

The Adventures of Hillary McClellan, Regional Buyer, Utah's Hogle Zoo



Hillary claims she is a boring person. It's not true. Here's why.

1. How many kids have a custom-built tree house in their backyard? As a youngster growing up in Salt Lake City, Hillary had the joy and freedom of climbing into the tree house in her backyard to create her adventures in the great outdoors. Her father built it for her and her younger brother, Dan. He even added a rope swing to the wooden structure. These play adventures created a connection with the outdoors that continues today. Her brother now works on the zoo's grounds crew.

2. Who fibs about their age in order to get a job? When Hillary turned 15, she applied for a job at Utah's Hogle Zoo, however, on the advice of her mom, she said she was 16 as her mom didn't think they would hire her otherwise. After getting the job, Hillary learned the zoo was hiring 14-year-olds! Her first job at the zoo was bagging peanuts and selling balloons. Her adventure at the zoo has now lasted more than 20 years!

3. How many high school graduates decide to take a car trip of more than 1,300 miles? After her high school graduation, Hillary, along with her boyfriend and best friend, packed the car and hooked up her parent's camper trailer and headed to Ketchikan, Alaska. Upon arriving in the historic city, located in southeast Alaska and nestled between the ocean and mountains, the trio parked their camper in a campground and found jobs. Unlike her friends who took jobs in a fish cannery, Hillary chose to work at a local mall, which was crowded with tourists in the summer. Each weekend, she would go to the local convenience store to use the pay phone to call her mother. Hillary decided to end her Alaskan adventure when Hogle Zoo's Director of Business Operations called her and offered her the job of assistant retail manager. Her mother told Hillary later that she wasn't happy that she went to Alaska, but she was glad she had the opportunity to get out of Salt Lake.

4. How many women like fast cars? Hillary's favorite sport is NASCAR, even though some people



Fast facts about Hillary

◆ *Hillary is married to her high school sweetheart, Jason.*

◆ *They have two sons, Justin, 6, and Jason, 4.*

◆ *Hillary said the smartest thing she ever did was go to work for Hogle Zoo and to marry Jason.*

◆ *She describes herself as a shy, yet competitive individual, who's kind and fun.*

Hogle Zoo's SSA GM Seth Palmer (pictured right) said that he and Hillary (left) have now worked together for 20 years. In that time they



have gone from being co-workers to close friends. He shared that he bought his first pair of long pants in over three years to attend Hillary's wedding reception; she was married in 1998.

He added that Hillary is best defined by the three things: a great friend, a great co-worker and a great mom. "Hillary is a great person to work with; you know you can always count on her best effort, she truly wants to succeed with every task she is given."

argue it's not a sport. In Hillary's mind it is! She loves the noise, the speed, the adrenaline, the smoking tires and the crashes. Hillary shared that she really would love to be a race car driver. She said her husband thinks she's a speed demon. "I'm a little hard on the car brakes because I speed up and slow down rather quickly," she laughingly said.

5. How many people dream of a Caribbean vacation? Hillary does. She envisions an adventure to a place she's never been. She looks forward to learning more about swashbuckling pirates as well as exploring where "X" marks the spot on a treasure map. Another intended adventure involves hanging out on the white sandy beach, watching the ocean while drinking margaritas!

6. How many people have a goal of trying to visit most of the 394 national parks in the United States?

Hillary and her husband, Jason, do. Before they had children, they would pack their camping and fishing gear and take off to visit many of the western national parks. Now that their children are getting older, they plan to create outdoor adventures and memories with their most valued possession. They want their children to love the outdoors as much as they do.



7. Who is motivated to appear on a reality television show? Hillary and her sister-in-law, Ronnie, plan on applying to be a contestant on the popular *The Amazing Race*, which features teams of two racing around the world for a \$1 million prize. Hillary said her sister-in-law is the only one who can put up with her and her occasional snappiness. Even if this team is never selected, Hillary will still continue to watch her favorite show.