

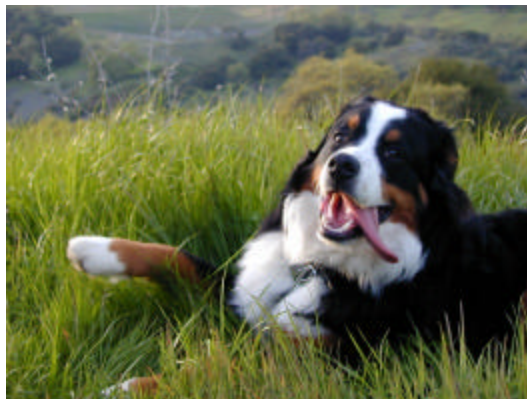
ODE to SCHLAPPI

June 10, 2001 – November 6, 2008

The snowflakes are falling
and so are my tears.
Winter has reached us
and our dear Schlappi, too.
He has lived a joyous Spring, a rapturous Summer and a
long Indian Fall
...and now his Winter is upon us.

As the cold Winter surrounds us,
cold are the tears trickling down my face
and splashing down onto the cold, cold paws of my
beloved Schlappi.

He has not much heat left in him to heat them, his little paws...
and it is getting harder for him to get up and walk.
The Winter is slowly taking it's toll...
taking our dear Schlappi away from us.



His Spring was full of love and life...

Digging in the soft sands of California Beaches...

Sleeping in our lush, green California garden on
full-moon nights.

Playing with his dear puppy-hood friends, Georgie,
the Golden Lab, and Elsa, the great African
Ridgeback.





He pulled a wagon in an Easter parade in Capitola, CA. We would go on long hikes in the Hills of Almaden Valley. How he loved to run through the long wispy grasses with such joy in his heart and a big Berner smile on his face.

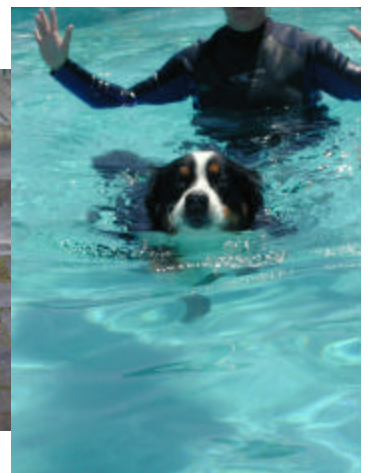
His baby Berner brother, Smokie Bear, came to us in during his Spring and his youth. Schlappi taught Smokie well, with patience, love and tenderness from his unselfish heart. He was the best Big Brother Smokie Bear could have ever asked for. Smokie learned so much from Schlappi and looked up to him immensely.



Schlappi was a star. Wining and dining in some of the Nation's nicest pet friendly hotels. He was featured in the articles I wrote for Fido Friendly Magazine about these wonderful adventures. (below left Schlappi & Smokie in Aspen, CO)



He braved two TBLO operations, and even got to learn to swim in Hydro-therapy sessions after his operation.



His Summer was spent in the high Rocky Mountain town of Telluride, Colorado.



For these dogs, the Bernese, came from the Mountains and it is only fair if possible to return them to the mountains that they love so much.

Schlappi loved to hike “up-hill” just like me, his Mom, and coming down careful and slow, also like his Mom.

He loved to make friends with all other animals as well as with both children and grown-ups, alike...but his unseverable bond to me was and has always been clear. He was my dog and I was his human and nothing would ever come between that magical, mystical, unspoken bond between us.



His daily routine involved going on long morning walks in the woods and then coming to Alpen Schatz, the store and business



inspired by him. He loved “hanging out”, getting treats from the UPS man, and getting petted and praised by thousands of customers over the years.

His wonderful, gentle demeanor and beautiful looks indeed inspired many people to get their first

Bernese Mountain Dog – such was the great example that he set for the breed.





His Long Indian Fall came rather suddenly...

with him tiring more readily, losing interest in his treats and then eventually food all together.

This way too long Autumn was spent with many months of worry, many vet visits, trying to find out why this change...what was happening to our dear boy, Schlappi.

It was spent making him eat, but nevertheless, watching him dwindle.

Once the Vet did the final test, which revealed a horrible form of Liver Cancer, we began experimenting with Holistic treatments which seemed to make him feel better for a short period of time, but eventually could not hold back the ever-growing, encroaching cancer.

This season was filled with a myriad of emotions:

Confusion, Sadness, Love, Hope, Disbelief, Fear...

...and all of the time trying **so hard** to remain positive and joyful around our dear, dear, most loyal and faithful brave Schlappi....so as to give him strength and hope and to not let him see our distress...

As the long Indian Summer dragged on and on, we all lost strength and sleep, and gradually our hope began to fade...as Schlappi's body began to fade more quickly.

His eyes and spirit and soul remained so bright and strong...but in a body not fit to carry him any longer.



His Winter came abruptly one day ...
and we knew we could not hold onto him any longer.

We had to let him go.

And he went out with dignity and bravery
and with one last deep breath...his candle was
extinguished.

He was brave and noble and strong in spirit until the
very end, and his powerful spirit will live on forever in
our hearts and in his heaven.



Schlappi in Garden of the Gods

SCHLAPPI was a gentleman.

He was the “wise man”, the looker, the
thinker...

Schlappi is/was a very old soul...and hence
from the time that we were brought together, he
bonded to my own very old soul so very deeply.

Our bond was so strong, that already when he
was just 6 months old, I began crying when I
thought that someday, my Schlappi might leave
us...and now that it has come...I cannot believe
he is gone...he has touched my life so deeply
and it will never be the same again.



His nickname was “Rock Lobster” after the B52 song...as he at times would do what he wanted to do and no one could change his mind.

He had quite the independent spirit...our dear “Rock Lobster”, which made him more human than dog at times.



On walks, he was the “super-sniffer” taking the walk at his pace rather than ours...investigating select bushes, trees, and grasses as if they had a story to tell.

He also loved to sleep outdoors on certain moon-lit nights, at times hiding from us, with his passion to stay out “in nature” all night long.

He loved to roll on his back in the grass and scratch his lower back on bushes.

He was so gentle with his little kitten sisters, Salsa & Tango, and of course his little brother Smokie Bear. Indeed he wanted to make friends with all animals, including Mr. Porcupine, who he

encountered more than just once – probably wanting to sniff him and “make friends” but with a disappointing result each time.

His favorite people food was cheese, and every morning when I made my breakfast...he would be there at my feet, gazing up to me with his big brown eyes...saying “just one sliver, pleeeeeeaaase”. And of course he got his way...

He never liked to be left alone, rather be with me/us... whether in the car, store, walk, etc., so if it were possible, we spent most of every day of his life doing things together, apart from trips involving flying, on which he could not accompany me.

Now, just 7 short years later, his Angels have come for him...and he has faded before our eyes. His soul is still strong, however his body is gone. Never have I known a dog with such a big soul and spirit and heart. There is so much to be learned from him...but he has had to leave us.

I know that I will see him again when my time comes, and with this thought, I can go on. He will be waiting there for me as big and beautiful and loving and loyal as ever.

Oh, my Schlappi!!! My dearest...my heart and my soul... **THANK YOU** for all of the wonderful years you have given me and all of the people you have touched and inspired.

We will miss you and love you forever!!!!

For Schlappi from your loving Mom, always.