

Partners Forum

International Association of Assistance Dog Partners

VOLUME FOURTEEN • NUMBER THREE

FIRST QUARTER 2008

Partnership with Royal Canin USA

by Ed and Toni Eames

This issue of *Partners' Forum* is sponsored through a generous grant from Royal Canin USA, manufacturer of a variety of premium pet foods. Royal Canin USA joins Bayer Animal Health, Fort Dodge Animal Health, Nutramax Laboratories, Nestle Purina and Procter & Gamble in supporting the Veterinary Care Partnership program.

Going beyond these IAADP support efforts, this caring company is providing a limited number of 6-pound bag coupons for those already feeding their assistance dog partners or considering switching to Royal Canin Maxi Golden Retriever 25, Maxi Labrador Retriever 30 or Maxi Large Breed Adult foods. We have a limited number of coupons for each variety, and we will distribute on a first come, first served basis.

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Only 11½ lbs., Rudy, a Bichon-Papillon mix, can assist his partner Fran, who is severely disabled by rheumatoid arthritis, to call for help by fetching the phone. Alternatively, he will operate her Life Alert machine on command, as detailed in her training article on page 14.



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IAADP Guest Speakers in London

by Wendy Morrell

Hello to everyone and greetings from England! I am writing this a little over three months ahead of the 2008 IAADP annual conference. I cannot believe the time has come round so quickly, but thankfully things are shaping up really nicely with the conference programme and we have lots of exciting presentations and workshops which will hopefully be of interest to everyone.

I am delighted that Rosemary Smart, Chief Executive of The Kennel Club, has agreed to open our conference and attend the rest of the day. Here in the U.K., The Kennel Club support assistance dog organisations in a very tangible way via their Charitable Trust, and have shown real commitment to the assistance dog movement over a number of years.

Our keynote speaker is Dr Roger Mugford, a psychologist and farmer who introduced the concept of behavioural therapy to the veterinary profession by founding The Animal Behaviour Centre in 1979. He invented the Halti head-collar plus other training and reward based behaviour aids distributed by The Company of Animals, of which he is Managing Director.

Roger is a Vice Patron of Dogs for the Disabled, a Trustee of Cancer and Bio-detection Dogs and was awarded The Blue Cross Welfare Award in 2005. His major current pre-occupation is the defence of dogs facing unjust treatment before the law and owners who may live in palaces or in poverty.

Helen McCain is Director of Training and Development for Dogs for the Disabled here in the U.K., and we are delighted that Helen has agreed to give a presentation on "The Successor Dog Challenge." Something which I am sure has crossed the (human) mind of every partnership at one time or another!

Helen has worked in the assistance dog industry for over 20 years. Her role at Dogs for the Disabled is to oversee all aspects of the charity's assistance dog training work with specific responsibilities for standards, quality assurance and new developments. Helen pioneered the UK's first assistance dog program for children and is now developing a new Dogs for the Disabled program training assistance dogs to work with autistic children and their families.

I am really blessed in that when my assistance dog Caesar suffered a serious dental injury I was able to find a world renowned veterinary dentist almost on our doorstep! Thankfully with the expertise of her practice Caesar was successfully treated and made pain free, able to continue working as normal. I am really excited to be able to share with you that Dr. Cecilia Gorrel is to be presenting to our conference on the topic "Maintaining Oral Health in Our Dogs...What Every Partner Should Know."

Cecilia is truly a leader in her field and is qualified as a Doctor of Dental Surgery, an Oral Pathologist and a Veterinary Surgeon. Cecilia is also an RCVS-recognised Specialist in Veterinary Dentistry. She is a partner in a Veterinary Dentistry and Oral Surgery Referral service (Petdent Ltd) in the UK. Cecilia is also an Independent Research Consultant investigating oral diseases in the dog and cat. She is a Diplomate and was the Inaugural President of the European Veterinary Dental College (EVDC). Dr. Gorrel is also an Honorary Fellow of the Academy of Veterinary Dentistry and an Honorary Lifetime Member of the British Veterinary Dental Association. She is active as an international lecturer and has authored and co-authored numerous scientific publications, including the books 'Veterinary Dentistry for the General Practitioner' and 'Veterinary Dentistry for the Nurse and Technician.'

In addition to these great speakers, all of whom I know personally and can wholeheartedly recommend, we have workshops planned on the subjects of "International Air Travel with Assistance Dogs," "Access Updates from Around the World," "Assistance Dogs in Norway," a session on sharing equipment, new products and ideas, an IAADP news round-up, and finally one very exciting presentation which is only just coming to fruition at the moment, and you'll have to watch the conference page on the IAADP website for further details nearer the time!

If you are able to come to the conference, I wish you and your assistance dog a safe and trouble free journey, if you are unable to join us in London, for what is the first international assistance dog conference ever held in Europe, please watch the next edition of *Partners' Forum* after the conference for all the reports and updates from the conference.

Continental Airlines - Official Carrier for Our Conference

We are proud and delighted to announce that Continental Airlines has partnered with IAADP and Assistance Dogs International to be recognized as the official carrier for the joint conferences in London in June. As the first United States airline to apply for and be approved to carry service animals in the cabin on flights between North America and the United Kingdom, Continental Airlines has earned kudos from the assistance dog community. This major step forward in providing international access for all of us who travel with assistance dogs is a tribute to the company's initiative and commitment to the disability

community. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate that this innovative and forward looking company offers ADI and IAADP conference participants a significant discount on their airfares when attending the June conferences.

The Continental Airlines group number is ZDRW, agreement code D7VIC3. In order to book a flight and obtain the discount, you will need both codes.

When you are ready to book your flight, call 1-800-468-7022 between 7am - 10pm Central time. If you have questions about how the discount works, call 1-800-322-8662.

Royal Canin USA - Knowledge and Respect for all Dogs

by Brent Mayabb, DVM

For assistance, service and guide dogs, it's important that their nutrition be highly monitored in order for them to stay in top form.

With over 40 years of experience in health nutrition, Royal Canin USA is the forerunner of nutritional and technological advancement in pet food. Our collaboration with nutritionists, breeders and veterinarians from around the world means that our research is as impartial and relevant as possible, ensuring the best nutrition for dogs and cats.

All over the world, Royal Canin USA initiates and supports strictly controlled research projects at Veterinary Universities and Schools with the objective of understanding the role of nutrition in the health of dogs and cats. These projects also enable us to validate the effectiveness of our dietetic foods in the management of certain diseases.

With the compatible objectives of IAADP and Royal Canin USA of Knowledge and Respect, we know that Royal Canin USA and IAADP will become strong partners. We are excited and honored about our association with IAADP.

Temperament, trainability, and good health are some traits that make a successful assistance dog. As the leader in health nutrition, Royal Canin USA has developed pet food not only to meet the pet's nutritional needs, but to promote optimal health and longevity. The nutritional benefits come from our dedication to respecting the pet's unique physiology and gaining knowledge through research.

While assistance dogs may come in different breeds and sizes based upon their specific function(s), large breed dogs, especially Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers are commonly employed. The Golden Retriever is a dog who is equally comfortable sloshing through wet fields with hunters as he is at home with the children tugging on his unmistakable golden coat. This versatility has led to the breed's popularity, and also lends itself well to becoming an assistance dog. Because of the Golden's popularity, much is known about health issues related to the Golden Retriever. Some of these concerns can be addressed nutritionally, and Royal Canin USA developed Maxi Golden Retriever 25 formula with these issues in mind.

One of the most prominent features of the Golden Retriever is his distinctive coat. Beneath the coat, however, the Golden has very sensitive skin that is prone to certain issues such as hot spots, seborrhea, and skin infections. To help reduce the occurrence of these conditions and improve overall skin health, Royal Canin Maxi Golden Retriever 25 has augmented levels of both omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-6 fatty acids contribute to the luster and softness of the hair coat, while omega-3 fatty acids, particularly EPA and DHA, help reduce inflammation of the skin. A unique innovation from Royal Canin is a complex of nutrients made up of four B vitamins and one amino acid that offers an additional method of skin protection. This com-

ination of nutrients has been shown to increase the production of the substance that acts as the mortar (ceramide) between the skin cells. The effect of more ceramide production is an improvement of the skin's ability to act as a wall to irritants, allergens, and bacteria for the dog.

Golden Retrievers live long lives, providing many years of happiness to their owners. With this increased longevity comes increased likelihood of issues that stem from oxidative damage to the cells. The damage may be even more prominent in working dogs. Oxidative damage leads to subtle changes attributed to normal aging all the way to more serious effects such as cancer. Royal Canin Maxi Golden Retriever 25 contains many antioxidants to help reduce the effects of oxidative damage. First, this formula contains an antioxidant complex consisting of taurine, lutein, vitamin E and vitamin C. This group of antioxidants has a synergistic effect in reducing free radical production and DNA damage. Also included in this formula are antioxidants extracted from green tea called polyphenols. Lycopene is an antioxidant compound found in this formula that occurs naturally in tomatoes, and has demonstrated some anti-tumor properties.

Many assistance dogs will become the eyes of their owners, and another issue that some Golden Retrievers face is the degradation of vision over time. This may be from a loss of acuity (a normal age-related change) or the development of opacity of the lens like a cataract. Although these changes may not be preventable, this formula contains nutrients to help protect the eye. Lutein and zeaxanthin are pigments in the carotenoid family which act in synergy to help reduce damage to the retina and lens from oxidation caused by light exposure over time.

The Labrador Retriever is the dog most frequently registered with AKC each year. And although the Lab possesses many of the same traits as the Golden that make him an excellent assistance dog such as temperament, trainability, and longevity, the breeds are quite distinct (just ask anyone who has owned both). Labradors may share some health risks with Golden Retrievers, but they also have their own unique set of concerns. For this reason, Royal Canin has developed a separate formula specifically for this breed called Maxi Labrador Retriever 30.

The coat of the Labrador is made up of 3 types of hair that serve to help protect skin from damage from the environment. The skin of Labradors also secretes more sebum, which is an oily substance that serves to help "waterproof" the coat. Sebum also has an antibacterial effect. Maxi Labrador Retriever 30 has many nutritional differences designed for this special coat. Hair growth requires protein, and the formula has 30% protein to provide for a healthy coat. It also has augmented levels of zinc, B vitamins, and omega fatty acids for optimum coat condition.

continued on page 4...

Royal Canin USA - Knowledge and Respect

Continued from page 3

Labradors have a natural predisposition to weight gain. This is a function of genetics, behavior, and in many cases, lifestyle. Labs have been shown to carry a higher percentage of fat mass versus lean muscle mass than other large breed dogs. Some Labs tend to be greedy eaters, and many will continue to eat as long as food is available, further predisposing them to being overweight. It's very important for assistance dogs to be in top physical condition for work and for longevity. Maxi Labrador Retriever 30 has been designed with obesity prevention in mind. It has reduced energy content, with a higher percent of the calories coming from protein and a lower percent coming from fat than comparable adult maintenance diets. L-carnitine is an amino acid that has been added to the diet because it has been shown to increase fat utilization. The kibble is specifically designed to slow ingestion rate by stimulating chewing. A complimentary benefit is the "brushing" effect this has on the teeth.

Because of their size, Labs experience stress on their joints. Some Labradors suffer from hip or knee problems. Excess weight also compounds these orthopedic issues. Maxi Labrador Retriever 30 has glucosamine, chondroitin, and manganese added to help promote healthy joints. Omega 3 fatty acids present in the formula, particularly EPA and DHA, help reduce inflammation associated with joint problems.

For other large breed dogs, Royal Canin USA has a formula called Maxi Large Breed Adult. It is a formula that was developed based on research on issues that are known to commonly affect large breed dogs.

Large breed dogs have been shown to have reduced digestive ability as compared to their small and medium breed counterparts. There are multiple factors involved that cause this, but the result is reduced stool quality, increased stool volume and frequency, and more stool odor. To combat this, Royal Canin Maxi Large Breed Adult was designed with very high digestibility. It uses chicken meal and egg as protein sources and also incorporates beet pulp, a source of both soluble and insoluble fiber to improve stool quality and limit intestinal fermentation.

As mentioned above with Labrador Retrievers, other large breed dogs may also be predisposed to osteoarthritis. While this condition may not be entirely preventable, by providing certain nutrients, we can promote overall joint health. Our Maxi Large Breed Adult formula contains supplemental levels of glucosamine and chondroitin for healthy cartilage and omega 3 fatty acids to help reduce inflammation. The diet also has a moderate energy content to help reduce the likelihood of obesity because that can exacerbate the signs associated with arthritis.

Whether a Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, or other large breed dog, Royal Canin USA makes a formula to help provide the nutrients to keep your companion healthy. Through working with breeders, collaboration with nutrition scientists and veterinarians, and by looking at the specific risks associated with breed and size, we are able to provide the optimum nutrition for good health and longevity. Through this we can strive toward our common goal of keeping your assistance dog in peak form.

IAADP Comment On Disaster Legislation

Disaster Relief, Emergency Evacuation, Sheltering and Service Animals

by Ed Eames, Ph.D., President

In establishing the right of people to be accompanied by their pets during disaster relief efforts, a fundamental error has been made in both federal and state statutes. That error is giving equivalency to pets and service animals. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the regulations implementing that federal law, people with disabilities are guaranteed the right to be accompanied by their service animals in all places of public accommodations. Under Title Three, all public accommodations, such as hospitals, restaurants, hotels, places of entertainment and public transportation facilities, must change their policies, practices and procedures to permit service animals to accompany their disabled partners. These rights are not extended to people with disabilities and their pets, nor to nondisabled individuals and their companion animals.

Unfortunately, recently enacted laws do not recognize this civil right when they state that service animals may be transported in crates during evacuations and placed in shelters or crates near their disabled partners after an emergency evacuation. Service animals enhance the independence, safety, mobility and quality of life for their disabled partners by performing trained tasks to mitigate the impact of the disability. Therefore, it is absolutely essential and mandated by the ADA that a service animal accompany the disabled partner during an evacuation, whether that be by car, bus, train, airplane, ship, or any other form of transportation. Furthermore, service animals should be permitted to stay with their disabled partners in shelters established as part of an emergency relief effort. Placing service animals in nearby shelters is not an acceptable procedure. This would deprive the disabled person from receiving the benefits of the trained tasks performed by the service animal to mitigate the effects of the disabling condition.

Clear language must be inserted into proposed legislation guaranteeing the right of disabled people to be accompanied by their service animals in disaster relief transportation efforts and in shelters established to house and care for those being evacuated from the disaster area.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Access Problem?

Contact: ADA Helpline at
800-514-0301
TTY: 800-514-0363

Email: ada.complaint@usdoj.gov

A Tribute For A Hero

by Jill Exposito

On December 7, 2007 a light went out on Earth and a brighter light began shining throughout the entire Universe. This was the day the assistance dog community and many others lost an extraordinary man and colleague, Michael Osborn. While Michael may no longer be with us in the physical sense, I'm sure all who met or knew him, or just knew of him will agree, he left us with a tremendous legacy and shall live on forever because of who he was. His great work on this Earth will not ever be forgotten. He touched many lives and took the time to know and listen to us about our own lives. He was the real deal, a genuine person who really cared.

Michael was partnered with Hastings, his Guide Dog from Guide Dogs for the Blind. I read once in a story that Michael likened having a Guide Dog to taking a magic carpet ride. And what a magical ride it was for him and Hastings. Together they traveled extensively across the United States and across the oceans of the world. There were many trips to Hawaii and Australia, even Paris and Switzerland too. Together they were the worldly and exemplary ambassadors of the assistance dog community.

Michael had a great sense of humor and a great outlook on life. He was positive to the max and always knew how to crack a laugh or break the ice. He was charming and totally irresistible. With Hastings by his side, they were the dynamic duo – devoted to each other – always one looking after the other.

Luckily, Michael advocated for those of us who make up the assistance dog community. He wanted what was right and what was fair and just – that we and our canine partners get the dignity and respect all humans should have regardless of circumstance. His biggest advocacy effort was working with the British and United States governments and their respective airlines to overturn the archaic rules of not allowing assistance dogs to fly in the cabin of aircraft with their human partners between the United States and the United Kingdom.

The “2nd Battle of Hastings” as it became known began when Michael spearheaded and led the charge to get this outdated rule changed. He knew from flying with Hastings all over the world that it was possible for a canine partner to fly comfortably with his/her human partner. Michael's tenacity and perseverance made it happen! Assistance dog teams now fly together in the cabin of certain airlines between the United States and the United Kingdom. Even up to his last days on Earth, Michael worked toward his goal of getting all airlines to comply with the new rules. Soon all airlines will be in compliance and we have Michael to thank.

During the college football season, Michael used to say, “Fight On!” when cheering on his beloved USC Trojans. Those are symbolic words to remember Michael by. He would want us all to “Fight On” for our rights as human beings and to continue the fight against discrimination.

It is most fitting that the June 2008 IAADP Conference will be held “across the pond” in the United Kingdom and

because of Michael Osborn and his advocacy, assistance dog teams will make this trip together. With that being said, IAADP is proud to dedicate its conference in honor of Michael Osborn. We shall honor and celebrate the great life of this great man. He was a hero and an inspiration and he shall never be forgotten.

Partner Member

Free benefits unless otherwise noted

All Members Worldwide

- “Partners Forum” Newsletter
- Emergency Recovery Kit - funded by Bayer Animal Health
- International Help-line [call or write]

Available in United States

- Sentinel Flavor Tabs from Novartis Animal Health
- Advantage or Advantix from Bayer Animal Health
- Dasuquin, Cosequin, Welactin and Denosyl from Nutramax Laboratories
- AVID Microchip - Avid Microchip ID Systems, Inc.
- Registration in PETtrac and/or the AKC Companion Animal Recovery Program
- Veterinary Care Partnership Grant (eligibility guidelines on website)
- KV Vet Supply offers 15% off all non-pharmaceutical products
- Veterinary Centers of America (VCA) - 10% discount
- Kansas State University Veterinary Diagnostic Labs - 50% discount on titer testing.
- Fort Dodge Animal Health - vaccine rebate up to \$20
- Access & Education brochure

Available in Canada

- Advantage or Advantage-Multi from Bayer Animal Health Canada
- Wyeth Animal Health - vaccine rebate up to \$20

Note: Members in the UK and other countries are encouraged to seek similar benefits from companies for their geographical area.

A Tail To Tell

by Toni and Ed Eames

We couldn't refuse; it was just too exciting! An all expense paid trip to Chicago to speak to 150 Golden Retriever breeders from all over the world. Royal Canin USA, sponsor of the event, would be purchasing copies of our book, *Partners in Independence*, to give to all attendees at the October event. What a deal!

Our Golden Retriever guide dogs, Keebler and Latrell, were almost as excited as we. They strode into the lobby of the Fairmont Hotel with heads held high and loved our spacious room in this deluxe hostelry. The reception on Wednesday, October 10, 2007 provided an opportunity to meet people from Japan, Hong Kong, Holland, France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

For the next two days we were immersed in Golden Retriever lore. We and other participants learned a great deal about the history of the breed and its working characteristics. Leading experts presented research on medical issues ranging from cancer to osteoarthritis to dermatological and dental problems. Royal Canin veterinary staff then presented information about their recently launched Golden Retriever dog food designed to address these health issues.

On the less scientific front, speakers described the various facets of the breed in conformation, field, search and rescue, obedience and therapy work. Our presentation focused on the Golden as working guide, hearing and service dog. With almost 60 years of Golden Retriever guide dog partnerships between us, we reminisced about the unique characteristics of our previous dogs. Toni talked about Charm, the pioneering guide dog who obtained an AKC novice CD obedience title, Flicka who bound Toni to the veterinary profession when diagnosed with lymphosarcoma and Ivy who became the first guide dog to obtain the AKC CDX intermediate obedience title. Ivy was also honored as Guide Dog of the Year by the Delta Society. Ed shared his feelings of highs and lows as his guide Kirby was diagnosed with bone cancer, went through a left front leg amputation and was rehabilitated as the first three-legged guide dog in history. We ended by showing our Maxwell award-winning video, *Partners in Independence*. The audience must have shared the Dog Writers Association of America judges' opinion when they voted *Partners in Independence* the best video of the year, since they offered a thunderous round of applause at the completion of the film!

Several attendees told us they donated puppies and stud services to a number of assistance dog training programs. Hopefully, our educational message encouraged many more to become an active part of the assistance dog community. Thank you, Royal Canin for underwriting this outstanding symposium and offering us the chance to spread the word about the multiplicity of capabilities of our breed of choice!

Following our presentation, we met with the President of Royal Canin USA and discussed establishing a partnership between the company and IAADP. The result is a grant to help the IAADP Veterinary Care Partnership program, sponsorship of this issue of *Partners' Forum* and other relationships mentioned in this issue.

Flying back to Fresno from Chicago on October 12, we had to scramble to attend that evening's performance of *The Miracle Worker*, a fund raiser for Ed's North Fresno Lions Club. Since we sold 41 of the total 130 tickets purchased, many of our friends were in the audience. The more than \$2,000 raised will be used to support Lions International Sight First II effort to eliminate preventable blindness throughout the world. So far, more than \$150,000,000 has been raised in this world-wide effort.

The next day it was off to Portland, Oregon to begin our Pacific Northwest tour to speak at Oregon and Washington State Universities' veterinary schools and address the Assistance Dog Club of Puget Sound.

At Oregon State, the smallest veterinary school in the country, we were delighted with the large turnout. Following the presentation, a faculty member introduced herself, said she had been a student at the University of Missouri when we lectured there several years ago and encouraged her students to attend. Needless to say, we were delighted.

After spending time with friends in Salem and Portland, we flew to Pullman, home of Washington State University. Latrell's puppy raisers, Julia and Ashley Creech, drove six hours to join us. The evening entertainment was our presentation to the students at the veterinary school.

It was off Wednesday morning for the long drive to the Creech home in Bellingham with a stop to visit veterinary friend and IAADP Animal Health Care Community Advisory Board member Carin Smith in Pesheston. Carin and her partner Doug live in a log house out in the country. After a yummy lunch, we ventured out to meet Carin's horses, an engaging pair of Tennessee Walkers. The dogs had a good run and Keebler even scarfed a mouthful of horse manure in the corral, before she was foiled! No accounting for doggy tastes!

When the other Creech children, Amber and Daniel, joined us that evening, Latrell was overwhelmed with joy being back in his first home. One of his favorite tricks is doing somersaults, and the family laughed when they saw him continue these antics, a carryover from his puppy days!

The Thursday morning event was a presentation at Ashley's school to 40 or so kids. They were very bright and interactive, and we enjoyed speaking with them.

Jeanne Hampl, former trainer at the Prison Pet Partnership Program and founder of the Assistance Dog Club of Puget Sound, was our host in Gig Harbor. She took us to dinner with the ADC board. It was great interacting with these folks and meeting their dogs. The restaurant gave the group a private room, so we were able to chat with everyone. Board members Linda and Wayne are hearing dog partners and the others work with service dogs. It was a very enjoyable evening!

We have always wanted to attend a meeting of the Assistance Dog Club of Puget Sound, and we were not disappointed. Thirty or so folks showed up with a variety of dogs and they were extremely receptive to our presentation. Afterwards, several members told us how important

IAADP, especially the Veterinary Care Partnership program, was in helping them keep their dogs in good health. All ADC members are also members of IAADP.

Both dogs presented us with a real problem after these successive trips. In Chicago, where there was no grass, they refused to relieve for 36 hours. We gave in and took them to a park before flying home and they had plenty of grass laden running time on the Pacific Northwest trip. We should have restricted them when they began holding out again on our return home and insisted they needed grass. Since we travel so much in areas where there is no grass readily available, we insist they relieve on the street in front of our house. However, we learned our lesson when they each had a urine accident in the house.

Several months ago, we were asked to do a presentation at the November conference of the Cat and Dog Writers Association in Foster City, California. Friend Bob Walker stopped off in Fresno on his way to the conference. You may have seen Bob and his wife Frances on television displaying their Cat House. They have transformed their San Diego home into a feline haven with ramps and cubby holes and colorful cat themes. Their cat haven has not only been featured on television, but in high end art magazines, and even in *Parade*!

Bob made the six hour drive to Fresno on Wednesday November 14 and we spent a lovely evening playing with the animals and getting better acquainted.

Friday afternoon we shared the stage with fellow writer Debbie White and discussed language in the fields of assistance dogs and writing about disability. That evening we connected with Carrie Foote of Central Life Sciences. This

is the company you read about in the last issue of *Partners' Forum*, which is contributing Comfort Zone with Dog Appeasing Pheromones for members interested in seeing if the product will reduce noise sensitivity or any other stress related behavior.

We've had two tragic losses since our last column. Dr. Roger Gfeller, an emergency and critical care specialist in Fresno, lost his life in a car accident. Many of the mourners at his funeral were clients whose animals were saved by Roger's skillful hands. Roger had a long standing relationship with IAADP. At one of our earlier conferences, he donated copies of his dog first-aid book to all attendees. As director of the Fresno 24-hour emergency hospital, he negotiated a significant discount policy for IAADP members. Having just opened a state-of-the-art specialty hospital, he instituted a similar policy. What an incredible loss for the animals of Fresno and for us personally!

Former IAADP board member Michael Osborn was the lead figure in the struggle to convince the British government to allow assistance dogs to fly from North America to England in the passenger cabin of the aircraft. His tenacity and persuasiveness paved the way for all of us desiring to travel internationally with our canine assistants. In early December, the world lost a great advocate when Michael succumbed to cancer. Survivor partner Labrador Retriever guide dog Hastings has been adopted by Michael's sister. The 2008 IAADP conference in the U.K. will be dedicated in Michael's memory.

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

Free Eye Examination & Wellness Report

Pilot Program in USA Limited to Program Certified Assistance Dogs

Partners with program certified dogs will be able to participate in the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists pilot program, a National Service Dog Eye Examination Day on May 12, 2008. Such dogs will receive a free complete eye examination to screen for ocular health with one of 180 board certified veterinary ophthalmologists in the United States and some areas of Canada.

In addition to the eye exam, the assistance dog can receive a preventative health diagnosis and blood panel. Sponsored by Pet Health Systems, this additional program will be implemented by your primary care veterinarian following the May 12 eye screening.

If interested, please register at www.ACVOeyeexam.org after April 1, 2008. Complete the general information on the form which will be supplied to the veterinary ophthalmologist you select. Then, contact the participating clinic of your choice from the list provided to schedule an appointment. Most clinics will be participating on May 12th,

others may have additional days designated for the program. You can learn more about the program by visiting the website, www.ACVOeyeexam.org.

The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists has established this program as a way of repaying a debt to guide, hearing and service dogs dedicated to the well being of their disabled partners. While it is commendable this organization is making this outreach effort to ensure the health and well being of canine assistants, we are disappointed owner-trained teams belonging to IAADP cannot participate this year. We are advocating this policy be reconsidered next year.

Ed Eames, President
IAADP

Kazi, the Brave

by Jacqueline Rotteveel

At our 6 month visit and check-up, Susan, the Executive Director of Dogs In Service and our trainer, asked me whether Kazi was making my life easier. I asked her if we could delay the answer to that question until we had partnered together for a full year. I'm great at stalling.

See, I had never even owned a dog. I am a cat person. I loved dogs, just never had one. What I did have was a multitude of disabling medical conditions, including a neuromuscular disorder, that was limiting my life. I'm in pain all the time, with flare ups that set my teeth on edge and bring me to tears. My disease is degenerative – new problems all the time – the parts wear out too soon. I have overwhelming fatigue. One of the things that I find especially difficult is that you can't see any of this from the outside. On the outside I look just marvelous, darling – really.

I started thinking about getting a service dog a million years ago. But, I wondered, did I deserve one? Would a dog really help? After all, I could do things, nothing was broken or missing – it's just that everything I did caused me pain that was often excruciating. And wore me OUT...How could a dog help?

So I called Susan and we got together to talk at length. She was convinced a dog could help. So I went on the waiting list until the right dog was found for me. Kazi was 18 months old when I started working with him. A beautiful Golden Retriever, with a very soft and sensitive personality, he was an amazing mix of nobility and sheer goofiness. He had been trained by lots of wonderful people to whom I will be forever indebted.

Then came boot camp. 'Nuf said.

My whole life changed. My whole routine changed. Kazi wore a walker harness and I held on to him for balance and to help me walk. He picked up the hundreds of things I dropped, got pots out of cabinets so I didn't have to bend, helped me get dressed in the morning, braced me when I need help getting up, and lots of other helpful things, with many more helpful things yet to learn.

He also came with lots of work. There was grooming, regular training sessions, trips to the vets (darn those allergies!), daily runs at the dog park, time for play, learning to speak dog, and having to explain, ever so sweetly to an uneducated public why they couldn't pet my beautiful dog.

So, six months into this gig, things were just starting to even out between the work and worry I was putting in and what he was giving back.

Then I had a conversation with Susan that turned things around. "Don't hide your pain from Kazi," she said to me. "While we don't always know what a dog will do in response," she said, "we know that they know, sometimes before we do, about our pain – about any changes with us really. So, thinking that we can even hide it from them is silly." What Kazi would do in response to my pain, and the regular fluctuations of it, was yet to be seen.

See, I've learned what most people with chronic medical conditions learn: what other people want is for you to

feel better. They don't know what to do if you don't. And they don't know what to do if there is nothing to do. I have exhausted every medical avenue I could, and have found no treatment that works. I know it's no fun to be around someone who moans and groans all the time. I'm a hospice chaplain – I visit dying patients and support the people that care for them – I need to have a peaceful, positive and comforting demeanor. Whining isn't in the job description.

So I've learned to hide my pain when other people are in the room. And when they ask, I sometimes say "I'm good today" (even if I'm not), or just "same old same old," or sometimes a vague, "oh, you know..." I hate the look on their faces when I say I'm no better, or having a bad day. They look so disappointed.

What I so desperately want to avoid is hearing things like, "So, is this how it's going to be from now on – you sitting there in all that pain?!" Or "You were fine yesterday, what did you do that suddenly you're not fine now?!" You have no idea how many variations on those themes there are – verbally, and non-verbally. Body language isn't so hard to read. And silent huffing speaks volumes. It seems awfully hard for other people to live with my pain.

It's hard for me too.

"Don't hide your pain from Kazi." Hmm...wonder what that'd be like?

So I tried it. When I was home, alone with Kazi, I'd moan if I felt like moaning, and cry if I felt like crying, and say "ow, ow ow" every time I needed to. I walked, or shuffled, and stopped every two steps if I had to. And I watched what he did. A couple of nights, when the pain was really bad, I called him over and had him shuffle, two steps at a time, right next to me. Not really doing anything, but just being there right next to me.

The weekend before Christmas, my pain was especially high, and there were lots of things to do. I spent most of the day Saturday up in the kitchen doing something for a few minutes, then on the couch resting. Back and forth, up and down. I was frustrated, tired, and in pain. Oh, and did I mention cranky? Kazi was also pretty restless and just hanging around me, in spite of my trying to get him to just stay put and lay on his bed. He kept standing there, when I was in the kitchen, staring at me.

"What is it?! What the heck do you want?!" I took him out to do his business, he had been fed, he had a bone to chew but seemed totally uninterested. We had already been to the park for a run... what the heck did he want?! He was starting to irritate me!

And, being cranky (I did mention that, right?) I wasn't so much using my happy voice with him. And I was dropping things and banging cabinet and dishes (sometimes by accident, sometimes not). I wasn't a happy camper. Lots of "saka-frasa-rasa expletives deleted" under my breath. Yes, sometimes chaplains swear, Virginia.

And there stood Kazi, feet firmly planted, just staring at me.

This went on all day, and it made me crazy. By the end

of the day I had had it. I sat down on the sofa for what I hoped would be the last time. Kazi came over, waited until he had my ok, then came up on the couch next to me, curled up and went to sleep.

And then it hit me. There wasn't anything wrong with him – there wasn't anything he needed or wanted. The whole time he was standing there, on alert, staring at me, was because he wanted to make sure I was okay – and he knew I wasn't. And in spite of my irritation, crankiness, and expletives deleted, he stood his ground. He wasn't scared off. And as soon as I sat down on the sofa, he knew I was ok, and he curled up and went to sleep right next to me.

Kazi, the brave. Braver than any human I've ever known. Stood there, keeping an eye on me, even when I was the most unpleasant human being I could be. Even when under other circumstances any other sane person would have put on their coat and left to go to the movies. He stood there, and watched and waited.

I've never had anyone in my life be so brave.

See, it doesn't matter to Kazi if I could pick up that pot yesterday. All he knows is that I've asked him to get it for me today. And it makes him happy. He bounces over and hands it to me ever so gently, and wags his tail the whole time.

He isn't thinking, "Criminiy, is this how it's going to be from now on?" He's just happy to be with me, and thrilled to help me. Maybe I've lived all wrong up till now, but honest to God, while I've had people in my life offer to help from time to time, I've just never had anyone who was this happy to help me. Kazi isn't keeping a scorecard, there's no balance sheet here. He helps me because he wants to. Imagine that. Not only do I no longer have any guilt about asking for help, I actually feel bad when I don't ask him to help me. When I drop the occasional knife, or other unsafe object, he always looks so dejected when I won't let him get it, that I have to "oops" drop something else that he can get.

Never had a person in my life like that before.

They say life is what we make of it, about the "meaning" we place on it. I could go out on disability, but I just can't bear the idea of being home, sitting on the sofa all day, just me, Jerry Springer, and unrelenting pain. Being a chaplain gives my life meaning. It distracts me from my own suffering, and it gives me something special and important to do. The price I pay for that is very high, but worth it.

It's no different for Kazi. He'd be a great pet, I suppose. But he's not. He's special. He has a purpose, a meaning to his life. And he loves it.

It's amazing that we ever found one another.

When I pull into the hospital parking lot to start my day, it's usually still dark. Kazi's in his walker harness, and we start our walk into the office. The way the lot lights hit, I can see his silhouette as we walk. His head is up, and his tail is happily waving. I am holding on to him, heart and soul and hands.

Has Kazi made my life easier? Not in the ways we usually use that word "easy." But he's the only one I can be honest and true with about my pain, and not worry that he's going to leave me in the lurch, or get tired of me. He's actually happy to help me – it makes him special – it gives him a purpose. And we all know what life would be without purpose.

Kazi is the bravest being I know.

How lucky it is that we found one another. Thank God.

Meet Your Board Member

Interview by Wendy Morrell

Your name: Toni Eames

Your assistance dog's name and breed: Keebler is a six-year-old Golden Retriever

Current location: Fresno, California

Is Keebler your first dog and how long have you been together? Keebler is

my fifth guide dog and we have been a team for four years

Is Keebler owner trained or program trained? Keebler was trained at Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael, California

Briefly, how did you become involved with IAADP?

My husband Ed and I, along with Joan Froling and others, founded IAADP in 1993. We realized those of us working with guide, hearing and service dogs had many things in common and believed a coalition of assistance dog partners was the answer to meeting many of these needs.

In terms of the assistance dog movement, what excites you most? I am most excited by the coming together of many people with a diversity of disabilities bonded by our common love for our dogs.

Again in terms of the assistance dog movement, what frustrates you most? I am most frustrated by access denials and the slowness in educating the public about assistance dogs.

And now to the nitty gritty questions, Not many people know this, but I am quite good at: designing and creating hand knit and crocheted items.

My favourite holiday destination is: South Africa which I've visited twice.

Reality tv or a good film? Neither. I much prefer reading a good book.

Hamburger or Hot Dog? I like them both as long as they are extremely well done. Boiled hot dogs are a turn off.

Pizza or Pasta? That's a tough one, because I like them both, but no olives please!

Beer, wine or soft drink? Although I like diet Pepsi, I try to stick to drinking water.

My last meal out was in? My last meal was at Tony Roma's restaurant where we indulged in ribs! Most delicious!

When relaxing, Keebler and I like to: cuddle on the couch while Ed types at the computer.



My Beagle Partner & The Baugher Lesson

by Elena May Scott

“Is that a Beagle?”

“How do you get your Beagle to walk on leash like that?”

“I’ve never seen such a laid-back Beagle!”

“Yeah, but can she hunt?”

“My daughter breeds Beagles. Beagles can’t be Service Dogs!”

Marley was being her usual self – chillin’ on the couch (more bored than anything else), watching me struggle to reach the floor yet again to pick up something I had just dropped. (Why is it that everything dropped near a power wheelchair lands between the wheels?) Out of frustration, I glared at her, “Its time you earned your upkeep around here, young lady!” And that was the start of our seven year adventure.

I was really lucky. No one had told me that Beagles can’t be Service Dogs, so there were no preconceived stereotypes in our way. Our biggest challenge was learning to communicate with each other. If I could explain to Marley what I needed her to do, she was happy to have something to do.

And, going out in the world – What a great adventure! She quickly got bored with the home improvement store and the drug store – she loved going to new places. It wasn’t long before I was telling everyone that she was a typical female teenager. Her favorite things to do – slam doors and go to the mall.

At first, I was really nervous about taking Marley out in public. She wasn’t a Golden or a Lab or a Shepherd. What problems would I encounter with a “small” dog that I was claiming was a Service Dog that I trained myself?

After a while, I learned that having a Beagle as a Service Dog in this part of the country (NC) is an advantage. Folks around here know Beagles as working dogs. “If a Beagle can’t hunt, it ain’t no good.” In the seven years we were together, we only had two serious access challenges (one was the mother of a Beagle breeder).

Our wonderful seven year partnership ended in September, Marley had cancer.

I had intended to begin training Marley’s successor a year earlier. I joked about having two new vests made up – the one for the new dog labeled “Apprentice,” the other for Marley, “The Donald.” But life got in the way, postponing my plans.

Now, as I’ve begun training a successor dog (No, my heart won’t let another Beagle in yet), I can’t help but review the training I did with Marley – especially after reading in the last issue of *Partners’ Forum* the article, “Court



Ruling on Proof of Task Training.” Would I be able to prove in a court of law that my “owner trained” Service Dog is, in fact, a trained Service Dog?

After reading and re-reading the article, and doing a little research, I was shocked to realize that I could have easily ended up with the very same mess that Baugher did. Marley was a good Service Dog. There are a lot of people who had seen Marley lie quietly beside my wheelchair – doctors, receptionists, waiters, pharmacists, cashiers...the list could go on quite a while.

I also have the advantage of needing a Service Dog to perform tasks that can be photographed. While we tried many times, we were never able to get a good picture of Marley picking up a dime. But, we got some great pictures of her closing doors and picking up keys (and lots of other items). If you’d like to see her in action, some of Marley’s pictures are online at <http://ridemaps.com/marley> (I highly recommend the two “close the closet door” videos).

Much to my amazement, Marley was selected to be one of the Service Dogs featured in a primary school reader published in Hong Kong. (Can you imagine a generation of children that know that Beagles really can be Service Dogs!)

Now, that I’ve done all that bragging, back to the Baugher decision. If I had felt wronged and wanted to take legal action, could not afford an attorney and believed that I could represent myself in court, I would have ended up with the exact same decision handed down. I would have made the same mistake Baugher did – I would have submitted letters from everyone I felt could testify that Marley was a good Service Dog. I had no idea that letters can’t be considered as evidence in a court of law. The letter from Baugher’s doctor should have been an affidavit written in formal legal-ese with a witnessed signature.

The defendants in the Baugher case argued that there needed to be “evidence of outside obedience training.” Bless the sweet judge’s heart – he disagreed. And, while the judge “disagree[d] that there must be documented evi-

dence of individual training,” he did say that we need “some evidence” that our dogs are indeed Service Dogs. And, he very kindly gave the rest of us owner-trainers some hints as to what we may want to do before we find our case thrown out before we have a chance to put on a demonstration in a courtroom.

Keep your own documentation! I keep a log and a blog. Everyday, at various times during the day, I make a note in my dog’s training log of the skills we worked on, how long we worked, and how he did with the task. It’s not anything fancy, just a calendar with a week per page giving me plenty of room for notes. At the end of each week, I total the time we worked, highlight significant events, and note what we need to work on the next week.

My blog isn’t nearly as “structured” as the log. When we have things going on in our lives, I write about them to keep family and friends updated on our adventures. At times, my blog entries have been about how heavenly the butcher smells (according to Marley), how amazing magic closets (elevators) are, and just general comments on how training is going.

So, I’ve given myself a lot to think about. I must keep my new dog’s training log up-to-date for at least six months or 120 hours, whichever comes later. I must periodically review “IAADP’S Minimum Training Standards for Public Access” at <http://iaadp.org/iaadp-minimum-training-standards-for-public-access.html> to make sure we’re on the right track and not leaving out important items. I must take photographs and videos of my dog performing trained tasks (the ADA uses the plural form of the word, “task” – that means my Service Dog must do at least two trained tasks). If my Service Dog performs tasks that are difficult to photograph, I’ll need formal affidavits from people who have witnessed my Service Dog working.

Those of us who have chosen to “owner train” have taken on a tremendous responsibility. Yes, having a program schooled dog would make it much easier to prove that a dog has been appropriately trained. But life isn’t “fair.” The courts sometimes choose to not believe that a person with a disability can train their own Service Dog. It is up to us to be ready to show them, “Yes! We can!”

The Day the Lights Went Out

by Jacki (Jack) Pearce-Droge

The day was Saturday, November 17, and four of us decided to head out to the Tacoma Mall to get something to eat after the meeting. The good food at the Nordstrom’s Café was beckoning and our hunger pulled us in. It was a beautiful day for an adventure.

We ordered our late lunch and when it was brought to the table we ate in earnest. Before I go any further, I should tell you that there were four of us. Linda Lohdefinck and Wayne Terry, both of whom read lips better than I can hear. Alice Dawson, a good friend who also interprets for Linda, me in my power chair and 3 assistance dogs. Two of the dogs are hearing dogs, one a determined Welsh Corgi named Daisy Mae and the other is a larger 13-year-old spry Belgian Melanois named Dominic. The third dog is my very laid back mobility assistance dog, a large Golden Retriever named Forrest. These dogs are quite different, not only in appearance but also in nature. Forrest and I have attended hearing dog class as a way to help us stay on top of our working relationship. I watch Daisy Mae and Dominic jump and run to their partner when a telephone rings or a microwave bell sounds. Forrest however, chooses to rest while lifting his head only on occasion. It is a huge difference but it wouldn’t be helpful to me if he jumped up at every noise while I was in meetings at work. But at that point, all three of our partners preferred to rest under the table.

About 20 minutes into our feast, the lights flickered and then went out. It was as dark as pitch. Linda and Wayne could not read lips, Alice’s attempts at signing were unseen and I didn’t know where to go from there or even how I would get there. The generator came on and we had some light. Ambience, we called it, trying to make “light” of the situation. Dominic and Daisy Mae were both up and were ever watchful of their partners but that is expected of hearing dogs. Forrest only looked up, as he lay beside me unmoving. But that is what I expect of him as a service dog most of the time. Innocuous behavior – ever-quiet and still. The generator was apparently battery powered and the lights began to fade. I took out a small flashlight from my power chair but it offered very little in the way of light. Alice tried to sign against the light of her cell phone.

In a few minutes, one of the employees took Linda and I into the ladies room with a flashlight. I mentioned to her that I had overheard the staff talking about how they would be able to go home early and I mentioned (smiling) that I hoped they realized that nobody could leave until I got off the floor and outside. She responded by saying that they had it covered and were working on it.

So feeling calmer and more assured that we would not be spending the night in the mall, we began to watch our

continued on page 12...

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.

The Day the Lights Went Out

Continued from page 11

dogs and talk about their behavioral differences in an emergency. Of course, while we had talked about our own differences it never occurred to us to think about the fact that one cannot sign in a blackout or that the signing cannot be seen. Another question had to do with having to get a person and a 300 pound wheelchair down the stairs because the elevator was but a mere memory. But we were most interested in how an emergency can have an impact on people with different disabilities, especially if they use assistance dogs trained for very different roles in their partner's life.

The light began to fade in the restaurant but it was stronger out on the floor. Someone said that there was a skylight. Wherever the light was coming from, we realized that we needed to move out there. One of the employees came over and said to me that we had three options available to us. I can honestly say that I only remember the last one – call the Fire Department. Now as an aside, Tacoma has a tremendous Fire Department and I have no doubt that they receive the appreciation that they deserve. But I digress. I then had to figure out how to disconnect the power from my chair so that it could be pushed without someone being crushed. This is actually one of those things that is demonstrated once and while we think that we will of course remember, we rarely do.

We were led towards a staircase and at that point we were separated. The staircase was lit up, perhaps with temporary lighting. I do know that Linda had taken Forrest and Dominic off towards the stairs. Alice joined them in case Linda might need an interpreter. Forrest kept looking back (he is not usually timid about going with someone he knows) and the door closed behind them. That's when I realized that Forrest does not "do" stairs. He goes where I go and I don't "do" stairs. I had told him that he should "go with Linda" but he wasn't quite buying it. Linda told me later that he was hesitant to go down but she was able to have one on each side and by saying "step, step, step" all the way down the 3 flights of stairs and that they were able

to synchronize their steps all the way down. Wayne had followed, taking Daisy Mae down along with Linda, Alice, Dominic and Forrest. But I didn't see them again until I was at ground level.

As my friends were led out, I waited as three members of the Tacoma Fire Department walked up and said that they had mapped out a plan for me. I was first carried down the stairs while sitting in a stable manual wheelchair and then they went back for my 300 lb. monster. Now understand that I have my life wrapped or hanging from that chair and I was worried more about that than the chair itself. Well, they all made it down and all were well and in one piece. It was then that I realized that these people had a plan that they had practiced time and again. While we might have been more than a little concerned, they were not.

So many issues arose that we had not considered prior to that day. I had not been worried that Forrest would ever hesitate going with someone that he knew. But he was more than hesitant. I hadn't thought about him being edgy with stairs as he is a pretty nervy guy. Besides stairs are not a part of my active life any longer so I had no reason to personally think about it. However, that's not something that he's familiar with. None of us had realized that we would have some difficulty communicating with one another or that we would need some sort of light to do so, but we did. But how would Alice ever know that her interpreting would rely on lighting to be read? So much of this has to do with all that we do each day. The norm. As friends and advocates for the disabled, we learned that we should not rely solely on what we do each day.

I would encourage all of you to take some time and ask a friend to work your dog in ways that he/she is not normally worked. I would encourage all of you to look beyond what might be considered the standard preparation for an emergency. Talk with your city officials and if nothing else, plan for yourself and for your assistance dog. We were so fortunate in that this was not a life-threatening situation. It was a real-time practice. We hopefully will never know if we might have fared better in such a situation if we had only taken the time to practice what might not be the norm.

Small Dogs Can Do Big Things

by Melissa Williams

What comes to mind when you picture mobility with the term "service dog?" Does a specific breed or size come to mind? The general population tends to be under the impression that only big dogs can do big jobs. While larger breeds are of benefit for tasks such as providing brace and balance, pulling a manual wheelchair and opening heavy doors, small breeds are still capable of performing a phenomenal number of tasks for an array of different disabilities.

As an individual who uses a wheelchair for mobility, I am able to be more independent and self-sufficient due to a Miniature Schnauzer named Rügen. Regardless of his size, at 20 pounds, Rügen is able to accomplish many tasks

which are too difficult for me to complete. Although his size may be hindering for heavier tasks, you would never know it from his determination and problem solving ability in order to accomplish those tasks not requiring brute strength.

Taking into account my geographical location and the absence of local service dog schools, established organizations, or professional service dog trainers, I had to find ways to be successful in owner-training my service dog. I was able to modify a large number of tasks to meet Rügen's physical size and attributes. Some of these examples are:

- Setting the telephone at a lower vantage point instead of on the counter or hanging it from a wall

- Connecting a sliding dimmer switch mounted on the leg of an end table which controls an existing lamp
- Having Rügen jump into my lap to press elevator or handicap door buttons and doorbells
- Training him to stand on his hind legs to hand me an object or item
- When training Rügen to open a door or drawer, I simply changed the fulcrum point by adding a longer handle or longer strap
- I placed medication bottles in an accessible location (taking in consideration there are not young children in my home)



Amazingly enough, at 3 years of age, Rügen is able to reliably perform the following tasks: drag my crutches, walker or wheelchair over to me; retrieve items I've dropped or items needed from lower shelves while shopping. He is capable of pushing handicap and elevator door buttons, doorbells, closing an assortment of doors and drawers, and turning the lights on with his nose. With his paw he can turn the lights off and shut heavier doors and drawers. Using his inherent Schnauzer sense of smell and hearing, he is able to detect respiratory and low blood sugar problems. He is trained to do the necessary response work by retrieving medication, my husband, or pushing or signaling for help with a panic button.

Rügen's lack of brute strength is actually a plus for my particular medical issues. Because he is smaller he does not tend to be a "bull in a china shop," per se. He has the natural ability to be gentle with his mouth and with his overall body. Although a small service dog may not be an option for some individuals that may be considering a service dog, you don't want to overlook the things a small dog can do. As the general population becomes more familiar with service dogs and their wide range of use, smaller breeds used as service dogs will hopefully become more recognized and accepted for their many abilities and accomplishments.

Landlord Fined Fifty Five Thousand Dollars!

Justice Department Settles Georgia Lawsuit Alleging Housing Discrimination Against Guide Dog Users

Published 09/28/2007

(PressMediaWire) WASHINGTON – The Justice Department announced that it has reached a settlement with the owners and managers of the Hickory Plantation and Willow Way Apartments, both located in Camden County, Ga., resolving a lawsuit filed by the Department alleging discrimination against persons with disabilities. According to the complaint, which was filed simultaneously with the consent decree in federal district court in Savannah, Ga., Defendants Herbert Bolt, Betty Bolt, and Herbert Bolt, Jr. violated the Fair Housing Act by refusing to rent an apartment at Hickory Plantation to a visually impaired individual who used a guide dog.

Under the agreement, which must still be approved by the court, the defendants will pay \$35,000 to compensate victims at Hickory Plantation and Willow Way, pay a \$20,000 civil penalty to the U.S. government, establish and follow non-discriminatory tenancy procedures, undergo fair housing training, and file reports with the government.

"Individuals who use guide dogs are entitled to the same housing opportunities as people who don't," said Rena J. Comisac, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "Landlords must understand that they have a responsibility to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, and where they fail to do so, the Department will enforce the law."

The Department conducted its investigation using fair-housing testers – individuals who pose as renters for purposes of gathering information about possible discriminatory practices in the rental of apartments.

This case is another example of the success of Operation Home Sweet Home, a concentrated initiative of the Department of Justice to expose and eliminate housing discrimination in America. This initiative was inspired by the plight of displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina who were suddenly forced to find new places to live. Operation Home Sweet Home is not limited to the areas hit by Hurricane Katrina and targets housing discrimination across the country. More information about Operation Home Sweet Home is available at the Justice Department Web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/housing/fairhousing/>.

Individuals who believe that they may have been the victim of housing discrimination at Hickory Plantation or Willow Way should call the Justice Department's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section at 1-800-896-7743 (option number 93), or send an email to <mailto:fairhousing@usdoj.gov>.

Since Jan. 1, 2001, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division has filed 238 cases to enforce the Fair Housing Act, 112 of which have alleged discrimination based on disability.

<http://pressmediawire.com/article/cfm?articleID=2518>

Tribute to a Real Angel

by Roxie Choroser

Living in Tucson for a number of years, I had known Mary George through the University. I am disabled as a result of muscular dystrophy and have used a power wheelchair for mobility since my teenage years. After graduating, I began working for Vocational Rehabilitation as a counselor, and continued to work in the Tucson offices until late 1998. In the early '80's, I had trained my little sheltie through Handi Dogs, teaching her to pick up small objects for me. She was a great help to me, but unfortunately she passed away following an injury in 1985. We had two other shelties as pets at the time, so I decided not to get another dog to train for service work until after they were gone.

In 1996, after attending several dog shows in Tucson and Phoenix, placing ads in the newspapers and visiting the local shelters, a Golden Retriever breeder in Phoenix gave me Angel, a two-year-old who was being retired from show. When he handed me her leash he said, "People will tell you every day that she is the most beautiful dog they have ever seen... and, they will be right." And, he was right. A day did not go by that someone told me that. Angel and I were both interviewed and approved for Top Dog training and we started classes in January 1997. Blake and Savannah were our mentors and the girls spent some wonderful afternoons together playing in a local pond and chasing tennis balls. What a great time we all had! Angel graduated from Top Dog in November 1988 and we were officially Team #58.

In the 10 years and two months that we were together, Angel and I were only apart for a few days when I traveled out of town and was unable to take her. After that, I vowed that if she could not go with me, then I would not go. We traveled often by plane, train, Greyhound, public transportation and in our van, always impressing people

with her poise, manners and beauty. She loved every one and was a great ambassador for Top Dog and service dogs everywhere.

In September of last year Angel had two seizures and was diagnosed with a probable brain tumor. Because of her age, treatment options were very limited. We decided to go with a conservative approach of prednisone, later adding anti-seizure medication. She did very well for about four months and then began to go downhill. We were committed to giving her the best quality of life possible for as long as we could, but we would not allow her to suffer. On February 5, my husband and I took Angel to the vet for the last time. Our precious girl passed away peacefully in our arms. We loved her so much and miss her terribly.

In December of last year, Angel was able to travel with me to Scottsdale so that I could be partnered with her successor. Brianna is a two-year-old yellow Lab who was trained at Power Paws Assistance Dogs. She is very sweet and Angel seemed to approve of her, even playing sometimes together. Interestingly enough, I went to Phoenix on December 20, 1996 to get Angel, and exactly 10 years later I flew from Oregon to Scottsdale to get Brianna on December 20, 2007. Who would have ever thought things would work out like this?

If you would like to contact us, we would like to hear from you. Our e-mail address is rchoroser@yahoo.com and you can see our online photo album at <http://community.webshots.com/user/roxie62057>.

Roxie, Danny & Brianna
Angel (reading at the bridge)
Milwaukie, Oregon

Teaching My Service Dog To Call For Help

by Francine McClendon

My service dog, Rudy, has learned to call for help by pushing the button on a Life Alert machine. Life Alert is a system that when triggered will reach a dispatcher who can send out assistance in the form of ambulance, police, or designated responder. An individual can enroll in Life Alert for about \$30 per month and the fee may be covered by insurance. I had been a Life Alert enrollee for many years prior to owning a service dog and decided to try to train my dog to call for help by activating the system for me. The company I'm enrolled in very kindly agreed to issue me a practice machine to train my dog thus leaving my actual machine operational during

training. I kept the practice machine disconnected from the phone line which prevented actual alarms being sent to the dispatcher during training. However, the audio alarm was intact on the practice machine. This was crucial in determining whether Rudy was pushing the button sufficiently hard enough to trigger the actual alert.

The Life Alert System is comprised of a stationary machine with a large button of about 2.5 inches. The machine is off white in color and resembles a speakerphone but has no handset or number pad. The system includes a remote alarm that can be worn as a wristband or around the neck. It is difficult for my arthritic fingers to depress the alarm

and Rudy has become a successful alternative backup to the remote alarm as he has mastered pawing the large button on the system's stationary machine to set off the alarm.

To make more of a contrast and make the large button more of an obvious target for Rudy to paw I cut out a red felt circle to cover the button and attached it over the button with double sticky tape. The felt surface also has the benefit of preventing his paw from slipping as much. Rudy already had learned the concept of touch by paw and it was relatively easy to do a refresher using an additional red felt circle for him to touch with treat rewards. After becoming consistent with pawing the circle, I affixed it to the large button alarm, and Rudy began pawing the button immediately, however not hard enough to consistently set off the alarm.

Rudy is a small breed dog, an 11.5 lb. Bichon Papillon Mix, and it was necessary to gently lift him up and place his paw on the button to set off the alarm, giving him praise ("good!"/"yes!") and a treat reward at the sound. The sound of the alarm is a sort of loud squelching noise and was a bit scary to him. Some additional sessions of my setting off the alarm and giving Rudy a treat at the sound helped desensitize him to the disconcerting noise. And doing this most importantly helped him to associate what he initially perceived as a negative sound into something positive (the food reward). After several practice sessions, Rudy eventually understood that his job was not complete until he pawed the button hard enough to hear the noise, thus sounding the alarm to receive the much desired service dog jackpot of treats!

Soon I could point to the machine and give him the command to "push 911," gradually increasing my distance from the machine in 5 foot increments. After about a month Rudy was reliably activating the device from any room in my apartment. The Life Alert machine is kept stationed in one spot (on Rudy's feeding station cum leash up table) so he knows the place to go to carry out this task.

A glitch in the process soon became evident however, when I realized that in his exuberance to paw the button, he was occasionally hitting a tiny recessed square button on the right side of the machine. He was depressing a clear/reset mechanism and inadvertently turning off the signal before the alarm was completely activated. This was a serious dilemma as, if this button was tripped, no alert would be sent to the response center. Our good friend Jane came up



with a simple remedy that has been 100% successful to this point. By turning the machine and placing the right side with the tiny clear button flush to the wall, ONLY the big red felt covered button is open to Rudy's approach. Rudy has not turned the signal off with the machine positioned in this manner.

It has been near 2 months since I sent back the practice device and Rudy has consistently been conducting a weekly test to maintain this potentially life saving skill. Rudy eagerly races to carry out the command when I'm in bed or in the shower as well as when others are present to distract him. Rudy, whose specialty is item retrieval, has been underestimated many times by me and others, because of his small size. I recently found out that this little dynamo is capable of picking up more than my small cell phone, when he retrieved a friend's phone I had dropped. I never even considered getting a cordless phone because I always drop them and can't pick them up. Now Rudy is learning to retrieve a regular sized cordless phone just like the "big dogs."

It is difficult to say how my service dog will react in the event of a real emergency. But, I know for certain that this little dog with the big heart is working hard to learn tasks to keep me safe and I love him for it!

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Assistance Dogs are First Class: It's official!

by Wendy Morrell



A set of Royal Mail stamps, due to go on sale from February 5th and paying tribute to working dogs, will feature two dogs representing the Assistance Dog movement.

This is the first time a special set of stamps has been devoted entirely to working dogs. It will also help to mark the launch of Year of the Assistance Dog, run in collaboration by the five members of Assistance Dogs UK: Canine Partners, Dogs for the Disabled, Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and Support Dogs.

The First Class stamp features Rowan, a Golden Retriever assistance dog trained by Dogs for the Disabled who is collecting the post for his owner, one of the many tasks that assistance dogs perform every day for their owners. The 78 pence stamp features Warwick, a Labrador guide dog, using his skills to provide mobility for his visually impaired owner.

During 2008, members of Assistance Dogs UK will be holding a range of activities to highlight the role of assistance dogs, campaigning for consistent access to services and awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act. More information is available at www.assistancedogs.org.uk

The collection of stamps were on sale from 5th February to the 28th February in local post offices throughout the United Kingdom.

Who Do I Ask? Where Do I Send It?

Ed Eames Ph.D., IAADP President
eames@iaadp.org 559-224-0544

Legal Questions

Joan Froling, Chairperson, Editor
joan@iaadp.org 586-826-3938

CADO, Newsletter

Tanya Eversole
tanya@iaadp.org 513-245-2199

Advocacy

Devon Wilkins, Vice President, Canada
devon@iaadp.org 705-444-4512

Canadian Issues
Canadian Benefits

Wendy Morrell, Vice President, Europe
wendy@iaadp.org 077470 42695

European Issues

Toni Eames, Treasurer
toni@iaadp.org 559-224-0544

Grief Counseling
Thank you notes

Tanya Eversole, Database Mgr.
tanya@iaadp.org 513-245-2199

Membership
Benefits, VCP

Jill Exposito, Board Member
jill@iaadp.org 913-469-6063

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Membership Dues: Partner Member \$30; Renewal \$30; or join/renew, 3 years for the price of 2 years! \$60; Partners outside North America \$20 per year or \$40 for 3 years; Friend \$30; Provider \$35. 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, Disk or data CD. 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!

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Call (513) 245-2199 or email tanya@iaadp.org 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

% Tanya Eversole
P.O. Box 531086
Cincinnati, OH 45253

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