

BEAR PAW SERVICE DISTRICT SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021

The Annual meeting of the Bear Paw Property Owners Association (BPPOA) is Saturday May 29, 2021 at 1pm in the Bear Paw Clubhouse. The proposed agenda includes discussion of last, current and next years plans/activities and election of directors for the BPPOA Board. you may vote in person or by proxy, a copy of which is enclosed in this newsletter. If you vote by proxy, fill out the form completely and ensure it is filed, preferably by the person given your proxy, with the BPPOA secretary at the BP office before the meeting ail your proxy to 60 Village Rd. Murphy, NC 28906. Remember, one vote per lot regardless of the number or co-owners; taxes must be current.

Three Directors will be elected at this meeting. A director must be a BPPOA property owner in good standing throughout his/her term in office, must be 21 years of age and can serve a maximum of two consecutive two year terms. Any qualified member may officially declare their candidacy at the meeting. BPPOA directors will be submitted to the Cherokee County Commissioners to become Bear Paw Service District Directors. If you are interested in running for a position on the board, please contact Mitch or Emily in the BP office 828-644-0808. The following Candidates have expressed a desire to be involved with the operations of Bear Paw and will be running for the Board:

Linda Hughes:

I have been a resident of Bear Paw for over 15 years. I was born and raised in Atlanta GA, and we moved here permanently from Atlanta in March 2020. I retired in October 2020.

During my work career I held numerous management and executive positions. These roles include being the divisional CIO for a fortune 50 company as well as the CEO of a small business. I was a consultant for over half my career providing strategies and operational advice for state and local governments as well as nonprofits and all sizes of corporations. This has given me an appreciation for many different organizations, knowledge of their issues, and the ability to be part of figuring out how to solve simple as well as complex issues.

My nonprofit and government experience includes: being a board member for multiple business and technology companies; being committee chairman for the building and maintenance area of Trees Atlanta; being board chair for the Atlanta chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners, PAWS Atlanta (a no kill animal shelter), and other technology and business groups; and being a board member for the Atlanta Regional Commission Strategic Plan Innovation Committee.

As I transition to retirement one of my goals is to be more involved with the Bear Paw community and Murphy. I am hopeful that my experience with corporate, government, and nonprofit boards can be leveraged as a member of the board.

Thank you,
Linda

Bear Paw is greening up and with it, our outlook! It's been an interesting ride this past year, but we have weathered the storm and are left with greater appreciation of life and of one other. A "handshake" means more than ever, and a face expresses more than we knew.

This will be my final note to everyone, as the election is coming, and a new Board will be serving Bear Paw. Steve Jones and Jerry Pezzella have been invaluable counselors to us, without whom we'd have floundered. But floundering wasn't on the menu and though challenges will always remain, Bear Paw is in great shape.

Additionally, internet service in Bear Paw is being vigorously explored, and an upcoming communication concerning it will address challenges and a call for solutions. Your input and ideas are crucial, as with the more people involved, the better we can overcome this issue. Please stay tuned for another message from me shortly!!!!

Lastly, confusion has been expressed about the various organizations that support Bear Paw Service District, and whether this support comes fairly or not. It's a long story and is sensitive to those who understand the history and the facts. In an upcoming communication these facts will be presented, and your input and discussion is warmly invited.

Thank you again to the entire Board for your hard work and your support of Bear Paw. You have performed wonderfully in challenging circumstances! With your continued diligence and our manager Mitch's daily dedication, Bear Paw will continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

David Marion

ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR RETURNS!

Among the many planned activities for this summer is the return of the annual Arts & Crafts Fair to be held July 3rd, 9am until noon at the clubhouse pavilion. As in past years, there will be plenty of fun activities for the children followed by Hotdogs fresh off the grill - \$3 for hotdog, chips and a drink but participating kids eat free! Put it on your calendar and come join the fun!

If you are an artist or crafty person, please let us know. We may have a need to display your talent at the Craft Fair. We already have a couple of wood turners, two quilters, a basket weaver, a stained-glass artist, a photographer and a puzzle maker. Are you a painter, carver, photographer, or potter? If so, we would like to show off your talent at the Craft Fair. If you would like to come display your art or crafts, please contact David Dempsey at djdempsey@bellsouth.net or call 404-386-1558. Please let us know by June 4th so we can include you in our exhibit plan. Also call if you would like to volunteer to help with the fair. Volunteers are greatly appreciated.

***** If you are not receiving emails from BPSD please call office to verify your correct email. You also may check your spam settings on your email account as well. *****

Please visit bearpawnc.com for updated Calendar of Meetings as well as any happenings in the paw!

BEAR PAW LADIES AUXILIARY 2021

The Bear Paw Ladies Auxiliary (BPLA) provides an opportunity for the ladies in Bear Paw to work together to enhance our community as well as to support various enrichment programs at the Hiwassee Dam School. All ladies in Bear Paw are welcome. The work of the BPLA continually demonstrates that you can accomplish amazing things by working together.

The BPLA holds two luncheon meetings each year, Spring and Fall. Our first meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 20, at 11:30 in the clubhouse. Bring one of your favorite salads or other dish to share. Drinks and dessert will be provided. Please RSVP Tricia at 828/644-0835 and leave a message so we can plan to accommodate everyone.

The BPLA WELCOME COMMITTEE, comprised of Maraya Magness, Lynda Jacobs and Lydia Kennedy, has been hard at work developing a "Bear Paw" phone book. Only those who have authorized us to use their information will be in the book.

The Bear Paw phone book is now complete and will be sold for \$5 as a fundraiser for the BPLA. It will be available at the May luncheon, the Memorial Day BBQ and the Bear Paw office.

The *BPLA ANNUAL GARAGE SALE* will be on Saturday, August 21, from 8 until noon. Set up will take place on Friday, August 20, at 3:00. All volunteers for the set-up and/or the actual sale event will be invited to enjoy a cocktail party immediately following the completion of the set-up. This will be followed by an opportunity for you to shop ahead of the general public. Everyone in Bear Paw is invited to volunteer. Please contact Tricia at 828/644-0835.

All donations are appreciated but we do ask that you observe the following guidelines:

PLEASE DO NOT DONATE

OLD TVs, Stereos or Speakers

Mattresses

Clothes

Anything That Could Be Considered TRASH

(Please drive a little further and deposit these items in the dumpsters)

The office has a key to the storage area (skate-room) where you can leave your items.

The Bear Paw Ladies Auxiliary thanks you for your donations, participation and support.

BEAR PAW LIVE! 2021

With all fingers and toes crossed that everything will be back to some semblance of normalcy by summer, the Bear Paw Live! Committee is happy to announce the schedule for our 2021 concerts:

June 26 – BabyGray with Jimmy Gillis

August 7 – Kayla Taylor Jazz

September 4 – Joe Gransden and Kenny Banks

JUNE 26 - BabyGray (Michelle Milligan and Bobby Kennedy) along with Jimmy Gillis are certainly not strangers to our Bear Paw community. They have performed for us on two previous occasions and have never disappointed. Whether you love to dance or just kick back and listen to their exciting sound, their music showcases something for everyone. All three are members of the touring band, Southern Satisfaction, and will entertain you with acoustic versions of many of your favorite rock, soul, country, pop, funk and blues standards.

AUGUST 7 - Some of you might remember Kayla Taylor as the talented lead vocalist for the 120 East Band who performed for us in 2019. What you might not know is that Kayla's "real job" is to perform with her own jazz ensemble, appropriately called Kayla Taylor Jazz. Led by the duo of Kayla Taylor on vocals and Steve Moore on guitar, along with Randy Hunter on saxophone and two as yet unnamed (due to covid considerations) musicians on upright bass and drums, this talented group appears regularly on the Atlanta music scene as well as being very popular at wedding receptions. This evening will give everyone an opportunity for an evening that is laid back, mellow and entertaining. Kayla and the guys perform a wide range of jazz classics as well as favorites from the American Songbook.

SEPTEMBER 4 – In 2019 we were lucky enough to entice Joe Gransden to perform for us with his Big Band pianist Geoff Haydon. If you were in attendance, you know that Joe is the consummate entertainer – reminiscent of the likes of Frank Sinatra and Harry Connick, Jr. This year Joe will return to our lineup along with his regular duo sidekick Kenny Banks. Joe and Kenny have graced the stages of such venues as The Blue Note in NYC, the Rialto Theatre and Ray's on the River (every Thursday night) in Atlanta as well as Clint Eastwood's Tehama Golf Club in Carmel, CA. According to Clint Eastwood, "Joe is a young man with an old soul and a classic voice. . . And don't forget, he plays a hell of a trumpet!" Joe Gransden on trumpet and vocals and Kenny Banks on keys promise to transport you into a world where cool jazz is still king.

The only change we are making this year is to start all concerts at 8:00 PM. This will give you just a little more time to get off the lake and get to the concerts to relax and unwind with friends and family. We hope an added bonus is that the sun will not be quite so hot and blinding! Reservations are still \$12 in advance - made by making arrangements with Ginger Webster at 828/644-5807 before noon on the Saturday of each concert or you can always pay \$15 at the gate. Children under 13 are still \$5 anytime. All concerts will be staged under the Pavilion rain or shine. We will follow any required COVID protocols.

This year the Bear Paw Live! Committee is comprised of Cheryl Dover, Eileen Humphlett, Lydia Kennedy, Beth Lucchesi, Kathi Mansfield, Tricia Swiger, Marie Wang and Ginger Webster - along with the tireless support and help of their husbands.

PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR

June 26 – BabyGray with Jimmy Gillis

August 7 – Kayla Taylor Jazz

September 4 – Joe Gransden and Kenny Banks



Bear Paw Service District

Manager's Report

Mitch Price

03/27/21

Administration/HR

- Emily Bryant is currently scheduled to take the class necessary to obtain her North Carolina Notary Commission. This will be a value-added service for the Service District to provide its residents.

Trees

- Cliff Raper, our front area lawn and road grass maintenance person, has given me a verbal quote of \$3,800.00 to trim tree limbs throughout the property. Bear Paw pays Mr. Raper about \$21,555.00 annually to maintain the front area and road mowing only. The breakout is as follows:
 - i. \$13,500.00/year to mow roads (\$4,500.00 x 3 times per year approximately 2 ½ weeks before Memorial Day, July Fourth, and Labor Day).
 - ii. \$8,055.00/year for front entrance work (\$895.00/mo. x 9 mos.—April thru Dec.)
- 12/17/20: John Schafer at 90 Cherry Hill was given approval by this Manager for tree trimming by Mi Po Tree Service.
- 01/06/21: Claude cleared more trees on White Cloud Dr., Arrowhead Dr., and Whispering Pine Trail.

Security

- The cameras and video recording system at the front gate need upgrading. Our current system has no practical purpose and exposes the Service District to unnecessary liability. The issues are as follows:
 - i. License plate camera is incapable of capturing a readable license plate image because it is too far away, and the camera is not capable of zooming in. Also, the camera is not the correct specification to capture low light images.
 - ii. The camera positioned above the door to the gatehouse for capturing a driver's face is very low quality; and the camera that captures the old exit side is the same. This old exit side camera could be better deployed where the current license plate camera sits but facing toward Hiwassee Dam Access Rd. so that it captures the exit traffic.
 - iii. Currently, there is no camera facing toward the interior of the property in the direction of the pond and pavilion. A replacement camera was ordered and received prior to my time at Bear Paw, but it is not compatible with the current DVR.
 - iv. The current DVR is outdated and appears unable to record and playback.
- I have attached two price quotes for a new system: one from Mountain Valley Systems, LLC located in Morganton, GA; and the other from Tri State Life Safety located in Murphy, NC.

60 Village Rd. Murphy, NC 28906 828-644-0808

- Also attached are two other price quotes from Mountain Valley Systems, LLC. One is for an upgraded gate operator system which includes a battery backup system; and the other is for a battery backup system only, which we currently do not have.
- 01/06/21: Claude put a new doorknob on the gatehouse.

Access Control

- It is the opinion of this Manager that any type of construction and contractor work on the Bear Paw property should have designated hours. Typically—except for emergency service—gated communities only allow construction and service work Monday through Saturday between the hours of 8:00am and 5pm. No activity would be allowed on Sundays or the six major US holidays, i.e., New Year's Day; Memorial Day; July Fourth; Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day; and Christmas Day.

Front Entrance Lights

- Price quote attached from Mountain Power Electric for replacement of the front entrance lights.

Pool

- The pool is currently in the process of draining to determine exactly where a water leak is located. Possible leak locations include the tile and grout areas, the pool shell, and the skimmers and skimmer lines. This process could take until the end of March if rainfall remains light enough for the pool drainage to stay ahead of rainwater replenishment. The Board should review the price quote from Danny Weeks which shows the cost of redoing the tile and grout, and, or resurfacing the entire pool. The drainage of pool water below a certain level will also eliminate or reveal a problem with the leakage possibly coming from the skimmer lines. Leakage seems to be the greatest during cold weather. Our highest volume of leakage was at 2100 gallons per day.
- There is currently a nationwide chlorine shortage due to a major chlorine manufacturing plant burning down in the state of Louisiana. Not having adequate availability of chlorine will preclude Bear Paw from opening the pool for the season. An option would be for Bear Paw to purchase a salt chlorinator which would convert salt into sodium hypochlorite (pool chlorine). Price quotes pending.
- In the absence of a maximum capacity for the pool area as might be mandated by the county, the current COVID-19 regulations allow pools such as Bear Paw to have a limit of 10 people per 1000 sq. feet. For Bear Paw, that would mean a cap of approximately 40 people at any given time in the pool and deck areas. The Board, however, will have to determine vis-a-vis COVID-19 if it wants to open at all, even if the pool leak and chlorine shortage can be corrected.
- For informational purposes only, Bill Wolcott from Tri-State Pool and Spas, at this Manager's request, has quoted the following for a pool cover which could be utilized during the winter months if desired:
 - i. \$9,600.00 for a standard mesh cover.
 - ii. \$10,800.00 for a heavy mesh cover.

Pavilion

- Please review the attached price quote for the re-painting of the pavilion upper structure. The price quote also contains separately a price quote for the area on top of the roof which appears not to be painted but shows signs of rust.
- 01/04/21: Mountain Power Electric relocated the overhead Pickleball Lights.

Construction

- As of 12/29/20, Mr. Steve Smith notified this Manager that he will be building an attached garage subject to Bear Paw Service District approval. As noted in the prior Manager's Report, on 11/02, after an inspection by this Manager, I gave permission to Mr. Steve Smith at 525 Wildwood Dr. to replace his existing crumbling retaining wall.

Paving, Graveling, and Road Repair

- There are various locations on the property that need road repair attention. These are items that can fall within the regular budgetary designations.

Culvert Relining

- This Manager is in the process of collecting information for Jonathan Simmons with Applied Polymerics in Mt. Airy, NC to obtain pricing for relining the culverts.

Playground

- The main swing set is not steady. The poles need to be shored up with concrete or some other support material.
- Wayne Roberts reports that The Cottages are offering to pay 75% of the cost to upgrade the playground climbing set.

Conversion of Hard Files to Digital Format

- This Manager is reviewing the most economical way to convert our eligible hard records and files—as per NC State retention requirements as well as Bear Paw policy—to a digital format. So far, the best option appears to be renting a high-speed scanner at a cost of approximately \$200.00 to \$300.00 for a 30-day period and using volunteer help under the supervision of the Manager for the project. Trish Swiger has very generously volunteered the help of the CAC (Community Action Committee) to accomplish this end. Thank you, Trish!

End of Report

Proxy for the 2021 Election of Directors
To the Bear Paw Property Owners Association
Board of Directors

I give (print the name) _____ my proxy to vote at the May 29, 2021 Bear Paw Property Owners Association meeting, or at any adjournment thereof, for the election of directors, on any other issues or matters raised at that meeting and to act on my behalf in any other business as if I personally was present. This proxy revokes all previous proxies.

I certify I am the owner, or duly authorized representative of multiple owners, of _____ lot/s (indicate number of lots) located in Bear Paw, and that all taxes have been paid on this/these lot(s).

Date: _____

Owner's Signature: _____

Print Owner's Name: _____

2021

BEAR PAW SUMMER CLUBHOUSE WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

(Memorial Day weekend thru Labor Day weekend)

Freedom summer in the "Paw"

BEAR PAW Service District Office 828-644-0808 Open 8 am to 4 pm Mon-Fri

YOGA FREE BP CLUBHOUSE UP STAIRS MON., WED., FRI. 8:30 TO 9:30 am

Stretch Yoga classes for men and women are lead by Elaine Ryan (239-218-7706)

When she is unavailable there is a DVD ready to play in the TV set with instructions. You will improve your range of motion, balance and agility. Get fit, feel good!

LINE DANCING FREE BP CLUBHOUSE UP STAIRS Tues. & Thurs. 10 am

Taught by Cheryl Dover (772-538- 8205) and Jan Merkie. You will get a cardio workout, enjoy the music and learn new dances. Come join in the fun.

Pickleball FREE UNDER THE PAVILLION Wed. & Fri. at 10 am

Set-up is required to play. Wednesday is a planned day to play but you may play other times as long as you coordinate with the office (644-0808). There are balls and rackets available.

Men's Card Night BP CLUBHOUSE DOWNSTAIRS Wed. but Varies

This is a great time for the fellas to get together and have some fun. Toni 644-9584

Women's Bridge BP CLUBHOUSE UPSTAIRS Thurs. 1 to 4 pm

Begins after Memorial Day Contact Linda 644-5990

Available Weekly: Mon. thru Sun 8am to 10pm

Tennis

Pack-up your tennis rackets and balls and head to the tennis courts. You will need your pool key to unlock the gate. Please be courteous to others who want to play.

Pool

Pool Key issued to Bear Paw residents required

Swim at your own risk, there is no lifeguards so never leave children unattended. The pool opens Memorial Weekend and closes sometime after Labor Day as the weather cools.

The pool is open from 8am to 10 pm daily during the summer.

Library

FREE BP CLUBHOUSE UP STAIRS Take a book, leave a book. The Bear Paw Ladies Auxiliary has set up a free library. The books are organized alphabetically by author. If you want something new to read or have a book to donate please feel free to use the library. It is appreciated that if you donate or return books that you file them on the shelves properly. Please no magazines

WI-Fi FREE

Connect to Wi-Fi easily at the clubhouse, no security code required. There are tables, chairs and comfy couches upstairs in the clubhouse or you can use one of the picnic tables under the pavillion.

2021 Bear Paw Summer Calender of Events

When	Who	What	Time	Where	What you need to do	Contact
May						
Thurs., 20th	BPLA	Luncheon Meeting	11:30 AM	Bear Paw Clubhouse	Bring Salad/dish to share. Drinks and dessert provided.	All Bear Paw Ladies RSVP/info 644-0835
Sat. 29th	BPSD	Annual Meeting	9:00 PM	Bear Paw Clubhouse	Regular meeting: only the board can vote	Bear Paw Property Owners Office 828-644-0835
	BPPOA	Annual Meeting	1pm	Bear Paw Clubhouse	Election of new physical year board members.	Bear Paw Property Owners Office 828-644-0835
Sun., 30th	CAC	Memorial Weekend BARBEQUE !	5:00 PM	Bear Paw Clubhouse	BBQ, BEANS SLAW, DRINKS AND DESSERT PROVIDED \$10 pp, \$8 kids under 8. There will be a silent auction and 50/50	All of Bear Paw RSVP required by May 23rd Lydia via phone 644-1090
June						
Sat., 26th	Bear Paw LIVE! CONCERT	"Baby Gray with Jimmy Gillis"	8pm	Bear Paw Pavilion	Tickets: \$12 in advance (\$15 at the gate) \$5 children under 13 BYOB & Bring chairs/snacks	All of Bear Paw ORDER via Ginger at 828-644-5807
July						
Sat., 3rd	CAC	Craft Fair	9 am to 12	Bear Paw Pavilion	Come for a fun experience, hands on for adults and kids specialty arts to make and buy.	All of Bear Paw Volunteer to share your craft via David 423-413-6010
Sun., 4th	CAC	Golf-cart Parade	7:00 PM	Bear Paw Pavilion	Decorate your golf-cart/ATV for the 4th and join in the fun! We will Crown Miss Bear Paw, start parade at 7 followed by awards for best golf-cart.	All of Bear Paw Contact Tricia at 644-0835
Sat., 17th	BPLA	Garden Party work day.	9am	Bear Paw Clubhouse	Dress for garden work. Wear your work cloths and bring your garden tools.	Contact Rena 404-255-7473
Sat., 31st	CAC	BP Cocktail Party	5 to 7 pm	Bear Paw Clubhouse	Relax with your neighbors. We will have appetizers & \$2 specialty BearPaw cups filled with rum punch. Bring \$ for 50/50	All of Bear Paw Contact Lydia 644-0835
August						
Sat., 7th	Bear Paw LIVE! CONCERT	"Kayla Taylor Jazz"	8pm	Bear Paw Pavilion	Tickets: \$12 in advance (\$15 at the gate) \$5 children under 13 BYOB & Bring chairs/snacks	All of Bear Paw ORDER via Ginger at 828-644-5807
Sat., 21st	BPLA	Annual Garage Sale	8am to noon	Bear Paw Pavilion	DONATE ITEMS NOW AT THE STORAGE ROOM ACROSS FROM OFFICE. VOLUNTEER TO HELP.	All of Bear Paw & local community. Contact Tricia 644-0835 after May 1st or call the office 644-0808
September						
Sat., 4th	Bear Paw LIVE! CONCERT	"Joe Gransden & Kenny Banks"	8pm	Bear Paw Pavilion	Tickets: \$12 in advance \$15 at the gate under 13 \$5. ORDER via Ginger at 828-644-5807 BYOB & Bring chairs/snacks	All of Bear Paw ORDER via Ginger at 828-644-5807
October						
Sat., 9th	CAC	Chili Cook-off	5pm	Bear Paw Pavilion	Compete for the "Best Chili" award. Bring a dessert or cornbread if you are not making Chili.	RSVP Lydia via phone 644-1090
November						
Mon., 29th	CAC	Decorate BP for Christmas	3pm	Bear Paw Pavilion	Dress weather appropriate ready to hang lights.	All of Bear Paw Info contact Lydia 644-0835

BERNIE'S STORY

We recently received news that Bernie, the St. Bernard, has passed away within the last week. The story below was submitted by Mr. Joseph Harvey on Judy Lane long before Bernie's passing, but we were holding it for this Newsletter edition.

For those of you who had the pleasure of knowing Bernie, you will appreciate this story. And for those of us who did not, we can appreciate his story also.

Rest in peace, Bernie.

That First Day

By

Joseph Harvey

It was in mid-August on the day after a three day trip across the southern US from San Diego to Murphy, North Carolina. It was our first day in a new house in a new state in a place called Bear Paw. It was the first day Bernie, an 11 year old St. Bernard, would spend in a mountain lake environment after spending a lifetime in the southern California urban sprawl.

I was dog tired. My wife, Betty, who arrived by plane two days before with the cat, was set to drive my daughter and her fiancé down to Atlanta to fly back to sunny California after being part of our little caravan across the country. I needed a day - to look at the lake, maybe take a little walk with Bernie, and dwell a little on our coming life in this beautiful place. It was great; nobody could call because our cell didn't work in this area; there was no internet and no tv available. Peace at last.

At about 9:00 a.m. the DirecTV guy, Matt, showed up even though our tv's were still en-route. It was ok. His southern drawl and my Brooklynese mixed well as he went about his work. The propane guy showed up a little later and filled the tank. It was getting crowded but still quite manageable.

Then it all went to hell. The moving man, Dennis, showed up suddenly with two giant UHaul trucks that he had to rent because the trailer couldn't fit on the narrow winding road leading up to the house. There was no way he could be there just a half day behind us. We still had not paid the somewhat enormous bill. Not only that, but I didn't have the necessary cash or certified check with me and there was no way to reach anyone to pay the guy. These moving guys must know magic or something because one quick phone call to his people (His Verizon phone worked on the hill unlike my ATT phone.) and a couple of calls to my credit card companies instantly sucked 10 grand out of me. I didn't think that was possible.

So, he and three local hires began the process of unloading our junk. Everybody was still nice but I was overwhelmed and getting stressed. Bernie, as usual, was sticking his nose into the pandemonium.

I kept up with them for a while directing this box here and that piece of furniture there- upstairs, downstairs, way down in the basement. They worked hard and sweat and stank and Dennis with his clipboard kept track of it all while Bernie soon went to sleep in a bathroom and the cat, Binx, went somewhere to sleep or do whatever it is cats do.

While checking the action outside, I saw a brown and white stray beagle wandering around who, although much smaller than Bernie, reminded me to check on Bernie's whereabouts. I moved from bathroom, to bedroom, to all his new favorite spots - no Bernie. I asked Dennis and his helpers - nobody knew where he was and nobody had even seen him lately. I set out into the narrow, winding street, curving off downhill. Bernie, being an old guy, would head downhill so I chose that direction.

Earlier in the morning I had been introduced to the neighbors across the street, Marti and The Coach. They were nice people soon to join in my adventure. I told Marti of my predicament and she said she had seen Bernie frolicking with Buddy, the aforementioned beagle, and thought nothing of it. Well, Buddy was there looking guilty as hell but there was no Bernie in sight. She offered to drive me around to look for the lost dog, but I bravely refused thinking I could find him best by myself and off I went into a neighborhood that was pretty much a forest with hills and a lake on two sides at its bottom. Up and down the hills and no Bernie. As I said, I figured he would head off in any direction that went downhill. Too bad the roads mostly went up and the pathways going down were far too steep for Bernie to negotiate. They all ended at the lake- where he wouldn't want to go anyway or so I thought. Bernie hated the water and couldn't really swim too well. So up and down I went yelling Bernie's name at the top of my lungs. I did hear distant barking on one side of the lake, but that didn't sound like him or did it?

What would I tell Betty if I lost Bernie on our first day in Bear Paw?

I was hot, tired and scared when Marti pulled up in her Toyota. This time I was ready to take her offer of a ride. I got in. Now I was going up and down hills of Bear Paw fruitlessly screaming Bernie's name to the trees from a car. Bernie was probably getting ready to be dinner for a bear or an unconscious victim of a renegade copperhead. Where could the stupid dog be? I was totally oblivious to the beauty of the mountainous forest and lake that surrounded me. How was Bernie feeling about his first day in a totally alien environment that might be his last? We went from the security gate to the water tower to the Marina. Everybody we saw was willing to help look, but no one actually saw him. How could a 185 pound brown and white St. Bernard disappear so completely? I still occasionally heard that dog barking in the woods near the lake, but it couldn't be Bernie? I looked at Marti and she was just as worried as I was.

The whole community was buzzing about Bernie's disappearance. A gas-powered golf cart with two occupants drove by carrying an older gentleman and a young man just entering his teenage years. They asked about the lost dog. The young man, named Ethan, showed wild exuberance about joining the hunt for Bernie. After informing the young man about the details of the situation, he suggested getting his Weimaraner and having him sniff out poor old Bernie. I approved thinking it would do no harm but probably not work either. The kid asked me to get something that had his scent and I set out to Bernie's usual haunts where I found an old quilt that he slept on and left with plenty of slobber and a good dose of his truly magnificent scent. I gave it to Ethan and set off on my own to continue my frantic search.

Not 15 minutes later, Ethan came running up screaming, "He found it! He found it! The dog is in the lake". I kinda thought Bernie would end up in the lake. But how? The sides were steep and treacherous. Brambles, vines, poison ivy, rocks, boulders, and no real trails. There were rocks

at the bottom near the shore and maybe even the odd copperhead or two. Bernie couldn't swim. Bernie could easily be dead or dying. How could I let my dog die like this?

Ethan said he knew a way down the hill to the lake and took me to it. It sure didn't look like much of a way to me, but down I went anyway tripping over the vine tangled branches and rocks all the while listening to the mixed cries and barks of Bernie in distress. I guess it really was him who I had been hearing all the while. Not too much the worse for wear, I finally made it safely to the bottom. There was Bernie's bottom half in / top half out of the water while being kept from drowning by a young lady named Cyndi who was accompanied by her dog who had no trouble navigating on land or water. Poor Bernie was in shock and would have been dead if it were not for this brave young lady who had been with Bernie for quite some time

Meanwhile, Marti's husband, The Coach, was off to the Marina to get help and maybe a boat. I was told it could take a half hour for a boat to get there. I wondered if the three of us, now all in the water could keep Bernie from drowning. The time dragged on as we amused ourselves to keep going. Suddenly, in the distance a boat turned into our cove and seemed to be heading towards us. My God, it seemed to take forever, and how were we going to resolve this situation when they got here?

As the faces of The Coach and Ron, the owner of the boat, came into view, the three of us began to feel that maybe it was over. It wasn't. The boat was of the pontoon variety and stood high in the water. We had a helpless wet dog weighing about 185 pounds whose rear legs were exhausted or possibly paralyzed. We had to somehow lift him into the boat. We were all standing in water full of rocks embedded in muck with slippery footing, and a sharp drop into deep water. Ron tried to maneuver the boat into position while we struggled with Bernie. Soon the boat was positioned but there was no way to get his body into the boat. After a number of unsuccessful tries, our strength and stamina were waning. With one last effort, everyone holding some part of Bernie's body, we pushed and pulled, with even Bernie giving a push himself with his damaged legs, him up and onto the deck of the pontoon boat. Bernie collapsed. Those of us still in the water climbed aboard. I held onto the semi-conscious Bernie and we set off for the Marina.

The ride back was uneventful. Bernie closed his eyes. I looked around and thanked everyone and worried about how badly Bernie may be hurt. I honestly didn't know if he was going to live or die. And those around me probably thought the same. We pulled into the Marina and started discussing how we were going to get Bernie off the boat and home. I felt like I should provide some input but I had never been in the Marina before and was truly a stranger in a strange land. They chose to go to the dock walk near a break in the railing. We had to lift his still limp body off the boat, through the opening in the railing and onto the back of a gas powered golf cart which also belonged to Ron, our boat Captain. I got on the back of the golf cart and hung onto Bernie and not much else as we set off up the hill to my house. When we got there, we moved Bernie to the bed of my pickup. He just lay there hurt, exhausted, panting and I hoped, not dying.

I hope I thanked everybody as they headed off in various directions. My wife came home around the time people were leaving and I had to tell her the whole story, but I don't have to tell it again to you because you have already heard it.

Epilogue: The tv works now and all our junk is here and there all over the house. Bernie didn't move so fast for the next few days and slept a lot. We took him to the vet hospital, but it was

closed. Miraculously, he got a little better each day. Today, we hike the roads in the hills of Bear Paw and I try to keep Bernie out of the lake.

A big thank you to all those who participated in this adventure. I hope I got to mention everyone who was there that fateful day.

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