

Things that turn back the clock

Many years ago, my wife worked at a pet shop in our little town. A friend of ours owned it and needed help keeping the animals fed and cages clean. It was a little shop and tended to have fish, mice, rats and some more exotic pets. My wife found a cute little grey furball. It was a chinchilla. That first chinchilla was brought home and given the name Jimmy. He would sit on her shoulder, under her hair with just his nose poking out most of the time. A very clean and personable pet. Over the years many other chinchillas made it into our house. Some were welcomed because of their specific colors, some because they were 'rescue' chinchillas. Homes that could or would not take care of the animals, those animals were cared for here.

Fast forward to 2003. My lovely wife died, and my daughters and I are left with over a dozen chinchillas. Some most were older, but there were still a few youngsters. Over the last few years, I gave a couple away to friends. Others made it through their lives and died. The last few are all over eight years old and they are coming to the end of their lives too. Chinchillas can live to be over 20, I'm almost sure one of ours was close to that, but we never really knew how old she was. Most die after 10-12 years of life. Today, another little chinchilla passed on. Another connection to my wife is gone.

My wife and my youngest daughters could tell you the names of almost every chin. I'm taking nothing away from my oldest, but she had been on her own during the last few chinchilla arrivals. Me, I remembered just a few of the names. Those chinchillas have been gone for some time now. I didn't remember the names of the remaining 4. I just know the color and location.

So a little beige chinchilla is not with me anymore. And memories of other chinchillas and how my wife loved the little animals flood my mind. Funny how things turn the clock backwards.