

## DOGS, CATS, AND RABBITS

### THE MANY JOYS OF PETS

These last few weeks have been difficult for everyone. No one expected a pandemic, let alone all the fallout from COVID-19. But amidst all the challenges, there have been unexpected bright spots of good news. For example, adoption and fostering rates at animal shelters across the country have increased as people have turned to their pets to help them through self-isolation. It's no surprise pets became a source of comfort during these difficult times. That's what our pets have always done for us. I know well the joys that come from animal companionship.



*Young Jim with his German shepherd, Lady*

The first dog I remember having was a German shepherd named Lady. She was my best friend and my protector. Lady was a gentle, loving, and obedient dog. She even won a few obedience competitions my dad put her in. But when I say she was my protector, I mean it. One day when I was a little boy, I was in the yard playing with Lady and our mailman came by. My parents weren't outside, and Lady got so protective that she bit his ankle! Thankfully, he wasn't badly hurt. The worst damage was to his sock, and my mother gladly ordered him a new pair.

I've had dogs my whole life, and I have shared many dog stories in the pages of this very newsletter. But dogs weren't the only pets we had around the house. My family also had rabbits and built a rabbit hutch outside for them. One winter brought a blizzard so fierce that we had to bring the rabbit inside to keep her warm. Four days later, when the weather was better, I went outside to clean the hutch. When I reached into the hutch, I was shocked to find a warm pile of fur squirming around. It was a bunch of bunnies! We had no idea that our rabbit had babies. Despite being alone for several days, the babies were fine. We brought the rabbit (previously named "Mr. Quigley) back outside to take care of them. The bunnies all grew up and found new homes with various friends of ours.

Living with pets always comes with some adventures. Whether they're dogs, cats, or rabbits, animals all have their own unique personalities. Right now, the only pet we have around the house is our cat, Sweet Beast. We originally named her Ziva, after the character from "NCIS," but we learned that Sweet Beast or "Bea" fits better. Before our dog passed away, Bea would join us on walks, following us around the block. She still joins my wife and I on walks around the neighborhood, much to the surprise of our neighbors.

Bea is an outside cat who very much enjoys her independence. One winter, my wife and son bullied me into buying Bea a heated cat house. I knew she wouldn't use it. There's place under the barn where she likes to hang out, and if it's really cold, we bring her into the laundry room. But I was outvoted. Every other cat in the neighborhood, and one raccoon, used that thing, but Bea wanted nothing to do with it! She turned her nose up at it, just like I told them she would.



*Sweet Bea*

I can't say I blame them for worrying about Sweet Bea. Part of the joy of pets is having something to fuss over. My mother used to feed my sister's dog eggs and toast all the time, insisting the poor dog was hungry despite my sister's objections. When Mom moved to an assisted living home, that dog lost 20 pounds! Beyond fussing over pets, it's also nice to have someone around who's happy to see you. Dogs are good at this, but I know friendly cats who also like to hang out. It's great when Bea comes to say hello occasionally — usually at meal time. Pets just have that ability — make you feel loved.

If you have a pet at home, then be sure to thank them for all their love and support during these times of social isolation. And if you're looking for some animal companionship, I'll bet the local animal shelters would be glad to hear from you.

*-Jim Monast*

# TACKLE ALLERGIES THIS SPRING

## With These 3 Strategies



Spring has officially sprung. Grass is growing, flowers are blooming, and longer days are here again. And while the arrival of spring is a cause for celebration, for outdoor enthusiasts who suffer from seasonal allergies, the season is bittersweet. For many, this time of the year is characterized by stuffy noses, burning eyes, and sneezing. But according to WebMD, even severe allergy sufferers can enjoy the outdoors without worrying about allergies by taking the following precautions.

### Watch pollen counts.

You can usually find information about local pollen levels on the internet or in your local newspaper. If pollen counts are through the roof, consider hitting the indoor gym instead of running outside. In general, pollen counts are highest on warm and breezy mornings and lowest when it is cool and rainy. Plan your outdoor pursuits accordingly.

### Change immediately after spending time outdoors.

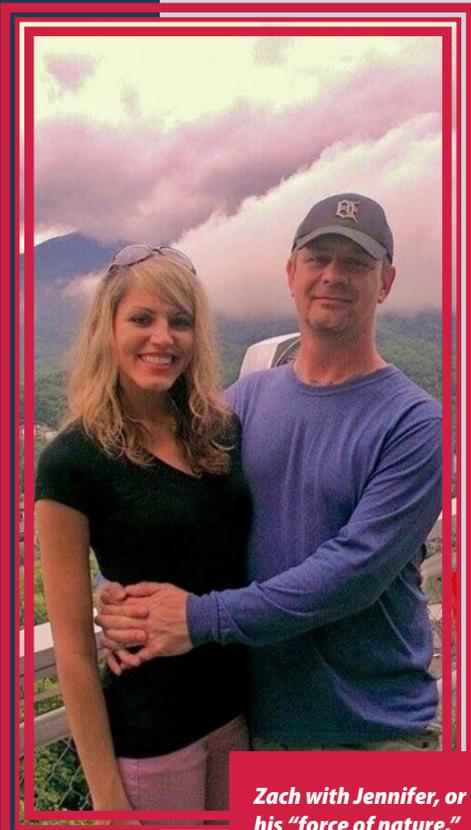
If you suffer from seasonal allergies but still love to exercise outdoors, build a habit of showering and changing immediately after coming back inside. While you were

out crushing that 30-mile bike ride, pollen was slowly accumulating in your hair and on your clothes. And while 30 minutes of outdoor exercise will, according to WebMD, completely coat your nasal membrane with allergens, showering and laundering your clothing will limit your exposure while indoors.

### Medicate, medicate, medicate.

Depending on the severity of your allergies, medication, not prevention, will likely provide the best relief available. Every person is different, so ask your doctor about the best medicine for you, and make sure you understand how you're supposed to use it before dismissing its efficacy. Some allergy medicines can take as long as three weeks to reach their full effectiveness.

## CLIENT STORY: ZACH



*Zach with Jennifer, or his "force of nature," as he refers to her. Jennifer has been endlessly supportive through all of this.*

There's been a renewed focus on our health workers lately. During the outbreak of COVID-19, they've been on the medical front lines, inspiring us with their compassion and dedication to their calling. It's not as though they don't perform heroic acts every day, but it's human nature for us to overlook one another during the normal course of events. We tend to focus on the needs right in front of us and are busy living our own lives.

Zach is one such person who felt called to help others as his life's work. While working as a registered nurse at a mental health facility, he performed home visits to help isolated patients needing medical care. During one of these calls, a 400-pound patient fell on him. He was taken to OSU's medical center and underwent surgery for multi-level lumbar disc herniations.

He went back to work, but his attendance was sporadic because of his ongoing back pain. A second surgery was followed by a third, resulting in some improvement but not much. A post-surgery infection and a bad reaction to medication didn't help, either. He had trouble sleeping and trouble standing. Sitting was the most uncomfortable, and walking was hard, too, as his left leg would just spontaneously give out, causing him to fall. The falls led to three neck surgeries.

Left with near-total loss of lower back motion, radiating pain, and difficulty even dressing himself, Zach's rehabilitation efforts, while heroic, didn't pan out. An industrial commission orthopedist said, "In a review of the records, I find no recommendations for anything that might be considered restorative ... everything is palliative."

We helped Zach file for permanent total disability, and the Industrial Commission agreed that he can no longer work. While he misses his patients, Zach still finds joy in encouraging others. By sharing his experience, strength, and hope with friends and neighbors going through tough times and providing a listening ear and kind words, Zach is still a health worker hero. He's one of our faves and a good egg!



# Some Good News

## MISS HALEY ADOPTS HER 'PROBLEM' STUDENT

In her first year as a teacher, 22-year-old Chelsea Haley joined Teach for America. She was assigned to a low-income school in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she met Jerome Robinson, a little boy determined to send his young teacher to an early retirement.

"At certain points, his behavior got so bad, I thought, 'I can't do this anymore. I can't be a teacher,'" Haley recalls. But she refused to give up, and she worked to build a relationship with her problem student by attending his basketball games and spending more time with him. Haley learned that Jerome lived with his mother and 1-year-old brother, Jace. The family struggled with poverty and the loss of loved ones, including Jerome's father and little sister.

Haley and Jerome formed a close bond. Even after Jerome moved on to fifth grade, other teachers would send him to Haley's classroom because she was the only teacher he would listen to. Shortly after starting her third year teaching, Haley dreamed that God told her she needed to become Jerome's

mother. Initially, she laughed the idea off. But the very next day, Jerome asked Haley if he could live with her. She told him that she'd been feeling the same thing.

The next time Haley had dinner with Jerome and his mother, Haley told the family she would be returning to her home in Georgia after the school year finished. Jerome's mother said, "You can go back, but I want you to take Jerome and Jace with you."

In December 2015, Haley, who was only 24, filed papers to take custody of the brothers. The young teacher even took money out of her retirement account to put a down payment on a house in Georgia. It was a big change for everyone, but the family is thriving. Jerome went from being regularly suspended in elementary school to being on the honor roll in eighth grade.

"I don't think there are many words to really describe just how awesome it is to celebrate all of Jerome's achievements," Haley said. "I'm just really, really proud of him."

May is Teacher Appreciation Month, and we want to celebrate all the teachers like Chelsea Haley who have made a difference in the lives of their students.

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ANSWER

## NIBBLES WITH NUG

### GRILLED PRIME RIB



Inspired by Primal Palate

Who says the cookout has to ruin your diet? Try this paleo-friendly recipe for a main dish that's worthy of your next barbecue.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 lbs beef rib roast
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp Himalayan salt

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Take rib roast out of the refrigerator 30 minutes prior to grilling.
2. Season roast with salt and pepper and allow it to rest for 10 minutes while you heat a gas grill to 600 F.
3. Sear roast for 3–4 minutes on each side.
4. Turn off the grill but continue cooking the steak, flipping every 4–5 minutes, until it reaches an internal temperature of 125 F. Remove from grill.
5. Allow the roast to rest — its internal temperature will continue to climb — for 5–10 minutes. Slice and serve.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Fur-Ever Friends
- 2** How to Avoid Allergies This Spring
- 2** Client Story: Zach
- 3** Good News: Teacher of the Year
- 3** Grilled Prime Rib
- 4** Powerful Ways to Honor Our Veterans

## HOW WILL YOU SPEND MEMORIAL DAY?

### POWERFUL WAYS TO HONOR OUR VETERANS

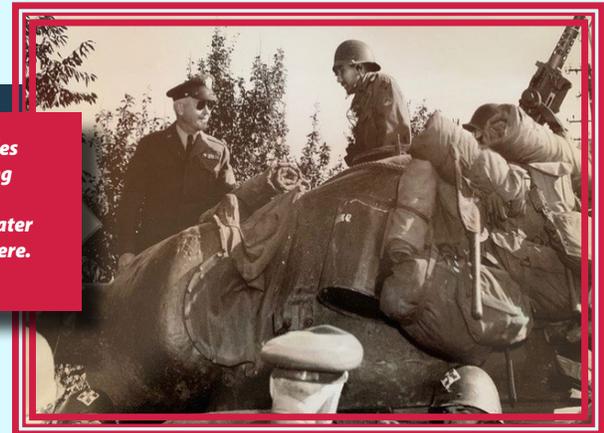
*Editor's Note: In light of COVID-19, please use extreme caution when honoring veterans and those who died in the line of duty this May. Check with your local municipality for precautions, rescheduled events, and updates. Thank you.*

Every year, Memorial Day reminds us to honor those who paid the ultimate price for their country. While Veterans Day recognizes all service members, Memorial Day is dedicated specifically to those who lost their lives during their service in the U.S. military.

The holiday, celebrated on May 25 this year, also marks the unofficial start to summer. While you're enjoying your three-day weekend, don't forget to honor those who died while protecting your rights. Here are some simple ways to honor that sacrifice.

**Visit Memorials** Many parks, public buildings, and monuments feature memorials that honor veterans who have lost their lives. Visit one of these monuments and spend some time learning about

*My father-in-law, Tank Commander Charles Wilson of the 40th Tank Battalion, meeting General Douglas MacArthur in Germany. MacArthur commanded in the Pacific Theater but was in Germany visiting the troops there. Charles died April 13, 2020.*



our nation's history and the tragic cost of war. This is a great opportunity to teach your children about our nation's military, and it can even be a fitting moment to learn more about local military connections. If you feel like giving back more directly, consider using this opportunity to spruce up your local park or memorial.

Talk to your municipality before you get started to ensure the monuments are open. If you have to wait for memorials to re-open, start crafting your plans now so you can be prepared to honor our veterans at a later date.

**Volunteer** Giving back to veterans through organizations that help families who have lost loved

ones can be a powerful way to spend your Memorial Day. Do you have specialized skills or knowledge in health care, construction, or art? If so, check with your local Veterans Affairs office to see if you can partner with an organization to provide resources to those in need — whether in-person or through donations. If you can't give up your time, try donating food, clothing, and supplies to veterans or those serving today.

Find more information about Memorial Day at [VA.gov](http://VA.gov). Thank you to those who served and to the families of those who were lost in the line of duty.