

The Rainbow Bridge Comes All Too Soon
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A number of our friends have experienced the loss of their four-footed companions this year. Emma, Bud and Woofie are among the ones who have crossed to the Rainbow Bridge. For those of you not familiar with the Bridge, it is a mythical place just this side of heaven, where loved pets are made young and healthy again. They romp and play, and wait for their special humans to join them, so they can journey to heaven together.

Emma was a wonderful Old English Sheepdog mix, who, as a puppy, was rescued from a house fire by our friend Mel. Together, Mel and Emma climbed many of Colorado's fourteeners, and rafted down many rapids and rivers.

Bud, an Irish Setter mix, and Woofie, a terrier mix were the cherished family members of our friend Sandy. While Bud loved most everyone, Woofie would have been happy if he could have had Sandy all to himself. He often tried to make this happen by being a grumpy old man at times with visitors and other dogs alike. But he was a cutie who looked a lot like the movie star dog Benji.

Mocha, our 11 year old Dalmatian, began showing his age this year, and we know it won't be too many more years before he too takes his place at the Bridge. It's hard for us to believe Mocha is now an "old-man". It truly seems like yesterday that he was a youngster with endless energy, chewing up shoes, and pestering to play. Now Ashley, our 5 year old Dalmatian, has assumed that role, and Mocha is content to nap on the couch, or preferably the bed.

With so many advances in veterinary medicine, our pets are living longer than ever before. There are many options from nutritional supplements, to acupuncture to new anti-inflammatory medications that can prolong pets' healthy years and improve their quality of life in their senior years. Veterinarians offer preventive health care programs specially tailored for senior pets. Behaviorists can help owners with behavioral changes common to older pets such as separation anxiety and housesoiling (due to non-medical causes). Changes associated with aging can be slowed down with good care. As Dr. Steve Withrow, head of the oncology service at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at Colorado State University says, "age is not a disease".

As our pets reach the end of their life span, it's a heart wrenching decision to make the choice to say good-bye and give them a peaceful death. But this is the last gift we have to give in return for all the years of laughter and companionship they gave to us.

Our wish for the new year is that we don't allow the young, active, fun years with our pets slip by. We should play more games of fetch, take more walks, and twirl the cat dancer more often. Someone once said that the biggest fault pets have is that their lives are too short. We agree, so let's make the most of the all too few years we have the privilege of enjoying with our four-legged family members.

Copies of the Rainbow Bridge story that can be personalized are available at Pet Tributes and Magnets, 612-935-3492.

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