



## In search of a painted pig pucker

There were pigs in pens, and pigs in blankets. There were party hats on pigs, and leather jackets on pigs. There were pigs in wooden wagons, and pigs in feather boas. There were pigs bobbing for apples, and pigs eating watermelon. There were pigs wearing sunglasses, and pigs wearing smiles. There were black pigs and pink pigs and silver pigs and spotted pigs.

But where in the name of Miss Piggy were all the pigs wearing lipstick?

Given the nationwide furor over Sen. Barack Obama's pig poke of the GOP's promise of change — "You know, you can put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig." — I felt the 10th annual PigFest at Ross Mill Farm in Rushland on Saturday was the place to be.

PigFest is sponsored by the Pig Placement Network, an organization that helps abandoned, abused and neglected pot-bellied pigs find homes. PPN has placed nearly 500 domesticated pigs in permanent homes.

PigFest resembled a fall festival one might attend at a local farm. Bucolic setting, bales of hay for seating, refreshments and grilled food (no pork, of course). There was music from the late '60s and early '70s being played on the P.A., and lots of folks dressed in PigFest tee shirts and jeans.

But search as I might, a lipstick-wearing pig could not be found.

"The lipstick-on-a-pig comment is nothing new," said PPN board member Jeannie Watson of Long Island, N.Y. "What bothers me are comments about my Amos the Wonder Pig. Some people will say, 'Hey bring him over to my house for a cookout.' That doesn't make me very happy.

"I've never put lipstick on my pigs, but I do put nail polish on my girl's hooves. Her name is Frosty April, and her favorite color is hot pink. She also likes her belly rubbed."

Hey Jeannie, who doesn't?

Rose Strong of Kintnersville adopted two pigs from PPN and fosters a third for them. She rolled her eyes when reminded of Obama's "lipstick on a pig" comment last

week. "That doesn't bother me," she said. "We've all heard that line before.

"What is kind of annoying is when my brother-in-law comes over to my house, walks behind one of my three pigs, measures the width of its backside with his hands, and then walks over to my grill to see if the pig will fit. When you love pigs like we do, stuff like that gets on your nerves."

I still hadn't seen lipstick on a pig yet. But like any reporter worth his bacon, my search continued.

Just then, as two pig people were discussing how to best clean the waxy goo from a pig's ears — does that classify as an oinker pointer? — I heard there was a pig spa on the premises. Surely there's where I would find the elusive lipstick on a pig.

When I was introduced to Susan Magidson, owner of Ross Mill Farm who has been involved with saving pot-bellied pigs since their introduction in the U.S. in the late-1980s, she confirmed there indeed is a spa on site for the porcine pets.

Her confirmation sparked visions of four oversized pigs seated on cushy lounge chairs, chatting about the evils of Hatfield meats while wearing thirsty terry cloth robes and sipping Pinot Grigio as they awaited their appointment with noted pig masseur, Mr. Ziffel.

"We pamper them," Magidson said. "We do grooming and massage therapy. We also do something called reiki (a Japanese massage technique for stress reduction and relaxation). We even paint their nails. I think the pigs, in general, sense a feeling of social status when they're being pampered in the spa."

When asked if I might find lipstick on a pig at the spa, Magidson didn't appreciate the humor.

"The lipstick-on-a-pig comments from the politicians show me that the media isn't really focused on what's important," she said. "There are other issues in this country that should be focused on, not silly comments like lipstick on a pig.

"And being a pig person, I'm insulted when I hear things

like that, just as I am when I hear comments like “dirty as a pig” or comments about them being roasted. We see pigs as other people see dogs.

“You know, I’ll take it a step further: We see pigs like some people see children.”

As I left PigFest, I wondered that maybe I’d see lipstick on a pig at next year’s event.

Now that would be real change.

Just then, as two pig people were discussing how to best clean the waxy goo from a pig’s ears — does that classify as an oinker pointer? — I heard there was a pig spa on the premises. Surely there’s where I would find the elusive lipstick on a pig.

When I was introduced to Susan Magidson, owner of Ross Mill Farm who has been involved with saving pot-bellied pigs since their introduction in the U.S. in the late-1980s, she confirmed there indeed is a spa on site for the porcine pets.

Her confirmation sparked visions of four oversized pigs seated on cushy lounge chairs, chatting about the evils of Hatfield meats while wearing thirsty terry cloth robes and sipping Pinot Grigio as they awaited their appointment with noted pig masseur, Mr. Ziffel.

“We pamper them,” Magidson said. “We do grooming

and massage therapy. We also do something called reiki (a Japanese massage technique for stress reduction and relaxation). We even paint their nails. I think the pigs, in general, sense a feeling of social status when they’re being pampered in the spa.”

When asked if I might find lipstick on a pig at the spa, Magidson didn’t appreciate the humor.

“The lipstick-on-a-pig comments from the politicians show me that the media isn’t really focused on what’s important,” she said. “There are other issues in this country that should be focused on, not silly comments like lipstick on a pig.

“And being a pig person, I’m insulted when I hear things like that, just as I am when I hear comments like “dirty as a pig” or comments about them being roasted. We see pigs as other people see dogs.

“You know, I’ll take it a step further: We see pigs like some people see children.”

As I left PigFest, I wondered that maybe I’d see lipstick on a pig at next year’s event.

Now that would be real change.

Phil Gianficaro is a columnist for The Intelligencer. He can be reached at 215-345-3078 or [pgianficaro@phillyburbs.com](mailto:pgianficaro@phillyburbs.com).