

How Do You Decide that Today is the Day to Put Your Best Friend to Sleep?



By Ed Frawley



Leerburg Kennels

Foreword

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[Leerburg Kennel](#) and Video is owned by Ed Frawley.

Ed has owned German Shepherds (GSD) for over 45 years. Since 1978 he has bred over 350 litters of German working bloodline GSD's. His dogs work in law enforcement, as S&R dogs, as competition Schutzhund dogs, and as family companions and protectors.

Since 1980 Ed has produced over 120 dog training videos and DVD's. He was a police K-9 handler for 10 years, competed in several dog sports, including AKC obedience and Schutzhund. In addition he has built one of the top dog training supply businesses in the world.

If you go to the web site **Leerburg.com**® you will see that it has over 10,000 printed pages. The Leerburg Web Discussion board has over 10,000 registered members and over 120,000 posts in the archives. Learn to use our site search function.

How Do You Decide that Today is the Day to Put Your Best Friend to Sleep?

A Tribute to a Friend

“THE RAINBOW BRIDGE”

Ed Frawley



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The recent death of a friend's 13 1/2-year-old German Shepherd, again reminded me of January the 5th, 1998 (the worst day of my life to date). I was forced to make the hardest decision I have ever been faced with, that was to put my best friend ([Nickie](#)) to sleep. This was something I had put off for months.

Going through the process to make this decision for an old or sick dog is a long and painful experience.

Mine went something like this:

- Boy he's not looking too good today.
- The steroids really made him act like he did 3 or 4 months ago; this is great!
- He is not able to hold his bladder (because of the steroids). This is hard for him. He knows he shouldn't be having accidents in the house. It embarrasses him. He is so proud.
- The heck with the Steroids. They are fixing one problem but causing him too many other problems. It's not worth it (for him).
- Now he can't walk up stairs again.
- God he's getting worse again. I know I am going to have to make the decision. I can't even think about it!
- I don't mind picking him up and carrying him down the steps to the front yard so he can relieve himself. I have to steady him. His old legs are a little wobbly.
- "How do I know what day is going to be THE DAY"? Look at the way he looks at me. Do I wake up one morning and decide, "today is the day I am going to be a cold

hearted S.O.B. and call the vet?" No. I don't mind carrying him outside. It's not so hard and I really don't mind cleaning up after him in the house, it's not like he meant to do it.

- God, he fell down the steps again. That really hurt him. He still has the heart but the body is gone.
- Am I keeping him alive for myself or for him?
- Shit, he can't even get up this morning. He was forced to lie in a pool of urine all night because he couldn't move. Today is the day. Thank God my vet will come to the house.
- The vet is here and I don't have the guts to watch this. I give him one last hug. I have to leave the house crying like a baby. Thank God for my ex-wife. She held him until the end.
- Every now and then when things slow down I find myself thinking of our times together. It almost always brings a lump to my throat and quite often a tear to my eye.
- We sure had some good times.
- It's been 11 months and 6 days. As I wrote this I started to cry again. I can't help it. Who cares? Not me!! I still miss him and

think about him every day when I look at his pictures in my bedroom.

The answer to the question of “When is the right day?” Should always be when you ask “Am I keeping him alive for me and not for him?”

The following poem ([The Rainbow Bridge](#)) is one that was sent to me after Nickie died. I asked a local artist friend here in town to do the artwork. I took this poem along with several very nice photos of Nickie and had them matted and framed. They hang on my bedroom wall. I am thinking about asking her if we can make prints to offer people who have lost their pet. If you are interested in purchasing a print, please go to <http://leerburg.com/5c.htm>.

The Rainbow Bridge Poster



The Rainbow Bridge

**There is a bridge connecting Heaven and Earth.
It is called the Rainbow Bridge because of the many colors.
Just this side of the Rainbow Bridge there is a land
of meadows, hills and valleys with lush green grass.**

**When a beloved pet dies, the pet goes to this place.
There is always food and warm spring weather.
The old and frail are made young again.
Those that are maimed are made whole again.
They play all day with each other.**

**There is only one thing missing. They are not with
their special person who loved them on Earth.
So, each day they run and play, until the day comes
when one suddenly stops playing and looks up!
The nose twitches! The ears are up! The eyes are staring!
And this one runs from the group!**

**You have been seen,
and when you and your special friend meet,
you take him or her in your arms and embrace.
Your face is kissed again and again and again,
and you look once more into the eyes of your trusted friend.**

**Then you cross the Rainbow Bridge together,
never again to be separated.**



A friend (Charlie Snyder) took this photo of Janis and Bentley. It is one of my all time favorites. To me this picture says 10,000 words.

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.

- Author Unknown

IF IT SHOULD BE

If it should be that I grow weak
And pain should keep me from my sleep,
Then you must do what must be done
For this last battle cannot be won.
You will be sad I understand,
Don't let the grief then stay your hand.
For this day more than all the rest,
Your love for me must stand the test.
We've had so many happy years,
What is to come can hold no fears,
You'd not want me to suffer so,
The time has come to let me go.
Take me where my need they'll tend,
And please stay with me until the end.
Hold me firm and speak to me.
Until my eyes no longer see.
I know in time that you will see,
The kindness that you did for me.
Although my tail its last has waved,
From pain and suffering I've been saved.
Please do not grieve it must be you,
Who has this painful thing to do,
We've been close, we two, these years
Don't let your heart hold back its tears.
For I am now in a better place,
And will be waiting to see your happy face.
So when you cross that final bridge,
Look for me...
I'll be standing next to the fridge.
-Author Unknown



I love this photo. It's a picture of a 13 year old Leerburg female (Dallas) sleeping on her dog bed. She is owned by Charlie Snyder (a friend). I happen to love old dogs and tell people that the biggest problem with owning a dog is that they don't live long enough.

When Tomorrow Starts Without Me

When tomorrow starts without me,
And I'm not there to see;
The sun will rise and find your eyes
All filled with tears for me.
I wish so much you wouldn't cry
The way you did today,
I know how much you loved me,
As much as I love you,
And each time that you think of me
I know you'll miss me too.
But when tomorrow starts without me,
please try to understand
That an angel came and called my name
And petted me with her hand.
She said my place was ready,
In Heaven far above,
And that I'd have to leave behind
All those I dearly love.
But, as I turned to heel away,
A tear fell from my eye,
For all my life I never thought
That I would have to die.
I had so much to live for,
So many sits and downs to do,
It seemed almost impossible,
That I was leaving you.
I thought about our lives together,
I know you must be sad,
I thought of all the love we shared,
And all the fun we had.
Remember when I'd nudge your hand,
And poke you with my nose?
The frisbee I would gladly chase,
The bad guy, I'd "bark and hold"
If I could relive yesterday,

Just even for awhile,
I'd wag my tail and kiss you,
Just so I could see you smile.
But then I fully realized,
That this could never be
For emptiness and memories
Will take the place of me.
And when I thought of treats and toys
I might miss come tomorrow,
I thought of you and when I did,
My dog-heart filled with sorrow.
But when I walked through Heaven's gate;
And felt so much at home;
As God looked down and smiled at me,
From His beautiful throne.
He said, "This is eternity,"
And now we welcome you,
Today your life on earth is past,
But here it starts anew.
I promise no tomorrow,
But today will always last;
For you see, each day's the same,
There's no longing for the past.
Now you have been so faithful
So trusting, loyal and true;
Though there were times you did things,
You knew you shouldn't do
But good dogs are forgiven,
And now at last you're free;
So won't you sit here by my side,
And wait right here with me?"
So when tomorrow starts without me,
Don't think we're far apart,
For every time you think of me,
I'm right there, in your heart.
-Author Unknown

Treasured Friend

I lost a treasured friend today
The little dog who used to lay
Her gentle head upon my knee
And share her silent thoughts with me...
She'll come no longer to my call
Retrieve no more her favorite ball
A voice far greater than my own
Has called her to His golden throne.
Although me eyes are filled with tears,
I thank Him for the happy years
He let her spend down here with me
And for her love and loyalty.
When it is time for me to go
And join her there, this much I know...
I shall not fear the transient dark
For she will greet me with her bark.
-Author Unknown

To My Family

It seems like only yesterday,
When you brought me home,
The years that I've been living here,
Have absolutely flown.
There were times I was a stinker,
I'd run and bark and dig.
Sometimes I'd roll in—you know,
And act just like a pig.
I loved my toys and playing ball,
And running in the yard.
The most important job I had,
Was barking while on guard.
For in my home are those I loved,
I'd die to keep them safe.

I've grown old, my health is bad,
It's hard to walk and stand.
It's time to go—you understand,
My life's no longer grand.
Please think of me with loving thoughts,
And wipe away your tears.
For God in all His wisdom,
Has counted out my years.
Be assured you've done the right thing,
You've ended all my pain.
Your heart will hurt for just a while,
Then learn to love again.

Goodbye my wonderful family,
Goodbye my very best friend.
I thank you for this time we had,
You loved me to the end.

Author: Cathy Prokopek Scott ©1999
-- dedicated to her lost Meg



Rixi

**Our very much loved Leerburg Office dog
Dec. 29th, 1992 - Feb. 14th, 2006**

[Rixi vom Posthorn SchH1](#) passed away on Tuesday Feb 14th, 2006. She had just celebrated her 13th birthday on December 29, 2005. She went peacefully and was surrounded by the great staff here at Leerburg, who loved her and had become her extended family.

Her cancer had grown enormously, we estimate the tumor(s) in her liver and spleen weighed 25 pounds or more and today she lost the use of

her back legs. Until this morning, she was her old self...chasing toys, barking and playing tug. She told us today was the day to let her go and we allowed her to on her own terms.

We will miss her terribly but know she is now in a better place with endless sticks to carry, bags of chicken to pilfer and fax machines to toss around. She was best known for putting her toys in the boxes of outgoing orders in Leerburg's office, and occasionally trading it for a new one she liked better. If it's possible for a dog to have a dry sense of humor, she certainly did.

See you on the other side Rixi Roo.



This portrait of Rixi hangs in the Leerburg Office.

Ed Frawley's Philosophy of Dog Training



Article

E-mail

Below is an ever expanding list of Emails from people who have gone through the loss of their pet - you will need to have a box of Kleenex next to your computer before you read on:

Losing a dog you love is no different than losing a parent or a child. It hits you in the heart and takes time to get past. In the short term you think that will never happen but it does.

Dear Ed,

Thank you so much for giving grieving pet owners a place to talk about their best friends. In my family the names of canine family members who have passed on are mentioned and remembered during family gatherings, just as our human members who have passed on are

remembered and mentioned. The conversations start with, "Do you remember when (Perky, Ruffles, Brandi, Little Bit, Buddy etc. did...)" Well this Thanksgiving as we gathered together once more, a new name was added to the remembrance list; my Molly passed over that "Rainbow Bridge" the day before Thanksgiving. Of all the dogs that my parents, siblings, and children can remember, Molly stood out the most for her bravery, intelligence and loyalty.

She was a tough, independent thinker with a strong play and prey drive. She bonded to the whole pack, including cats, chickens, sons, nieces and nephews. I was the one who trained and cared for her. If I said that someone or something was a pack member, (code word "baby") she would guard that person or animal. I was injured the year that I brought her into our family and she quickly learned to fetch and bring anything, including my four-year old son when he was in danger. She was able to track me down anywhere at six weeks of age and quickly learned to track my two sons by name. We lived in a heavily forested area on a five-acre clearing and she guarded against all dangerous intruders. She helped me raise my youngest son while I recovered from two leg reconstructions and then helped me recover by being the most patient and protective walking companion. She stopped two burglaries and put herself between my teenage son and a bear.

When we moved to a neighborhood, she adjusted beautifully and enjoyed her retirement years helping me teach Para transit drivers how to work with service animals when I was the Human Resources Director and Corporate trainer for a special needs transportation provider. Molly lived almost twelve years and was in magnificent health until her last summer when she developed inoperable cancer of the stomach.

Every dog that has been a part of our extended family has lived to a ripe old age, the oldest dog was almost eighteen years old. No matter how long they live, it is never, never long enough and the dogs that have left us leave a permanent hole in our hearts. People who do not love and understand dogs do not understand the grief of those of us who do.

In time I will find another best friend, because to live without one is unthinkable. I do believe that I will eventually find my new best friend at Leerburg Kennels.

Ed, Thank you and Cindy for all that you do.

Janet Kelley

My miniature schnauzer, Sherman, was put to sleep this morning. He suffered from:

Pemphigus vulgaris, the rarest and hardest to treat of autoimmune diseases. While surfing the

net I ran across the poem on your site that is called "If It Has To Be". It brought tears to my eyes but also let me know that it was time. The side effects of all the medications he had to take were even worse than the disease and there is no cure. We fought his disease for over 9 weeks. Up days and down days were killing us both. When the medicine caused his legs to tremble, I took it as a positive sign. It really meant he had no control over his nerves or muscles. Sherman was my baby for 10 years and slept with me every night. I never thought it was possible to love an animal this much. We had that special bond. Worse than the actual appointment this morning was the 2 days leading up to it. I prayed for a miracle and cried until my eyes were swollen. Sherman had never seen me cry and the look of horror and shock on his face let me know that it hurt him to see me hurt so much. This helped me to decide that today, there would be no tears.

This morning, I put on my Happy Face, fed him a good breakfast and took him for a short walk. I laughed and cooed to him and did the baby talk thing. I held him in my arms and laughed as my heart felt like it would burst. I was determined that he would not see my pain or feel fear or sorrow, no matter how hard it was for me. It was the hardest thing I ever did in my life. I was surprised at how well it went when we arrived at the vet's office. He actually tried to push the door open with his nose.

When the time came, I cradled him in my arms and promised him that he would never suffer again and I would not leave his side. He seemed to understand. It was quick (about 15 seconds) and he just drifted off to a peaceful sleep and his whole body relaxed. I was overwhelmed with emotion. I felt a deep pain in my heart and at the same time I felt a sense of relief that I kept my promise to him (no more pain).

His final moments were filled with love, laughter and baby talk. I held him tight. My final gift to him was to let him pass thinking how happy I was.

Sorry to ramble, I am crying so hard and my thoughts are confused.

Basically, I wanted to thank you for helping me to make the right decision.

October 2, 2006

I recently lost a great and wonderful friend. My 14 year old Lab Mokie passed away and has left a huge hole in my life. I was lucky to have been able to share 13 1/2 years with her.

She taught me a lot about life. She was always there when I needed a friend (usually slobbering on my face to make me smile). She is the first dog I ever took through OB school... and we only passed because we showed up every day. On

the final test of the down stay she stayed approx. 3 seconds before she was off exploring the room. That was Mokie. Everything she did was an adventure and everyday brought something new. She never let a day go by that she didn't get into trouble in some way or another.

Mokie was a Dog Pound Rescue. She was due to die when I found her. She was only 5 1/2 months old... too young to die like that. So she came to live with me and enriched my life for so many years.

She was 14 years old when she passed. Full of life and love. She went out on her terms and did not ask me to make that decision for her. She always did things her way, no matter what I had to say about it!

I know that I will see her again someday. I am sure that she is pilfering garbage cans on the other side of the Bridge...and will most likely meet me with a stinky shoe when I see her again.

So, I say Good Bye to my old friend. It was great knowing her and sharing my life with her.

Thank you Mokie, for all that you have given me. Thank you for all the smiles that I needed (and the hundreds of gallons of slobber!) Thank you for choosing to live with me and teaching me all that you knew. Thank you for being my right hand and keeping the Pup in line... you taught

her well too. We will all miss you. See you on the other side Ole Lady. You were the best.

--Kelly



March 16, 2006

Dear Ed,

I can't thank you enough for such a wonderful site!

I just wanted to add my own note on the passing of a family member.

Chelsea was with us for almost 14 yrs. She was a long haired German shepherd we got as a 9 week old puppy. My family thought I was CRAZY to bring a puppy into my home, as I had 1 yr old twin girls and a 3 yr old boy.

My children grew up with her and she was their built in baby sitter and neighborhood child protector, any child that came into our yard she deemed as someone she had to keep an eye on and protect, even if that meant not allowing their own parents to come and take them home. There was more then one occasion when a parent would come to get their kids and Chelsea would stand between the child and parent, barking and carrying on, until I went and told her it was alright, that the parents were just there to get their children, then she would be fine.

Well, at the age of 13 1/2, one month after her constant companion from puppy hood passed away(our cat who wouldn't leave her side, and would nip her on the nose if Chelsea stopped licking and cleaning her). She totally lost interest in life around her and totally went downhill to the extent that I found out she pretty much had stopped eating. The day I told my ex we HAD to put her to sleep, I had gone over to see her (she lived with him because I couldn't keep her in my apartment), and she couldn't walk more then 6 steps before laying back down.

I had told her years before, that when the time came for her to leave our family, mine would be the last face she would see. As hard as it was, I made good on my promise to her and was holding her at the vets till she took her last breath.

Ed, it's been a little over a year since I had to say good-bye to my baby girl Chelsea, but to this day I miss her as much as I did the day I said good-bye.

Thank you again for such a wonderful site!

Sincerely,
Nancy H.

Dear Ed,

Yesterday I had to have my best friend, Joepa, put to sleep. He is a 13 year old Shar Pei who I rescued when he was about 5. It was a very difficult time in my life, going through a divorce and from the moment we met, we bonded. He rarely left my side and often I would almost trip over him telling him he was going to kill me some day. I know he felt it was his job to watch over me and that is what he did. I remarried and with my new wife and family he accepted them as his own. So gentle he was with the kids and had a unique sense of friend or foe. This amazed me. He knew when someone came into the house, even if he had never met them if they were a friend of mine or someone I didn't know.

He was so laid back but ever vigilant as to what was going on. Lying by my chair, moving only when I did. I am a retired police officer from Washington DC. I moved back to PA to be closer to my parents. Exactly one month of being here,

my Father passed away and just last year my Mother died. In both incidents Joepa sensed my grief and in his way, stuck even closer too me. He was always there for me, always.

He was getting old, I knew he was not seeing well or hearing well but he still knew those around him. All I would hear from the Vet was how amazed she was of a shar pei living this long and being as good looking as he was. I would just tell her he was well cared for and loved.

For a while I knew he was having problems and often prayed to God for more time with him, just a little more. I was blessed in that I believe these prayers were answered. Last November the Vet found a large tumor in his right lung. She told me that because of his age he probably would not survive the surgery. Since then he lost the use of his rear legs and I got him a bottom's up lease so I could carry his back end while he walked with his front two. We did this for a while but I could tell he was tiring more and more each day. Eventually our walks were nothing more than getting him into the back yard. He was getting weak and his breathing was difficult. For the past two weeks, I noticed he was losing a little more bladder control so each time I'd take him out; I have to clean the rug we had passed over. I knew he was struggling with this because this is a guy who would rather burst than have an accident in the house. He never had any and he would not even go in his yard. I had to always walk him. Still he

and I dealt with this and next came losing control in his bed. I still would get him up, out we'd go and I would clean the rug, clean him and toss the bedding in the washer. We tried to keep him in an area in the house, closer to the back door but he, being Joepa, he would have nothing of this. He pushed past the chairs I had there blocking him, and started to drag himself into the living room, by my chair where he felt he had to be. My heart was breaking at this and just said he'll stay by me. Next he lost control of his bowels and trying to get him up and clean him, looking at him and knowing how prideful he was, we both knew it was time. We made one more journey to the vet's. My wonderful wife drove and I stayed in the back of the van with Joepa. We were with him the entire time and it was hard for me but after all the years of his courageous devotion to me, I would not leave him now. It was very quick and peaceful but the one thing that will stick with me forever is when his head dropped into my hands as I was scratching him under his chin.

I miss him and will always feel him next to me. My wife told me, as did my Father, that they have never seen an animal so devoted to someone. From the moment we met, he picked me.

Thanks for listening to me, I'm just trying to get this out.

Jack Whitcomb

March 27-06

Hi Ed,

My name is Karen Cushman, we live in Maryland with our beloved 16 year old Shiatsu who, as most feel, is our life, our baby, who was there with me before my marriage, my two boys and who is the love of our life and family. His name is Simba...we named him a year before the Lion King came out so no, he's not named after the movie. :) Over the past two years, he's been ill. He no longer can go up or down stairs, he's lost most of his vision and he can't really hear. His back legs go out on him periodically where he falls to the floor. He's in kidney failure and on medication to help with digestion, peeing and pain. He's pretty alert, barks and seems to be in no pain. The last month he's gotten worse. He pees and poops all over the area he is restricted to...pads and all, it's a complete mess by the time we get home. He eats a little and drinks a ton. He sleeps most of the day and we are struggling with what to do. He's fairly alert...when he's awake...but sleeps all day and night. When he is up, he's walking into walls, can't see us or find our voices. It's killing me to see him this way but I can't seem to bring myself to put him down because he seems well enough...if that makes any sense. I've dealt with this illness for two+ years and have seen him pretty much on his death bed, lethargic and not eating for days. He's not like that now, however how can he live this way...is it fair?, I'm so confused, don't

want to face putting him down and feel I'm not giving him a chance. It's tearing me up and the vet just says his kidney failure will be his demise... do I spend more money on finding out the same thing, knowing there is nothing they can do... please help. I'm scared, worried about him and would never want him to think we gave up on him. We love him so much.

Thank you.

Karen

March 12, 06

Dear Ed,

My husband and I came across your site in the wee hours of Feb. 21st, 2006. We were looking for a site that would advise us on euthanasia for our little girl who was in great respiratory distress. We knew it was time for her to go, but having to get a vet at 3 am and nearly an hour's drive away was not an option. With the help of my best friend who was a nurse, via telephone, we made the decision to put her to sleep ourselves. Trust me when I tell you, we would never do that again in a million years. After giving her an overdose of Ativan, we held her, watched her, waited, and prayed for God to just let her go to sleep. It was the longest and most painful night either of us has ever had to endure.

Mindy was a small Chihuahua/terrier mix whom I rescued from our local pound when she was just 18 months old. Of the 5 small dogs they showed me that day, she was the only one that immediately licked my face when I picked her up, thereby winning a place in my heart right then and there. From then on, she was my constant companion for the next 12 1/2 years. She saw me through the death of my daughter and my husband, and when I decided to pack up and move from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland over 5 years ago, she made her way into my new husband's heart right away. She went everywhere with us, in the car, on the ferry, and on planes. She was an excellent traveler, never complaining as long as she could be with us. By the time we moved to NL, she had already had 7 teeth removed and had been spayed and had a small mammary gland tumor removed. Through all of this, she remained her bouncy usual self. I always told people she had "small dog syndrome", as she was willing to take on any dog no matter the size. She just liked to try and put them in their place and let them know who was boss.

Last year, she developed a larger lump on her abdomen and we assumed that it was another tumor. We were right. The vet took x-rays and determined that it was removable, but also informed us that she also had a heart murmur. She had her operation and was put on medications for her heart. We also noticed just

prior to that that she was also going deaf and her eyes seemed to be getting cloudier. Still, she recovered completely from her operation and the medication gave her back most of the energy she had enjoyed before being diagnosed with her heart ailment.

Around the first of Feb. this year, we started to notice that her eating habits were changing. She would leave her breakfast in her dish and may not eat it even at suppertime. After another visit to her vet, we were told that her kidneys were not functioning properly and that she had lost weight, and that a change in her diet was necessary. Over the next 2 weeks, she did start to eat a little more, and seemed to feel a little better. Then she stopped eating that food as well. On Feb. 20th, I picked up some recipes from the vet for homemade food that we knew she would eat; she loved rice and hamburger. We decided to try the egg one first and save the burger mix for the next day. She ate the egg and loved it. Finally we knew she could sleep with a full belly.

Around 3 am the next morning, my husband woke me. He told me that Mindy had been coughing constantly and trying to catch her breath for over an hour. We tried a heating pad to relax her lungs. It didn't work. She was getting worse. After nearly another hour and with neither of us wanting to say what we knew had to be done, I finally said to him, "We need to do something". He reluctantly agreed and we

decided to give her 2 sleeping pills. We figured it would either make her rest or put her to sleep. Either way, it would get us through until we could take her to the vet. I lay on the couch with her on my chest on her blanket. Within a few minutes her breathing seemed to settle down and the coughing eased off. Her legs all went to sleep. That was to last about 2 hours until the coughing returned and she tried to stand up. I took her outside thinking she may need to relieve herself and I had to hold her up on her legs. She could do nothing so I brought her back in. She was having a really hard time trying to get enough air in, so it was then that I made the call to my best friend and asked her advice on what we could give her that would be permanent. We decided on Ativan. Not knowing how much would be enough, we chose 7mg, crushed it up on a spoon, tapped it into her throat and syringed in some water to get it down. I wrapped her in her blanket and held her on my lap while we waited, and cried, and prayed. We apologized over and over to her, but promised that if she would just let herself go to sleep that she would no longer be in any pain when she woke up in God's garden. Her strong will to hang on to her very last breath lasted for nearly 2 more hours. She fought right to the end. As her heart stopped while my hand was on her chest, we began to bawl uncontrollably. Had we done the right thing? Having looked into her eyes a few hours before, she seemed to have been pleading with

us to do something, and letting us know that it was going to be ok to say good-bye. We were leaving to go away the next day and we would never have let our sitter go through having to put her down. We wanted to be with her. We needed to be with her. We wanted her to know that we loved her enough to let her go. Our 2 beagles and the cat knew something was wrong. They had been awake the entire night. We decided to show her to them after she had passed so that each one would know that she was gone. Each seemed to say goodbye in their own way. After a little while with both of us taking turns holding her and hugging her and crying and trying to say good-bye, I retrieved a box from our spare room and laid her in it on her blanket. I stroked her little body, kissed her, cover her up and closed the lid but my husband insisted that it was too quick, that we needed to leave her lay there for a little while, while we went out to dig her grave. I opened the box again and we decided that she should have her little homemade sweater with her to keep her warm for her journey, so we placed it in with her and left her box open while we were out. It took us a while to get her place ready. It's hard to use a pick and shovel when you can't see them through tears. When we finished and came into the house to get her, we took our turns saying good-bye again. I brushed her so that she would look nice when she got to Rainbow Bridge. We patted her again and again, telling her how much we loved her and how

sorry we were for what we had done. This is so hard to write. I have had to stop many times to get this far. When we finally went back outside to lay her to rest, both of our beagles barked and howled constantly while we were gone. I guess that was their way of saying their final good-byes to her. Mindy now lies in our front yard, in a spot my husband picked out just for her. He told me that the sun would always shine on her to keep her warm, and we lay her facing out over the bay so that she could now enjoy the view of the bay she hasn't seen clearly now for nearly 2 years. She has a temporary marker for now, and my husband wants to make her a permanent one come spring.

Even being away for 16 days did nothing to prepare us for coming home to that empty little spot on our couch where our baby always lay. Our hearts are broken and will be for a very long time. Peaceful sleep our little one. We will meet you again at the base of Rainbow Bridge. Until then, you let all those big dogs know who you are, ok?

In long loving memory of our little Mindy 1992-
Feb. 21st, 2006

We love you always and forever,

Mummy and Daddy (Janet and Alonzo)

1-25-06

Ed,

I just called the vet to make the appointment to put my "baby" at rest. Shelby chose us almost 15 years ago, just a few weeks after my husband and I were married. He has been the best dog I could have ever imagined having. He is also the first dog I have ever had. We have been through so much together. When he was 3 years old he had to have 5 discs removed from his back as they were pressing on his spinal cord, but that didn't slow him down. The vet told us he probably wouldn't be walking when we picked him a few days later, but Shelby proved him wrong. Three days after surgery he walked (he tried to run but we held him back) by himself out to the car to go home. Then a few years later he was getting heavy and we found out he had thyroid problems. Once we found the right dose of medicine, he was back to his old self. In the last few years he has lost most of his hearing, but he still ran and played like a puppy. Then in late November early December things started to take a turn. About a week and a half ago we found out that his recent weight loss was due to liver cancer. The vet gave him a shot of cortisone to fix the problem temporarily, but today he isn't eating anything not even his treats. He moves so slow and seems to trip over his own paws. I called my husband and said I think it is time. He agreed

and said he was waiting for me to let him know when I was ready. It was the hardest phone call I've ever made. All I've been doing is crying and hugging Shelby and telling him how much I love him and always will. I can't imagine coming home from work to an empty house (my husband is a firefighter and is gone for 24 hours every 48 hours). What will I do without my faithful companion, who is going to calm my nerves during a thunderstorm or when I hear a noise outside? I know he is going to a better place, and will be waiting for both me and my husband. Until then my sweet baby, know that daddy and I will love you for always and are so happy that you chose us that March day 15 years ago. Rest in peace.

Love,
Mommy and Daddy
(Karen & Randy)

1-24-06

Ed

About 2 years ago the vet told me that Sam had cancer in his liver and abdomen and didn't expect him to live more than a few weeks- but amazingly Sam did very well for close to 2 years after that.

It's been a long time since I've taken him to the woods, and his walks around town have shortened from miles to just around our short block. All of his speed and agility are long gone. In the past few weeks he has aged more than he had in the last few years, losing control of his bowels, not being able to stand unless I help him up, and in the last few days hardly eating or drinking.

Sad to say, I feel that Sam has given me more than I could repay. He has lived a good long time so maybe I didn't do such a poor job with him- but I so regret the times I lost my temper and yelled at him, or took him for granted. This morning he was unable to stand- he was sliding along the floor trying to get up, and he let out a yelp of frustration before giving up. With a little help he was able to stand and walk. But it is time I fear, and our appointment to have Sam put to sleep is only hours away. No matter how much I try to tell myself that it is best for him, there is that gnawing feeling that I am somehow betraying him. I hope that he does not think so.

I love that dog.

Thank you for your site and letting me say my piece.

THOMAS SICA

1-11-06

What a beautiful website you have developed. I thank you for sharing it. I found it when I was looking for a site to help me feel I am doing the right thing of putting my cocker spaniel Ceaser to rest. Ceaser and I have been together for 14 years. He is a beautiful loving blonde cocker. He has been deaf and blind for about 3 years and now is having such a hard time moving. Ceaser has taught me what unconditional love is, something that I never understood or had. I don't trust anyone but I trusted my Ceaser. After a relationship that I ended after 7 years because I didn't know how to love or trust someone enough to hang in with anyone, it was just Ceaser and me. I lay in bed one night and Ceaser was by my side, tail wagging, licking my face, and I told him that it would probably be just him and me. That he could not go before me. Well, I have to let him go. It will be this Friday the 13th at 4:30/ I will be there till the end holding his little head until he is in heaven. I have told him I am sorry but he will be healthy and happy again. His long blonde ears will flap in the wind as he runs around, I told him he better be there waiting for me when it's my turn. My heart is broken and I can't stand to think of life without him. But he has been so loyal to me I have to give it back to him. Ceaser, mommy loves you and always will. Thank you for being my angel on earth and I pray you close those

big brown eyes knowing how much you are and will always be loved. God please make his last moments peaceful.

Thanks Elizabeth

1-5-06

I wanted to say thank you for your webpage about putting your best friend to sleep. I go today to end a friendship that has lasted for 10 years. Pepper is a Dalmatian that I got when he was six weeks old. From the instant we met, we were bound to each other. He saw me through tough times and was always faithful to me like no person ever could be. We would run in the park, go to the beach to play in the water, and sometimes just cuddle together and watch TV. He accepted my wife and children as his own and looked after them and protected them. He was by far the best watch dog in the world. He recently started gaining a lot of weight but wasn't eating so I took him to the vet and was told he had some major issue that was causing him to retain fluids. The vet told me that we could try to find out what was causing this, but it always seemed to end with the same result. This will be extremely difficult, but I know now that it is what is best for him. I will miss him very much and hope that he finds peace in his new home. I wasn't always the best friend to him, but he was to me and I can never repay that. Thank you for

your site as it helped me realize what had to be done and gave me the courage to do it.

Tom Wood

12-10-05

Ginger was my little red-headed Pekingese. she was my little peanut, my pumpkin. She was 15 and 1/2 and I've had her since I was 8 yrs old. I don't even remember life without her. she has been there thru everything, smiling away.

I knew my baby was getting old and over the past years I've feared the day that it would come to an end. She was always such a happy dog, always relaxed and gentle. She had a few medical spurts in the past but always bounced back. But I started to realize her mortality when she started losing her hearing and her eye sight but her spirit remained the same. True she started slowing down and sleeping more. the other two dogs we have are younger and she couldn't keep up with them but she always was more of a homely kind of dog. she's rather sit with me or my mom and be part of our conversations than play with the other two rascals. She always knew when you were sad and would look up with the biggest puppy dog eyes you've ever seen. she'd sit next to you and start to lick your hand which I have never been much of a fan of so she'd walk right in front of you and lay down and role over onto her back, paws up in the air, and almost demand

a tummy rub. how could you resist? it would always make me laugh even thru streams of tears and I would give in. she was my rock, the one thing that was constant in my life.

This year has been one of the hardest of my life so far...ranging from parting ways with my long term love to totaling my car to death of a friend and many things in between and now at the year's end I had to say goodbye to my best friend.

A day before Thanksgiving my mom called me and was worried about Ginger saying that it seemed like she was having some kind of seizures. She would fall over, wet herself, and make noises almost like a crying infant. Well, that Friday we found out that she had congestive heart failure. She was given medicine to help control her attacks. It was hard for her to breath and her heart was working double time. Well over the next two weeks she didn't get any better. I stayed at my mom's as much as I could to be close to her. It got so awful and I know that my mom was just trying to hold on. Then I found this website and really started contemplating my only other option. I didn't want to keep her alive for me.

She wasn't my little peanut anymore. She hadn't eaten in over a week, her back legs started giving out, she couldn't even sit up right, and she would automatically lie down. She lost 3 lbs in a wk and her belly was swollen. The doctor said it was

taking every bit of energy she had to breathe. I would see her sitting at the water bowl staring down like she had to muster up the strength to drink. I knew this wasn't right; we couldn't let her be like this. I told my mom what we had to do. hearing myself say those words out loud was like a slap in the face.

I held her in my arms and we reminisced on 15 yrs of history, I told her I'd miss her and that she was the most perfect thing ever. She didn't have those same puppy dog eyes anymore. she would gaze up at me but it didn't really seem like she was looking at me.

This Thursday, December 8 my step dad and I took her in. There was a crazy snow storm and we bundled her up in this red blanket that my mom demanded we not bring back. she said she couldn't go with. I said I would have it no other way but to be right there. As they laid her down after the tranquilizer and shaved a bit of her little arm I crouched down nose to nose with her and kept my eyes fixed on hers. I just kept telling her that I loved her and that it would be ok and petted her little head. it was so hard, her eyes stayed open even after and we couldn't get them to close and her tongue was sticking out a bit. I couldn't catch my breath. she still looked like she was with us and I kept kissing her head. I just didn't want to leave her there but I knew it was over. I had a flashback to the day that we got her and now here it was 15 beautiful yrs later, the

end of our journey together. my step dad picked her up and wrapped her in the blanket and I told her I loved her one last time and walked away. It is so hard and I pray that this is what she wanted.

She'll be back with us before Christmas in an urn on top of our fireplace for the holidays. I'm going to miss everything about her even all that use to annoy me like her snoring (cuz of her cute little smushed nose) but I'm so happy that she is not in pain because that really broke my heart. hearing all the stories of other people going through this has really helped a lot. thank you and my heart is with all of you

Corrine

12-05-05

Just yesterday we had to say goodbye to our Doberman Odin. He was a handsome, muscular red, though he's been pretty much a roan Dobie the last few years. He would have been 14 this Wednesday, Dec. 8th. He had been going down in his hips for the last three weeks or so, but he still could get around after being helped up and having help down the back porch stairs. He was even still trying to play as recently as three days ago. Yesterday morning his front legs started to lose their placing ability and he couldn't get up even with help. More significantly, he didn't seem to want to try. That pretty made the decision for

us. Always before he seemed to want to fight and keep going. Yesterday he lost that. It was as if the other animals sensed something going on. All of them made it a point to come and sniff him over and lick his face. Even our nearly feral cat, Ninja, made an appearance, which was really strange. I gave him his big basted bone to chew on to his hearts content on the ride to the emergency hospital. Luckily for all of us, he had been there many times when I still worked there, so going to the clinic was not traumatic for him like it is most other dogs. He was licking my face right up to the end. He had a lot longer than most Dobermans, and had a good life. Five years ago, he went down and we thought it was end then. We treated him with steroids and he bounced back like nothin' to it. We still have one of his sons, who will be 13 himself in a few months. (We thought Odin had been kept away from Freya, but surprise!) Freya we lost to bloat several years ago.

Rest in peace Odester. You were the best, old man.

11-22-05

Dear Mr. Frawley

Our precious 14 yr old Black Lab mix, Casey girl, crossed the Rainbow Bridge on October 14, 2005. It has been 5 weeks without her and our hearts

are still aching. The decision to take her to the vet was an agonizing one, but once I realized that I was keeping her here for me, I knew I had to help her be free. She was a part of our lives for many years and she was the most loving and gentle dog you could ever wish for in an animal. It's meant so much to us that we received sympathy cards from people who loved her and flowers from the vets and their assistants in the loss of our girl. She had problems for a few years with her back legs and had trouble walking. It came to a point where we had to carry her and she gave us a sad look and I knew it was time. I came across your site while searching for some answers on what I should do and I can't thank you enough for posting the letters from people, such as myself, who are having the same difficulty in their life and had to make the decision to say goodbye to their friend.

I think of her often and miss her terribly. I write this note with tears streaming down my face because I feel like I lost a part of my life. She will always be in our hearts and the memories we share as a family are starting to become happy ones. I told my husband and children that I did not want to get another dog because of the pain I was going through with the loss of Casey. Then, my daughter sent me a website with puppies that were abandoned or abused and needed to find a "forever home". That's when Miles, a black lab mix, came into our life and he

has been therapy for me since we picked him up 2 weeks ago. He traveled from West Virginia to Pennsylvania to be a part of our home. He will never replace our girl but I know that Casey sent him to me to help with the healing. There are so many animals out there that need homes and if we can rescue one, we have done a good deed.

Thank you for letting me share and I hope that those who are reading this will find comfort in knowing that our precious animals will always be in our hearts and memories and they give us so much joy and love that we can never forget them. Thank you Casey girl, for the good times and the memories you left with us.....we love you and miss you.

Regards
Marita McCafferty
Pennsylvania

Mr. Frawley

I emailed you a few weeks ago about sending a note for your website about our decision to put our Casey girl to sleep. I am attaching it and if you find it appropriate, please post on your site. We have since adopted an adorable 10 month old puppy and named him Miles. He was tied to a fence; his owners moved and left him with no food and water for a month. Someone rescued him and he was in a shelter in West VA for 3

months. We found him thru a lab rescue and he now has a "forever home". He has been good for me but the pain of losing Casey is still here.

Thank you for letting me share....it helps with the grief.

Regards,
Marita McCafferty

10-10-05

Dear Ed,

I came to your site while my pet was becoming weaker and weaker. He has been by my side for 18 years, and was in perfect health (or so it seemed) until this past month. He began rapidly losing weight although he continued to eat. I am very glad I came to your web site because it truly helped me through the toughest decision I ever had to make. I held Diggers head in my hand while I looked him in the eyes telling him how much I loved him and how much I will miss him, until he took his last breath. That was less than a week ago, every time I turn a corner I expect to see him and I get sad when I remember I will never see his face again. Please allow me to share my letter to Digger with you. Lori

Dear Digger, 10-04-05

I'm so sorry to see you go. I hope you can forgive me. It breaks my heart to see you suffer. I don't

want you to be in any pain. You don't deserve any pain or suffering. Please know in your little kitty heart how much I love you. I will miss you very much. You have been a part of my life for 18 years, and, that is longer than anyone I know has stuck around. Your little kitty eyes have seen so much of my life and you were always there ...along for every crazy ride.

All you ever wanted was to be loved and held. You always got everyone's attention by head butting them, and no one could resist petting you after a head butt. I'm so sorry for the days I was too busy to hold you or when you dug your claws into me and I pushed you away. I hope you know I loved you.

You were truly the "best" most easy going kitty. Never a problem. Christian and I will always remember you. I hope Grandma is waiting for you in Heaven to play "flower" with your tail. I Love you and will never forget you. 18 years is a long time. I hope I was good to you and never neglectful. I know that Cafefe and RatCat will miss you and will be looking for you. You will always be in my heart.

I love you and Thanks for sharing the last 18 years with me.

Love, Your Mom since you opened your eyes,

Lori

10/07/2005

Ed-

Yesterday I too made the decision to let my Shaddie go. Shaddie brought joy, happiness and laughs for 10 years, and to honor her I let her go when she became much too quickly a confused Lab, one who was appalled not being able to control herself and saw the look in her eyes and the behavior towards me, which was not the loving dog she was.

Our vet treated us with kindness and dignity and apparently from Shaddie's past seizures she probably had brain cancer that caused her quick complete change. I had the honor of telling this wonderful friend thank you. Thank you for always letting us hug you, thank you for letting us laugh at your wacky quirks, thank you for being on guard, and thanked her for all the love we shared. I believe in the Rainbow Bridge, and it has helped our sons ages 13 and 17, although we all firmly believe that our Shaddie has stolen every ball and is not willing to share. Even though I know in my heart she wasn't our Shaddie at the end, I still feel like I let her down. After reading all your thoughts, I find I'm not alone. I find this house too quiet, I find I miss sweeping up dog hair and I find the squirrels in the backyard are even in shock. Thank you for your web-site I needed to hear that I wasn't alone in my grief.

Kathy

Today is Thursday, September 8, 2005. I woke up this morning at 6AM. Next to me was my baby girl of 14 years Fifi-Love, a 9 pound mixed terrier. She was breathing heavily as fluid was again building in her body from her liver that has been consumed by tumors. Her condition was inoperable and her body was visibly weak. Today was the day that I let my baby girl go....

Five days ago, Saturday, September 3 – due to Fifi’s sudden weight loss and lack of appetite, I rushed her to the vet. I was informed by Fifi’s doctor that she was anemic and that her x-rays showed a large mass in her stomach area. In addition, she had fluid building up in her body. Her vet could further understand her condition after an ultrasound was done. Unfortunately, the doctor who would perform the ultrasound would not be available until Tuesday. All he could do was extract the fluid to help Fifi’s breathing. I was fearful for my baby girl as I did not need a doctor to tell me that the x-rays did not look good. This was the Labor Day weekend, and I spent the entire weekend miserably upset – saddened and helpless that I could not do or find out anything until Tuesday. I wished I could do more for my baby, but all I could do at that point was to treat her with extra TLC.

Tuesday, September 6 – her veterinarian informed me that the ultrasound finding wasn’t good – her liver was in bad shape. There were

two tumors that were consuming her liver and it was inoperable. I don't have enough strength to go into details at this time as the pain I am feeling is still tremendous. The doctor informed me that her condition would worsen – the fluid would continue to build up and her breathing would again be heavily affected as a result. I knew in so many words what needed to be done. The veterinarian wouldn't be back in the clinic until Thursday. That night, he had drained fluid from her body for the second time in three days per my request. Fifi's condition was noticeably improved after the fluid extraction. I was buying time for her so I can spend time just being with her – being there for her – holding her - hugging her - talking to her – appreciating her – loving her. That night, I held her tight while we lay on my bed. I carefully placed her on my pillows and she laid her head between her two paws and looked at me. I came up to her to kiss her nose – then I started to cry. I carried her and rocked her like a baby in my arms and all she could do was stare at her Mom. She would lick my lips as if to tell me that everything would be okay. Then she licked the tears from my eyes – I was so heartbroken.

Yesterday, I took her to the beach where we sat at one of the benches during the afternoon – just me and her. I'd give her a kiss and she'd give me one in return. She laid her head on my lap as I brushed her black hair back, then we would both

stare into the ocean. It was a peaceful moment, yet I was crying inside.

I woke up this morning and laid Fifi on my chest. We laid there together for almost two hours. I felt her breathing weighing heavily on her. I had told the vet office that I'd be coming by first thing in the morning at about 8 – that way it wouldn't be a crowded office. It was indeed an empty vet clinic – no patients. My brother and my fiancé were there to be with me and my baby. At about 8:25, my Fifi-Love was given a sedative while she lay in my arms. Within seconds she fell asleep and her body was so light. I started crying – sobbing... the tears just flowed down my face. I never realized that she would feel this light in my arms. I was shocked and distressed. The veterinarian reassured me that she was sedated and sleeping. I gave her to the vet for the second shot which he would administer in the back lab. Before he took my baby girl out of the room, I had to close her mouth – that was disheartening for me to see. I gave her a final kiss as my tears continued to gush down. I was not strong enough to be there for the final injection and I had asked my brother to be with my baby love and to hold her for me until she passed on. I rushed out of the vet office – to the parking lot and looked up to the morning sky. It was hard to see as the tears were flooding my eyes. My fiancé was there to comfort me. I couldn't breathe – I was an emotional wreck – filled with guilt, sorrow, and emptiness.

It's been several hours since. The pain of her loss has not subsided. I've spent this evening looking at pictures of her – from her puppy-hood days until her adult days. I miss her so much. She was the one that was saddened by my departure every morning as I went off to school or work. She was also the first one that would greet me – running down the stairs to shower me with her kisses when I got home. She was the one that stayed with me every single night – sleeping on my bed keeping each other company. She was and always will be my baby.

This is my first night in 14 years that I'm laying on my bed by myself – in my room alone. I am hoping that as the days go by, the sadness will lessen and fond memories of my little baby will comfort me. I hope and pray that she won't forget me as I know I will never forget her. I hope and pray that she knows how much she has blessed not only my life, but every member in my family as well. I know that my little baby girl became an angel this morning. To my Fifi-Angel – thank you for everything – I will always love you Fifi!

Victoria

Sept. 1 -05

Ed,

I to have been looking for some kind of reassurance that I am doing the right thing by

putting our 14 1/2 year old Jasper to sleep. His appointment is at 12:00 PM today and it is 9:50 Am now. Every story I read on your web site not only made me feel that I was not alone, but doing the right thing for my beloved friend. I also found that every story told a little bit of our lives. All the way from the good times of playing at the park or all the times he was the man of the house protecting us to carrying him up the stairs and picking him up in the middle of the night because he is crying and can't move. It broke my heart when he fell down the stairs and cried louder then I've ever heard him. Reading the E-mails now makes me realize I am doing the right thing. I have been keeping him here for us not realizing the pain he is suffering for us. Thank you for your E-mails. I now feel I have the strength to stand with him by his side as he did for us for so many years.

Vickie
Omaha, Nebraska

Today is August 20th 2005 and yesterday was the most painful and difficult day of my life. I had to put my loving best friend Samantha, "my Princess", Samantha was a 19 yr old Tabby who was "my baby girl". The decision of ending her suffering was unbearable but I knew that I had to do it, I had to do it for my Sam. I promised her that she would go like a queen and that I would rather hurt the way I do today than to make her

suffer. Not having children in my life made my Sam my baby, my confident, my best friend... Sam slept on me every night for the last 19 yrs, she would take a shower with me and even wash her face when I washed mine, Samantha thought she was human and she was!!!! Walking around today has been hell for me, I hear her voice, I see her at every corner and my heart feels as if someone took a chunk out of it. I came across your web site and reading some of these stories just reinforced that I have done the right think and it was nice to see that I was not alone! Thank you Sammy, I know that we will meet again, I will have you in my heart for ever and I thank you for the love you gave me and for always being here for me no matter what. You will always be my "baby girl". Rest and know that there was nothing I wouldn't have done for you. Thank you Samantha!! I love you!

Frederrique

8-14-05

Boda, a Doberman/lab mix rescued from a shelter after being taken in from a man using her to train attack dogs, became our closest and dearest friend. When my wife got her, she had marks on her nose from where the previous owner had her restrained and unable to ward off the attack dogs he was training. She had absolutely NO fight in her whatsoever. When we

first got her, just to raise your voice at her would cause her to lie down and urinate all over herself. Over the next few months, gaining her trust was very difficult, but was achieved with such heart warming effects that have lasted 12 years now. Boda helped my wife through her previous abusive relationship and a lot of heartaches and tribulations. Our kids, 12 yr old boy and 7 yr old girl, have been around our beloved dog all their lives. Of course it is hard to explain to kids the whys and all the other questions they have. We are leaving in about 30 minutes to take her and the pain is so hard to bear. I can't even see to type. She will always be with us. We love you so much Boda, and you will be in our hearts and thoughts.

The Jackson Family
Indianapolis, IN

8/2/05

Ed,

First I'd like to say how sorry and for your loss and know what you and everyone else here from reading emails will and have gone through. I just had to make this heart-rending tear-jerking decision for my 14 year 10 month old precious girl Keysha. Keysha was a one month old mix Chow/Husky/Sheppard when I picked her up, from the litter she was the runt of the pack. I saw

the ad in the paper for a Husky/Shepard mix \$25 so I made my way 20 miles across town to pick her up, it wasn't until a few months later that I noticed chow in the mix, her mom and dad were present but no chow.

During her first year I came close to losing her to anti-freeze poisoning that the neighbor unknowingly left out. She slipped out of the house as I was taking the trash out I had not yet noticed until I started looking around the house for her then it dawned on me that she may have gotten out of the house, I walked around the garage and saw her licking from what looking like a drain bucket so I went to pick her up and saw the horror. This happened on Thanksgiving Day thus there were no vet clinics open in my area. I searched and found a 24hr emergency pet clinic over 30 miles away so off we went I was there in 20 min give or take. I told the vet what happened and they immediately started the removal procedure inducing vomiting the next step was a clear shot of Everclear straight into the blood vein. I took her home that day and monitored her progress with luck she was ok.

I was 31 when she came into my life, it was just me and her I'd been in several relationships that turned sour but Keysha was always there, she spent 8 hours outside each day all by her self as I was away at work and when I got home at the days end she was always there to greet me with tail wagging ready to come in the house.

She grew to be a 50 pound ball of love, years passed as she became older; her hearing was the first to go then cataracts impaired her vision with arthritis starting to show up at around her 13th year. During the beginning of this summer 2005, I worked it out with my Sister and Father to let her out of the house during the noon hours of the day while I was at work as my sister lived in the same neighborhood and my father was but only 5 miles away. This way she could stay indoors in the AC during the hot Texas days.

It came to the point that Keysha had to be helped when she tried to get up and picked up and carried outside for her duties and then back in as her old legs were give out. On 7/28/05 my Birthday it came to me from both my sister and father that she was suffering and I should think about doing the right thing, I came to realize that both of them were right so I made the call to the vet. It was 7/29/05 8:40 AM CST that Keysha departed our world to be in haven. From the ride to the vet clear to the end was the hardest thing I've ever had to do in my entire life. As almost everyone here has described it's as if part of me has been tore away, the house is now empty where it should be filled with her presents. I have arranged to have her ashes and will receive them sometime this week. I have also wished to have her ashes be with me upon my death, not sure what the legalities are here.

Keysha please know that I will always love you.

Thanks for listening,
Randy Blackstock

Aug 1- 2005

I had stumbled upon your website a few months ago when we were deciding to put our dog Nikki down.... Well today was the day and I must say it has been one of the worst days of my life... I am 20 years old and having my first child in December but let me tell you about Nikki, she came to us when she was 3 days old (a stray). My uncle put her in a brown paper bag and surprised us (my 3 sisters and I). We got her some time in early July 1992. She has been struggling with arthritis for years now and recently she has been getting worse and developed a massive tumor, actually 2 of them on both sides of her stomach. Keeping her alive has been a selfish act and I wish we would have done it a while ago because she had to suffer. But I always thought "Why are we trying to play God?" But it's been about 8 hours since she went into eternal sleep and I am glad we chose to play god because her time was coming! It has been hard this past week since we made the appointment but I know that everything will be ok because I will see her soon. The pain will never go away but finding your website has made it a little easier on my family and myself. I have had her since I was 7 years old

and my younger sisters pretty much all their lives. I hope to see her one day when God reunites us all.

I love that dog and I wouldn't change anything. One of the worst parts of today was that her appointment was at 12 pm and then I had my very first ultrasound at 4:30. So I was very happy and very sad all in the same day!

Thank you for making this site possible for everyone to tell their stories about their loved pets!!!

Thanks always
Hiedi

7-27-05

Ed,

Today is July 27, 2005. This a.m. my daughter, Sammy, my husband, Wade & I held our dog while the vet gave him his last shot. His health has been declining for so long this moment was feared for a long time. He had bad hips, arthritic shoulders, fatty cysts, & the last month - problems breathing. He was 13 yrs old & that was 13 yrs of devotion, trust, fun, & love he gave us. From his bone-headed puppy stunts that tried out patience to the end to the gentle nudges he gave us to pet him he was my boy, my family, my child. When people scoff at someone who has loved their family member as we do, I have to

remind myself they probably have never felt that kind of love in their lives & I have to pity them. They have no idea what it is like to have one living soul love you more than anything they can express & want to please you at all the moments of their lives, & they do all of it unconditionally. They can't help the passion they love us with & I guess I can't help mine. We have a house full of pets we love with all our hearts, but this boy was so special. He was with my husband & I since shortly before we were married. He is the closest thing to a brother my daughter ever had. They played & scrapped just like kids. I can't express how broken my heart is right now. I feel like it will never mend. I hope my boy died knowing that we loved him so very much & that we will miss him more than I can ever express. I found your site by accident - I was so glad I did.

Thank you.

July 27, 2005

Mr. Frawley~

I am so grateful to you for having this site. On Monday, August 1, 2005, my beloved Zephyr will wag his tail for the last time. He is a 14 year old Basenji/Boxer mix that we adopted from the shelter when he was 7. The last 6 months have been difficult; the next 6 will be worst. I am happy to have been his owner; he's been a great dog – my first since I was a child. He has been

having problems standing, walking and needs our assistance when voiding so he does not fall. I have not felt such heartache since my mother died 5 years ago. Bless each and every one of you who loves an old dog enough to know when to say, "it's time."

Mary A.

7-25-05

Ed

We want to say THANK YOU for the wonderful 13 1/2 years we had with a dog we purchased from you in 1992. Rosa Vom Leerburg was born on November 8, 1991 and we picked her up in January, 1992. We called her Tasha. Friday, July 16th, we had to take her to the vet and say our final good-byes. It was very hard, but the right thing to do. We had 13 1/2 wonderful years with her, but it was time. Her legs were giving out and she had a lot of trouble getting up and standing. She slipped on the wet grass when she was a puppy and hurt her hip so it was not unusual that she had arthritis in her hip when she got old. We felt blessed that we had her so long since that is a very old age for a large dog.

We cannot begin to tell you how much we enjoyed having her as part of our family. She was absolutely wonderful. Well behaved and very loving. We took her to training at the German

Shepherd Club of Wisconsin and she quickly progressed into the top training category which involved jumping and special tricks. We were only interested in the behavioral training so did not continue.

Tasha had a wonderful life. She had the run of the house and could sleep anywhere where she chose. She particularly liked the couch which was in front of the window so she could open her eyes and look out at any time.

We loved her very much. Our children always teased us that she was our "favorite." Maybe because she never complained and was just happy to be around us and loved us unconditionally. She never asked for the car, money or complained about what was for dinner.

I know they say "people food" is not good for a dog, but she certainly did wonderfully on it. I think the difference is that she never ate anything we would not eat. She did not get the 'scraps' that no one wanted. If we would not eat it ourselves, she did not get it. She had great manners and knew not to beg and waited until she was called. Believe it or not, she would sit and eat from a fork if we didn't put it in her bowl. She loved chicken and turkey breast and ate a lot of carrots. We always cooked an extra chicken breast for Tasha for dinner if that is what we were eating.

I'm sure you don't remember, but I didn't want a German shepherd because I thought they were mean dogs. Tasha was the most wonderful pet we could have had and she quickly became part of our family. You were certainly right when you said it all depended on how they are raised and trained. You were ready to send her to Florida to be a guard dog, but decided she had the personality we needed and asked if we wanted to pick her up. I cannot begin to THANK YOU for making that decision. She certainly would not have had such a luxurious life as a guard dog and we would not have had 13 1/2 fantastic years with her.

We miss her terribly and will always have a special place in our hearts for her. If we decide to get another dog, we will certainly come to Leerburg kennels again.

Sincerely,
Greg & Gail Nowakowsk

Dear Mr. Frawley,

Today is Saturday, July 23, 2005. On Monday July 25, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. I will be putting my beloved best friend Sandy to sleep. As she rests on her blanket next to me, I question whether I am doing the right thing. My head tells me yes, my heart screams no. I have had Sandy since she was 6 months old. She is now 17years old. It was always me and Sandy from the beginning. When

my first marriage failed she was the one that kept me going. She was always there for me in good times and bad. And now I have to be there for her.

Like your Nickie, she is also having accidents in the house and can only stand for very short periods of time. I made the decision yesterday with my husband after we came home from work and found she had spent the day on the floor and couldn't get up. She had messed where she was and hung her head in shame. It wasn't her fault, it was mine. I should have made this decision sooner. I just couldn't. I was hoping she would just go to sleep and go to heaven on her own. But that hasn't happened and now I sit here with her ripped with guilt for two reasons. One, I let this go on for too long and two, because now I feel like I'm going to kill her. It would be so much easier if she had cancer or some other disease, but she doesn't. Her body is just worn out and her legs can't support her anymore. She still eats and drinks and gobbles her treats. She never complains or seems in distress, except when she walks. Her heart is still strong, but her spirit is fading. I don't know what to do to help her anymore. That is why I search the web for some answers and found your website. You will never know how much it helped me to make this decision. I asked myself that question "Am I keeping her alive for myself or for her"? If Sandy had the choice what would Sandy want? I know

the answer deep in my heart. She would want to go wait for me at Rainbow Bridge and be whole again.

So on Monday I will be there with her until the end, just like she was always there for me. Thank you for this website and for letting me know I am not alone. God Bless you.

Christine

Dear Mr. Frawley,

Friday, July 15, 2005 was the worst day of my life. We put our faithful friend Zauber, an 11 year old German Shepherd to sleep.

My husband and I had just moved in together when we decided that we would get a dog. My uncle in Germany had bred German Shepherds and there as a young child I was exposed to Schutzhund training. The choice to get a Shepherd was obvious and my husband totally agreed. We always laughed telling friends that we bought a "fetus" When the breeder called as January 2 1994 to tell us the pups were born we were ecstatic. Zauber was a big 120 lb sable Shepherd with not enough "drive" to make a good Schutzhund, but plenty to be our friend and protector. We did some of the training with him and if my husband worked nights and I gave him the command to "Pass auf" he would bark ferociously and run from room to room to

find the “bad guy.” In his 11 ½ years of life, he never made a wrong move. He never growled or snapped at anyone, but at the same time I always felt safe because I knew if he had to, he would do whatever it took. Unfortunately we also found out that he had HD early when a routine x-ray to validate the breeders guarantee showed signs of it. Of course we did not return him at that time. Zauber’s prime role was to be our companion which he was always.

The character of that dog was incredible. When he was a year old we rescued a dog from the pound and Lizzie and him were steady companions. (She misses him terribly and hasn’t eaten in 3 days) Over the last few years, his health deteriorated, his legs I should say. Like you said in your tribute, he had good days and bad days but his attitude never wavered. He was such a tough guy. He never let us see how much pain he really was in. When our daughter was born 4 years ago, I was worried that she would inadvertently hurt him and he would retaliate. Sure enough, as she was learning to walk she fell on him often but never did he whimper or cry or worse even snap. 6 month ago my husband said to me it was time, I wasn’t ready. I didn’t mind getting up in the night to help him get up off the kitchen floor because he couldn’t do it himself. I didn’t mind cleaning his poop off the floor when he had an accident because he couldn’t get up fast enough. Finally I found your website and read and re-read

it daily trying to find the strength to make the final choice for my friend.

Friday, we lifted him in the car and drove him to the vet. He was having a great day, pulling on the leash, looking like he was ready to go for a long hike. It was so hard to make him lie down in the office and stay with him those final moments. My husband and I both sat on the floor by his head and kept telling him he was a good boy, suddenly it seemed as if he stopped everything midstream. His head slowly fell backwards, his tongue still half out, eyes looking at us. The vet said we could stay with him as long as we wanted. It was so fast. I asked if he was gone and she said yes. All I remember thinking was Oh my god what have we done. In my head I knew we had done the right thing, he wasn't able to do any of the things he so loved to do. But in my heart it was the absolute worst thing to do. Leaving him lying there on the floor at the vets was the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life. We are all having a tough time with this and although I know we did the right thing, I hope one of these days the guilt I feel will go away.

Thank you for providing this forum. It has helped me tremendously making that final loving choice for our loyal friend Zauber.

Regards,
Corinna

July 12, 2005

Ed,

Hi. As I went online today to look up "When is the right time to put my best friend down" and your web page showed up. As I was reading your story and poems and others stories that other people wrote.

Last Aug. 24th 2004 we lost our Shepherd {Sadi} She was almost 13 years old She was starting to get around slower than the past. Then the morning before she passed she seemed to have an attitude with my husband. he brought her outside for the bathroom he said she was fine other than the attitude that was 4:30 am. When I woke up at 7:45 am she couldn't get up whenever she tried she fell down. and she was breathing real hard. I called the vet to see what to do I brought her in which wasn't an easy task {she was 93 lbs} I got her there they ran some tests. thinking that she was paralyzed in her back end what happened was she lost all circulation because of breathing so hard and fast.

Her heart rate was 180 beats, and when they did x-rays they seen her lungs were filled with fluid. They wanted to keep her in the vet over night to keep a heart medicine to slow her heart down well that night we lost her.

That was so hard losing her. Now I am faced with the decision of having to put down my Siberian

Husky/Malamute {Kila}. She just turned 16 years old. July 10th 2005 today is July 12th She has not been the same dog since the loss of Sadi she has gone down hill. {She lost her best friend too} Well my dilemma is I have 2 daughters 20 & 22 years old My younger daughter said we should put her down and our other daughter says we are cruel. How would we like it when we get older and we start losing bowel control put us to sleep to?

A few days after losing Sadi we did get a new Shepherd pup {Sable} She said we are replacing Sadi I told her we were helping to fill the void. And that no dog we ever get will replace the other. Each dog has their own personality Sable just turn 1 yrs old July 5th. It is a very hard decision for me anyway then having her say those things. Kila wants to follow me where ever I go but she has had a hard time, she struggles going up and down stairs getting up from laying, her appetite as of lately has been bad. She has Cataracs/Glacoma. and can't hear. When we call her name she doesn't hear us we touch her and she startles. She sleeps all day long breaths real hard. In the mornings when I wake up I don't know if she is still with us or when I come home from work each day. If we didn't love our dog we wouldn't have spent tons of money on vet bills replacing both back legs costing over \$1000.00 each time. The last surgery was about 3 1/2 years ago and when she blew out her leg again {about 6 months ago}. the vet checked her

over and said she may not make it thru another so we chose not to do that. We just wanted her to be comfortable. I know I'm making the right decision by putting her down, but what do I do not want to do is break my daughter's heart? We held a family meeting today but it makes my decision harder because of her comments. I spoke with the vet receptionist she said that maybe it is time. She knows it's a hard thing to do because she has been in that boat before herself. I asked my kids and husband if they want to be there when we do put her down. My husband, and 20 yrs old said yes but not in the room. My other daughter said no. I would like to be in the room with her to the very end. but my husband said I shouldn't. When I picked her out at the age of 7 days her eyes weren't even all the way opened yet. I know I will miss her dearly as I do Sadi. I thought of putting her down this Thursday but it is also my daughter's birthday and she is the one I'm having trouble with.

Thanks for listening to me and my dilemmas I'm hoping my daughter will understand

Thanks again,
Lisa

July 8th 2005

Ed,

Earlier this week I made the decision to call the vet to set a date. Immediately afterward, I started searching the web for comfort, similar stories, anything to help get me through the next few days. I read a lot of stories, but when I read your thought process that eventually led to your decision ... it was almost exactly what I had experienced and was comforting to read from others with similar situations.

For the past couple months I've known in the back of my mind that the time was near for my best friend of 13 years, but it wasn't until this week after I just experienced enough misery myself from a pneumonia, that I decided it wasn't fair and I needed to call the vet. When the vet's assistant answered, I could barely speak ... I stuttered out that I needed to bring in my dog ... and when she looked up that he was due another vaccination ... I managed to get out the words "no, I think it's time". She immediately knew what I meant and after a brief pause, asked when I'd like to bring him in.

This is when my voice just stopped working ... all I was thinking was I really don't want to bring him in at all ... but then after a long silence managed to ask her if she had anything next week thinking that was the longest I could postpone it. She mentions the Doctor is on vacation next week

but gets back on the 19th. I knew it wouldn't be good to fret over this for another week, I just wanted a few days to spoil him and let the kids spoil him as well, so I asked about Friday, she said see you at 11a and gave me the number of the pet cemetery to make arrangements. Then she mentioned that it's usually better for them to come pick up the body when it's over which I wondered why at the time.

The next few days were spent spoiling him with treats and attention throughout the day and into the night. I'm pretty sure he knew something was up but was eating up the treats and enjoying all the attention which actually made him look like he was doing better (I should mention that he was doing really bad a few months earlier, but after taking glucosamine capsules daily, he was able to go for walks again which was encouraging for a short while). I think I was secretly hoping nature might take its course before Friday in order to not make me the bad guy, but his heart was too strong for that and soon it was time to load him up in the car. I let the kids give him the last of the treats and say goodbye and although I was as straightforward with them as possible, they're too young to realize the impact yet. I just wanted to make sure they didn't see me when the water works hit. They understand it as he's going to Heaven to see Ashley, our other female collie and Zues' long time friend of 10 years (she was 4 years older than he was and when she passed away, I could

tell a part of him went with her). Ashley suffered the same fate with old age and a stroke, although we were out of town on vacation and my parents who were watching our dogs had to make the decision. I remembered at the time that it was probably easier not to be around, but thinking that I would've liked to be able to comfort and hold her.

Once I arrive at the vet, they don't let me wait ... it's straight away to the table for a tranquilizer. My vet is very old school, quick with vaccinations, reasonable prices and very direct which I've always appreciated in the past as opposed to others who have tried to take me for ride or lay on a big guilt trip. Well, I was expecting maybe a few words of condolences, but it's probably better to just be left alone for the 10 minutes or so that it takes the tranquilizer to work. The whole time I just kept talking to him looking in his eyes as he started to relax. Then came time for the fatal injection which didn't take long at all and after confirming he was gone, left me alone again. At first it seemed a little cold, but I think that was better than laying some kind of hallmark statement on me which would not have been this vet's style. As I picked him up off the table, I couldn't believe how limp his body was, I think I was still kind of numb to the situation, but knew what had to be done. So I put him in the trunk of my car and drove to the pet cemetery where I had arranged to have him cremated.

This was my first time at a pet cemetery and it was not really what I expected. They were really pleasant and sympathetic over the phone, so I guess I had an impression of more like a funeral home, but this was a little more raw and after filling out the paperwork and selecting a box for the ashes I was asked to drive around back to give the body to 'the man in the back'. This, I'm pretty sure is why they recommend you have them pick up the body at the vet. As I drive around the building I'm met by a large man that looks like he just escaped from prison pushing something close to resembling wheel barrow lined with newspaper towards the car and helps me transfer the body from the trunk to this box on wheels. It's a little rough to see the body rolled away to the building with the big smokestack coming out of it, but I wanted to see it through to the last step instead of wondering what happened to the body.

He was a great dog, took a little longer than my female to train, but once trained, I never needed to use a leash and he always stayed around the house. He also got along with everyone and every dog (any dog that wanted to get along that is). He kept close watch of the kids at the park and frequently would go check if the neighbors were home who would invite him in and give him treats. Some reason I shed more tears prior to going to the vet than after, so I can't tell if I'm still just numb to the experience or relieved it's over

or in disbelief and that it will hit me the next day when I go to put food his bowl and finally realize that he's gone for good.

Your web site has been a big help, thanks!
Erik

July 5, 2005

Ed - thank you

Today is the day. I am sitting here on my sofa with my beloved dog Apollo, adopted from the shelter 14 years ago today. We saw the vet this morning and she offered to do more tests, but we both knew they wouldn't do any good.

I knew it was time. She told me I was doing the right thing, but I can still feel my heart breaking. Our appointment is this afternoon, after my kids get home and can say goodbye.

Thank you for creating a place where I could go to find some comfort from those who've had to make this hard decision before me. It feels better to know I am not alone, that my lingering doubts are normal, that the hardest decision I've ever had to make is the right one.

There will be a hole in my heart and I will miss Apollo every day of the rest of my life..... Until I meet him at the Rainbow Bridge.

Apollo's mom

Ed's comments:

Your email brought a lump to my throat and I am sure it will help others. What we are forced to do is never an easy path but it's the right path. Our dogs always know the love and they always have the trust that we will take care of them and do what's best.

I am sorry for your loss.

Ed,

I would like to Thank You for your story of Nicki and the poems you have assembled on your web site. I lost my Jake on April 11th of this year (sudden death heart attack) he died in my arms on the way to the vets. Your rainbow bridge section with its stories and poems has helped me tremendously; feel less alone, for as you know there are good days and bad (like today). Jake was my first GSD and I'm in love with this breed because of him. Once again, Thanks it has helped me to begin healing.

Best Regards....John Morrill of Rio Rancho New Mexico

Ed's Comment:

John

Losing a dog you love is no different than losing a parent or a child. It hits you in the heart and takes time to get past. In the short term you think

that will never happen but it does.

Getting a new dog helps. The new dog can never fill the spot of the old dog – but dogs are so different they teach you that they are individuals and as such only ask for respect and nothing more.

January 7, 2004

“Sad Day”

Today January 7, 2004 was a very sad day for us. We had to put our 17 year old dog Pepper to sleep. Seeking comfort for the pain and grief we are going through we were so thankful we found your web site. We too knew it was time from the night before when our son Adam still home from college break was trying his hardest to show Pepper his love with a warm bath and cuddling his life long pet. Pepper had all the symptoms you read about with the vomiting, inability to stand, uncontrollable bladder and bowl movements. This was not the family pet we all had known for years. His body was shutting down and we knew it. We knew the day would come when we would have to make a decision about our Pepper’s health. Some will think you should have taken him to the vet for additional care but we always felt all this was going to do was just prolong some of the agony. We all gave him love in our own way especially Adam.

It all began 17 years ago for Christmas 1986. A precious gift to our three kids ages then Chris 7, Matt 5, Adam 1 ½ was a half breed Shih-Tzu/Poodle. We never gave him a name to allow our kids the opportunity for themselves. We had made arrangements with their Grandparents to bring him to our house on Christmas morning. As they came in and placed this little pesky furry puppy down he immediately took off like he had always been a part of us. Our son Matt yelled out he looks like Pepper. That was due to his coal black color. All were in agreement with the name because it just made sense. Much of the time his name was just Pep. At that time we lived in an older home where we allowed Pepper to have free roam of our roomy two story home. As the weeks, months & years rolled along our three kids grew along side of Pepper and just did what was natural for kids and that was just enjoying life having fun with their dog. Years later we moved into a newer home and thought then it would be best if Pepper had his own area in our garage. Adam our youngest at the time was five years old and was bothered most by seeing Pepper banned from the new carpet and the comfort of being in a house all the time. This seemed to be bothering him most but we had to convince him it was best this way. When our daughter Chris was married then moved a couple hours away and Matt had started college that left Adam at home with Mom & Dad and of course Pepper. It was about then Pepper was pretty much having

free roam of this house whenever Adam came home. Pepper just sensed when he heard his car pull into our drive that this was his signal to enjoying his best bud that being Adam. Even though we were not in total agreement with this Adam always showed Pepper genuine love. After all how many seniors in high school can still be a very active three sport jock and still have the biggest heart to allow his furry friend half his bed at night. It was always our plan to sell our home in small town USA and move to the bigger city when Adam graduated from high school and left for college. Pepper was already approaching 17 years old and for us to find another home just did not work out. My wife and I for the first time in our married lives had to consider renting. This is when it really got difficult because so many places were dead set against having pets. We did finally find a newer apartment complex that did welcome pets for a minimal charge. Even though we felt like it was going to be an inconvenience to walk Pepper to the designated pet areas we were willing to do so. Pepper seemed to adjust rather well to the indoor apartment living. Shortly after moving into the apartment my wife wanted to get another dog kind of to keep Pepper company. A close friend of hers recently had a litter of Shih-Tzu's. For two months these two dogs really bonded. We noticed during the month of December 2003 Pepper was coughing considerably more and at times struggled just to stand up. Our new puppy was also curious

as to what was happening to his friend. Which brings us to the dreaded time of watching a dear pet go downhill so fast. In the past couple of months there had always been little things that happened that told us he is not doing well. It was just too painful for us to see him going through this. As my wife put it the other night it was as if Pepper was saying please do something for me. His last night with us Adam had come to grips with the situation and prayed to God to allow Pepper to go to sleep from his extremely restless night. Almost immediately after his prayer Pepper did sleep at home. As we dwell upon it we wonder what if. What if we would have tried to get him some medications or injections? Perhaps this would have extended his life for days, weeks or who knows. We have read many of the testimonials on your web site and have come to grips that we did what we felt was best for our beloved Pepper. We know he is not suffering and no pet especially one that is loved so much should.

Thanks for having such a big heart and sharing your web site.

Jim & Kim Wanemacher

January 6, 2004

“Story of Brandy”

Hello,

I found your site when I was trying to come to grips with putting our precious dog to sleep. After reading through some of the emails I was ready and felt I was not alone in this difficult decision. Brandy was put to rest last night. We got her from the pound when she was 5 and she lived almost 10 more years. When we got her we soon found out that she must have been abused/neglected her first 5 years of life and we loved her with all of our hearts with all of her quirky quirks and miss them so much.

These past few years she has had a time of it with arthritis and we gave her pain pills and shots - she seemed to fair okay and still wanted to eat, wag her tail, & trot around. Before this past Christmas (2003) she had congestive heart failure and had to go to the vet’s for a few weeks (in and out of the vet’s) - then she had kidney failure and would not eat. She was on IV/fluids for a few days and we took her home -- we were told she would okay but it would be a day-to-day thing. We were told we had to feed her slow cooked chicken with rice, etc., so we bought a crock-pot.

She came home a day before Christmas Eve and we were able to share Christmas together (the nicest Christmas present we received) and even

give her some ham even though it was a no no - we were happy she was eating. We started making meals for Brandy using the crock-pot and soon we were eating the very same chicken/turkey, which was funny as our own Brandy is guiding us to eat better! She wagged her tail, trotted around, scratched on doors she wanted open (very normal behavior), growled at the cat (normal), eating all of the food she was suppose to eat, walking around the yard, etc...- But this slight bounce back lasted until New Year's Day.

Her strength was so bad she began falling, urinating on herself because she did not have enough strength to even stand up at times, eating but not very well and soon did not want the slow cooked turkey or chicken even with soup on it (loved ham though - but bad for kidneys), coughing the same cough when she had congestive heart failure weeks prior, and just plain miserable/uncomfortable. No tail wagging, she got the sick look about her again as she had before - the inevitable was coming. Not once did she whine or cry but my husband and I both knew this was not how Brandy wanted to live. We did not mind cleaning up her accidents or spoon feeding her, or even carrying her from point A to point B - we became very concerned over what kind of life was this for her, is this really silent suffering on her part, & if we wait until the "final" chapter - how much pain will she be in - how much more suffering?

We knew it was time. We fed her only what she wanted, ham. We loved on her all day giving her hugs, kisses, watching her sleep during the day and I watched her sleep her last night here - I could not sleep. My husband carried her around the yard a final time in the morning and I hugged her many times. Later on I was there at the vet's to say goodbye and be with her until her final moments. My husband could not go in - and I understand, my Mom was with me as she loves her so much as well and she too lost her dog this year and had to go through a similar situation. I am writing this now and feel so sad but I know she is in a better place. We have lost such a dear companion - a true friend in the purest sense and will forever think of her and hope to be with our Brandy again.

Roni & Mike

July 4th, 1988 - July 22, 2003.

My Best Friend Died Today.

My dog K.C. came into this world to take care of me on July 4th, 1988. I had just turned 19. She was a hellcat of an Irish Wolfhound pup... a small ball of white fur terrorizing anything and everything in her path. Nothing was safe... especially white socks and pant legs. She grew so fast you would think she was secretly slamming pints of Miracle-Gro when I wasn't looking. As she grew, she found out just how fast she could run...

meaning away from me at any time she wished it. She looked like an errant lightning bolt running across the back yard. She used this speed to her advantage, running down any animal she could smell... from miles away. Occasionally she would proudly present me with her 'trophies,' half of a rabbit or groundhog. She would drop it on the deck, so proud and happy to be able to give me this 'gift.'

All this time, we developed a very special bond. One that I fear I may never again have with anything or anyone... it was just that special.

I think it began on a bitterly cold day in the early part of winter, 1988-89, here in Michigan. We were out with a couple other people, down by the large pond near our house. The pond had a small stream that flowed through the center of it, thus certain parts of it wouldn't freeze for quite some time. K.C. loved to run on the ice. She was doing just that on this day, when we all heard a cry of panic and a splash.

One look and I knew my girl was in big trouble. I glanced over to see her pawing pitifully at the thin ice. It would break away every time one of her paws tried to gain a foothold. As fate would have it, it was in the deep end as well... maybe 20 or 30 feet of water. Her whimpers were of sheer panic. Everyone was frozen in shock.

Except me. I never gave it a moment of thought. My girl was in danger.

Something inside kicked in and it felt as though fifty gallons of adrenaline had been shot into my system. I ran out on the ice, making a beeline for my girl. I got as far as I could before it gave way, plunging into the icy cold water. I didn't let it affect me, although in the back of my mind I remembered something about having 30 or 40 seconds to get yourself out, or else the muscles freeze and lose their ability to function... then you drown. I broke the ice as I went along, finally reaching my girl. I grabbed her around the chest and made my way back towards thick ice. Her cries and shivers of panic were more than enough to get me motivated, and I was finally able to hoist her up onto the thick ice, where she was able to get to shore. I was barely able to get myself out before my muscles gave in. All the way back to the house, I was shivering so hard, I thought I would break a bone just from the vibrations.

I realized I had saved my girl's life.

Fast forward years later, to where we were living in Houston, Texas. I was about 25 years old now, and times had been quite rough. There were a lot of things going on in my life as well as my head. I had lost my fiancé to a cocaine addiction... she had moved out and taken up residence with her coke addicted girlfriend. My job was driving me insane; I was isolated from every single one of my friends back in Michigan, as well as my family. I was all alone.

I was being extremely stupid one night. I had drank entirely too much, and had a loaded gun in my hand. Sitting in the dark. Alone. Contemplating just how easy it would be to take away all of my pain. I had no one that mattered... I wasn't important to anyone.

All of a sudden, out of the dark like a silent train came my 80 pound Wolfhound. I was instantly covered in kisses, flying fur, and a bionically wagging tail. She never did this... she showed me plenty of affection, but never in this fashion, all of a sudden, for no reason. I realized that I did have responsibilities in this world... there was a very special girl that depended 100% upon me for her well-being. I never felt so loved as I did in that moment.

I realized my girl had saved my life.

Fast forward, back to Michigan. I am now 34 years old. K.C. had been in failing health. I had spent a huge amount of money trying different treatments for various issues. Money I couldn't afford to not spend on my mortgage, etc., but that didn't matter one iota to me. She was my baby girl. In the last couple weeks she had shown a huge improvement, and even did a little spin now and then when we were going outside. About a week ago, she stopped eating. She started to fail quickly. I was in shock, and going out of my mind. The only thing she would eat was Honey Roasted Smoked Turkey, cut up into

little pieces, and only if I fed it to her by hand. I tried cooking everything I could think of, and then even resorted to baby food, but there was no desire for any of it, except the turkey from my hand.

I knew I should be giving her some peace, but I couldn't let go. She was my girl. I couldn't stand to be without her. It would just hurt too much... then I realized I was doing everything for me, and not for her. Finally, after doing quite a bit of research and soul-searching, I called the vet this morning.

K.C. died in my arms today.

I will always love my special girl the same way I always have... unconditionally. It didn't matter to me that I had to clean up after her accidents every morning, or sometimes clean her off after she would be outside and fell in the dirt, or the land mines she had just made. I cleaned her wounds, comforted her, and finally made the most difficult decision of my life... to give her peace. It is tearing me up so much that mere letters and words can never explain... I miss my special girl so much...

I've been crying for six days now, and none so hard as today. I always tried to hide it from her, so she wouldn't know what I was going through. I think she did though... behind her beautiful, cloudy old eyes, I think she understood.

I guess I'm writing this for therapeutic reasons... to put down in words how much my girl means to me. I'm not writing this for sympathy or condolences, but rather as a story for all of you that own pets. In the end, I was thinking of what is best for her, not for me. As I sit here, writing this, with tears still flowing, I am comforted just a bit by one thing. When it was all done, she laid gently down into my arms, and passed away peacefully and quietly.

I have never felt this much pain, nor do I hope to do so again. This has been the worst day of my entire 34 years on this planet. She was such a special girl to me, and I believe that the amount of pain you feel is directly proportional to how deep my love, my bond with her was. But I do feel slightly comforted that I did the only duty I think she would ever have required of me... to ensure that when the time came, she went peacefully, with dignity and grace.

I love you K.C.... so much. You be good and wait by that Rainbow Bridge for me. We'll be together again soon, never to be parted again.

In loving memory...

-Lee Reicheld, your boy.

Dear Ed,

I had to humanely destroy my 13 year old German Shepherd on July 14, 2003 due to illness and old age. I miss her every day I live as I had her since she was a small puppy. I took her for her last walk the night of July 13, 2003 and she was ok, but a little pokey. By 3:30 the next morning she could not stand up. I stayed up with her and took her to the vet early that afternoon. Here is a poem I wrote about my new dog:

She's Not You

I got my new dog in
Just the other week.
The only thing is
She's not you.

When you died in July
In my arms at the vet's
Most of me died with you.

But now I have a new dog
To train, to handle, to work.
But the thing is
She's not you.

I miss you every day,
Every time I open my eyes
Every time I walk the new dog.
It just brings home the fact
She's not you.

The new dog is a good dog
And I like her a lot.
It is just that
She's not you.

Robin, my Robin,
I miss you a whole lot.

I think my new dog will
Be a very good dog
Who will almost
Hold a candle to you.

But who am I to compare
Her to you since
She's not you.

-- K. S. George
10/30/2003

Dear Mr. Frawley,

I found your article today and would like to pass
my story on to you.

Dakota was a beautiful golden retriever. We
adopted her five years ago, almost to the day
(June of 1998). She was a quiet, gentle, loyal
friend loved by all. She was already at the very
least 5 years old when we adopted her. Her
previous owners had mistreated her. She had
been used for breeding. We had tried our very
best in these past years she has been a part of
our family to show how much she is loved.

In September '02, we found a lump on her. After
a biopsy determined it was a benign tumor and
could be safely removed, we decided to put her
through a surgery to do so. The surgery had been
delayed and postponed until December. It was

hard to see her go through the recovery. She seemed so depressed. But she was back to her puppy-ish self in no time.

However, in February, we found four more tumors. The vet said they too could be removed. We decided to do the surgery one more time but if it reoccurred in the future, we would not operate. She was fine up until a week ago when we found another small lump. This was devastating as we knew we had promised not to let her suffer any longer. In the past week since we found it, it had grown significantly to be the size of two tennis balls.

And it was more than just the tumors. Walking had started to become a struggle. She had hip dysplasia and would walk really slow. She had trouble standing up. Her eyesight began to fail, and I'm sure something was wrong with her breathing too. The decision had to be made. This could not go on any longer. Letting her go on would be a selfish act on our parts.

Today, before my mother took Dakota to the vet's office, I took her to the park one last time. I sat under a tree and she laid in front of me. I brushed her coat - I knew she always loved to have her coat brushed. I spoke to her, told her I love her and that it is okay to go. I hugged her, gave her a kiss, and brought her home.

Soon after, around 3pm, my mom took her to be put to sleep. I had chosen not to go along.

So, I had no idea when it would happen. All of a sudden, around 5 minutes to 4pm, I began to cry uncontrollably. I felt a sudden emptiness and I knew she must be gone. Soon after, I felt numb and could no longer cry. My mom called me at around 5pm to tell me everything. Only then did I find out that Dakota was pronounced at 3:55pm, the exact moment I had felt the emptiness. I know it will be difficult for a while to adjust. Dakota will not be at my bedroom door when I wake up in the morning. We will no longer have our morning walk before I leave for work. And she won't be there at the door to greet me when I come home anymore. Simple things like seeing her food & water bowls sitting there, the bag of food that is nearly full, her pills on the countertop, and her chair with her blanket on it are difficult to see right now. They are all reminders of her. Bear in mind, she only passed away two hours before I wrote this email.

We share a connection with our pets. One that survives even after death. I know she was a part of me because I felt a part of me leave when she died. I know that if I had felt her soul at that very moment, it is that same connection that will bring us back together one day. Now I must think of the good times we shared. Like when we played "Catch Me If You Can" in the snow. Or when I would say, "Dakota, dance" and she would stand on her hind legs and put her paws in my hands. These things will always bring

a smile to my face and keep her memory alive in my heart.

I have only been through this experience once before. It was 12 years ago (I was 7 years old). I don't think I completely understood what was happening. So this is pretty much the first time I am going through this. It is not easy. But I will recover. And I will never forget the joy my beloved Dakota has brought to me these past five years, and I wouldn't trade my time with her for anything in this world. She will be dearly missed.

Kathleen Devine
Ontario, Canada

Dear Mr. Frawley,

I came across your web site a couple of weeks back when I was looking for answers on when to put my dog to sleep. My name is Derek Sittler and my dog was a black lab named Max. We brought him home from the Humane Society from a litter of pups that was a breeder's mistake. Since then he has been my VERY best friend and protector of my wife and 2 daughters. This dog was a tough dog and was not the type of dog to lie around and be lazy.

When my daughters and he were young he would watch over them like a hawk. He always played so carefully around them and never got

to rough, he just knew how far he could go. We he played with me, well that's another story we would play fight and throw balls around till we were both exhausted and he would still come back for more. We soon discovered that he had epilepsy, the doctor put him on medication to help with the seizures but it changed his temperament and he would growl and was disoriented and very confused. The medication would not let the dog sleep and he was slowly slipping away from me because of lack of sleep he would just pace. I came home from work early on a Friday and took him off the medication; he would only lay down with his head on my lap if I was there. Max would sleep but he would stop breathing, I resuscitated him once. I sat on the floor with my dog for 3 days while he slept, I was sure he was going to die. After being able to sleep and being off the medication he recovered and was soon back to normal. At this time I set out on my own to help with his problem and researched it as much as I could. Fortunately we have a very large veterinary teaching hospital close to us and I knew a Veterinary researcher there that I was able to ask some questions, my suspicions were that it was food related.

My vet told me that it unlikely to be food related, the people at Guelph University told me that it is very possible. Needless to say we switched dog food and things changed immediately, the seizures stopped and his health returned. In the

years since then he only had a seizure once and a while but we were able to handle them. Since then my relationship with my Max was as close as you could get.

In these past couple of months he has lost a lot of weight and his back legs don't work very well anymore. We took him to the vet and was told he more than likely had cancer, and his kidneys were failing and nerve damage in his spine had caused his rear leg muscles to atrophy away. We decided to watch him day by day and allow him to sleep in our bedroom for the first time in thirteen years. Soon he could no longer climb stairs well and could not hold his bladder.

I could tell he was ashamed of himself every time he had an accident and I was so afraid he would fall down the stairs and injure himself. My Max was a very proud dog and incredibly intelligent. He was very well trained and had manners. I have been around dogs my whole life and never had a dog like this one. My wife and I decided that the day had come to have him put to sleep because I wanted to leave this world as proud as he lived in it, he deserved his dignity and pride more than anything else. My vet who had taken care of him since he was a puppy said he would put him to sleep for us. It was a warm spring day so my vet who is out in the country put him to sleep out in his yard under a big tree with my wife and I beside him instead of in the office, he said Max deserved it.

I know this is a long story but I think I need to tell someone about him. I am a 40 years old man and never cried about anything in my life. Sometimes I can't stop the tears from coming. Max was my VERY best friend for thirteen years and I will miss him deeply, such a large piece of me is gone now I don't know if I will ever fill it. My heart and my home are missing something special. This was a once in a lifetime dog and I will miss him so.

Max left my side on April 24/2003 on a warm spring day in the grass under a big tree.

GOODBYE my FRIEND.

Derek Sittler

Mr. Frawley,

I found the Leerburg Kennel website yesterday in my ever ending search for how you know it is the right time to put your precious 17 year and 3 month Dachshund named "George" to sleep. As I read, I could relate to the articles and somehow, they gave me the courage to come home and tell my husband that it was time. We wanted to take him the next day, however, the vet would not be in and the horrible decision had to be today or postpone until next week. We decided to take him then and within 2 hours of that call, he was gone. Definitely the worst thing I have ever gone through in my life! I had to share my husband's words for your website readers. It is a wonderful

tribute to our dog and I'm sure as I did, others will relate. Thank you for having a mechanism to let others share their painful experiences, in a small way, it is comforting. Here is our tribute to "George" 11-23-85 to 2-28-03.

"We made the difficult decision today to have our precious puppy of 17 years and three months put down by the wonderful veterinarian who has cared for him the last 16 years. George enjoyed the sunshine this morning with Jan, who has been coming by in the middle of the day to feed him. He spent a nice afternoon with me at home and was kissed on many times and loved even more from a spring that never runs dry. This evening, he went to the most capable and compassionate hands that ever touched an animal; George's vet.

He had become so frail - barely more than a third of his healthy weight. With all his muscle tone gone, he was front-heavy and was having more difficulty walking. The decision of when to know is the "right" time is too tough to make. There is never a right time. He continued to wag his tail as he stumbled along. He still ate his food with great zeal, though he was not able to derive the nutrition he needed from it. His system was beginning to fail him. Most importantly for holding on to him - he was still as affectionate and sweet as he had been for so many years. We had a redemption of sorts in our relationship from the days of growling and snapping that

had gotten progressively worse over a couple of years and lasted into the time we were renting before moving into the new house. Before we came to Carlsbad, he had mellowed and reverted to contently sitting in my lap or lying against my chest with his head tucked under my chin - a most wonderful feeling.

Our hospice time with him has been extremely intensive with maintenance, but because he was so loved and loving, and because he still seemed content, we held on.

I credit my wife with George's long and healthy life, as she was always the one providing the nudge for us to take him with us when we went out, going home to take care of him, and keeping him so well integrated into our lives. Pets can be little beings that are there when you want them - in the back yard, roaming outside, amusing themselves in the house, waiting patiently - but they can come into your life more fully when you open the door and let them in. George came into ours as fully as a bundle of energetic fur could. He was so fully a part of our lives in eating, sleeping, waking, communicating - that I cannot imagine my life without him.

We have so many wonderful memories of you, George, and you will always be in our hearts. So I will wash your blankets one more time. Though you will not be here to enjoy the warmth of them as they come out of the dryer, you are the warmth in my heart that forever glows."

Comment:

I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciated your web page for Today is the day. This past Saturday, I had to put my 16 year old dog Daisy to sleep. Daisy was a beagle, black lab mix and the kind of dog that was a bit shy, but very sweet. She followed me everywhere and loved to fetch the ball and take a swim in our pool. She's been my dog since she was a puppy.

Lately Daisy's health had been getting worse - she had been falling down the stairs allot and she was in pain. She was in liver failure and, while she ate well, she had been looking more and more gaunt and getting weaker. She had some accidents in the house - I felt so sorry for her and could never get angry with her about the accidents, because I knew she was losing control. Then, in the last couple of weeks, Daisy has had trouble walking, to the point that she would slump over from her weakened hind legs from a stand still. I knew the time that I've been dreading had come. My wife made the appointment and we brought her in on Saturday morning. I decided to stay with her, because I didn't want her to be scared. It was one of the most difficult things to do in my entire life. I'm a 34 year old man, married with children and I cried like a baby. I still have a lump in my throat as I'm writing this. I miss my "Daisy-digger-dogger" (that's what I called her) and will always have a

special place for her. Again I thank you for your great website.

GC in California

Ed:

Last night, was the night that my best friend and sister, Judy was put to sleep. Judy was around 15 years old, the same age as myself. The two of us practically grew up together. Over the past few months, she started to loose strength in her back legs. Soon after that her bladder became almost uncontrollable. Judy always had an appetite, up until her last meal. We decided to give her meatloaf and grilled chicken for her last meal. She enjoyed all of it. My father and I then took her outside, and walked her around for a while. Then it was time to take her into the car, and off to a new and hopefully better life. The only thing is that I do not have anyone to take care of now. I feel an emptiness in the house, but not my heart. To me Judy was the best companion my family could have. She brought happiness to everyone she saw. I will never forget the love and happiness she gave me.

Tim

Response:

As you go through life you will always look at what had to be done as one of the hardest things

you ever had to do. The memories that we have for our dogs that pass will stay with us forever. Our dogs teach us far more than we teach them – just use that knowledge on your next dog.

Ed

February 13, 2003

It was a hot Florida summer day and I was walking through a grassy field behind the house of a backyard breeder. The puppies were like 13 little hamsters that maneuvered the yard like a little herd. They were just bigger than my hand, and identical in almost every way. As they past me, one little guy would come to me and crawl around my feet. Feeling that I had been selected by him, I took him home. Within a few days I realized that his walking under me had more to do with getting out of the sun than some type of connection. Whichever one of us picked the other, I am so thankful that I came to know the loyalty, friendship, and devotion Bear (a.k.a. boar; boo-boo; mutley) would provide over the next 12 years.

Of course, it wasn't always sunshine and roses. As a puppy he was a terror. He ate my furniture and anything unfortunate enough to be left on a counter (I understood the defrosting chickens and steaks, but I never figured out the carrot thing. This dog would rather have a carrot than a steak). Thankfully, the horror

tapered off after a year as he matured from my 5 pound rodent into my 95 pound best friend and occasional protector. Granted he was almost always protecting me from the mailman or the lawn guy, but I appreciated the effort. Over the ensuing years we shared trips to the beach, rides in the car, walks in the woods, and the quiet indescribable loyalty that only a truly great dog can give. He also tolerated antlers at Christmas, kids riding him like a horse, wearing that satellite dish when he had an operation on his butt, and countless other subtle indignities. I tell you, he was the best.

That day in the grassy field with the 13 puppies was like yesterday. I can't believe how short 12 years seems when viewed backwards. A week ago Bear started to age before my eyes. It was subtle at first; he didn't feel like going on walks and wouldn't finish his food. He started getting up and laying down a little slower than usual. Last night he refused his nightly carrot, and this morning he was dragging his rear legs. The vet brought the worst news. The cancer apparently started in his prostate and had spread everywhere. Bear had probably been dying inside for months, but was so brave and strong that he wouldn't let us know he was hurting. I held him as he was put to sleep. His eyes grew distant and his head grew heavy in my arms. And as quickly as that, Bear was gone.

A few months ago I picked up a puppy (another one of those subtle indignities that Bear so nobly tolerated). Girl (a.k.a. squirrel; gir-illa; monkey-butt) is testing my theory that the shittiest puppies turn into the best dogs (I must believe this else I might kill her . . . or me). I am especially glad to have her today. Her presence helped me through coming home and not having Bear there to greet me at his "spot" at the top of the deck, and working at the computer without Bear laying on his mat next to me, and, I hope, going upstairs tonight without giving somebody a carrot before I go to bed.

Jonathan Pavsner

January 30, 2003

Ed

Today I was reading your article. I needed some support. For a while, my dog, Zack, has been going to the bathroom, in the house, two to three times a day. He is almost 14 years old. He is a large German Shepard. He is such a good dog, but last night, as my mother cleaned up his uncontrolled doings, I told her that I think it was time. We have had my dog since I was in third grade, when he was three. When people asked me if I had any brothers, I'd say "Zack." Neither my mother nor I could take him to the vet this morning; we couldn't bear looking him in the face. He seemed so alive in his eyes. My

grandparents came this morning and picked him up. I couldn't go to school today, because I am such a mess. It was very hard to get him into their car, but right then I knew it was right. He was not living a good life. Some mornings, I'd go to let him out and he'd just look at me because he couldn't stand up...I didn't know what to say, I would feel so bad. Then there would be times that he'd be standing up, and the pressure would cause him to go to the bathroom. I have been crying since 645. Every time I think that he is really gone, I start to cry. I just hope so badly that he has gone to a better place, and that we made a good choice for him.

thanks

Deana Murphy

August 1, 2001

Mr. Frawley,

Hey a while ago I sent you an e-mail telling you about my dog Keltie and how we had to put her to sleep. I am glad you responded to that e-mail it made me feel so much better and so did your website! I miss her soooooo much and I just keep remembering all the good times we had together but it just makes me cry and miss her even more. I guess God just gives us dogs to have kind of as a present...I guess all good things don't last. Well, if anyone else e-mails you about

loosing a pet and they need someone to share their pain tell them that they can e-mail me. Well thanks for everything you've helped me with. May God bless you! ~Fiona

July 23, 2001

Dear Mr. Frawley,

Thank you so much for your kind letter. I went to the site and had tears when I finished. The site meant a lot to me as now I realize that I am not the only one that is heartbroken. Words cannot express my gratitude to you for Nina. She was a wonderful dog, sometimes a puke, but, that goes with dogs and I even have to laugh now when I think about some of the things that she did.

She cost us over 1,000 dollars once when she chewed up my carpet. It was never a choice not to have her operated on to remove it from her esophagus. It came automatic. We went out for ice cream, gone only about 45 minutes.

One Christmas, we had to go shopping and she was unhappy that we couldn't take her, so, when we came home, she had chewed up all the balls on the Christmas tree as high as she could reach. I asked her what she did and she hung her head. She did not need a scolding, she knew what she did. We laughed and took pictures of the mess.

Nina gave us so much love and affection, so much pleasure and protected us. We are grateful

to you for selecting her for us and will never forget her.

With prayers and many thanks to you. Janet Marsh

Tuesday May 15th.

Yesterday I had to put my dog to sleep. Scuffy was 14 years old. I am 35. Although he was not my first dog to be put down in my life, I will hold memories of him more than the others.

He stopped eating about a week or so ago. My dad wanted to put him down but I wanted to see what a vet said first. As I was crying looking at him Saturday, he wagged his tail at me for the first time in a long time. First I thought it was a sign of hope, but now I know it was him telling me it's OK.

When I took him to the vet, they ran a few different blood tests for a couple of days and found out he had pancreas cancer. Although he would look around and seemed OK (just very exhausted), the vets told me it was best for him. He could not eat, and wouldn't drink his water. I patted him for one last time in the vet's office then they took him away. I told them I would come back later that day when a friend was with me to pick up his body. They handed it to me in a cardboard box tape-sealed. We did not open it. We buried him in the backyard in the

box. I placed his favorite blanket on top of the box. I went to the internet today seeking some strength from others' experiences. Although I am crying while typing this letter, I feel better to type the words. Although I may get another dog someday in my lifetime, this one will always hold a dear place in my heart. I will never forget you Scuffy. I hope when my day comes many years from now you are waiting for me.

I love you Scuffy.

Wayne Haseltine
Salem, New Hampshire

January 2, 2000

Dear Ed,

I have spent the better part of the last 2 days visiting your web site. I have learned so much. I have a GSD rescue that I will begin training. Your tribute to your beloved Nickie brought a tear to my eye. I lost my 13 year old Collie September 3, 2000. The day he died this poem appeared in the local paper. Hope you don't mind that I share it with you.

Sincerely,
Susan Poyser-Soros
Texas

Autumn

by Christy Caballero

What do we do when our loving pets face the last leg of the race? We do all we can to help them finish well, of course. We take time to read the unspoken needs of the friends we've come to know so well.

We give the simple reassurance of a loving touch when the old boy seems confused for no reason. We groom them faithfully, but more gently as age brings muscle wasting, and the arthritic bones aren't so well padded. We learn to slow down for their sake, as they enjoy the scent of the wind, or track a visitor's trail across their yard.

We expect to be inconvenienced, and aren't angry when it happens. We watch for pain and treat it, watch for changes in vision and hearing and do what we can to help preserve those precious senses for as long as possible. We take care of their teeth, and make sure their food is a manageable texture for them.

We remind them of the need for a potty walk when they seem to forget. We remember the little rewards. We scratch the graying ears and tummy, and go for car rides together.

When the pet we love has an unexplained need for comfort, we give it freely. When infirmities bring a sense of vulnerability, we become our old guardian's protector. We watch their deepest slumbers, when dreams take them running across long-forgotten fields, and we remember those fields too.

When they cannot stand alone, we lift them. When their steps are uncertain, we steady them. And if their health fails, it falls to us to make the choice that will gently put them to rest.

But until that's absolutely necessary, we pause to let the autumn sun warm our old friend's bones. And we realize, autumn is not a bad time of year at all. Old age is not a disease or a reason to give up. It is a stage of life that brings its own changes. Autumn can be a beautiful time of harvest. And sometimes the harvest is love.

December 15, 1998

When I read this article about "Today the Day", I was saying to myself, that's exactly what I went through verbatim. When I made the decision, I held him in my arms and felt as though I had just had my heart torn out. I knew that I was holding on to him for my sake, not his. He hurt so badly, but damn it was without a doubt the hardest decision I have ever had to make, and hopefully will not ever have to experience that again. The best, if there is such a thing, thing was I knew in my heart, he was ready and when it came, it was very peaceful.

Jane Capelli

Well Ed, she's gone. I took her to the vet last evening. I want to thank you for everything. Before I took her out, we went to a favorite spot that we both enjoyed. She could run free with no one to bother her there, and lots of different smells that she enjoyed investigating. It's a conservation park here in our town, and a lot of the wildlife hang out there, and she just loved to roam around and sniff everything there... very

pretty place way out in the country with a lake and a hillside you can see for miles on. I got her out the truck and put her down because she could not jump out herself. She hasn't done that in awhile. She just staggered around. We walked over a hill covered with grass and sat down. She just lay down beside - she could barely breath. I thought when would leave me then, but she hung on. That was our favorite spot. Now I'll remember it forever. I'll hold her in my heart and memory always. She was a good old dog. We took her to the vet and stayed with her to the end. I held her in my arms and told her, looking in her eyes, that I loved her. As she passed, I did not want her to be alone. Thanks for everything.

Take care,
Sgt. Richard Davies

Dear Ed,

Been going through more of your terrific site and thought you may want some contributions to your Pet Loss section. I am sorry this email is so very long but I think that you will like these.

:) Stef

GOODBYE

With heavy hearts, and a tears in our eyes
After all these years, we must say goodbye.
Please understand, we've done all we could
If there was anything we could do, you know we would.

I'm sitting right here, gently rubbing your ears
While I talk to you softly, trying to hold back the tears
The memories you gave us, we'll never forget
Especially the ones of the day we all met.

One last hug and one last kiss
You have no idea how much you'll be missed.
To look into your eyes this one last time
You tell me it's okay, you know it's your time.

Close your eyes now and go to sleep
We'll pray to the Lord your soul he'll keep
Go in peace now, our good friend
We'll stay right here with you until the end.

Dream of that special day and time
When we'll meet at the Bridge and all will be fine
We'll run and play, side by side
With a soft warm feeling deep down inside.

Your memory will live on in each one of us
You'll always be number one to all of us
Have a safe journey through the night
I promise when you awake, you'll be in God's light.

So with heavy hearts and tears in our eyes
Just for now my friend, we say goodbye.

DONT GRIEVE

Don't grieve too long for now I'm free
I've followed the path God set for me
I ran to Him when I heard His call
I swished my tail and left it all.

I could not stay another day
To bark, to love, to romp or play
Games left unplayed must stay that way
I found such peace, it made my day.

My parting has left you with a void
Please fill it with remembered joy
A friendship shared, your laugh, a kiss
Oh yes, these things I too shall miss.

Be not burdened with times of sorrow
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow
My life's been full, you've given so much
Your time, your love and gentle touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief
Lift up your head and share with me
God wanted me, He set me free.

TREASURED FRIEND

I lost a treasured friend today
The little dog who used to lay
Her gentle head upon my knee
And share her silent thoughts with me.
She'll come no longer to my call
Retrieve no more her favorite ball
A voice far greater than my own
Has called her to His golden throne.

Although my eyes are filled with tears
I thank Him for the happy years
He let her spend down here with me
And for her love and loyalty.
When it is time for me to go
And join her there, this much I know
I shall not fear the transient dark
For she will greet me with her bark.

OLD DOG IN A LOCKET

Old dog in a locket
That lies next to my heart

I will always love you
As I did right from the start.
You were right beside me
Through the darkest of my days
It was your kind and gentle nature
That made me want to stay.
Now I hold you in my arms
Your breath still warm against my hand
Our hearts still beat together
And I wonder if you understand.
Through the hours that I held you
Before the light did leave your soul
I knew a way to keep you
Forever in my hold.
I snipped the hair from around your eyes
So I would always see
The beauty that surrounds me
Even in times of need.
I snipped the hair from around your ears
So I would always hear
Music in the distance
To quiet any fears.
I snipped the hair from across your back
To bring me strength in times of need
And the power of your essence
Would always be with me.
I snipped the hair from around your heart
That beats in time with mine
So I would know that love would find me
At some distant time.
And so, your life slipped out of mine
On a quiet, spring-like day
But I knew that part of you
Was always here to stay.
Old dog in a locket
That lays next to my heart
I will always love you
Even though we had to part.

IF...

If it should be that I grow frail and weak
And pain should keep me from my sleep
Then you must do what must be done
For this last battle can't be won
You will be sad, I understand
Don't let your grief then stay your hand
For this day, more than all the rest
Your love and friendship stand the test
We've had so many happy years
What is to come can hold no fears.
Would you want me to suffer? So
When the time comes, please let me go.

Take me where my needs they'll tend
Only, stay with me until the end
And hold me firm and speak to me
Until my eyes no longer see
It is a kindness that you do to me.
Although my tail its last has waved
From pain and suffering I have been saved.
Do not grieve it should be you
Who must decide this thing to do.
We've been so close, we two these years
Don't let your heart hold any tears

Thanks,
Stef :)

Dear Sir,

I just wanted to take time to let you know how much your article concerning when to put your dog to sleep helped me cope with that situation. My dog, my partner and best friend, served with

me for seven and a half years on the street as a Patrol/Narcotics K-9. He was fortunate to retire without disability at the ripe old age of eleven and a half. He was the oldest police dog that we ever retired. Even after he retired, we spent every day together. However, just after he turned 14 on December 10, 2000, he took a turn for the worse and started to go down hill rapidly. Just as your article stated, he would get better then worse. I watched this transition with hope that it was just my imagination, and his life would go on. Of course that was not the case. Finally, on January 4, 2001, I got on the internet and read your article and I knew what had to be done, as much as I hated to do it. The next morning his lifelong vet put him to sleep. The "Rainbow Bridge" will now give me a chance to see him again when it comes my time. I look forward to seeing him again. I certainly thank you for your compassion in regards to a matter that all pet owners face. My best to you and yours.

MPO III Daryl E. Delagrang
High Point Police Department
High Point, NC 27260
HPPDK9RET@aol.com

In memory of K-9 Sam (Belgian Malinois)
HPPD January 14, 1991 to June 15, 1998
May God Bless His Soul

11-14-05

Dear Ed,

I found your site after making the decision to put my dog to sleep. The appointment is Thursday at noon and I really am dreading it. We made our decision based on our dog's declining mental health. Our 15-1/2 year old dog is hearing impaired, mostly blind and in decline mentally. She constantly thinks she is going to be left alone or thinks that she has been left even when we are here. She then uses the bathroom in the house. She seems scared or worried much of the time. She is still strong physically although she has an abscess and some sort of infection that has not responded to antibiotics. She does not have enough clotting agents in her blood to make it safe to operate to remove the abscess. But she still eats and sometimes will play for a few minutes. We have decided to put her to sleep because of the mental problems and the fact that she will not get better, only worse, even though she could last for months longer. The receptionist at the vet's office seemed not to understand why we would want to put her down while she still eats and gets around. I was feeling terrible guilt about this decision until I found your web site. I don't want to keep her going just because it will make it easier for me to justify the decision when all her quality of life is gone. I am spending her last days giving her treats and lots of one on one

attention. All the poems and e-mails have been comforting. Thanks for making it available!

AP

I am sitting at my computer with tears in my eyes, again. I just read your "Is today the day" article. I just put my husband's dog, "Teaspoon" to sleep last weekend. I have worked as a vet tech in the past, and was prepared for this by my experiences at work. Unfortunately, my husband had a terrible time making the decision (the dog was his before we got together). My advice to others: when the time comes, you will know it. Your dog will tell you it is time, you just have to listen. Make the appointment (many vets will come to your house for this, especially if you explain the situation), and plan a quiet time with your dog so his life will end on a positive note. If at all possible, take him to his favorite place; don't be afraid to take pictures of him, especially if you don't have many of him. And most of all, tell him how much you love him, and explain to him that it is all right for him to let go. If you cannot bring yourself to be with your dog during euthanasia, have a family member or friend do it for you. You will feel better when they tell you that he went peacefully. I am so glad that my husband finally decided it was time. The best thing he could have done for Teaspoon, after trying all that modern medicine had to offer, was some dignity in death.

Nan

I was at work when my brother phoned to tell me that he had booked an appointment with the vet to see what he would say about my dog's health. CiCi, a shih-tzu had been a part of our family for 18 years and having my father, mother, two brothers and a sister as relatives she was spoiled rotten. She never wanted anything, never bit anyone or was vicious to anyone, if anything she would lick someone to death.

Everyone in the neighborhood loved her and would stop to stroke her and say hello.

But the last six months have been downhill. She would be brilliant one day then just lie in her basket the next and urinate and be crying because she could not move. She was a very proud dog and would be embarrassed because she had soiled the house. We never once hit her for doing it. This went on for about six months until we decided what we hope is best for her.

So on the 13th of August 2001, a dog which was perfect in every way was put to sleep. I have never felt so upset over anything like this and never want to again.

Myself, younger brother and mother took her to the vet and all hugged and kissed her goodbye and thanked her for the memories which I shall hold until we meet again. I carried her out of the vet's and cried like a baby, brought her home and buried her in the garden that she loved so much.

Your website has helped me so much and I thank you for this. Until we meet again CiCi, I will always love you.

Darren

Mr. Frawley,

This morning my wife and I came to the realization that our beloved Sandy, a German Shepard & Collie mix, that we rescued from the pound 16 years ago may need to be put to sleep. We were discussion this issue, something I avoided talking about as I couldn't stand the thought of losing my girl and it is destroying the both of us. Last night the very same question occurred to us, are we keeping here alive for us or her? We are not selfish people as we will always seek out the best for our pets and spare no expense for their health and well being, we also have two cats a 16 year old and a 4 month old kitten that I found by our steps and nursed back to health. But, this time I think I was being selfish. In the past year I noticed that Sandy no longer walks with her usual spring that she was so famous for in our apartment complex and she basically lays around all day and mopes. In past few months I've noticed that she has lost control of her bladder in much the same way that Nickie did. The exception is that Sandy will be standing and simply urinate without being aware of this. She's a proud dog and once she realizes what has

happened she is embarrassed. We have never reprimanded her for this since we know that it is not of her doing.

Also, about 2 years ago we discovered a lump in her breast. It was removed but the vet told us that it may reappear. As fate would have it the tumors have resurfaced. She has a few under her skin in different locations of her body and I noticed two lumps in her throat last night. Now she is scared to go down the steps and we have to carry her up and down in order for her to relieve herself, I know this bothers her.

To be honest, I don't mind carrying her up and down the stairs, walking her four hours and cleaning up her accidents, as we love her. If that is all that it took to keep her happy, comfortable and proud I'd do it every ten seconds if I had to. I just wonder if we are making the right decision and being selfish in another way.

I just wanted to say thank you for your website and tribute to Nickie. I've cried like a baby today and can't seem to stop every time I think of Sandy or Nickie. Your site has made things easier; I just hope I have the strength to take her to the vet on that day. How I'll do it and where I'll get the strength I have no idea.

Javier

Dear Mr. Frawley,

Thank you for sharing yourself in discussing what you went through with the loss of Nicki. It offers strength and solace to others facing the same decision, knowing they are not alone and there are others who can understand the struggle and the pain of facing our friend's final day.

We had to help our 15 yr old Lab/Husky cross-over just before Christmas. He had been failing for some time, but was doing quite well until he started to have difficulty with the stairs. We would help him, but the day he fell down and hurt himself and later defecated in the house and fell in it and was unable to get up, was the day we made the "decision". He was devastated and completely embarrassed. My husband and I spoke with our children, 7 & 4, and told them what was going to happen. They asked very honest questions and we gave them the most honest answers we could. We made an appointment and waited for the day, making his last 2 days a time of love and pampering. Some say we should have taken him in right away but we had many friends who wanted to say good-bye to him, give him treats and lots of love. It was a slow process, and VERY difficult, but necessary for all of us, especially the children. On the morning we were taking Texas to the vet, our 4 yr old bounded down the stairs before school and said, "Tex is going to heaven today!" Out of the mouths of babes.

Both children said good-bye and gave him treats before they left for the day. We sent notes along to their teachers the day before, just in case the children needed to talk about it in class. They both did, by the way, and the teachers really appreciated being told. It actually stimulated conversation in class about the loss of pets, and that it was ok to be sad and to talk about it.

My husband took time off work and met me at the vet clinic. We decided to take Tex to the clinic because he liked it there and it was NOT a place of stress for him. The staff is a very caring group and made every effort to make it as comfortable for us as possible. They had a big comforter ready for us and we sat on the floor with Tex. I held his head on my lap, as the drug was administered. We stroked him and told him how much we loved him, what a special part he had played in our lives, and how much we would miss him. The life left his eyes and he died with complete dignity and peace, like the true gentleman he had always been. You see, Tex had come to us, at the age of 9, from an abusive situation. Thankfully, his spirit had not been broken, and he gave us all the love he had to give. He should have had no trust or faith in humankind left, and yet he gave it to us, day after day. He taught us a lot about trust, faith and the power of love. We should be so worthy.

Many friends have talked to me about what a horrible time they have making the decision to

let their four-legged friends go. I know it was one of the most difficult things I have ever had to face. BUT, my comment to others (as well as to myself) is this.....our pets, our companions, our friends give us all they have and ask for almost nothing in return except for this one thing..... when it is time for them to go, we MUST help them. It is the final gift that we can give them, and we OWE it to them. For all of the years of unconditional love they have given to us, it is our responsibility to do this final act, because we are able and they are not. No one ever said it would be easy.

This has turned into a long note, which was not my initial intent. However, there is a certain amount of therapy that comes with telling the story of loss. Tears, definitely, but also the calm of knowing that we were able to give our dear friend death with dignity, surrounded by love. We should all be so fortunate.

Warm regards,
Liz Schroeder

Tomorrow is the day that I have to put my St. Bernard to sleep. She has been having seizures, that last longer than 5 minutes and it takes her another 10-20 minutes to recover from the seizures. She can no longer hold her bladder and she growled and snapped at my 16 month old son, whom she loves dearly. She's just not herself.

She's only 3 1/2 and it kills to let her go. She whines constantly. Like you said just when I think she's getting better, she has another seizure. It kills my family to see her go through them. She doesn't greet us at the door anymore and when people come over she just lies in her corner. And that is so not like her. She loves anyone and everyone. She use to be my husbands fastball teams mascot. Everyone knew her and they always had a treat for her. I know that it's not going to be just me that's upset when she's gone. They even endured the slobber, that famous St Bernard slobber. They finally went and bought her a bandana to wear around her neck to catch the slobber, it even had the team logo. Well thanks for listening to me and I hope the pain will heal someday.

Amy

Dear Mr. Frawley,

I want to thank you for your website. Over the past few days, I've been anguishing over the most difficult decision in my life.

Nicholas first came into our lives during Christmas, 1988. He was 2 years old. He was a carin-terrier mix, with the kind of face only a best friend could love. I was 10 at the time, and he was my best friend and loyal companion ever since.

In recent years, Nicholas began having health

problems. Years of persistent ball-fetching caused arthritis in his hips. Soon, glaucoma robbed him of his vision, and his hearing soon slipped away. Like any good dog, he never let on to the pain he was going through.

Just this Monday evening, I was giving him a bath. I left the room to get a towel, and when I returned, he was completely under water. I pulled him out, and managed to get him breathing again. I consulted a vet who told me that if he didn't show vast improvement over the next 24 hours, we should consider putting him to sleep. It was a decision I knew would come, but one I didn't have to make. During the night, he became much worse. I feel he developed aspiration pneumonia, and he could hardly breathe. Every time he tried to eat, the congestion would make it difficult to keep him down. I selfishly allowed him to struggle through the day Tuesday. I found your website, and the comments there allowed me to find the strength to think of what was best for my friend.

Tuesday night, when I arrived home, he was in the same place he was when I left. He had urinated on himself. It became clear. He could stand, he couldn't eat, and he could hardly breathe. I decided to let him go.

I was in the room when the vet made the injection. He was strong and proud until the very end. After he was gone, I stayed with him for a

few minutes, petting him and telling him I loved him. I always will.

My family and I are going to bury him today in my uncle's backyard. He loved that place. 5 acres of land is almost like dog heaven on earth.

Thank you so much for helping me do what was best for Nicholas.

-Erick

My friend says the reason I have such a hard time making a decision to put my dog to sleep is because of the death of my mom who had cancer but I tell him it is just because this dog is my soul mate, my child and my best friend.

Pascale is about 17-18 years old. I adopted her so I don't know exactly. People have always stopped me on the streets of New York to tell me they have never seen such an unusual and sweet dog. She has a personality like an angel.

Well she has a disc compression and severe arthritis and she is almost deaf and blind but still has some spunk and loves her snacks. Yes she makes in my apartment but I decided it was my karma to clean up after her since she stuck by me. My story is like yours, first rimadyl, then prednasone and ID decided one more fall and that would be that but the vet said since she keeps rallying we should try the home iv prednisone drips. I did it for the first time today

after I called the vet and made an appointment for her to come tomorrow to put her to sleep, but I can't do it because she perked up and is walking around.

I know it will be soon, very soon, I come home in the middle of the day just to hug her and tell her I love her. I don't want her to suffer and I don't want to keep her alive for me but I don't want to make a mistake and put her to sleep a day early I also don't want to wait to long and regret that I made her suffer, yes several times she has fallen and I found her, wet on the floor but now this iv drip seems to work, I know it wont last long so I watch her, she does not seem in pain, wags her tail loves her snacks so I am canceling with the vet tomorrow but I know it wont be long,

It is helpful to read everyone's stories, I still hope I know when it is "the day" I keep thinking it is "the day" and then she perks up or gets up and walks and wags her tail so I say not yet. I just pray that I will know and she will let me know when the day is.

Thanks for listening.

Diana

Here is another very nice poem that was posted after a very nice dog that I used to own died at her home.

When tomorrow starts without me,
And I'm not there to see;
The sun will rise and find your eyes
All filled with tears for me.

I wish so much you wouldn't cry
The way you did today,
I know how much you loved me,
As much as I love you,
And each time that you think of me
I know you'll miss me too.

But when tomorrow starts without me,
please try to understand
That an angel came and called my name
And petted me with her hand.

She said my place was ready,
In Heaven far above,
And that I'd have to leave behind
All those I dearly love.

But, as I turned to heel away,
A tear fell from my eye,
For all my life I never thought
That I would have to die.

I had so much to live for,
So many sits and downs to do,
It seemed almost impossible,
That I was leaving you.

I thought about our lives together,
I know you must be sad,
I thought of all the love we shared,
And all the fun we had.

Remember when I'd nudge your hand,
And poke you with my nose?
The kongs that I would gladly chase,

The bad guy, I'd "bark and hold"?

If I could relive yesterday,
Just even for awhile,
I'd wag my tail and kiss you,
Just so I could see you smile.

But then I fully realized,
That this could never be
For emptiness and memories
Will take the place of me.

And when I thought of treats and toys
I might miss come tomorrow,
I thought of you and when I did,
My dog-heart filled with sorrow.

But when I walked through Heaven's gate;
And felt so much at home;
As God looked down and smiled at me,
From His beautiful throne.

He said, "This is eternity,"
And now we welcome you,
Today your life on earth is past,
But here it starts anew.

I promise no tomorrow,
But today will always last;
For you see, each day's the same,
There's no longing for the past.

Now you have been so faithful
So trusting, loyal and true;
Though there were times you did things,
You knew you shouldn't do.

But good dogs are forgiven,
And now at last you're free;
So won't you sit here by my side,

And wait right here with me?

So when tomorrow starts without me,
Don't think we're far apart,
For every time you think of me,
I'm right there, in your heart.

Hi,

Bandit, an Alaskan Malamute, with all the spunk and determination...on and on.....died this past week. I was with her, and though I thought I would never grow close to this particular doggie, as we have had a few others, again I never thought that Bandit would grow into my heart so much. She was just such an assertive dog. I thought that she was always trying to play pranks on me, that is the type of personality I am trying to convey about her.

I did not think she would die without fighting, and I did not want to make choices for her, but in the end, she needed a nurse and companion. I remember times, where I fell asleep next to her, as I watched her go through the phases I know were that of stepping out of this life and into her next. I know, because I helped my Dad in the Hospice organization, and while I do not want to step on any toes about a human life and an animal's life, I did see so many comparisons, that it seemed like a double wammy. But, though I do not want to write more at this time, what makes it do darn hard to accept

that she is gone? She was 13 and 6 months, approximately, and would have gone on, I believe, except she developed diarrhea in late June, or there about, actually had been having bouts of it since January.

So, even though we took her to the vet, and she had times where her stools were firm again, I saw that it was not continuous. I feel like I am all alone in this grieving. She died a week ago, and just today, I was finally able to go out to her pen, where she ran freely and get her water bucket, and her food bowl. She also has a dog house, and a blanket to deal with. It is just so lonely with her gone, and I don't know why this is so bothersome, as I have had another dog die about 3 years ago, and I loved that dog just as much.

I will say this ...I cannot get this image of her out of my head, that of her gasping for breath, and her eyes so sparkly, as if she were trying to tell me something. I think I did the wrong thing by allowing her to die a natural death, and even though we tried to control the pain, I know that she was having it, and that does not even mention the fear she must have felt.

I really did not know who to share this with, but it appears that those of you on this web-site are those that may understand. I do not know how to take the first step to getting that image out of my mind, the one where she is counting on me to get her better.

She did not get better, as you know by now, and I thank you for listening. There is a lump in my throat that just will not go away, and I do have another little beautiful dog, a miniature dachshund, who deserves better than what I have been towards her. Although all I can think of is that I wish time would stop so that I can enjoy everything about this little dog now, and that I will never move towards a situation like that which I just spoke of with Bandit.

I know that everyone handles grief in their own way, but I do hope there is a way that I can get that poem that is on your site. Do people just copy it? I do not want to do anything that is not the right thing.

Once again, thank you for listening when I have no one else to talk to.

You, again, have a wonderful site. It has been a help to me.

Sincerely,
Pama

Brent Peterson [petersonsolar@msn.com]

Dear Mr. Frawley,

Thanks so very much for this web site. I have found a great deal of comfort by reading all of these emails in this time of grieving again,

since having to put our 2nd German Shepherd to sleep this last Tuesday.

I have to mention “Von” our first Shepherd, who ended up on our door step, when his owner down the street just left town one day.

We had him for a little more than 10 years, and thought him to be 2-3 years old when he planted himself on the front porch.

“Von” never really bonded to my husband, no matter what we did. He did although bond to our daughter, and myself.

Our daughter Wendy, being only two years old at the time.

Wendy and “Von” grew up together.

“Von” was a gentle giant. He was majestic, and proud. He was cool, and had a very calm temperament. His only flaw was that he was a bit shy of men, which we thought might be because of his prior owner.

I had never had a dog before. I was sure that he would stay outside. I never wanted our house to smell like a “Dog” for goodness sake.

In a short time “Von” had a blanket in front of the woodstove, one at the foot of everyone’s bed, and he was welcomed anywhere he wanted to be in the house.

We knew probably two years before he died, that his days were limited, as larger breed dogs don't live forever we were told, and "Von" was starting to have leg, and hip problems...

Every night when it was time to tuck Wendy into bed, there would be "Von" ready to say prayers before lights out. He was such a good boy.

I prepared Wendy for saying goodbye to him, giving her the choice whether or not she wanted to be there when he was put to sleep. Wendy was only 12 years old at the time, but her, and I agreed that it would be important to "Von" to see his two best girls, before he closed his eyes for the last time, and, that it was not about our sadness, but it was about what "Von" needed.

"Von" spent three days at the Vet's office, receiving chiropractic adjustments, before we lost all hope.

It has been eight years since we put "Von" down. Wendy and I were there, it was so quick that my husband missed "Von's" passing, as he went out to write the receptionist a check, so Wendy and I would not have to linger later when it was over.

Putting my best friend to sleep, changed the core of my very being, I would never be the same...As awful as it sounds, there are people I know, that I could put to sleep, more easily than I did these

beautiful dogs.

It was so quiet in the house without "Von". We just needed so badly to have the life and love of a dog again.

We were sure that if we got a German Shepherd puppy that we would have at least two more years of loving a dog, and my husband was hoping to be able to bond with this one, knowing there would not be any past abuse from a prior owner.

So after looking, and waiting, we bought "Roo-bie."

Named because he looked like a Kangaroo, all legs, tail, ears, and he could only hop up the stairs in the house. So my husband carried him. He was not a good eater. So my husband hand fed him. "Roo-bie" would sleep all day long with my husband, as he worked nights during the puppy stage.

Wendy and I were so happy for her dad to be bonding to the puppy.

"Roo-bie" also loved Wendy so, as well as my husband. I was third on "Roo-bie's" list even though I cooked dinner for the little "squirt" every single night. "Roo-bie" would play me, when he wanted his walk.

As "Roo-bie" got older he would settle down for short periods, so I could get down on the floor,

and hold him like a baby. I would talk to him softly, whispering in his beautiful ears, that he was such a crazy little dog... even though he was probably 70 pounds by then.

He was a little terror. We treated him like a prince, he ran the house. "Roo-bie" was like a four year old little boy, that was so excited and so happy about everything, and he never wanted to grow up...

Everything was a game to "Roo-bie." Wendy was now 13 years old, and when it was time for lights out, and prayers, at bed time, it was play time for "Roo-bie", running down the hall with Wendy's prize basketball shoes. Or when my husband would read the paper, "Roo-bie" would grab the rest of the news paper lying on the floor, and RUN!! ... Just to be chased. I admit we did not give enough discipline to "Roo-bie," but we could not do anything else but laugh at the fun he always wanted to have.

This last March "Roo-bie" had a terrible seizure, it lasted for hours. I thought he had gone mad. "Roo-bie" was only 7 years old, and had been in perfect health up to this point. An hour after he was brought home from the vet, he went into seizure again. We were sure that we were going to have to put him down then and there, and how would we tell Wendy, as she was across state at college having final exams. The Vet talked us out of it, and kept him over night. I just wanted

Wendy to be there to say goodbye, I felt it was so important.

After five days at the vet, we were able to bring a mostly blind "Roo-bie" home. "Roo-bie" was weak he had to be carried outside, and held up to go to the bathroom. We were amazed that each day he did get a bit better, and when Wendy raced home after her last exam, finally she was home for the week of Spring Break.

When Wendy burst through the door calling his name, "Roo-bie" jumped up for the first time in a week, and took three steps towards her voice, before he fell into the wall.

"Roo-bie's" girl was home... It was a great moment.

"Roo-bie" made great strides during Wendy's week home from college, and continued to get better.

He was partially blind, but still happy, and wanting to play. "Roo-bie" waited for summer, when Wendy would be home again from college.

"Roo-bie" had the whole summer with Wendy home, and just took a turn for the worst a month ago, when he had another seizure. Things went down hill fast after this one. We were told again that it was probably a brain tumor and not epilepsy as we had hoped.

Wendy and I felt that he needed to be put to sleep weeks before her Dad was ready.

“Roo-bie,” was never going to tear through the house, like he had; only a week ago, In the last weeks, I willed him to die in my arms. but he just kept holding on.

I left it up to my husband when to make the decision to put “Roo-bie” to sleep. I found this web site by accident, and showed it to my husband, hoping it would bring him around

It was time, I knew it... Wendy knew it... but my husband could not bring himself to see it.

My husband said that “Roo-bie” could just be having a bad day, or week. He said that “Roo-bie” had snapped out of it before, and that dead is dead.

My husband said that he was not in any pain, but I knew that “Roo-bie” was in a constant state of fear, and confusion. I knew that he was having a great deal of psychological pain.

There was no hope. I had done everything I could to make my husbands decision easier. All I really wanted was to have “Roo-bie” put to sleep as a family. I felt it would be important to “Roo-bie,” and my husband was just procrastinating, and Wendy only had less than a week before she went back to college. ...Wendy needed to say

goodbye, and I just did not know how we were going to keep the dog comfortable with one less person to care for him when she went back to school.

Then it hit me, As obvious as it seems to me now, I just could not figure out that I was putting pressure on my husband. I assumed that he needed to be there with Wendy and me when "Roo-bie" was put to sleep. But I was very wrong.

"Roo-bie" was his dog first, and I have never seen man in the 23 years that I have known him, be so crazy over anything, as he was this dog.

So when I realized that my husband just couldn't bring himself to be there and this was the reason he was procrastinating. I explained as best I could, that it would be o.k... That Wendy and I would be there. Some people just can not bring themselves to be there, when this is necessary for their pet.

With this conversation, my husband made the arrangements to have "Roo-bie" put to sleep the next day, one hour after he himself was to leave for work.

Wendy and I were so relieved. You have to understand, that we had spent three weeks now crying over our beloved dog.

Every day, it was help him out to the back yard, hold him up to throw food down his throat as he could not chew, and stand at the same time. Hold

him up to drink, as he could not drink and stand at the same time. Pick him up to bring him into the house, and pick him up to take him outside. Pray that he would not get up and walk on his own, because he would just walk in a circle, until he fell down. This beautiful animal, who was always so full of life, agile, cocky, and so sure of himself. Now was so confused why this was happening to him...

I bought him two burgers from McDonalds on the day of his euthanasia. I fed them too him outside, in the sun, holding him up, as I threw pieces down his throat with the other hand. He was happy to get them, even if he couldn't chew. I brought him back in the house again, after he ate, and sat with him on the floor, I held him, like a baby, teasing him about having hamburger breath, and whispering into his ears, "what a crazy little dog". .cause he really use to be... Trying to be light hearted for Wendy, and my husband, who just sat in a blank stare at the T.V.

When my husband was ready to leave for work... I heard him walk behind us.

In a burst of tears, my husband asked Wendy, and I if we could leave the room. Wendy and I shot out of the room and into the garage. Crying myself now more than ever... I could hear my husband, sobbing and saying good bye to the only pet, I think he ever bonded with... Then I heard the front door open, and slam shut, and my husband went to work.

Wendy and I had only one more hour alone with our beloved family pet, and with a full tummy. "Roo-bie" napped right through it. I had to wake him up from a peaceful nap, to go put him to sleep for ever.

Just like before with our first German Shepherd, Wendy and I were there together. It was peaceful, so quick, and "Roo-bie" was able to see his two best girls, before he closed his eyes for the last time.

Now I have two boxes of ashes. "Von" and "Roo-bie" Wendy was only 12 years old, when we had to put our majestic "Von" to sleep.

This time Wendy was 20 years old, when we had to put our crazy little "Roo-bie" to sleep.

I really do believe, that the loving relationships, that our daughter had with these two beautiful dogs, has much to do with the great kid she grew up to be

Wendy said threw tears, as we left the Vet's office this last time..

"Mom, you know something...?"

"With all the love, and joy we have had through out the years, it really is worth the heart break you feel at the end..."

"...and I will do it again..."

What a terrific kid...

Therese Hensley

Washington State

I wanted to thank you for your website. I put my 14 1/2 year old lab down today. As his capabilities decreased and his problems mounted over the last year, I prayed that nature would take its course, but it just wasn't to be. After a particularly bad episode last night, I knew this morning that I had to do something. I have agonized over the same question everyone else does - 'when is the right time.' I searched the web this morning for some advice and came across your site and while it was hard to read through some of the emails, I came away convinced that whether I was ready, it was time. While it has been a very emotional day, I am at peace with my decision and am glad that he is finally resting comfortably. Thanks again for your website.

Dave Baugh [dwbaugh@insightbb.com]

Ed:

Thanks so much for the wonderful web site. I read through many of the postings a few months ago when we were first thinking about putting our near 14-year-old cocker spaniel, C.J., down. It was very emotional reading through the stories and when it came down to it, our vet told us that with a change in diet we could stem the kidney failure that had begun in C.J. and treat his ear infection, although he slept so much all the time and seemed disoriented sometimes. I jumped at

the chance to prolong his life, even though he was partially deaf and had been blind for several years -- very cloudy cataracts. He also slowed considerably. But it all came to an end almost two weeks ago when he began lifting his back right leg and refusing to walk on it. The pain spread through his hip and back over three days until he had problems even trying to walk. We took him in thinking cancer or a tumor and the vet suspected a bad hip, slipped disk or something along those lines. His right leg had muscle loss so he apparently had been favoring one of his legs for some time so slight we didn't even notice. The vet said with anti-inflammatory and pain meds he might be able to do okay but no guarantee. I wanted to jump at it, but my wife, through her tears, said she couldn't take this a third time and couldn't stand for C.J. to be on medications for the rest of his life and possibly in pain. It killed me to go along with it, but my 12-year-old son, wife and I said goodbye, and I held C.J. while he was injected and faded away. We spent some time with him, cried, said our final goodbyes and walked out -- devastated. Our pooch endured a tumor on his leg, a few bad seizures, allergies, ear infections, anal gland removal and me nearly backing over him six years ago in addition to him wandering off and us not finding him for a day. Throughout all of it, I never wanted it to end. Who does? My wife made an awesome collage of C.J. and us, with pictures of him as a pup right on up through the years. I never thought he

would make it to 10 but in the end, nearly 14 years wasn't long enough. I wonder sometimes if we did the right thing -- there is some nagging guilt. However, I take some solace in the words of a friend who lost a dog several years ago. His mom told him "Try not to be sad that it's over, but be happy that it ever happened at all." What great words. So long, buddy. I love you. I miss you every day but know that you feel no pain now. We've got some great memories. See you again on the other side.

Mike

Mr. Frawley,

Thank you for your website. Yesterday was one of the hardest days I've ever had. We had to put our beautiful Chow, Bear, to sleep. We got Bear in April of 1991, and our vet estimated her age at 7 months old. She has never been a lovey dovey type of dog, but she was a faithful companion for almost 14 years. She was a mommy's dog. Our vet has suspicions that she was somewhat abused before we got her probably by a male since she preferred females. She loved to run and loved the other animals in the house especially the cats. They were her babies. She was very protective but never aggressive.

She developed arthritis in the past several years, but in December 2003 the seizures started. The

first one scared me half to death. The seizures were so intermittent that our vet didn't want to put her on medication for them due to her age. On Wednesday night here in Colorado, we had an awful storm which set off another seizure. She hadn't had one in almost a month. It usually took her several hours to calm down after having seizure, but she always seemed to bounce back. On Thursday night, she had another one and then on Friday morning at 4:15 am another seizure. I stayed with her and calmed her down. She seemed to be doing okay so I left for work knowing my husband and daughter were home. Bear had another seizure around 9:30 am and they both stayed with her to calm her down. I called around 11:00 am to check on her, and my husband said she didn't seem to be doing okay. I decided to leave work and come home right away. Bear had yet another seizure so that was four in less than 24 hours. After the last seizure, she looked like she couldn't see, bumping into everything, and extremely agitated. We took her to the vet, but I knew in my heart it would be her last trip (she loved to ride in the car).

The vet checked her over and offered us options which were slim due to her age. He thought her loss of vision was due the brain not processing from the seizures, and he didn't know if it was permanent or not. This meant that she could potential fall down the stairs or off the deck and get seriously injured. I knew I couldn't let

her suffer any longer, but it was one of the most difficult decisions I've ever made. My husband, my daughter and I all stayed with her until the end, and I decided to have her cremated so she could always be with the family she loved so much.

When I got home and looked into the eyes my two little dogs (who seemed to saying "Where is Bear"), I felt so guilty for having her put to sleep until I read your website. I read all the stories with tears streaming down my face, and I understand I had to do what was best for her.

Bear you will be greatly missed by Mom, Dad, Holly, and Greyson and your little buddies Roger, Roxy, Sammy and Xander.

Julie Scharff
Colorado Springs, CO

Ed, here's my story. It's still a fresh wound. I'm usually a good writer but I think emotion might have gotten the best of me on this one. Thanks for the great website.

Brad Elm

Mott, TX

I was 8 years old and a cruel woman in my neighborhood had put anti-freeze in her yard to kill any dogs or cats that happened to wander into it. Well I had a basset hound named George,

and he'd bolt for the gate anytime it was opened up wide enough for him to get his frame through. Just his natural born instinct. We came home from one of my little league games and found him howling in pain in our yard. Yes, he'd gotten out somehow and had some of Cruella Deville's potion. I felt so helpless and powerless as I watched him be in pain. My parents rushed him to the local emergency vet's office. They put him out of his misery and luckily I wasn't old enough to understand it all. However, I did mope around the house for several weeks after it as I missed my play buddy with the funny ears.

Then, one day my dad found an ad for what he'd been looking to buy me. Beagle puppies. They were about 45 minutes from our house at this ranch. I found out about it as he dropped me off for school. I couldn't concentrate all day because I knew I was going to get a puppy. As he picked me up from school that day I had nothing on my mind but going to get my new friend. We pulled up and there was about 7 puppies running around in this small pen. The old rancher that owned the place was a crude man who was not so nice to the dogs. As we were let into the pen to pick which one we wanted they all cowered thinking we were going to beat them. The old man had told us that the pup's dad was eaten by coyotes (as the mom was the only one around) but in later years I was inclined to believe that the old man might have killed him his-self. They

quickly warmed to us and surrounded us. All except one. A shy one who trotted behind a tree and tried to hide. My dad told me that's the one...he's the pick of the litter. So I scooped him up in my arms and he wasn't much bigger than a rat. He rode in my lap the whole way home. We got him to the house and he tried to hide in a corner of the living room. I was relentless in playing with him that first night. No homework for me, I was too busy. I had a puppy to love. He quickly warmed to me and even spent that first night in my bed with me as he would until he was a very old dog.

As the years went by, the beagle I came to love and know as Casey, loved me back unconditionally. Since receiving him he'd experienced it all with me. Elementary, jr. high, high school, girls, crushes, jobs, heartaches, grief, happiness, joy, friends, enemies, fights, making up, college, holidays, leaving home and coming back again, you name it and Casey was there for me. Sometimes when I felt I had no other friend in the world I had my dog. I taught him everything I knew and he never met a stranger. He liked people and he loved to be petted. He was a very emotional dog and I could always tell how he felt even if the vet couldn't with science and tests. As a puppy, Casey was very sick. At about 6 months he developed mange and my parents thought about putting him to sleep and getting another puppy but I protested. They spent a lot of money to keep him alive and I've

been thankful for it every day. The vet wanted to neuter him and I never gave the ok. I just didn't want my little brother and best friend to not have all his parts! Something about being a Texan I guess...I figured he deserved everything the rest of us have.

As the years waned his health was strong. At about age 14 he was having trouble getting around and just plain standing up. So he had reconstructive surgery on both hind legs. Then he was fine again. Then he started to have accidents and I could tell it embarrassed him for us to have to clean up his messes. He'd always have this frown on his face when he'd do that. (I could tell!) In the last few weeks at the age of 16 my special friend stopped eating, could hardly stand up and ran constant fever. Between pants he'd suck it up and try to be the brave proud dog he'd always been. But, I just knew it was a matter of time.

Now as I sit here at 25 having had Casey since age 8, I'm lost. I've lost family members and close human friends and don't know that it's ever hurt this much. I've cried myself silly over the last few weeks for this dog. As I sit here and type this I have an empty feeling in the pit of my soul as I know that the space Casey reserved there is forever empty. I pray that God gives Casey the peace he so rightfully deserved and let's his memory live in my heart forever. I love you Casey and I always will.

Dear Mr. Frawley

First, I would like to say thank you for your site, and the stories that you share. We're having our dog Misty "put down" later this afternoon, and the letters posted on your site have helped me come to grips with this situation. If you're interested in posting Mist's story to possibly help someone else...here goes.

I didn't want Misty...or any other dog. My wife and I were married for just over a year when my wife became obsessed with pet ownership. My sister didn't help matters when she resolved to get a puppy as well. So my wife and sister went on a puppy hunt, and came across a litter of Shi-Tzu's that the owner didn't want. They each scooped up their favorite, and brought them to meet me. Very cute...but I wasn't won over. The fact that my wife was working mostly night-turn as a nurse, meant that I got the crying puppy to myself during my best sleeping hours. Even though Misty and I made countless trips to the yard in the wee hours (to go wee, of course...or just sniff around) I grew to like her.

When I came home from work, Misty was there to greet me. Her boundless energy and unconditional love helped me forget about the work day. I found that the game of "grab-my-paws-if-you can" was as therapeutic for me as it was for her. If I slapped my thighs Misty would begin running about the house, anticipating

something fun was about to happen. After a bath Misty would charge up and down the stairs, and throughout the house, as if to say, "Look at me! I'm clean. And the guy who swore to never like me got soaking wet giving me a bath!" In the evening, Misty would curl up in my lap, and wait for the question, "Are you ready for bed?" At that, she would charge upstairs, and take over our king-sized bed. Yes, a Shi-Tzu can do a pretty fair job of using up much of a king-sized bed. And I got used to whispering "Misty!" when her snoring got too much. I guess she tolerated my snoring in better style.

About 5 years ago, Misty began to (as I saw it) act strange and even spoiled. She stopped running, and did this odd serpentine maneuver to get up the stairs. If treats weren't delivered directly to her, she whined. But my wife knew better, and took her to the vet. They didn't catch it at the first visit, but eventually determined that Misty had Lupus. Who knew a dog could get Lupus? But there we were with dog that was on several medicines, and who needed treats hand delivered. But I'm not sure who whined more... me or Misty. I didn't want a dog, and now I had a "special needs dog." And Misty continued to get worse. Eventually, she needed carried up and down stairs. Her downward spiral was so slow, that the adjustments my wife and I made were hardly noticeable. Only when friends and family who hadn't seen Misty for a while stopped

by, would we get notice, "You have to cart her around? I think I would start thinking about putting her down."

Well, 5 years later, we're not sure why we kept going on like we did. Misty has had more accidents on the carpet than I could possibly tally up. She needs us to balance her as she tinkles in the yard. She needs to be carried to her food and water. And over the last week, she cries when any of our 4 children get too close to her. I know why we went on as we did for the last 5 years. Because Misty won me over, just as she had won my wife over, when she was part of an unwanted litter almost 12 years ago. I just never wanted to admit it.

Our children have always referred to Misty as part of the family. I just regret not doing the same...at least out loud. But I've always secretly liked Misty, and have always defended Misty when people would talk about putting her to sleep. But I know it's now time, and soon Misty will be gone. And I will shed a few tears, and say, "No more dogs." But Misty has opened a door in me. My wife loves Misty. My daughters love Misty. And, son of a gun, I love Misty too. It just took a lifetime (in dog years) to figure that out.

Tom from Munhall, PA

P.S. Thanks for listening. This was very therapeutic.

I almost didn't write because it looks like you are a very busy person.

Upon reading your story about your baby Nickie, I really needed to write to you. I just had to put my baby to sleep and I am wondering if I will ever be the same again.

How do you spend each minute of each day when he has always been and is still in it. How do I walk through each room that used to be occupied fully with my bigger than life Bubba. How do I just think one thought or utter one word that doesn't bring thoughts of him to my mind and heart.

Bubba, me and my family have been together almost 11 years now. It was only next month till his Birthday. I am so very sad.

Debra Albert

September 8, 2004

I have tried to write this several times beginning August 31st 2004, the day the decision was made to put our precious Caesar to sleep. The first attempt was to chronicle that day as it unfolded but I was unable to write the words. Today I feel I can now tell you our story and say thank you for your website and the stories you post from others.

Caesar was a beautiful Maltese from a puppy

farm. He was 8 weeks old when we got him. My husband was unsure of a small dog as men and young families needed a big dog. Caesar's nickname soon became "killer" and that began our 17 year journey together.

Caesar saw our 3 kids grow up and come back with 6 children of their own. All of them calling him theirs, but really, he belonged to my husband and I. As our baby aged, we watched and supported him in every way. As his eyes grew dim from cataracts and his hearing faded, we began to realize our time with him was getting shorter.

After our vacation in July this year, we saw a dramatic change in him. His legs would fail frequently, confusion set in and he began leaking urine on his bed. The last night of his life was spent trying to comfort him and to get him to lie down. His confusion was so bad he didn't know who we were. That night I held him and cried as I prayed for god to take him. When the next day dawned, we knew what we had to do.

It was then I found your website and made preparations for him. His confusion was better that day but we knew it wouldn't last and if we didn't follow thru he would suffer again that night. I was in the room when they put him to sleep. A decision I will never regret even though it causes me much pain still. I could not let our baby be alone and his comfort was my voice asking him "where is daddy?" which calmed

him while they located his vein and started the medication. When I saw him fading, for a fleeting minute I thought “NO! I have changed my mind” but he was gone. Shock set in quickly and all I could do was cry and kiss his nose like I always did.

My husband took me into the hall and it was then I realized he was sobbing uncontrollably, something I had never heard in 20+ years together. We went back in and kissed him goodbye, covering him with his favorite blanket. Back out in the hall, as we stood there clinging to each other we began our lives again without our beloved Caesar.

We had Caesar cremated, a decision his daddy made. His ashes will remain with us because that was where he was happiest. His favorite spot was our bed, between us. His favorite place to play was anywhere we were. The only thing he feared was separation from us.

Today we still cry those breathtaking sobs, but we are coming to terms with our decision. The decision which was so painful to us but brought relief to our precious Caesar who we will see again at the Rainbow Bridge.

Little Caesar XXI

“killer”

1/5/87 - 8/31/04

David & Peggy

Sept 21 2004

Ed:

Thank you for having such a wonderful website offering stories of other families who have lost a pet. Last night I had to put Zachary, my 16 year-old schipperke down. It was with no doubt the hardest thing to do in my entire life. He was just diagnosed with congestive heart failure two weeks ago and the doctor said that he was going to be around for two or more years. Unfortunately that did not happen. My parents went to half way across the country to visit their new granddaughters and had to leave Zack with a friend. Just before they left he started taking a turn for the worst, but unfortunately they had to go. Two nights ago I got a call from my Mom saying that I needed to get to the vet because Zack was not doing well and the friend decided to take him to the vet. I got there I went to the back to see him. As soon as I turned the corner he turned around like he knew I was coming for him. Just seeing him there knowing that he was not going to make it very much longer killed me. I picked him up and broke down. I stayed with him for a few hours and decided to go home. Luckily my parents were coming home the next day.... I made arrangements to meet them at the vet later that night. When we got there we all went back to see him you could see that he was overjoyed to see all of us as he was huffing

and puffing away. Unfortunately we were not feeling the same. The doctor walked us to an examination room and told us that they did not know how long he had and that breathing was becoming extremely hard for him. The decision was made and the doctor brought him in to say goodbye to us. As soon as he got to the room. He went to my dad and kissed him. Then to my Mom and fiancé' and did the same. When he got to me I was on the floor and he jumped in my arms and started kissing me. I could barely handle it at this point. The poor dog thought he was going home and it was exactly the opposite. The doctor came in with the needle. Luckily he already had an I.V in his arm so it was much easier to do. We all gathered around him with my dad holding him and within 10 seconds he was gone. I hope I never have the feeling that I had last night again. All I could do was cry and question if it was the right time to do it. The doctor assured to me that he would have done the same. Even though I have moved away from my parent's house and didn't visit him as much as I should have, he was and always will be my little brother.

A message to Zack:

Zack, you will be missed more than you could ever imagine. Thank you for all of your unconditional love and happiness you gave the family throughout the years. I knew this day would come, but I just wish I had a few more

hugs and kisses from you before you went away.
I'll be seeing you soon.

Your loving brother,
Keith

Sept. 30, 2004

I am another person who had been on the internet, searching for an answer to "When do I know it's time to say good bye to my dog?" It is a call that we have dreaded having to make.

We have been hoping Ginger would be able to have an easy, natural death, but it just hasn't happened that way. This past summer, a cancerous tumor was discovered. A month ago, our vet said she had other problems too, and there was no hope for a recovery. Ginger, our little sheltie, is 15 years old now.

The vet didn't expect Ginger would live more than a week, and sent her home to enjoy her time with us. That was one month ago today. She seemed to rally that first few weeks, but this past week, she has stopped eating almost completely. The tumor has grown and it is difficult for her to walk. She no longer can control her bodily functions. She still attempts a weak wag of the tail when we approach her and continues to watch everything we do.

Our two younger poodles have definitely cut in on Ginger's time over the years, but my hope is that she knows she was always a very loved part of the family. Our kids don't remember life without her. She's a beautiful little dog, and always got a lot of fuss and compliments from everyone who met her. She adored people and attention, as most shelties do.

I couldn't find a site that really got to the heart of the answer I needed until I found your site. The emails there described exactly what we have been going through. It is so difficult to let go, and so difficult to know when the time is right.

This afternoon, we take Ginger in to the vet and will say our goodbyes. I can do it now, knowing there are so many others out there that share our feelings. Thank you so much for this support.

Michelle Horstman

Ed,

Even though I have never had the opportunity to meet you, I feel as though we have shared the same pain. Your thoughts on the passing of your dog were identical to mine. For Ajax, it went down exactly the same way. Over the last two months of his life every day became more difficult, even though he and I always stayed

positive. Watching him go from vomiting his food (he did not have megaesophagus), to aspiration pneumonia, to eventually passing away was the greatest pain that I have personally ever experienced, he was my best friend. I also, didn't mind carrying him, holding him up while he urinated, holding his legs, which lacked support while he defecated. During that time, he and I really believed that he could beat it. In retrospect it wasn't pneumonia that killed my friend, his body simply broke down after an extremely hard seven years (he was so hard on himself and lived with reckless abandon). Even though he was seven, he had the same drive and energy that he had when he was two, he was unbelievable. I am coming to realize that you and I were bound to feel a lot of deep pain because we loved them so much. I am grateful to have been Ajax's friend, and I will always admire him.

Regards,
Jack Sherck

My name is Marlene Gardner and recently I was trying to decide weather or not it was time to put my wonderful beagle hound down so I search the internet for some help and I came upon your site.

As I was reading the stories about other people's dogs it helped me make up my mind.

Toby was an beautiful beagle hound who was 19 years old we had her since she was 2 years old she became a very faithful friend to my 3 girls and to my husband she was so playful and full of love for all of us but for me she was something special she was my 4th daughter everywhere

I went she would be right beside me we had this bond it was like we new what each other was thinking or saying she new me so well we would watch sad movies together and she would jump up on my lap and kiss in her own way my tears away, she would always cuddle up to me on the couch and to get my attention she would nudge my hand or arm.

When she was hunger she would push her bowl around until some filled it up for her, when we went on walks she would always stay by my side. I have a daycare in my home and she loved watching the kids play she would grade the children to make sure that no one wonder off and if one did she would nudge them back or bark to let me know. But as the years went on she started to slow down she got arthritis in her legs so she couldn't run as fast anymore she started to get lots of love handles on her body until she started to lose weight. One time a few years back she suffered a stoke and she was having seizures we rushed hat to the vet where she got the help she needed but since then she was' not the same mostly all she would do is lay around the house and as the years approached her she lost

her site and her hearing she couldn't walk much anymore and stairs were very hard for her so I would always carry her around she was having accidents in the house which I know she felt bad about I would just reassure her that it was alright I would just clean it up then I would pick her up and help her outside then I would have to hold up so she could go.

These past weeks I have been trying to decide if this was the right time to put her down and after reading stories on your site I finally made up my mind, I find that I was being selfish keeping her here because she was in a lot of pain every time you would touch her she would yelp and she was walking into walls she would just spend the day sleeping she would sleep 22 hours out of 24 so I made that extremely hard decision to put her down.

We did it on March 4th 2005 we were all there to hold her it was extremely hard to see her go it took almost 20 minutes before she was gone because she was a fighter to the end she always hated going to the vet she would shake every time we went and she still did that day I held her in my arms and reassured her that everything will be alright and that she won't be in anymore pain but she was a fighter right to the end I held on to her until her beautiful body slowly went to sleep it was the hardest thing I had ever had to do in my life to see my precious baby go to heaven I told her when she sees grandma to go to her

because she will be there waiting for her grandma love her too and she is heaven with Toby right now.

I asked Toby that when she gets to heaven to let me know if she was alright so when we got home we went to turn on a light and for some strange reason the light burnt out and it was just replaced a while ago so we took that as Toby's sign that she is in heaven with all the other dogs playing and with grandma.

I will never ever forget that day we were all crying and kissing and hugging her as she was leaving us my girls were so upset and my husband is not a crier but she cried for Toby that day. It is now just the next day and I miss her so much all I want to do is cry the vet gave us such a wonderful sympathy package it had a blanket a picture frame and a little medallion and a small book to help us. We put a beautiful picture of Toby in the frame along with her collar hanging over it we keep it on top of our TV unit so that we can see it everyday.

As I write this email I have a very heavy heart the tears are filling my eyes as I think about her it is so hard to lose the animal that you love so dearly but I have to remember that she is not in anymore pain. She lived to be 19 years old that is 133 years old in human life the vet said that is very unusual for a dog to live that long especially her breed. She was such a loved and contented

animal she new how much we loved her. Thank you for letting me send you this email I just need to talk about Toby and write my thoughts down it makes me feel a little better. Sincerely Marlene Gardner

From Carleton place

Ontario Canada

Dear Mr. Frawley:

I just want to thank you for your web site for it gave me the strength to do one of the hardest things I ever had to do in my life. One week ago to day I had to put my best friend, Amber, to sleep. She was suffering from cancer. It was by the grace of God that I stumbled across your website when trying to listen to my head instead of my heart and let her go. Knowing that I was not alone in having to make this decision and reading how other owners struggled with this issue was a great help to me. I can't go into detail about Amber's failing health. It's much too difficult at this time as the wounds are still too fresh, but I just wanted to say thanks for being there for me (for us). If it wasn't for your website I don't think I would have had enough courage to go through with it. Thanks for your help. We appreciate it.

Sincerely,
Michelle

Hi. I just wanted to say "Thank You" for your wonderful website. Tomorrow afternoon, I have to put my beloved Pookie to rest. Pookie is my "Heinz 57" 15 year old baby. Within the last 4 months, she has started having seizures and has been put on Phoenabarb. Her seizures were under control for a month or so and then she started having them again so the PB levels were increased.

About a month ago, she ate my cell phone charger that was in my car.....yes, you read that correctly.....she ATE my cell phone charger. I took her to the vet a couple of days later to see if she had passed the cord. She had not. It was a huge knot of wire in her stomach. She had surgery to remove the cord and seemed to be doing okay until about a week and a half ago. She had several cluster seizures in one day. None lasting over 2 minutes but I logged 10 seizures in 2 days. When I took her to the vet to have her stitches taken out, they did some blood tests to see if anything else was going on with her. The blood test came back showing her liver enzymes elevated and her white blood cell count high. She was put on different food and some antibiotics and I was told I should see a vast improvement in a couple of days. That was last Thursday.

Since then, she seems like she is losing her vision rapidly. Her eyes have always been a bit milky due to old age and cataracts but they are

really white now and she runs into walls, tables, you name it. She can't take 5 steps without stumbling or staggering and falling down. Sometimes she acts like she can't see me. She wedges herself into corners and just stands there. She has also, within the last couple of days, started lifting her feet high when she walks. I described this to my vet and he said she has most likely had a stroke. He said it is called "Goose Stepping" when she is lifting her feet and that is a sure sign that she has had a stroke.

I found your website yesterday and read a lot of the e-mails from people who struggled with when is the right time to let go. I am keeping her alive for me and not for her. I realized that yesterday. I know it won't be easy to let my Pookie girl go, but I have to for her sake. I've never had to put a pet to sleep and I hope I never have to again. Thank you once more for your wonderful website and words of encouragement.

Kristi Poo

June 21, 2005

Thank you for posting such a great website! I found your site last night, and it gave me comfort in knowing my decision was the right one to do. I had to put my best friend to sleep today, but I know he is happy and on the other side of that bridge with his flippy flop waiting for me to throw it. Oxford has had a wonderful life and

has seen more of this world than any dog could ever imagine. From riding in the Corvette with the top down, taking a ride in our plane, visiting the Bahamas, and living on a boat in Florida for a while. He certainly will be missed, but he touched so many people's lives including my own. Thank you Oxford for giving me 12 years of happy memories! We Love you, and miss you. Thank you again for keeping this site open and giving us a chance to realize we are not alone.

Todd Claggett

Dear Ed,

I am attaching a memorial I composed to my miniature poodle named Whiskey. I had her for almost 17 years, although she was in failing health the past several years.

I found your site when I was searching my heart and soul on whether or not I needed to do what I had always dreaded....putting her out of her misery. It was your site that helped me through it, along with a box of Kleenex. Only after I finally did put her down did I realize that it was something that I should have done for her sooner. I guess I wasn't able to face it.

I feel bad about that now.

Please read the attachment, along with a picture of my Whiskey. It says a lot about that precious little dog.

Thank you for your helpful site!
Mary Ann Shaw
Oxnard, CA



My Best Friend.....Whiskey

Sunday, June 11th I lost my best friend.

Whiskey was a beautiful dog, inside and out.

Whiskey's heart was full of love, so very smart,
and there was not a mean bone in her body.
Whiskey loved everyone!

Whiskey was just shy of 17 years old and it took
every bit of strength that I had to make the

decision that she should be spared the suffering that she had been enduring.

She shared everything in my life and will be very deeply missed.

From the very first day that I brought her home and she jumped in the shower with me the next morning, then ran over as I was blow drying my hair and looked up at me as if to say well, what about me? Since that day, she got a weekly bath/shower and was blow dried. She liked to be pretty, she liked to please, and she liked to be good and was so full of love.

Looking back over the years, and all the people that Whiskey has run across for any variety of reasons, it was always the same. To know Whiskey, was to love her.

She was truly a special little doggy. Actually I have often felt that she is not really a doggy, but a little person in a doggy suit! She has jogged with me since she was four months old until the past several years when her health started failing. She enjoyed going to the beach with me, she has been in Vegas and Laughlin numerous times, and a number of other little trips. She has flown back to Wisconsin with me numerous times for visits with family on Christmas or other visits. She will be very deeply missed by anyone who knew this sweet little girl.....especially me. She has etched her memory in my heart forever. I know that she

is in doggy heaven and is a doggy angel right now.

Dearly missed by her "Mom".... Maryann Shaw

Since writing it I have learned a great deal about motivational training methods...if I did it again I would have used the treat bag almost constantly. You always wonder what more might have been done. An e-collar might have helped break his sock habit. He had a good life with us.

Eulogy for Oscar

Oscar died from complications in surgery this 12th day of November, 2003. We buried him this afternoon in a pleasant clearing behind our house overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

The surgery was necessary to remove a gravel covered sock from his intestinal tract. Our efforts to keep Oscar from socks were never entirely successful. This sock fell from the clothes line.

We acquired Oscar in the fall of 1999. He had been in the care of the SPCA after a successful animal cruelty prosecution for physical abuse and neglect, and we took him one day before he was scheduled to be euthanized. It was apparently not an easy thing to place an abused and traumatized 90 pound black German Shepherd. Despite documented physical abuse, neglect and some minor behavioral issues, Oscar

was essentially an optimistic and gentle soul. Over the years he became more trusting and ever more appreciative of brushing, rubbing, and sharing of the loveseat.

The other side of Oscar's character was his wild enthusiasm for free running in nature. Although he was submissive with cattle dog Coogan and gentle with people, he was brave and stupid enough to tree two bears in his career. His nose was often to the wind, as he would breathe deeply of his surroundings.

Oscar was not an easy dog to keep alive. He was sometimes impulsive and threatening toward small dogs, occasionally alarming them and more crucially an owner or two. But after a week of dog day care in St. John's he had a gaggle of beagles in tow. It was that first 10 seconds of contact in which he exhibited an ardent curiosity that did verge on aggression. Obedience was never his strongpoint. Eye contact was impossible during drills, and when his other instincts and drives took over, you were out of luck. He would chase cars, snowmobiles, and ATVs, and thus had to be kept on lead far more than he would have liked: he was a skijor dog by default. I have walked miles through bog and skied many off track kilometers so that Oscar could run free and I certainly did enjoy that time. The sock habit was impossible to break and we never did succeed in keeping him from sticking his head in the hamper or laundry room, despite our efforts. In

the woods he was more prone to follow his own muse or the scent of prey than the other dogs, as was evident from his five day solo sojourn in snow-covered and windswept Blomidon mountains, and his far more numerous 10 minute disappearances in the course of a morning ramble. In a sense keeping him alive and safe was our mission, and it is tremendously sad that he did not live to die of old age. His character would have continued to improve. He would have been a grand and beloved old dog.

Our memories include his delight before a walk, as he bounded and pranced and spun in happy anticipation of his good fortune. They include his uncharacteristic assertion of his place on the loveseat with one or both of us. His mellow howling along with the siren at the fire station across the street. His time spent with or near coyotes when lost in the mountains in 2001. A night sleeping with me under the stars in Terra Nova National Park. A 50km ski from Corner Brook Ski Club to Benoit's Cove, across Serpentine Lake, up Red Gulch, below Southern Peak... Skijoring with a snowshoe hare ahead on the trail. Nights with Nicole in the Humber Village barn when I was articling in St. John's. The time he herded a moose directly toward me. A brilliant day of sunshine and fox tracks during an exploration of Burgess Gulch in Gros Morne Park. A special day at the Trout River Bowl. A 300m swim across a river to sniff noses with the

Rottweiler on the other side. Saying hello on the walk to the bathroom at 3am. Apples for bedtime snack. The satisfaction of finding a moose bone. His enjoyment of an outdoor sleep under the falling snow in Humber Village, contentedly alone.

We love you and miss you Bud.

Andrew and Nicole

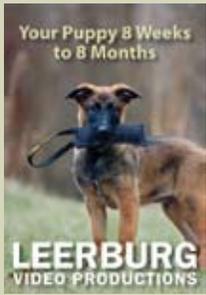
[Additional emails from others who have had to suffer the loss of their pets - click here.](#)

[Go to this web site and watch how Nick produced a tribute to his old dog. Click here, but have your Kleenex handy.](#)

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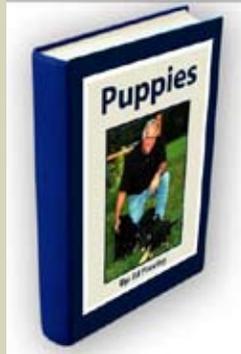
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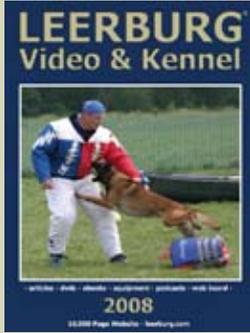


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