



HARLEY

Stargazer Cedarhills Brodi, CGN

Harley came into our lives initially for Joye, to help her after our tragic loss of Griz in June 2005, but he has become an incredibly important and loved part of our family who we would not be without. Joye had depended on Griz greatly for courage and when he was gone she was increasingly losing the courage that Griz helped her develop. We had no intention of getting another dog right away (famous last words) as we had wanted to spend 100% of the time with Joye, socializing her and helping her through her rough beginning of life, plus I was just beginning my own journey of fighting a very difficult battle with Lyme Disease and at the time, was progressively getting sicker with the disease, but Joye had other ideas—she needed a big brother! Then a big Berner boy appeared on the BARC website looking for a good home. Harley fit the bill perfectly and came into our lives on September 25, 2005 at the age of 5 1/2.

Harley was lucky to start out his life bred by a breeder and then raised in a family environment, where he was loved (for a time) and advanced obedience trained. Unfortunately, due to a death in the family he was sold, unknowingly to a puppy miller. This just goes to show you that not all dogs start out in a puppy mill, some like Harley, get unceremoniously dumped when they no longer fit into a family's life.

At the puppy mill, he was tied to a doghouse for 2 years used as stud. During that time, BARC worked at trying to get him away from the puppy mill, and finally was successful because he did not produce any puppies. No wonder, Harley was horribly neglected. He was so badly matted it took BARC more than 6 hours to remove the mats, some areas having to be shaved. He had a number of hot spots and badly infected ears, one so bad, he almost lost his hearing.

Harley came into this world as **Stargazer Cedarhills Brodi**, but with a cat named Brodi (same spelling), we needed to find a suitable new name for him for his new life. We made a list and went through it saying each name and "Come", carefully keeping the same tone as we said each name. He ignored all names, but responded quickly to Harley, and it suited him well... he rumbles when he sleeps, just like a Harley Davidson motorcycle. And, at 130 pounds, he's just about big enough to ride!!

Joye loves her big brother, and Harley just lays back and lets her use him as a chew toy. They play together and have a great time. She slams her little 75 pound body into his massive 130 pounds and just bounces off! And sometimes when they are just snuggling together, Harley will initiate the play. He loves when she chews on his ears!!!

Harley is a very good protector for Joye, the cats, the house, and us! Joye's confidence level has grown with Harley guiding her, but the times when she is uncomfortable with attention from strangers, Harley very casually places himself between Joye and the stranger as if to say, "Pat me", but really he is reading her comfort level and deflecting her tension. When someone comes to the door, he sits quietly beside me and watches as if to say, "Don't even think about messing with my Mommy."

And we got a bonus... Harley became my unofficial service dog during the time I was the sickest with Lyme. He helped me off the couch and kept me steady as I tried to walk around the house on weakened legs. Thankfully, the worst of the Lyme is over and I'm at the end of my healing journey. Through it all Harley has been a very understanding and caring dog with me, and with Joye. And seeing that gentle quality in him, he earned his Canine Good Neighbour on October 1, 2006 (CGN is CKC's version of AKC's CGC). Harley is the first BARC dog to earn a CGN title.

Harley's favourite thing is to sit on the floor in front of my chair and gently put both front paws up and lay his big head in my lap. It's his version of sitting on my lap!! He knows he must be gentle, and has learned that attention, pats and belly rubs are freely given now and he no longer has to turn himself inside out trying to get them. He thanks me by giving me tiny little kisses on my chin with just the tip of his big tongue!

Harley turns 7 on March 24, 2007. He still acts like a puppy and we hope to have many, many more happy years with him. Harley is such a big teddy bear, and we, and Joye, love him dearly.

Intensely loved and adored by Rob & Sherry Hartung, & little sister, Joye, in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada (March 2007)

