where Walter Brooks' personal papers reside, courtesy of a donation by our own Michael Cart. Michael's looking forward to showing them to us. The dates aren't yet set.

• Before that, of course, we'll hold our usual even-numbered year convention in New York State. Attempting to be responsive to concerns about accessibility and comfort, I've looked at several alternative locations in the Catskills and in the Finger Lakes areas and am currently trying to negotiate acceptable rates. [Now set for Seneca Falls – see page 4.]

• One thing I'd like to hope will *not* happen when we hold that meeting is a musical chairs exercise when the board selects officers for the next two years. I'd like very much to get some new blood involved.

This afternoon I'd like to spend some of our time discussing how we might increase member involvement and what sorts of roles we might want to fill to help ensure our own future. Perhaps we could benefit from a publicity coordinator, a membership recruiter, or a digital media expert?

We've been around for more than 30 years now. That's long enough



Based on popular demand, Freddyites will return to Fresno, California's Arne Nixon Center and its vast Freddy collection in 2019.

– and some of us are getting old enough – to think it'd be appropriate to have someone serve as our group's Historian.

It took me far too long to realize the obvious choice was to enlist our Secretary, Connie Arnold, who already does the best job of memorializing our gatherings. I'm pleased to announce that she graciously accepted.

She did make it clear, though, that she's like most of the rest of us Freddy fans – not necessarily comfortable enough with a computer to take on digital archiving. Fortunately, Kevin Parker has pretty much always been our go-to guy for things like that.

Kevin's the go-to guy for a lot of things for us. He was the first Friend of Freddy I ever met, when I joined the group back in 2001 or so. He's done pretty much everything over the years and held every title. How do you recognize such huge contributions?

Well, I hope you do it by presenting him with the Uncle Ben Atomic Station Wagon Award, for boundless energy and technological know-how – because that's what I'm going to do right now. Kevin?

(present award)

That's about it from me for now.

I'm looking forward to our discussions this afternoon and I'm sure our future will be better for the ideas you'll all bring to the table – provided, of course, that you're prepared to follow through on them!

Thank you, and may God bless the First Animal Republic. 🐷



**The Friends of Freddy
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Move over, Ann Landers
Pig Pens Advice Column

by *Michael Cart*

Meet Li'l Smokey, a micro/Juliana cross pig who resides in LaVeta, Colorado, where he is something of a celebrity. Born on November 7, 2015, he weighs in at 33 pounds of porcine personality. Like our Freddy, he is an indoor pig (though he has been known to venture outside occasionally). He goes Freddy one better, though, by being involved in many eleemosynary¹ efforts; for example, he recently collected non-perishable pet food for a pet pantry and non-perishable people food for a Native American charity. He also honchoed a collection to benefit friends who lost many of their possessions in a fire. But he is probably best known for a quarterly advice column he writes for *New Legends Magazine*. Here's a sample:

Dear Li'l Smokey: Please help. I am having a terrible time with my mother-in-law stealing my silverware when she comes to visit. What should I do?

(signed) Knifeless in LaVeta

Dear Knifeless: Well, since the knives are already gone, I would suggest you just serve carrots. You don't even need spoons or forks for that! Please let me know when dinner is ready. Carrots are my favorite food . . .

Sincerely, Li'l Smokey

¹ A word I borrowed from Ollie Groper

Dear Li'l Smokey: Because I have so many thoughts going through my head about the horrible things happening in our world, I no longer sleep well. What can I do?

(signed) Sleepless in Trinidad

Dear Sleepless: First, turn off the TV. Then quit wringing your hands. And then go do something. My favorite patron saint, Francis of Assisi says:

Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

When you are doing the impossible, sleep comes naturally. Oh, and I also suggest eating more carrots. What time is dinner?

Sincerely, Li'l Smokey

Hmmmm, so what time is dinner? 🐷

