

February 14, 2012

Ebenezer's Final Farewell Letter

Dearest Friends ~

I left this world on Sunday February 12, 2012 at 9:30 pm surrounded by the caregivers that had loved me for a very long time. I will never forget them and all the love they gave me day after day, and night after night.

The deer that roam my pasture were standing guard outside my barn when Randy & Shirley arrived at 7:30 pm. I heard Shirley's thoughts as she was coming to help me this time. She said if I was down it was her sign that I was ready to go. To be sure she understood I put my tired back up against the many straw bales that lined my building to help me keep warm this winter. I knew she would understand that it was my signal to her not to pick me up again. She and Randy had been lifting me off and on for months with help from other people that loved me. Sometimes they lifted me on their own by sheer will to have me live to enjoy another day for all of the people that loved me and wanted to visit. I knew I was loved by all these folks that stopped to help me over and over again.



This past summer had been rough for me. Something began to happen to my body that I didn't understand. Everywhere my body was supposed to bend it wouldn't. I heard the word arthritis used a lot when I moved. Shirley would be so sad and thought maybe I was telling her it was my time to go. But she had Dr. Wagner come and visit me and he said I was healthy otherwise; heart & lungs & blood work were all excellent whatever that all means because I don't know some of these words.

So for about a month they picked me up with these big wide straps. It took a lot of my friends to lift me and make sure my rear legs got underneath me before they set me down. I began to know something was wrong because I just felt weak. That never happened before. I weighed about 475 pounds & with the hot weather some days were unbearable for them & me. I wanted to lie down longer but when they got me up I would feel like I was going to fall down again because one side of me felt weird. I don't understand what it meant but Shirley would tell the caregivers that if I stayed down too long my blood would begin to pool on the side I was laying on. Many of my dedicated friends showed up day after day to help me.

After painful injections in my rear legs didn't help, one of my favorite people in the whole wide world, Matt Koch (I can still hear him holler my name as loud as he could from a distance, "Ebe! Ebe!") told Randy & Shirley about some injections that helped his dog that had arthritis. (I never liked dogs – sorry – they remind me of predators and my instincts tell me to run them off or hurt them to protect me and those I love. Sorry I got off of the subject for a minute.) So every two weeks I got a shot in my big neck muscle of a medicine that made me feel like a million bucks! Shirley called it juice for joints but it was Adequan Intramuscular Injections for Equines. There were days that I felt so good I could trot at a pretty fast pace. I loved to do it because it made Shirley and Randy laugh. I loved it when they would say, "Ebe you are funny and we love you Buddy." It would always be followed by pats and kisses.

But then something else began to happen. As the temperatures started dropping at night, I got cold. That had never happened before. I felt sick and like I should sleep for a long time. One morning Shirley was scared. She said something about 91.4. My new doc told them if my temp dipped into the 80's I would die of hypothermia. I didn't know what that meant but I got scared. I wasn't ready to go yet. Shirley and Randy left and came back with this thing that was noisy like those things they used in the summertime to make my grass smell good when it got shorter. They called it a generator and then there were these two things that blew warm air. Wow, that was neat. I would stand under them and it was like having a warm summer breeze blowing on me. Then Shirley put these weird things on my legs – they called them socks and they got out my heavy winter blanket for me to wear too but it was not enough. Shirley told me they talked to the Mayor of Grandview, Steve Dennis to ask him to talk to KCP&L on my behalf. They wanted something called electricity to help keep me warm. And to their surprise KCP&L agreed to do it. I didn't know what all that meant but I could feel their excitement and there were more hugs and kisses and tears and thanking God for this huge blessing. Trey Crosson of Crosson Electric (he was a nice guy – kind of quiet but I liked him) did all the necessary work from this weird pole out by my fence to the barn & we passed inspection and Randy was so excited when we got something called a meter on December 23rd. I got electricity (whatever that is but that noisy thing outside my barn quit and there was more warm breezes in my barn.) I was happy and all my caregivers were happy because it was snug in my barn. The year before was so cold and snowy and we were all so cold. We were all counting our blessings we didn't have to be cold anymore.

After that I noticed Shirley was really sad. She would kiss me on the neck and tell me not to leave her; that her mom was really sick and she needed me because I made her feel better. She began to spend less and less time with me but I had Randy and my other caregivers. Then one day she was with me again and she didn't leave me for a very long time. I knew that someone she loved very much was gone. I could feel her leave this world and then I knew it was going to be my time very soon. At night when I was alone I began to hear someone calling my name off in the distance. I got disoriented on Sunday February 5th when I got let out of the barn to exercise and I fell in a spot where I had walked a thousand times. Something was really hurting this time when Randy and Shirley and two nice men I didn't know very well stopped and helped me get up. I didn't let on that anything was hurting because I stood there for a very long time without moving.

Then 2 days later I couldn't hide it anymore. Shirley called Dr. Hall and he came to see me. But I didn't want him to know so I walked really fast inside my barn so he couldn't see my front left leg was shaking. Dr. Hall said barn rest for the rest of the week but on Friday I hurt so bad. This time Shirley called Dr. Wagner to come and do chiropractic work on me. I felt good for the rest of the day but the next morning my back legs quit working the way I remember they used to. Dr. Wagner came out on Saturday and thought by the way I was standing I had an ulcer from pain medicine I had been taking. So I got this medicine that tasted like apples called Ulcer Guard. It didn't help. Shirley and Randy came to be with me every few hours starting on Friday night. They tried to get me to eat because I didn't feel like it. Shirley gave me my favorite snack – oats coated with a little molasses. I got to have as much as I would eat of it. I got lots and lots of carrots. I just couldn't eat my regular food. I don't know why. The last time I managed to go to the bathroom was Saturday evening. I stopped drinking water even though it tasted so good. Shirley said my water was what Goldilocks would have liked. (Who is Goldilocks?) She said it was just right – not too hot or too cold. She was always coming up with stories to make me forget I was hurting.

Sunday was a bad day. I had to lay down every few hours. Friends were called to come and pick me up again and again throughout the day. Finally it was dark and I was tired. Randy and Shirley had just left from trying to get me to eat some dinner and I was so tired. My caregiver Carol came to check on me and she cried and cried and said she loved me so much. After she left I lay down and waited peacefully with my back resting against the straw bales for Shirley and Randy to come. I knew they would because they always did. They never failed me since they found me on September 16, 2009. After Shirley and Randy spent some time quietly talking with me and petting me softly they covered me with warm blankets. I sighed and stretched a few times and bowed my head. I hoped they knew that meant thank you. They began to call my caregivers to come and be with me. I felt so loved. Dr. Stigge was called and he came with this nice lady named Teresa. My owner was called but he never came to see me. He said, "There was nothing he could do about it," and he hung up from talking to Nancy, my caregiver that called me Barney for so many years. So a little before 9:30 pm I felt a little pinch in my neck and some warm liquid came into my body and I got really sleepy. I could hear my caregivers crying softly and they were all holding hands and looking at me. I was ready to go. Shirley told me I better be waiting for her at Heaven's Gate when she got there. Of course I will. I am going to greet all my friends that kept me going when my family stopped coming to see me. They will hear my big happy bray once again. I will be new but you will know me. I crossed the Rainbow Bridge and I am pain free now so I can do my donkey run and kick my back legs out.

Love to all,
Ebenezer