

# The Wedding (June 24, 2018)

## The World According to Rosebud and Brody

By Ted Slupik & Gail Diedrichsen

Therapy dogs, Rosebud and Brody, are great friends. Together these two collies visit a nursing home and rehabilitation center on Sunday mornings. Usually, Rosebud and Brody appear as themselves, but often many seniors insist on calling the collies "Lad and Lassie," remembering the movie star who appeared on TV Sunday nights back in the good old days. Fond recollections of loyal farm dogs stimulate easy conversations with residents. The shared stories of beloved pets bring back cherished memories, sometimes with happy tears, but always with a smile.

The residents always enjoy visiting, but especially get a kick out of special holiday visits when the two collies dress up to participate in special events or activities. Often their handlers even get in on the act, wearing costumes as well.



*On July 4th, they dressed as Uncle Sam and presented each resident with a small flag.*

*Although a Scottish breed, both Brody and Rosebud brought residents the luck o' the Irish dressed in their St. Patty's Day emerald green finest while helping to conduct an Irish singalong by dancing a collie jig!*



*Easter included egg coloring with the Easter collie's help. The residents were also given an opportunity to have their pictures taken with the Easter Bunny and collie.*

*Thanksgiving included crafts out of construction paper and feathers with the residents' picture in the middle.*



*Oh what fun it was to wear fun jingle bell collars that day! Rather than reindeer, Santa brought his Christmas collies to help him spread holiday cheer. Rosebud & Brody jingled all the way, giving each resident a bountiful stocking.*



Holidays can be a particularly lonely time for some of the residents. The special events, usually held in the facility's activity room, are much anticipated. Seeing Rosebud and Brody dressed in costume always elicits smiles from the residents, visitors, and staff. Looking forward to participating, the residents invite visiting family members to enjoy the dogs too. For young children who may feel a bit uncomfortable visiting relatives in a nursing home, the dogs in fun costumes are comforting.



For almost five years, the dogs have been visiting the nursing home and having fun, but nothing was more spectacular than the series of events put into motion this past May. It all began with a repeated question: "Are the two collies brother and sister?" The answer: "No, they're dating!" always got a chuckle. Rosebud was celebrating her birthday and the residents asked if we could have a birthday party...so, the party was planned. After the cake with the obligatory singing of the "Happy Birthday" song, Rosebud opened her gifts. Her boyfriend had a special surprise for her. A card was read aloud while Brody "proposed" to Rosebud by bowing in front of her and offering a gift of a pink bedazzled neck kerchief. Of course, Rosebud, who is trained to speak on command, woofed a resounding "YES!" The residents were ecstatic! "When is the wedding?" they asked.

Every week after Rosebud's birthday party, the residents kept asking for a wedding date and suggested a traditional June wedding would be perfect. June 24<sup>th</sup> was set as the date, and every week from early May during Rosebud and Brody's regular weekly visits, the residents would continually ask "how many more weeks until the wedding"? It was sweet to see the residents looking forward to this unique event. In fact some of them were inviting their family members. The pressure was on!

The big day was officially announced on the large activity calendar displayed on the bulletin board in the main hallway. The elegantly designed "puptials" invitations were delivered, the cakes and flowers were ordered, and the officiator was booked. The closer we got to the big day; the residents became more and more excited. In anticipation, residents who were able to travel asked the facility to reserve the bus to take them shopping so they could buy wedding gifts for the happy couple. The dogs enjoyed many memorable gifts, but what the bride and groom gave the seniors in return was priceless. **When older and in a nursing home, one doesn't get invited to too many weddings!**





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# *Finally, the day had arrived!*

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## The participants were:

The beautiful bride, **Rosebud**, was dressed in a beautiful white satin gown, with lace trim and ruffles on the sleeves and hemline. The back of the bride's exquisite gown was adorned with a satin bow. She also wore a veil of white tulle, trimmed with lace that complemented the gown. **Brody**, the groom, was amazingly handsome. Nothing made this boy look better than the classic black tuxedo lined with a satin leopard print with a red bow tie.

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*The Official Wedding Photograph*



**Pixie**, a Zellicon Papillion and sister of the bride, was the flower girl. Pixie was stunningly dressed in a purple multi-colored dress with a lilac satin bodice with the skirt comprised of lilac and pink roses made of tulle fit for a princess. The bodice was trimmed with a beautiful lilac satin rose with black bow.



**Nacho**, a Cavachon, the best dog and recent therapy dog trainee-graduate stole the show. Dressed in a black tuxedo with a bow tie, Nacho complemented the groom. With a wagging tail and darling face, wearing black tails put his cuteness rating over the top. Nacho was the crowd's favorite.



*Jean, the minister, getting acquainted with the happy couple.*

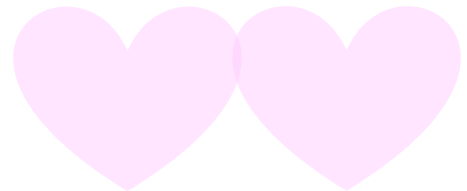
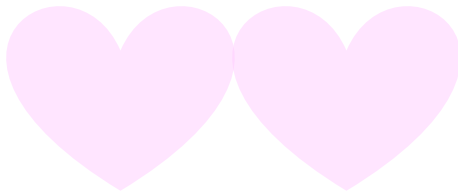


*Visiting with the best dog*

All of the residents dressed in their Sunday best, complete with jewelry. Some had invited family members to attend. Many of the ladies were honorary maids or matrons of honor. Every resident got a flower and a bottle of bubbles to help celebrate the day. Almost 40 residents attended. The processional started with the customary "Here comes the Bride". Rosebud looked so gorgeous in her bridal gown, all the ladies gasped with admiration.



During the ceremony, the dogs exchanged "I do" dog bones which were enthusiastically devoured without any desire to share marital property. After the processional and while the entertainment music was played, everyone enjoyed cake (both human and dogs).



For that day, that moment in time, everyone forgot their troubles. They were smiling, singing, happy, and young again; mostly because of these two special collies. During the ceremony, there were even a few tears shed!

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Brody has quite a history as a rescued dog whose past was less than lucky. Many of the new therapy dogs come with special stories too. There was Frankie, the abandoned white German Shepard who was found with buckshot in his chest. And Bella, a seven-year-old blind poodle who was determined to become a therapy dog. She did not let her impairment keep her from learning to be a therapy dog, initially by following Rosebud by scent and then by following her owner's voice. Most residents scarcely realized that Bella was blind.

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**These two collies bring joy, but they also perform important duties.**

Besides Brody's and Rosebud's usual visits, they often accompany and help teach and train other dogs who want to become therapy dogs. In the last four years, over 40 dogs have become therapy dogs with the collies' mentoring. When our most recent trainee, Jazzy LuLu and her handler, graduated, the day was marked with the usual presentation of a diploma. AND in keeping with our tradition, a graduation hat was placed upon Jazzy's proud head. The residents in the lobby gave Jazzy LuLu a congratulatory pet and smiled seeing her wearing her graduation hat.



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Mostly though, the residents have come to love Rosebud and Brody. Dogs live a relatively short time compared to humans. They touch our lives in a profound way in those few short years. They instinctively know how to live life to the fullest every day. In doing so, they teach us a very valuable lesson that we should embrace; that **every day is a gift!** We were all reminded of this the day of the wedding, but a month later, the residents are still talking about "the wedding," and many are now asking, "When's the baby shower?"

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Lizzy's Fund is an IRS approved not-for-profit charity that provides financial support to senior canines, aged 7 and older. The Fund is named after a little long-haired Chihuahua named Lizzy, who after her owners discovered Alternative Care Medical help, lived to 16-1/2 after vets gave up on her at age 9.

Would you like more information on Lizzy's Fund?

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