

Partners Forum

International Association of Assistance Dog Partners

VOLUME THIRTEEN • NUMBER THREE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

New Guidance on Air Travel to the U.K.

By Joan Froling

In April 2004, the British Parliament passed a law that removed the requirement which said dogs and cats which were PETS compliant could only be brought into the U.K. by air in a sealed container. This made it possible for carriers to seek permission to transport PETS compliant dogs or cats in the plane cabin with their owner. We thought it meant our assistance dogs would soon be able to travel to the U.K. in the plane cabin with us instead of in a sealed container in the hold on flights from North America if they met the Passport for Pets criteria for an exemption to the six month British quarantine. This criteria includes a microchip, rabies vaccine, a positive titer test six months in advance of the trip, and a certificate proving the dog was treated for parasites shortly before the flight.

Much to the disappointment of Michael Osborn, a guide dog partner, and other advocates who were so dedicated to getting that legislation through Parliament, the airlines in the United States with routes to the U.K. appeared to be in no hurry to accommodate our assistance dogs in the plane

cabin. Many months went by without any of them completing the paperwork for the necessary permit, called the Required Method of Operation [RMOP] from the U.K. Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] to become "an approved carrier" for transporting assistance dog teams in the plane cabin on long haul flights to the U.K.

After a year passed with no progress, Michael Osborn and other advocates for assistance dog partners appealed to U.S. Congressional Representatives who subsequently contacted the U.S. Department of Transportation on behalf of their con-

stituents. Upon investigating the matter, the DOT determined there were several issues which need to be addressed due to the complexities of laws or regulations in the U.K. and the U.S. and European Union affecting the transportation of service animals into the U.K. The DOT assigned Kathleen Blank Riether to work on a new guidance letter for the DOT, consulting with stakeholders on both sides of the Atlantic.

On February 26, 2007, the long awaited *Guidance Concerning the Carriage of Service Animals in Air Transportation into the U.K.* was published by the U.S. DOT in the Federal Register 72 FR 8268. For some, this is very good news.

The DOT cites the fact that service animals may be needed to provide assistance to their disabled partner in the plane cabin. Furthermore, forcing the service animal to ride in cargo could impair the animal's ability to perform its duties once the team is reunited at the end of the flight. Therefore it is going to require both U.S. and foreign carriers to transport service animals in the plane cabin, unless explicitly forbidden by national law.

The guidance document starts by saying its purpose is to assist U.S. and foreign carriers as well as passengers with disabilities in complying with both U.S. and U.K. regula-

continued on page 2...

Features You Shouldn't Miss

New IAADP Benefit. Page 3

Federal Court on School Access . . . Page 4

CADO Meets With DOJ. Page 6

IAADP Conference Highlights Page 8

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Officials at the U.S. Department of Justice, IAADP and other CADO members meet to discuss service animal issues in January 2007. See story on page 7.

New Guidance on Air Travel to U.K.

Continued from page 1

tions concerning the transport of service animals into the U.K. The document will accomplish this by (1) explaining the procedures passengers must follow in complying with the U.K. PETS Travel Scheme, (2) explaining the procedures that U.S. and foreign carriers must follow in obtaining an approved RMOP from DEFRA, and (3) notifying both U.S. and foreign carriers operating flights between the U.S. and the U.K. that failure to obtain an approved RMOP from DEFRA will be considered a violation of the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) and may subject such carriers to enforcement action from the U.S. DOT.

One of the difficulties to iron out was the difference between the U.K. definition of an assistance dog and the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2003 guidance document's definition of a service animal. The DOT definition includes privately trained assistance dogs [e.g. owner trained or trained by a dog trainer not affiliated with an approved program] as well as other species like cats that alert to seizures and emotional support animals.

The Civil Air Authority (C.A.A.) in the U.K. adopted a policy recommended by an advisory group assembled by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in the U.K. after the exciting news of the April 2004 change to the British law reached us at the ADI and IAADP Conference in Vancouver. We later learned that privately trained assistance dogs were not recognized by the advisory group as meeting the British standards for an assistance dog. Only graduates of schools in the U.K., or from members affiliated with the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International could be transported in the plane cabin on U.K. airlines, as of March 5, 2005. All other animals, including privately trained service animals, had to ride in the cargo hold.

For a limited number of teams, travel between the U.S. and U.K. became possible on Virgin Atlantic Airways and one other U.K. airline that filed for the proper permit from DEFRA. Many disabled persons in the U.S. did not understand or accept this restriction, so the U.S. Department of Transportation reports a number of complaints of discriminatory treatment were filed with the DOT in 2005 and 2006.

This guidance document explains that the U.S. DOT definition is inclusive of animals that are individually trained to perform a function and which perform that function for an individual with a disability or (2) an animal that has been shown to have an innate ability to assist a passenger with a disability [e.g. a seizure alert animal], or (3) an emotional support animal whose owner carries the required documentation of a medical condition and the need to travel with the animal.

In comments provided when we were asked to review a proposed first draft of this guidance document, IAADP expressed deep concern about the problems that might ensue if untrained emotional support dogs and cats were permitted in the plane cabin on long flights. While not eliminating these from its guidance on what animals will be permitted to fly as service animals with appropriate documentation, this guidance emphasizes the importance of training and proper behavior in several places to prospective passengers. For example, in one section the DOT states: "Regard-

less of the function it performs to assist a passenger with his or her disability, a service animal should be trained to behave properly in the airport and the plane cabin (i.e. not to run around freely, bark, bite other persons, or urinate in the cabin). Improper behavior indicating a lack of training may result in the service animal legitimately being denied transport in the cabin."

The DOT took note of the fact that carriers not based in the U.K. had the ability to apply to DEFRA for an RMOP to transport cats and dogs that were PETS compliant in the plane cabin with their owners. This paved the way for the DOT to require that all U.S. airlines and foreign carriers with routes between the U.S. and U.K. must comply with the ACAA with respect to dogs and cats that are service animals, unless expressly prohibited by national law. If the service dog or service cat is behaving appropriately and PETS compliant, the disabled passenger can travel with that service animal in the plane cabin. Furthermore, any U.S. airline or foreign carrier with "code sharing" with a route to the U.K. from a "listed country," one recognized as eligible for PETS, such as Canada or Germany or Sweden, must transport a service animal [dog or cat] in the plane cabin into the U.K. at no extra charge to the passenger.

Airlines based in the U.K., restricted by the C.A.A. to only transporting guide dogs and assistance dogs from certain schools, would be considered in compliance with the ACAA if they continue to follow their national law. All other carriers, domestic or foreign, could face penalties if they refuse to transport a disabled passenger's service animal that is a dog or cat.

The DOT noted that ferrets were permitted to travel to the U.K. under the Passport for Pets scheme, but because of its own policy exempting airlines from having to transport service animals like snakes, rodents or ferrets in the cabin or cargo hold, airlines do not have to transport ferrets under the ACAA.

Anyone interested in traveling to the U.K. with a guide, hearing or service dog, whether trained by a school, professional dog trainer or the owner, would be well advised to carefully read this new guidance. Not only does it explain what you must do to prepare your dog for the trip, it also details what the airlines will require from you and what will happen when you arrive at Gatwick or Heathrow, the two London airports which are the only ones currently accepting PETS compliant service animals.

One important provision is the need to notify the airline a minimum of 72 hours in advance of your flight that you plan to bring a service animal. If they do not notify the Animal Reception Center (ARC) in the U.K. a minimum of 24 hours in advance to expect you, your dog could end up in quarantine until arrangements can be made to have an inspector meet with you. Technically, the airlines should not even allow you on board if ARC officials are not expecting you.

All fees from the ARC will be the passenger's responsibility, although an airline may choose to absorb the cost itself. Additional fees include the veterinary expenses and the cost of faxing DEFRA before the trip. You may also have boarding fees if the dog is not PETS compliant, until arrangements can be made to get him out of quarantine and back to his country of origin.

Nothing is said in this guidance document about the U.K. law granting access to guide dogs and assistance dogs.

While there is no law preventing the British from accepting a dog or cat that travels by air with its owner, if PETS compliant, and processing it like any other pet, it is uncertain if the handler of a privately trained assistance dog will be permitted in places of public accommodation and on public transportation. The British are accustomed to seeing guide dogs in harnesses or other types of assistance dogs wearing bright colored capes with the Assistance Dogs of the U.K. logo. It might be advisable to consider alternatives, like pet friendly hotels and renting a car for getting about on a trip to the U.K., if you have a privately trained assistance dog.

We hope members from the USA who travel to the U.K. in 2007 and 2008 will provide IAADP with feedback on their experiences when they return. This will allow us to inform other members of what to expect when they contact our Information and Advocacy Center before a trip.

Something else of interest to IAADP members in this guidance document was the following statement: "It should be noted that the Council of the European Union subsequently adopted a community regulation on July 5, 2006, concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when traveling by air which shall apply to commercial carriers flying into, from or through an airport situated in an EU member state. The regulation, effective July 26, 2008, will require carriers to transport recognized assistance dogs in the aircraft cabin free of charge, subject to national legislation."

A major decision by the DOT impacting assistance dog teams that travel by air worth noting is that it will not impose a limit on how many hours the flight may last. The DOT also decided U.S. airlines will not mandate that the dog wear a special harness that can be attached to a seat belt on take off and landings as the British airlines presently insist upon. Foreign carriers that require an absorbent mat be placed under the service animal may continue this practice, but the airline must provide the mat and not expect the disabled passenger to do so.

Those wishing to read this new Guidance document on travel to the U.K. can find it at: <http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/rules/UKServiceAnimalGuidance.doc>

IAADP's Latest Benefit!

By Toni and Ed Eames

Like good tracking dogs, we are constantly on the trail of new benefits to make assistance dog partnerships less expensive. Our latest find is a discounted rabies titer testing fee from Kansas State University. Those of us lucky enough to travel to Hawaii or overseas, must have our assistance dogs microchipped and inoculated with a rabies vaccine. A blood sample must then be sent to the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at Kansas State University for titer testing. Dr. Gary Anderson, Director of the Lab, was enthusiastic about partnering with IAADP. Here is his message to us with an outline of the policy:

"It was a pleasure speaking with you last evening. I applaud your efforts on behalf of your organization, and we are pleased to participate by discounting rabies testing done at the KSVDL. As we discussed on the phone, we will consider this first step as a "Pilot Project," which is outlined more specifically in the points below.

In recognition of the many good things you do for our profession and society in general, the KSVDL is committed to the following points of understanding and practice for IAADP blood samples for titer testing."

This pilot program will commence January 1 through December 31, 2007 and will subsequently be evaluated annually.

When the veterinarian sends your assistance dog's blood sample to the laboratory, the paperwork must include a copy of your IAADP membership card.

You will receive a 50% discount and will be charged \$20 for the blood test.

Samples properly identified as IAADP submissions will be given priority in processing.

Member Feedback on Benefits

The next time you request a gift of Advantage, Cosequin, Welactin, a KV Vet Supply catalog discount or some other product or a rebate on vaccinations, please consider providing the donor with feedback. Send your comments to IAADP at toni@iaadp.org and we will be happy to forward them to our contact at the company. One such message from a member is reprinted here with her permission.

Dear Bayer Corporation,

Due to your generosity through the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners, I am so thankful that my service dog Joy, a Black Labrador Retriever, has been a recipient of Advantage and Advantix for the past year or so. It is imperative for Joy to have flea and tick control to work with me out in the community. I have spina bifida and am on Supplemental Security Income, so I must use my income wisely for my basic needs. The State of Washington gives me \$33.66 a month for Joy's needs which only covers part of her food costs. So you can see how grateful I am for your donation of Advantix for Joy.

In appreciation,
Gloria J. Olson

Many Thanks Virgin Atlantic!

By Wendy Morrell

I was delighted that the IAADP conference was on the East Coast this year as it meant that Caesar, my assistance dog, and I wouldn't have to travel much beyond our transatlantic flight from the United Kingdom. As an IAADP Board Member, Virgin Atlantic Airways kindly offered to sponsor my attendance at the conference, and their route goes from London Heathrow to Washington DC; a flight of some eight and a half hours.

Flying from the UK with an assistance dog is really no further bother than travelling normally; the check-in perhaps took a little longer, but other than that and needing to find a grassy patch at the airport before we went through security, everything was as a normal flight. Once we had taken off, Caesar (wearing his in-flight harness) settled and slept most of the way, waking occasionally for ice cubes and a walk around the cabin to stretch his legs. With a European Pet Passport, entry to the United States was straightforward and we were soon free to go on our way.

Our return trip was similarly uneventful, except two days before our flight, Caesar had to visit a vet for his Passport Preparations prior to returning to the UK. This involved administration of Milbemax worming preparation and Advantix flea and tick preparation, a health check and the filling in of his passport. When we arrived at Washington Dulles Airport on the way home we made our way to the Virgin Atlantic desk and Caesar was welcomed by name... we were expected. Again the staff was very efficient, and as had been the case on the way out, we were given four bulkhead seats for myself, my travelling companion and Caesar, thus plenty of room to stretch out comfortably. Exhausted from our trip, we all slept most of the way home.

On touchdown at Heathrow, a staff member from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (who had been informed of our travel dates before we left) boarded the plane to process Caesars' passport and check his identity by microchip, and we were soon on our way.

Many thanks to Virgin Atlantic for such a smooth trip, for supporting my work with IAADP and for being one of the two transatlantic carriers who have signed up to the Guidelines for Guide and Assistance Dogs on UK airlines.

IAADP Gratefully Acknowledges

**VIRGIN ATLANTIC
AIRLINES**

For Supporting IAADP's Conference

For more on the Conference, see page 8...

Federal Court Denies School Access

By Joan Froling

A 14-year-old hearing impaired boy was denied the right to bring his new hearing dog to school with him by officials in the East Meadow School District. They have taken the position the accommodations John Cave Jr. already receives such as a sign language interpreter are quite sufficient. They assert the presence of the two-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever would pose a health and safety hazard to other students and the staff. In particular they cite the fact that some students or staff members may have allergies to dogs.

Officials went so far as to physically bar John Cave Jr. from entering school with his hearing dog, Simba, locking the doors and calling the police and ordering him to get his dog off school property. Media coverage of the confrontation and subsequent ones made the national news.

John Jr.'s parents, John and Nancy Cave, filed a \$150 million dollar federal lawsuit against the school district for violating the Americans With Disabilities Act. They also sought an injunction to permit John and Simba to attend school, not wanting to wait years while the case dragged through the court system.

As stated in the *North County Gazette* on February 28, 2007, "the federal litigation says that the dog's effectiveness as a service dog is impaired if he spends too much time away from the teen, saying: 'Simba is alone six to eight hours a day and has been declining in his ability and training and as such is in serious risk of failing to provide the services he was trained to provide,' according to the lawsuit."

A six day hearing took place, covered by television crews and journalists. To the shock and dismay of the family, advocates and sympathizers, the judge ruled against the teenager, supporting the school's right to deny access.

It is reported that U.S. District Court Judge Arthur Spatt determined the family did not exhaust their right of appeal in the school district before coming into federal court with this lawsuit. That was his rationale for denying the requested injunction.

The attorney for the Cave family told reporters the family would appeal the decision.

IAADP has been in close touch with the family during this ordeal and will continue to support them in their fight against the school's denial of access.

**INFORMATION &
ADVOCACY CENTER**
Phone: (760) 439-9544 or
iaadp@aol.com

Board Update

Partner Members of IAADP elected nine representatives to the Board of Directors in December, 2006. Dino Brownson, Ed Eames, Toni Eames, Tanya Eversole, Jill Exposito, Joan Froling, Carol King, Wendy Morrell and Devon Wilkins will serve a four year term, working together to sustain and expand IAADP's global information sharing and advocacy network.

The board met in Baltimore, MD, on January 25, 26 and 29, prior to the conference on January 30. At that time, the board asked Ed Eames to continue as President, Joan Froling to continue as Chairperson, Carol King as Vice President, Toni Eames as Treasurer and Devon Wilkins as Secretary.

In keeping with the board's desire to provide additional support to partnerships outside the United States, Wendy Morrell, a graduate of Dogs for the Disabled in the U.K., was offered the newly developed role of European Vice President of the organization.

In a recent magazine article about this appointment, Wendy explained:

"This is an important role, which I was delighted to be offered and readily accepted. It was great to be able to exchange news and views about pressing matters in the world of assistance dogs; even though there are many differences, we also have much in common. No matter where you are in the world, access for assistance dog partnerships is always a top priority. Over the past few years I have been working on access not only here in the U.K. with Dogs for the Disabled but within Europe in conjunction with Assistance Dogs Europe and with assistance dog partnerships in Norway, Sweden, Austria and Croatia. There's so much to do, it is my aim that a partnership could travel within Europe and not be declined access as is often the case now. Just last autumn, a shopkeeper in Denmark asked me to tie Caesar up outside as it was the equivalent to having a rat in his shop! There was no law in place to protect us, so we had to leave."

The board also recognized the efforts of Devon Wilkins, a guide dog partner who has done so much for IAADP members in Canada. IAADP appointed Devon, a graduate of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, to the newly developed position of Canadian Vice President.

In a press release to Canadian publications for dog lovers, Devon said that as Canadian Vice President of IAADP, she will continue to advocate, as she has for the past 14 years, for equal access for people partnered with assistance dogs from coast to coast to coast. In addition, she will continue to encourage individuals partnered with assistance dogs to do what they can to educate people in their respective communities.

"My other major project," Devon explained, "is to keep dialoguing with guide, hearing, and service dog training programs across the country to ensure that whenever new legislation is enacted, it provides equitable protection for people partnered with all types of assistance dogs."

IAADP's board appreciates the fine show of support from Partner Members in the recent election and we will

continue our efforts to make good things happen.

Please take note in the gray box on the last page that we have divided up some of the workload among different board members and we'd appreciate you directing any questions that might come up to the right party by phone or email.

Legal questions - Ed Eames

Advocacy - Carol King

Membership, benefits or VCP questions - Tanya Eversole

Canadian issues or benefits - Devon Wilkins

European issues - Wendy Morrell

Fundraising - Dino Brownson

Newsletter, CADO - Joan Froling

Thank you notes, grief counseling - Toni Eames

New projects - Jill Exposito

Ruff Wear Benefit is Discontinued

Hi Ed & Toni,

I hope you had a great holiday. I wanted to let you know that effective January 15, 2007, Ruff Wear will formally discontinue our discount program with your organization and its members (IAADP).

All IAADP member accounts will receive standard retail pricing after January 15. Please advise your membership regarding the change. If you have any questions please let me know.

Thank you,

Jennifer, Ruff Wear Pro Purchase Coordinator

IAADP Writing Competition

Offering Annual \$50 Prize in each of 3 categories:

Best Article

Best Opinion Piece

Best Short Story or Anecdote

Entries accepted year round. Unpublished and published material welcome. Photo may accompany article, but not required.

CADO Meeting With U.S. DOJ

by Joan Froling

For new members unfamiliar with the advocacy work done by IAADP through the Coalition of Assistance Dog Organizations (CADO), it began in Columbus, Ohio, in 2001. Representatives from IAADP and Guide Dog Users, Inc. met with Assistance Dogs International and the Council of U.S. Dog Guide Schools to discuss concerns stemming from media coverage on individuals claiming public access rights with snakes, pigs, other farm animals, exotic pets and emotional support dogs. A program, Service Dogs for Victims of Assault, was receiving favorable national publicity for placing dogs which received protection training with psychiatric patients who were told their use of these hair trigger dogs in public was sanctioned by the Americans With Disabilities Act. Those of us promoting the responsible use of access rights in the disabled community were appalled.

Delegates to that first CADO meeting decided we should work together whenever it would be advantageous to the assistance dog movement to present “an united front” on an issue. We scheduled a meeting at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) which is in charge of enforcing the ADA. We asked John Wodatch, Chief of the Disability Rights Section, to please consider adopting a new definition of a service animal when the ADA regulations came up for review that year. We proposed a definition CADO members drafted at our first meeting to emphasize the importance of task training and to clarify that the presence of an animal for comfort, personal defense or protection does not qualify as training which mitigates the effects of a person’s disability and therefore does not qualify said animal as a service animal.

CADO also asked the DOJ to consider updating the 1996 guidance document to counteract all the misinformation and confusion in the disabled community as to whether task training is necessary or merely optional for an animal to become a service animal whose handler will have public access rights. In January 2002, the DOJ responded with the publication of the Business Brief on Service Animals at www.ada.gov which among other things, gives a business the right to ask “what tasks has your service animal been trained to perform?” This meant the need for training could no longer be ignored or debated...or so I thought, not yet fully appreciating the tenacity of those who apparently believe a requirement for training is too much of an imposition to place on disabled persons who want public access with a companion animal.

IAADP and other CADO members continued to meet once a year and worked together by email between meetings on other advocacy initiatives while waiting for the ADA regulatory review process to reach the stage where actual changes could take place.

In 2005, the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule Making was published on the DOJ’s website, seeking public comments. This gave CADO the opportunity to reiterate our concerns about those who seem oblivious to the ADA requirement for task training. We included CADO’s proposed revision to the Service Animal Definition.

We also urged the DOJ to eliminate the task example in the original definition, “minimal protection and rescue work” since the word “protection” has been taken out of context by so many individuals. We suggested as a substitute, “providing assistance in a medical crisis,” for it preserves the original intent of that phrase and cover new kinds of tasks as well.

In addition, our public comment asked the DOJ to consider limiting the use of other species of animals to those who could meet the minimum behavior and training standards for all service animals which CADO had developed after a meeting with DOJ officials in 2003.

The fourth recommendation we made was to consider using the federal anti-fraud statutes as a deterrent to dog show exhibitors and doting pet owners who commit service animal fraud, for presently, there are no consequences for such violations.

On January 31, 2007, CADO was pleased to have the opportunity for a two hour meeting with DOJ officials. Ed Eames, President, and Joan Froling, Chairperson, were IAADP’s delegates. Sheila Styron, President, and Becky Barnes, Vice President, were GDUI’s delegates. Wells Jones, President of the Guide Dog Foundation, represented the Council of U.S. Dog Guide Schools. Corey Hudson, President, and Linda Jennings, Past President, attended this meeting on behalf of Assistance Dogs International.

Loretta King, the Assistant Attorney General on Civil Rights, made us feel right at home when we took our seats in a large board room and settled our guide dogs and my service dog under the table. We were impressed that she was so familiar with CADO’s public comment from January 2005. She went over the CADO Service Animal definition, asking questions as to why we preferred one word or phrase to another in that definition. A lively discussion ensued.

Jeanine Worden, Deputy Chief of Investigations in the Disability Rights Section and partnered with a guide dog herself, explained why she did not think the DOJ should adopt the suggested behavior and training standards. She cited cases of access denial that she and her staff investigate. She is afraid provisions like “an animal shall be clean and not have a foul odor” is too subjective, for it would give businesses yet another excuse to explain why it was legal for them to exclude a team from their restaurant or store. Retrievers with their wet dog smell coming in out of the rain might be denied access. Her point was well taken.

John Wodatch, Chief of the Disability Rights Section, did acknowledge he was under pressure to bring his section’s definition of a service animal more in line with that adopted by Housing and the Department Of Transportation, which might be said to have a “task training optional” policy. At the same time, he indicated the DOJ does not want to grant public access to “comfort animals” that lack task training

He let us know that when the Notice of Proposed Rule Making is published late in the summer, there would be some important questions on service animal related issues. At that time, the public would have the opportunity to provide the

DOJ with feedback as to how they feel about one or more of these issues, through submitting letters of public comment.

We learned that if a large number of people from a coalition, let's say, felt strongly enough about a subject to flood the DOJ with letters asking the DOJ to listen to their side of things, the staff in the Disability Rights Section would tend to give this a lot of weight. If they only get a few letters on a topic, it is not going to have nearly the same effect when they go to write the final rule.

If we came away with nothing else, we came away with a new awareness of how tremendously important the NPRM public comment period in 2007 could be to the future of the assistance dog movement in the USA. It will be an advocacy effort in which **numbers count!**

I hope you'll support this advocacy effort when the time comes.

Good News On Access Issue

Dear Joan,
Last October, I wrote to you about the difficulty I was having in getting approval from my employer, a public school district, to have my diabetes alert service dog accompany me to work. You kindly responded with a wealth of useful information.

Soon after that correspondence, my request finally made its way to the appropriate authority, the school district's in-house attorney and Compliance Officer. This gentleman had never before reviewed a request concerning a service dog, but rather than looking for ways to refuse, he seemed to look for a way to grant his approval. You commented that "principals have a lot of power," which I believe to be true in my situation. My principal has actively supported me from the beginning. After addressing areas that might potentially lead to the district's liability in case of an accident, the Compliance Officer approved.

My service dog, Cody, has accompanied me to work since early November, consistently alerting me to my fluctuations in glucose levels. My twenty-four second grade students have been wonderfully cooperative and their parents are very supportive. My most recent lab results show the best glycemic control I've had in many years! Not only does Cody enable me to avoid potentially life-threatening episodes of hypoglycemia by alerting me to high glucose levels, he will help me avoid long-term complications of diabetes as well.

I am fortunate that I did not have to endure years of litigation before being allowed my service dog at work. My heart goes out to those who fight for the rights we all deserve. Thank you again for the work you do.

Robin Martinet
(and Cody, owner-trained diabetes alert service dog)

Join Our Canadian Assistance Dog Partners Listserv

By Devon Wilkins

In late 2006, Guide Dog Users of Canada announced that it would close the listserv with which it had been loosely associated for the past several years. Looking at it objectively, the organization's reasons for making such a decision were understandable. As the oft-repeated disclaimer says, the opinions expressed on the listserv weren't necessarily the opinions of GDUC. It came as no surprise, however, that some adherents to the list felt abandoned. Many called the decision a step backwards, and wondered aloud how guide dog users across the country would go about staying in touch with one another.

As you may know, I'm the secretary and Canadian Vice President of the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners-IAADP. Craig Goodenough, who is also a member of IAADP, had been the moderator of the old GDUC listserv for the past several years. Unlike some, we both saw this crossroads that had arisen as an opportunity to broaden horizons, and suggested a new listserv which could be called the Canadian Assistance Dog Partners List. Several other names were suggested as well, however, so Craig decided that the fair thing to do would be to put it to a vote. When all the ballots had been counted, though, the name that we had suggested had won the day.

Now, guide, hearing, and service dog partners across Canada can come together to discuss the issues that unite us, and educate one another about the subtle differences that set us apart.

To subscribe to the Canadian Assistance Dog Partners List, as we hope you will, send a blank message to: cadp-l-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

When you receive the request for confirmation, simply reply, and you will be subscribed. We'll be glad to have you!

IAADP Salutes the Generosity of **FORT DODGE ANIMAL HEALTH**

A Major Sponsor of the
IAADP Conference

For more on the Conference, keep reading...

IAADP Conference 2007

By Joan Froling

IAADP's 2007 Conference on January 30 in Baltimore was a marvelous gathering of assistance dog teams, trainers with service dogs-in-training, providers and others with a personal or professional interest in the assistance dog field. Our exciting day of workshops, awards and a delicious luncheon banquet followed the Assistance Dogs International three day conference. We also held a joint ADI-IAADP banquet on ADI's last night. With the temperatures in the twenties and thirties in Baltimore, there was always a chance of a snowstorm but fortunately we were blessed with good weather that week.

The Baltimore Marriott Inner Harbor Hotel at Camden Yards has a rather unique and charming way to welcome groups that come there for a conference. During the week of our stay, the IAADP logo was projected in lights from the ceiling onto several square feet of the tile floor in its elegant lobby. The hotel was easy to navigate and the savvy staff, which never asked to pet our canine partners, demonstrated the chain's resolve to be known as the "assistance dog friendly" hotel chain.

Our **keynote speaker** was **Marcus Engel**, a guide dog user and author of "After This...an Inspirational Journey For All The Wrong Reasons." He survived a horrific car accident as a freshman in college, one that left him blind and in need of over 300 hours of surgery to rebuild his face and assist him to regain his mobility in the months to follow. In a speech punctuated with plenty of humor, he discussed his struggle to make sense of what happened, his decision to obtain a guide dog from the Seeing Eye and the wonderful role a guide dog has played in his recovery and continuing journey through life. A copy of his book or more information about him can be obtained at the website, www.marcusengel.com

The first workshop, **U.S. Department of Transportation Discusses Service Animal Issues**, began with the introduction of two highly placed officials in the DOT air travel division, Kathleen Blank Riether and Mike Spollen. Both have been deeply involved with policy making on service animals in air travel. Kathleen wanted to communicate the fact that the DOT guidance document of 2003 requires all service animals, including emotional support animals, to be properly trained for public access in the airport and in the plane cabin. The new upcoming guidance for the transport of service animals into the U.K. was another topic. During the Q&A period, members of the audience had an opportunity to air their concerns about the inclusion of emotional support animals in the service animal definition. Kathleen admits there is no guarantee that people who attempt to train their own dog for public access will do a good job of it. She noted the need for a public education initiative to ensure the type of training needed is available

and given. In response to an access complaint, Mike Spollen invited audience members to contact the DOT Air Consumer section, indicating the staff wants to pursue such complaints.

IAADP's President Ed Eames, Ph.D., and Vice President Carol King, held a workshop titled **Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief for Assistance Dog Teams**. Among other things, Ed discussed examples of how he and other partners have worked to ensure assistance dogs will be properly taken care of when an ambulance is called. Carol King covered what partners should

have on hand for various emergencies if at home or if you must leave home. She thinks the lack of inclusion of persons with disabilities with service animals in emergency planning needs to be addressed. Our population is too small, but if partners take on a spokesperson role for the hearing impaired or mobility impaired or some other larger disability group and get involved with organizations that make policy, they will have a chance to raise awareness of the need to plan for disabled persons partnered with guide, hearing and service dogs. The audience went home with some excellent handouts and much food for thought.

Beyond the Fear – learning to love your mobility aid was a humorous and heartwarming half hour talk by guide dog partner, **Carol Fleischman**. She told us about the first scary days at the Seeing Eye as she worked hard to overcome her fear of dogs so she could become as confident and mobile as other blind persons she had met who chose a guide dog over cane travel. She knew almost nothing about dogs and neither did her husband, so when her dog first met him and suddenly upchucked on his shoes, they were appalled. She told her guide dog instructor that her dog hated her husband and asked him what to do? His advice? "Change husbands."



Dr. Pam Mitchell from Novartis Animal Health, which was honored at the Awards Banquet, shown here with Ed and Toni Eames.

At the luncheon banquet, we were pleased to have the chance to show our appreciation to two wonderful employees of Nutramax Laboratories, **Debby Vischer** who administers the Veterinary Care Partnership grant program for IAADP and **Cara Meehan**, who has been in charge of meeting all the requests for Cosequin and Welactin or Denosyl from IAADP members. Another beautiful plaque went to **Dr. Pam Mitchell**, a representative of Novartis Animal Health, to convey our gratitude to this company for their generous donation of Sentinel Flavor Tabs to protect assistance dogs from heartworms and other nasty parasites. We also honored **Dr. Robin Downing and her staff** with a plaque for making it possible for IAADP members to obtain the Sentinel by working with each applicant's veterinarian and mailing the product directly to each member's home. In addition, we thanked **Barx Brothers**, a card company which donated \$3,000 to IAADP from its sale of cards and posters featuring the Eames guide dogs as the subject of the artwork. **Ryan Noonan**, the representative from **Fort Dodge Animal Health**, took this opportunity to introduce the three scholarship winners, Lori Buffington, Kevin Frankeberger and Jacob Manning. He then presented them with the scholarships his company had generously sponsored.

The Changing Boundaries of the Service Animal Concept, the first workshop after lunch, featured **Nancy Fierer**, a board member from Assistance Dogs International, **Joan Froling**, IAADP Chairperson and **Michael Osborn**, guide dog partner and advocate. The panel tackled three questions (1) What has occurred, both positive and negative, since the passage of the ADA? (2) What are the most worrisome challenges confronting the assistance dog movement with respect to the service animal concept? and (3) What things could the community of programs and partners do to address these challenges, if interested? The audience was asked to fill out a survey afterwards. If the assistance dog field wants to limit public access to task trained service animals, which two of the five suggestions from the panel related to the challenges we discussed would be the most important to pursue? (A) Educate the media and through them, the public, on public access training requirements. (B) Try to pass model legislation in every state promoting the CADO Service Animal Definition. (C) Educate medical professionals about the laws and training requirements for service animals. (D) Increase educational outreach on appropriate training to owner/trainers, potential partners. (E) Fund a lobbyist to persuade federal agencies and legislators to protect our interests and rights. It was optional for someone to indicate if he or she would support one or two of these suggestions with money or volunteer time. The goal was to obtain feedback that would be of value to CADO member organizations involved in the battle to keep "task training" part of the Service Animal Definition.

Saving Lives with Diabetic Alert Dogs was presented by the founder of Dogs for Diabetics, **Mark Ruefenacht** and **Carol Edwards**, the program director and head trainer. Mark explained those with insulin dependent Type I diabetes like himself can suffer lows at night which could put them into a coma or even result in death. After the guide dog pup he was raising woke him up during



Award recipients, Cara Meehan and Debby Vischer from Nutramax Laboratories, flanked by Burt Honsch and Dr. Barbara Eves.

an episode, Mark began five years of research to develop a scientifically sound way to train dogs to reliably perform this potentially life saving task. Along with an excellent Powerpoint presentation, Mark put on an exciting demo of scent detection work with his yellow Lab, Armstrong. Carol set up four jars on stage, only one of which had the a pad which had captured the scent of an attack of hypoglycemia. Armstrong found the correct jar. Carol distracted the dog while Mark switched the position of the jars. Again and again, Armstrong was successful. Next Carol used a target stick to demonstrate how they teach the dog to jump up on the owner to alert to a low. The stories of different placements they've done, the latest with a family who has three diabetic children, educated us about how important this new kind of assistance dog can be to individuals born with this condition.

What's New? Sharing Training Ideas, Equipment, Products included an interesting training video shown by **Moto Arima**, founder of Japan Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. It demonstrated an idea she wanted to share which has worked well for her program...teach an audience of pet owners to overcome a behavior problem, like a pet poodle jumping up on people, by distracting the dog with a tug strap, get him to play tug of war, then show the audience about different tug- based tasks like pulling a zipper, a jacket sleeve or opening a door which they can teach their dog to do just like an assistance dog. This helps them to feel more familiar with assistance dogs and more receptive to education about them.

Carol King shared a tip for partners whose dogs might get diarrhea from a change of water or stress while traveling. She described how she boils up white rice [Minute Rice] in a coffee pot in a hotel room, after removing the filter. She reported her veterinarian gave her this idea and how useful she has found it to be, traveling with her service dog.

My contribution was to share my experience with a new wheelchair pulling harness. The ergonomic and safety benefits made it the most exciting innovation in my sixteen years of studying harness design and working with service

continued on page 10...

Conference Highlights

Continued from page 9

dogs who provide wheelchair pulling assistance. For more details, see the sidebar article, "Harness Design a Gem."

At the **IAADP Annual Meeting for Assistance Dog Partners**, Ed Eames had the pleasure of announcing a new benefit, a 50% discount on the expensive titer test for assistance dogs whose partners want to travel to the U.K. or Hawaii or other countries with a quarantine against rabies. Also those blood samples accompanied by a copy of an IAADP membership card will be processed immediately.

Ed also briefly touched on a number of advocacy issues IAADP tackled in the past year. In addition, he updated us on the case of the school teacher who was denied access to the workplace with her service dog. Two years have passed and Laura Otis is still fighting this access denial.

Another highlight of this meeting was a talk from **Nancy Cave**. She discussed her family's access battle on behalf of her 14-year-old son and his hearing dog, Simba, a yellow Labrador Retriever trained by NEADS. School authorities denied him the right to have his new hearing dog accompany him to high school after placement. The distressing story of the treatment her son received from school authorities, what it is like to live in the glare of so much media attention and their hopes for the future held the audience riveted.

The doorprize drawings, which we traditionally bring the conference to a close with, were done a bit differently this year.

Everyone was invited to toss their name badge into a pile on the floor. At the request of Toni Eames and the audience, my Samoyed service dog, Spirit, selected the winners by retrieving a name badge each time I asked him to. He enthusiastically waded around in the pile, nosing some aside, not just going for the nearest one on the fringe.

We gave away a gift certificate generously donated by our vendor, Arnie Epstein, of Circle E Ranch entitling the winner to \$250 in leather goods. The winner could select a custom crafted wheelchair pulling or balance support harness or nifty door opening devices and other service dog related items. Beautiful leather leashes, collars, and all sorts of additional leather items are also available on the



Ryan Noonan awards Fort Dodge Animal Health Scholarship to Jacob Manning, with SD Harley.

harness maker's website at www.circle-e.net

Next we had our traditional dogs [stuffed animals] for the Grand Doorprize drawings. Representing guide dogs was a plush Golden Retriever with lots of feathering. Our hearing dog was a charming sable and white Sheltie, standing four square. A regal black and white Border Collie to represent service dogs this year sat there looking very cuddly. Each wore leashes and collars and we had other items, like a small rawhide bone adding to the lifelike illusion while they were on display all day.

These stuffed animals, many doorprizes, and loads of items for our assistance dog goodie bags and items like the box of award plaques were shipped in advance to **Barbara Eves** at Nutramax Laboratories, who volunteered to bring them to the hotel so we did not have to pay storage fees. I

don't think she had any idea of how much "stuff" would be coming her way. She had to make three trips to bring the huge boxes to the hotel, taking up the better part of her afternoon and night...and never lost her smile! What a trooper! She also did a mountain of photocopying for IAADP, all the conference packet material, hand outs and meeting agendas.

Fidos for Freedom, the ADI member program that hosted the conference in Baltimore, deserves our gratitude as well. Joe Swetnam, the Executive Director, talked the hotel into setting up relief areas close by and found us a CART provider and marshaled a small army of volunteers to make this event go very smoothly for ADI and IAADP.

We also appreciate the cooperation from ADI's board in putting on this conference, in particular, Wells Jones who made the hotel arrangements, Chris Diefenthaler, the Vice President who coordinated the details of the conference with me, Linda Jennings, Past President, and Corey Hudson, the new President of the North American regional board for their helpfulness.

To the many volunteers who for reasons of space shall have to remain unsung heroes for their work before, during and after the 2007 conference, please know we couldn't have done this without you. A heartfelt thanks for going out of your way to make this special day celebrating assistance dog partnership, an unqualified success!



Lori Buffington, scholarship winner, and her partner Fennec.

Harness Design a Gem

By Joan Froling

The new wheelchair pulling harness I talked about was actually first shown by Paws With A Cause® in our equipment sharing workshop at the IAADP Conference in 2006. Like other programs, they are not in the business of manufacturing equipment for sale, but they do invite the audience to take photos and measurements if interested in duplicating something.

I did not really grasp what was so different about their new design till months later when I had an opportunity to test a model with my service dog, Spirit.

I was immediately impressed by a safety related breakthrough. I had much more control over the speed of the wheelchair and could slow it down or stop with ease, thanks to amount of "give" in the elastic strap material incorporated into the handle design.

The complex way the strapping is married to the leather, the location of the handle, it's length, the size of the piece that goes over the dog's head and perhaps other factors as well combined to improve communication with my service dog and his position while performing the task.

For sixteen years, I have loved this task because of the exhilarating teamwork involved. I highly value the independence it gives me in situations where the use of a 150 lb. motorized scooter is not practical due to issues like transportation difficulties. I've been resigned to the aches and pains I experience afterwards, accepting them as the price I had to pay to reap the benefits of this task. I have a neuromuscular disease and figured muscle weakness was the problem. As you might imagine, it was quite astonishing to realize I had no pain whatsoever at the end of two hours during the first test of this harness. Nor did pain set in after I went home. Was I dreaming? After repeated tests, I'm elated to report it was no fluke. I credit the marvelous give and take of the handle's elastic straps for alleviating the strain on my muscles and joints.

While no harness is going to be a cure-all or suitable for every disability, this discovery about the ergonomic benefit of the new design seemed to be too significant to keep to myself.

I'm very grateful to the founders of Paws With A Cause, for their remarkable generosity in sharing the fruits of their equipment research with the assistance dog field..

The harness maker, who has been a vendor at the last three IAADP conferences, at www.circle-e.net, indicated a willingness to be a source for a wheelchair pulling harness incorporating the new design. A set of backpacks can be added if desired.

Thank you to Our Friends At

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Survey Results & Drawing

By Joan Froling

Thank you for the return of the surveys in the ballot packets! Your input provided much needed guidance on where to focus our advocacy efforts.

We learned 55% of our respondents had encountered an animal in public which they thought was an emotional support animal. About half of those reported having a negative experience, chiefly due to dog aggression, which is rather chilling.

On the question of whether you think there is a serious problem with people passing off pets as service animals in public, about 50% said Yes, 35% were Unsure and 15% said No. As to the DOJ allowing businesses to require proof of disability such as a card acquired the same way as a handicap sticker is acquired, with a doctor's signature on a form, in order to cut down on service animal fraud, 61% of respondents said they would support that idea, 39% were against it. On the question of whether animals should be certified for public access, only 19% were against it, 81% were in favor of it.

Because of the overwhelming expression of keen interest in having IAADP continue the battle to limit public access only to task-trained service animals for the disabled, we will continue to make it a top priority. As part of that effort, we will ask you to help us with this advocacy work when the Department of Justice publishes its Notice of Proposed Rule Making in 2007, discussing the ADA regulations that are up for revision. The NPRM will definitely be seeking public comments on service animal issues. We will get in touch with you as soon as we learn what questions the DOJ will pose in the NPRM and draft a response we can share with you. We anticipate a battle between our side and those who think companion animal owners should have public access if they have a note from a doctor or therapist.

In other news, the Lucky Dog Drawing was won by Mary Vest, an IAADP member in Texas. The editor's Samoyed service dog, Spirit, once again made the selections, first retrieving one out of every ten entries spread out before him, then going through semifinalists till we had an array for his last pick of day. This system is the fairest one the editor could think of and Spirit greatly enjoys the milkbone treats he earns for his participation. Congratulations to Mary! We'd also like to thank Multi Pet for their generous donation of a \$50 gift certificate to the winner. Multi Pet makes innovative toys for dogs, including a series of stuffed ones that make surprisingly realistic sounds when the dog picks them up, such as a parrot's squawk, a horse neighing, a car engine roaring and so forth.

A Tail To Tell

By Toni and Ed Eames

January did not have a good start nor a good end. On New Year's Eve, our temperamental Siamese cat Kizzy badly bit Ed's hand. Ed reached over to pet Bambi and startled Kizzy who was sleeping on the couch. In spite of cleaning the wound, it got infected and required treatment with antibiotics.

Kizzy has always been our problem child since we adopted him thirteen years ago at the age of four weeks. He is a character, entertaining us with his food antics, but his friendly exuberance causes him to get overstimulated and bite. Dr. Karen Overall, renowned behaviorist, to the rescue. She recommended a tiny dose of Prozac to break the brain waves causing him to be irritable. Thus far, he is doing well.

The other cat concern was with Bambi, our new adoptee. As she began losing weight, a noticeable lump appeared on her upper rib cage. It was surgically removed and thankfully turned out to be benign. She has healed beautifully and her sweet personality continues to shine through.

All year we and other members of the board plan and work hard to make the IAADP Conference a huge success. Fresno friend Debbie Prieto accompanied us to Baltimore on January 24 where she was an invaluable assistant. Part of this week-long trip was the fun we planned to have sharing a suite with other IAADP board members. It would have been terrific if most of us had stayed well. Unfortunately, during our two-day board meeting, many of us were hit with a virulent norovirus producing explosive diarrhea and vomiting.

After the two day board meeting, we hosted the three scholarship winners in the suite with a pizza party. It was fun getting to know them prior to the hectic schedule of the ADI/IAADP conference.

Attending the Saturday afternoon ADI sessions, the virus hit us full force! Thank goodness there were three toilets in the suite! Sunday we missed the whole day conference by sleeping in between bathroom trips! By Monday we were ready to resume ADI attendance and made it through the evening banquet without a problem.

The IAADP conference day, January 30, went very well despite the absence of two board members who succumbed to the virus. The speakers were outstanding, the luncheon and awards ceremony was a huge hit and the door prizes were enthusiastically received by the winners.

Dr. Barbara Eves of Nutramax Laboratories was accompanied by Debbie Vischer, administrator of the Veterinary Care Partnership program and Cara Meehan, who had been responsible for the distribution of Cosequin to IAADP members. We were also delighted to welcome Nutramax's Burt Honsch, who we met many years ago at a veterinary conference. Ryan Noonan of Fort Dodge Animal Health presented the three scholarships sponsored by the company and Dr. Pam Mitchell accepted an award on behalf of Novartis honoring them for their contribution of Sentinel to IAADP partner members.

It's always exciting to announce a new member benefit at our conference and this year was no exception. IAADP has developed a relationship with the Kansas State University laboratory responsible for testing the effectiveness of rabies vaccines for individuals wanting to be accompanied by their dogs on overseas travel. The usual fee of \$40 will be reduced to \$20 and those indicating they are IAADP members will also be given priority status in processing the application.

The next day, Ed accompanied several folks to Washington, D.C. for a meeting with the Department of Justice. Toni stayed back in the hotel to pack, then met Ed later in the afternoon at the BWI Airport to do a presentation for Delta Air Lines.

On the way home from the ADI/IAADP conference in Baltimore, Ed experienced mild chest pain, sweating and breathing problems at the Fresno Airport. He didn't want to go directly to the hospital, so came home to rest. When the shortness of breath returned, we phoned Debbie, and she took him to the emergency room. The next day, February 1, he had an angiogram which showed significant deterioration since the previous one two years ago. He was released Friday afternoon and stayed home and relaxed.

Friday night, Ed had several episodes of extreme shortness of breath, so Toni phoned an ambulance and she and her Golden Retriever guide dog Keebler rode with him to the emergency room. Ed was readmitted after many hours in emergency and was stabilized and made comfortable.

The game plan was to send him to the Sequoia Hospital in Redwood City, about a three-hour drive from Fresno where he would receive a triple bypass surgery and valve replacement. After a week at the Fresno hospital, we received word the transfer would be made by ambulance, so Ed could be monitored.

Toni was driven to Redwood City by Guide Dogs for the Blind puppy raiser Mary Harris and daughter Melanie. On arriving at the hospital, they were bombarded with extremely positive reactions from the Sequoia Hospital staff to the presence of Keebler, Ed's Golden Retriever guide dog Latrell and Mary's Golden Retriever guide dog puppy Tango.

The Guest House where Toni stayed was very comfortable and not far from the hospital, but the route was somewhat complicated and Toni needed to pattern Keebler into finding the way. After a couple of trips Keebler had the route down pat!

Toni felt loved and protected when Fresno friends offered to help out. Linda Haymond drove up Friday evening and stayed with Toni until Sunday when another Fresno friend Beth Shea arrived.

Ed settled into his hospital room and was overwhelmed by the extremely positive response to him and the dogs. Realizing Toni would need distraction from the hospital stress, Mary had emailed the local Guide Dogs for the Blind puppy raisers to help out. GDB is Keebler and Latrell's alma mater. Throughout the rest of the week, Toni

was involved in a social event each day, ranging from a presentation at a nearby elementary school, speaking at the scheduled puppy raising meeting to meals shared with members of the group.

Ed's mood remained positive and he was mentally prepared for surgery on February 12, when his damaged aortic valve was replaced with one from a pig. Now, when he eats like a pig, we'll know why!

Beth was a huge support throughout the week. She did not stay in the guest house with Toni because she snores!! Latrell and Keebler were Toni's roommates. Toni had no problem handling both dogs as each has learned to heel on the right while the other guides. Prior to Toni's spinal fusion surgery in July, Ed would let Latrell guide while Keebler stayed on his right. Now the dogs were reversed. Neither is a puller and both are totally manageable.

When Toni and Beth visited Ed in intensive care on Tuesday morning, he was exhausted but fully coherent and able to sit up for several hours. No problem having the dogs in the intensive care unit. A day after surgery, Ed returned

to a private room and, amazingly, was walking with a physical therapist later that day. Three days after surgery, Ed was walking the hospital corridors with Latrell! Throughout the entire hospitalization, the Sequoia staff were outstanding and enthusiastic dog lovers.

On Friday, February 16, Ed was delighted with the news that he would be released the next day! No uncomfortable ambulance on this return trip. Following medical instructions, we took several breaks on the ride home in Beth's van. It was great to be greeted by our four feline family members who were well cared for at home by Debbie.

We kept a low profile for the rest of the month. Other than visits from friends, readers, a visiting nurse and an appointment with the cardiologist, we haven't ventured far from home. Ed has limited energy and must take frequent rest times. However, we are planning to resume our veterinary school lecture careers at the end of March!

Toni and Ed Eames can be contacted at 3376 North Wishon, Fresno, CA 93704-4832; Tel. 559-224-0544; email eeames@csufresno.edu.

My Dogs, My Partners, My Friends

By Shiela Henry

I have multiple sclerosis. I entered the realm of assistance dog partnerships in 1995. In truth, the courage that had both physically and mentally sustained me for 25 years was failing. Blessing, a self-confident, almost regal, four-year-old Blue Merle collie from Kings Valley Collies transformed my life. My husband, Mike, and I immediately fell in love with her. Blessing, equipped with a specially designed harness, gave me hope.

Blessing helped me regain much of the movement which I had lost from what could have been a disabling bout of M.S. With her assistance, I was able to move fearlessly about my environment. She was by my side when my husband and I watched our three sons, in high school and in college, win many wrestling competitions, sometimes local, sometimes state, and even some national competitions. Blessing was a great traveler.

After our sons left home, Mike and I began traveling more frequently. Because of my wonderful assistance dogs, I have remained mobile enough to go on a number of trips with limited help from my human partners. Blessing accompanied us on a number of trips to Las Vegas as well as a cruise through the Panama Canal. Although Blessing was a great hit with the passengers and crew, my travel companions, Elmer, Anita, and Mike still refer to the 10-day fiasco as a "cruise from hell." Although Blessing did not voice her displeasure, I am sure that she would have agreed.

Because the Norwegian Cruise Line ship developed a faulty engine, we missed three ports of call. No stops meant no grass. In preparation for the cruise, we had trained Blessing to go on a "potty" pad. This worked well at first, however, Mike soon learned that Blessing was

modest and would refuse to "go" if caught "in the act." Needless to say, we were all thankful when we touched soil again.

When Blessing's working days were over, Sega, a sable and white collie, became responsible for my mobility. This worked great because Blessing had always loved Mike best, anyway. We were fortunate that she was able to share our lives for a number of years after her retirement. Although Blessing was a slim and trim lady at 65 pounds, Sega was a big boy, weighing in at 75 pounds. He loved his food and I learned early that he would finish his own rations and then head directly for Blessing's food dish as she ate much more daintily.

Sega and I were together for close to seven years. We traveled to the Mayan Peninsula where Sega was given the honor of being the first dog to be allowed admission to a nationally renowned theme park. He worked at my side when we floated down the Mississippi on a barge to New Orleans to enjoy the Mardi Gras. Largely because of his presence, I received many beads and even a coveted coconut, a symbol of honor, as we enjoyed the ornate floats as they moved down Bourbon Street.

Not only was Sega a successful assistance dog, he was versatile enough to become an excellent household pet. He was there when I held my first grandson for the first time. Even in his final years, he made a lasting impression. I will never forget hearing Emma, my 2½ year old granddaughter commenting in a childlike, but matter of fact manner, "Sega walks just like you, grandma." Because of her young age, Emma didn't know why my walking was not normal, but she did know that because of Sega, equipped in his harness,

continued on page 14...

My Dogs, My Partners, My Friends

Continued from page 13

I was able to walk with her to her great-grandmothers for more “grandma time.”

When the time was right, I contacted Kings Valley once again. Stasha, a female sable and white collie was Sega’s successor. She has many of the same collie traits that endeared me to both Blessing and Sega; however, it did not take long for me to realize that she is both very sensitive and very opinionated at the same time.

Almost immediately after Stasha joined our home, she became a self-appointed watchdog, using her sharp voice to sound an alert. Sometimes it was hard to determine what had treaded on her turf. Although she is still learning the appropriate time to bark when we are at home, her demeanor while in harness is near perfection.

When Stasha and I are walking together, she is constantly reminding me that I am not walking correctly, whether I am not bending my knees, or if I am not putting my body weight on my often weakened hips. Because of her determination, I can count on the fact that she will let me know when my body position needs correction.

Approximately two years after Sega retired, Stasha demonstrated her sensitivity when I awoke up from a sound sleep with her nose in my face. After one look at Sega, I knew immediately that Sega, a faithful friend, was in crisis. It was evident that the two had developed a very strong bond. After that night it took almost two weeks before Stasha stopped making constant, unscheduled trips to the door, apparently looking for her missing comrade.

Because I have a mental picture in my mind of Blessing and Sega’s running with their tails flying in the wind, this piece has special meaning.

The Rainbow Bridge

Author Unknown

There is a bridge connecting Heaven and Earth. It is called the Rainbow Bridge because of its many colors. Just this side of the Rainbow Bridge, there is a land of meadows, hills and valleys with lush green grass.

When a beloved assistance partner dies the dog goes to this place. There is always food and water and warm spring weather. The old and frail animals are young again. Those who are maimed are made whole again. They play all day with each other. There is only one thing missing: they are not with their special person who need them and loved them on Earth. So each day they run and play until the day comes when one suddenly looks up! The nose twitches. The ears are up. The eyes are staring. And several run from the group. You have been seen, and when you and your special friends meet, you throw your arms around them. Your face is kissed again and again and you are looking into the eyes of your trusting assistance dog.

Then you cross the Rainbow Bridge together, never to be separated.

Shiela Henry live in Dayton, Oregon, with Stasha, her husband, Mike, and Mike’s dog, Asia.

Donor Honor Roll 2007

These wonderful companies have contributed door-prizes and Assistance Dog “Goodie Bag” gift items to enhance your and your dog’s enjoyment of the IAADP Conference. Please send your note of thanks to Toni@iaadp.org or IAADP c/o Tanya Eversole, PO Box 531086, Cincinnati, OH 45253 so that we may forward them to our sponsors.

We have provided their website urls so you can give them your patronage during the year to come!

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Jill Exposito
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Patty Kennedy, Author
Through Otis’ Eyes Lessons from a Guide Dog Puppy
Bailey By My Side: Golden Lessons for Life

Advocacy Effort on Maryland Bill

by Joan Froling

We received a request to support state legislation from Gary Norman, President of the Maryland chapter of Guide Dog Users, Inc. Upon reading the proposed bill, I determined two amendments were urgently needed. Gary agreed to support these amendments. Our board worked with me to draft a letter to send out to all the Committee Members, the Office of the Secretary on Disability and Speaker of the House in Maryland. I also sent it to others who might want to support it. We burned the midnight oil to get this done before the next hearing. I'm pleased that Sheila Styron, President of GDUI, sent a letter to the Committee members in support of IAADP's effort. Hopefully this bill which would have limited access rights only to the blind, deaf and mobility impaired will be amended prior to passage.

February 23, 2007

Peter A. Hammen, Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 505 Maryland Service Animal Reform Act -
"Gretchen's Law"

Dear Chair Hammen,

I'm writing you on behalf of the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners. Founded in 1993, this consumer advocacy organization represents over 2,000 members who work with guide, hearing and service dogs. Assistance dogs are the most common form of service animal working with disabled Americans.

IAADP's Board of Directors would like to comment on your Service Animal Reform Act, HB 505, and recommend two vitally important amendments.

We find much to commend in HB 505. We support your proposal to change the term "service dog" to Service Animal. We also support your decision to eliminate an old provision on identification and certification for guide, hearing and service dogs, so Maryland law will conform with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

We discovered two major oversights which urgently need to be addressed. The first is the outdated definition of disability in HB 505. The second is the failure to develop a definition of Service Animal in order to differentiate between a task-trained service animal and a pet, as the ADA did in 1991.

The ADA defines a disability as any mental or physical condition that substantially impairs one or more major life functions. Children and adults with life threatening Type One diabetes, leukemia, psychiatric disabilities, seizures, autism, chronic pain disorders, Alzheimer's Disease and many other invisible disabilities NOT related to mobility, blindness or deafness receive tremendous benefits from specially trained service animals. If HB 505 is permitted to exclude these children and adults in Maryland from having access rights, it would violate their federally guaranteed civil rights to work with a service animal to increase their safety and independence.

IAADP suggests a solution many other states employ

when updating service animal legislation – adopt ADA's definition of disability. This provides full protection for Maryland citizens and avoids conflict with federal requirements.

If the terms "blind or visually impaired" and "deaf or hard of hearing," are retained in HB 505, we propose changing the term "mobility impaired" to "people with other disabilities."

The second issue in HB 505 is the absence of a definition of service animal. IAADP belongs to the Coalition of Assistance Dog Organizations (CADO), which brings together the major consumer advocacy organizations representing disabled persons working with assistance dogs and the organizations training guide, hearing and service dogs. CADO members developed the following definition of a Service Animal to clarify what was intended by Congress in passing the ADA. This Service Animal definition has been adopted by other states as an excellent way to distinguish between pets and task trained service animals. We urge you to consider adoption of this definition:

Service animal means an assistance dog and may include other animals specifically trained to perform physical tasks to mitigate the effects of an individual's disability. Assistance dogs include guide dogs that guide individuals who are legally blind, hearing dogs that alert individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to specific sounds and service dogs for individuals with disabilities other than blindness or deafness. Service dogs are trained to perform a variety of physical tasks including but not limited to pulling a wheelchair, lending balance support, picking up dropped objects or providing assistance in a medical crisis. The presence of an animal for comfort, protection or personal defense does not qualify as training to mitigate the effects of a person's disability and therefore does not qualify said animal as a service animal.

We applaud the wonderful initiative in HB 505 to educate first responders like public safety officers, emergency shelter operators and 911 operators about disabled persons working with service animals. When it is implemented, though, it is essential that these public servants follow both state and federal mandates. Adding the recommended changes will avoid any conflict in this essential area of support for disabled Marylanders.

In closing, IAADP thanks you for the opportunity to provide this input. If you have any questions or wish to have additional input, please contact me. We think the Service Animal Reform Act, also known as "Gretchen's bill," has many admirable provisions. With the amendments we have recommended to ensure this legislation accomplishes the well intentioned goals of its sponsors and the committee that provided input when it was being drafted, we believe this new state law you are considering will be extremely beneficial to the disabled community.

Sincerely,
Joan Froling, IAADP Chairperson
(586) 826-3938

Meet Your Board Members

First Interview by Wendy Morrell

Your Name: Dino Brownson

Your assistance dog's name & breed: Penny is a Lab/Mastiff mix

Current location: Tequesta, Florida

Is this your first assistance dog? How long have you been together? PENNY is my second

Service Dog. She and I have been together for 7 years

Is your dog owner trained or program trained? Penny was program trained by Assistance Dogs of America, Inc. (ADAI)

Briefly, how did you become involved with IAADP? I came to know about IAADP when I became Executive Director of ADAI and came to provide all graduates with a year's membership. When I resigned from ADAI I wanted to continue my involvement with the Assistance Dog industry.

In terms of the assistance dog movement, what excites you the most? The Assistance Dog movement partners one of God's great creatures with an individual who needs the dogs help and together they become a loving and working team.

Again in terms of the assistance dog movement, what frustrates you the most? My frustration lies in the lack of standardization in the industry.

And now to the gritty questions:

My favorite holiday destination is: A quiet romantic place where my wife, Penny and I can chill out, have good food and leisure activities.

Reality TV or a good film? Good film, "A Few Good Men" is my favorite.

Hot Dog or Hamburger? Hamburger

Pizza or Pasta? Pasta

Beer, wine or soft drink? Wine

My last meal out was in: Tequesta at a great Continental restaurant.

When relaxing, my assistance dog and I like to: Penny and I curl up on the sofa and watch TV.

Not many people know this, but I'm: I am a former United States Marine and Jane and I have been married for 53 years, have four children and nine grandchildren.

Who Do I Ask? Where Do I Send It?

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New Projects

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Fundraising

Membership Information

Membership Dues: Partner Member \$20; Renewal \$20; Friend Member \$20; Provider Member \$25. Send check with signed application from website at <http://www.iaadp.org/membership/html> to IAADP c/o Tanya Eversole, P.O. Box 531086, Cincinnati, Ohio 45253. You may also obtain membership application with S.A.S.E., or send a letter with your signature affirming you're partnered with an assistance dog and who trained it. Credit Cards accepted online! Specify newsletter format - Print, Cassette or Disk. Renewal notices may or may not be sent out. Please renew 45 days in advance of the Expiration Date on Partner Membership Card to maintain your eligibility for benefits. Change of dog? Must update database file!

IAADP Information & Advocacy Center

Call (760) 439-9544 or email iaadp@aol.com or see contact info on IAADP Website: www.iaadp.org You can also contact us by mail at IAADP, P.O. Box 1326, Sterling Hts., MI 48311

International Association of Assistance Dog Partners

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