

Partners Forum

International Association of Assistance Dog Partners

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News To Celebrate! Air Travel Access Issue

by Joan Froling

The International Association of Assistance Dog Partners (IAADP), a consumer advocacy organization representing over 2,000 disabled persons working with guide, hearing and service dogs, launched an advocacy campaign several years ago in *Partners Forum*, believing the issue we tackled was vital to preserving our access rights under the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA).

For me, it began with a wake up call from an IAADP member in the USA who was bewildered and distraught over the treatment she received when she boarded an airplane in 2004 with her retriever size service dog. The flight attendant insisted she had to purchase a second seat for her dog. When she protested she didn't have the money, she was informed she'd have to get off the plane. A passenger who offered to share his foot space with her service dog was told that this was no longer an acceptable solution under the new rules. I had to explain to our member that airline personnel did not technically violate her access rights, for unfortunately, the airline was exercising its options under the Guidance document issued in May 2003

by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

In November 2004, as part of the process for amending the Air Carrier Access Act, the DOT published its Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM). It specifically invited comments on whether there should be any modifications to Part 382, Appendix A, which incorporated that 2003 Guidance document.

IAADP submitted a letter of Public Comment pointing out certain passages in the Guidance could have a devastating impact on many individuals whose disability requires the use of an assistance dog large enough to

perform tasks like guiding blind people, wheelchair pulling and providing balance support.

IAADP took particular note of three sections in the Guidance document in Appendix A of the NPRM. Two of them proclaim it would be an undue burden for the airlines to ask a passenger to share foot space with a service animal. The third, in reply to the question: "What if the service animal is too large to fit under the seat in front of the customer?" declared "If no single seat in the cabin will accommodate the animal and passenger without causing an obstruction, you may offer the option of purchasing a second seat, traveling on a later flight or having the service animal travel in the cargo hold."

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Editor: Joan Froling
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Service Dog Caesar proudly assists IAADP's European Vice President, Wendy Morrell, to carry the Olympic Torch through the streets of London. See page 6 for more details.

Air Travel Access Issue

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IAADP's President, Ed Eames, Ph.D., stated, "if accepted and implemented, these rules would threaten the right of disabled people with large assistance dogs to travel by air. In response to the first two statements, IAADP members have always found neighboring passengers willing to share leg room with our guide dogs, or have someone else volunteer to shift seats. Most distressing, however, is the third item in which the DOT authorizes the airlines to give disabled passengers the choice of three unconscionable options if their assistance dog cannot fit in the space in front of a single seat. Having to pay for an extra ticket would make air travel prohibitively expensive for all but the wealthiest disabled passenger with a large assistance dog. The idea that we would be willing to ship our canine assistants in cargo disregards the bond between us and undercuts the concept that our dogs provide greater independence, mobility and safety. Finally, the last option, making us take a later flight demonstrates a view toward disabled people indicating we do not have to get to places on time to meet work and social commitments."

I urged our readers to support this advocacy initiative by submitting public comments of their own. We began to network with others about our efforts to have the language in Appendix A reconsidered. Quite a few CEO's of guide, hearing and service dog programs belonging to Assistance Dogs International went on record seeking a modification of the language to preserve the access rights of their graduates, many of whom are partnered with large retriever size assistance dogs. By the time the NPRM public comment period closed in March 2005, the DOT had received at least 1,100 letters supporting IAADP's request for substitute language.

In opposition, Atlantic Southeast Airlines, a subsidiary of Delta Airlines, submitted a public comment stating "ASA supports the department's position that, if no single seat in the cabin will accommodate the service animal and passenger without causing an obstruction, the carrier may offer the option of purchasing a second seat, traveling on a later flight or having the service animal travel in the cargo hold. Bulkhead space on regional aircraft is limited and providing additional seating at no charge would result in a significant revenue loss."

The other U.S. airlines did not choose to reveal their position on this issue in public comments before the closing date of the public comment period.

Following the public comment period, a large number of assistance dog partners responded to our second Call to Action and contacted their federal elected representatives for support. Guide Dog Users, Inc. and the National Association of Guide Dog Users passed resolutions condemning the Guidance language at their 2005 conventions.

In January 2006, Mary Harris, a producer for Channel 4, KNBC in Los Angeles heard about the issue and came to the IAADP conference in San Diego where she interviewed several assistance dog partners. The story, aired on February 22, was also shown by a number of NBC affiliates across the country. The public outcry generated by this story, in addition to our previous advocacy efforts, resulted in a response from the DOT.

In a widely disseminated message from Robert Ashby, the Deputy Assistant General Counsel for Regulation and Enforcement at the U.S. Department of Transportation, in March 2006, we learned the DOT would address the concerns that had been raised by our community by rewriting the language to clarify what had been intended.

It took over two years for the Final Rule to be written and published in the Federal Register. In May 2008, we received our first look at the outcome of this tremendous advocacy effort. It is gratifying to be able to report that there are substantial changes to celebrate. The new Guidance goes to great lengths to ensure the airlines will understand the DOT wants them to continue to accommodate large assistance dogs in the plane cabin. In more than one place, it asks the airline to find a passenger who is willing to share foot space, explaining this is a customary and normal practice.

As we have stated in the past, IAADP has no objection to the safety regulation that a service animal may not be allowed to block a main aisle or exit row.

The Preamble to the New Rule quotes from the new Guidance document:

The only situation in which the rule contemplates that a service animal would not be permitted to accompany its user at his or her seat is where the animal blocks a space that, per FAA or applicable foreign government safety regulations, must remain unobstructed (e.g., an aisle, access to an emergency exit) AND the passenger and animal cannot be moved to another location where such a blockage does not occur. In such a situation, the carrier should first talk with other passengers to find a seat location where the service animal and its user can be agreeably accommodated (e.g., by finding a passenger who is willing to share foot space with the animal). The fact that a service animal may need to use a reasonable portion of an adjacent seat's foot space that does not deny another passenger effective use of the space for his or her feet is not, however, an adequate reason for the carrier to refuse to permit the animal to accompany its user at his or her seat. Only if no other alternative is available should the carrier discuss less desirable options concerning the transportation of the service animal with the passenger, such as traveling on a later flight with more room or carrying the animal in the cargo compartment. As indicated above, airlines may not charge passengers with disabilities for services required by Part 382, including transporting their oversize service animals in the cargo compartment.

In the Preamble, the DOT goes on to say: "In modifying this paragraph in the guidance, we deleted the phrase concerning the potential purchase of a second seat, since there are probably no circumstances under which this would happen. If a flight is totally filled, there would not be any seat available to buy. If the flight had even one middle seat unoccupied, someone with a service animal could be seated next to the vacant seat, and it is likely that even a large animal could use some of the floor space of the vacant seat, making any further purchase unnecessary. Of course, service animals generally sit on the floor, so it is unlikely that a service animal would ever actually occupy a separate seat.

The Guidance affirms that providing a seat in a class of service other than the one the passenger has purchased is not required. However, the DOT clarifies: *While a carrier*

is not required to do so, there could be situations in which the carrier could voluntarily reseat a passenger in a different seating class. For example, suppose that the economy class is completely full and no alternate seat location in that cabin can be found for a service animal that cannot be seated at the passenger's original seat location. If the business or first class cabin has vacant space, the carrier could choose to move the passenger and animal into the vacant space rather than make the passenger and animal take a later flight.

IAADP will be sending a letter to the U.S. Department of Transportation to thank them for listening to our community's concerns. These clarifications in the new Guidance on how to accommodate a passenger with a large assistance dog reflect the customary ways airlines have been accommodating us for more than fifty years. We did not want that kind of reasonable accommodation to become a thing of the past.

I suspect we would have seen some airlines begin exercising the option of selling us a vacant seat in these harsh economic times, just as they are now charging passengers for their luggage, if we had not come together as a community in 2005 to appeal to the DOT to take a second look at those policy statements in the Guidance document in the NPRM. By purging that language, the DOT has ensured this will not become a major problem for travelers with assistance dogs in the future.

My personal thanks to all our readers and allies who wrote a letter to the DOT during the public comment period. I also salute the subsequent efforts to preserve access rights for those of us who work with assistance dogs too large to fit only into the space in front of a single seat. One letter from IAADP alone would not have garnered much attention. This was an issue that needed many voices.

Nutramax Laboratories, USA, Helps IAADP

An Introduction to Products from Nutramax Laboratories, Inc. – Cosequin[®], Dasuquin[®], Denosyl[®], and Welactin[®]!

Nutramax Laboratories, Inc. is happy to continue its support of IAADP as a Veterinary Care Partnership Sponsor and by providing many of its products to IAADP members for their active adult assistance dog at no charge through their veterinarian.

Cosequin[®], the #1 veterinarian recommended joint health supplement brand, has been available to members for several years, but recently our next generation joint health product Dasuquin[®] also became available. First, for those members not yet familiar with Cosequin, Cosequin supports joint cartilage production and helps slow the breakdown of cartilage. It is the only glucosamine/chondroitin sulfate brand that has been shown effective, safe, and absorbable in published, controlled, U.S. veterinary studies.

And now we're excited to introduce our newest joint health product Dasuquin! Dasuquin combines Cosequin's glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate with ASU, which stands for avocado/soybean unsaponifiables. This is an ingredient which comes from the oil of avocados and soybeans and which has been shown to help joint health. Cell studies have shown that glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate with ASU works better than glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate alone.

Dasuquin or Cosequin is often administered to dogs with compromised joint health – you might notice this as a reluctance to climb stairs or even to walk distances that used to be no problem. Or you may notice stiffness or a change in gait. In this case, the product is started with a 4-6 week loading level and then, once a response is seen, is gradually lowered to a level that maintains the animal's comfort.

Dasuquin or Cosequin is also very helpful in healthy assistance and other working dogs of all ages to protect the joints of these active dogs as they go about their daily duties. Research has shown that dogs given Cosequin prior to a joint injury returned to normal function more quickly than dogs that were not given Cosequin. Of note, when used for protection, the lower maintenance amount, which may be one chewable tablet or capsule daily or every other day in a large breed dog, is often appropriate. Cosequin is available in both capsules and tasty chewable tablets, while Dasuquin is currently available in chewable tablets (same taste as Cosequin).

Moving on to our other products, we offer Denosyl[®] for support of liver health. Your veterinarian may recommend Denosyl if lab work shows that liver function is decreased or if your assistance dog is taking a medication that might, while helping another problem, hurt the liver. And we also make our omega-3 fish oil product Welactin[®] available. Welactin helps skin and coat health plus heart, brain, and kidney health and overall wellness.

By supporting joint, liver, and overall health, our products may aid in extending an assistance dog's working life, thereby helping to keep the bond between IAADP member and canine assistant intact. Nutramax Laboratories, Inc. salutes IAADP for its advocacy efforts on behalf of the disabled worldwide and looks forward to continuing our relationship with IAADP.

Banfield “Partners” with IAADP

Banfield, The Pet Hospital®, and its charity, The Banfield Charitable Trust (BCT) are partnering with the IAADP to help provide preventive care services for assistance dogs.

Banfield and the BCT have donated 24 BCT Wellness Plans to IAADP. The plans are awarded free of charge, are valid for an adult dog and include vaccinations, two comprehensive exams, two free office visits and discounts on other veterinary services from Banfield.

“It’s vital that assistance dogs remain healthy and receive the routine preventive they need so they can continue to work,” says Dianne McGill, executive director of the Banfield Charitable Trust. “We are very happy to be partnering with IAADP and helping its members and their guide, hearing and service dogs.

Studies show that dogs who receive routine preventive care live longer, happier lives, McGill says. Assistance dogs play an important role in society and Banfield wants to help them receive proper veterinary care.

The BCT Wellness Plans are made available to IAADP members who need financial assistance in providing care for their assistance dog.

Banfield vision for helping pets

Banfield was founded in 1955 by Dr. Warren Wegert with a commitment to making human quality medicine accessible to pet owners. In its hometown of Portland, Oregon, Banfield became known for its legendary client service, strong focus on preventive care and lifesaving veterinary medicine. By the early 1990’s, three generations of pet owners had come to know and trust the Banfield team.

In 1994, PetSmart, the nation’s largest retailer of pet-related products, services and solutions for pets and pet owners, asked Dr. Scott Campbell, Chairman of Banfield, to help bring high-quality veterinary care to PetSmart customers by opening exclusive pet hospitals in its store locations. By the mid-1990’s, three generations of pet owners had come to know and trust the Banfield team, making Banfield the leading private veterinary practice in the nation. Today, Banfield has more than 700 full-service veterinary hospitals across the country, the United Kingdom and in Mexico City.

Banfield’s mission of treating pets like family

The mission of Banfield is simple, says John Payne, Banfield’s President and CEO. “Our vision has always been to provide pets with the same quality of healthcare that their human family members receive,” Payne says. “We strive to practice high-quality veterinary medicine delivered by carefully selected doctors and loving team members, in hospitals with state-of-the-art equipment and supplies.”

Together with our high-tech medical equipment and technology, Banfield team members make life better for families by treating their dogs with state-of-the-art veterinary medicine available.

During the last 53 years, Banfield has become an innovator and a pioneer in veterinary medicine, largely due to quintessential offerings and services setting us apart. Among these services are Optimum Wellness Plans® (now in place for two decades), a Quality Assurance Program known as the best in the profession and superior anesthetic devices and protocols.

Maximizing pets’ lives through preventative healthcare

Preventive care is medicine that goes beyond treating illness to eliminate problems before they happen, especially with working dogs. This level of care requires close attention to details such as vaccinations, dental hygiene and nutrition. In keeping with its strong commitment to maximizing pets’ lives through the practice of preventive healthcare, Banfield introduced Optimum Wellness Plans®, which are packages of preventive healthcare services that aim to:

Keep your pet safe from preventable diseases

- Detect abnormalities early enough for effective, inexpensive treatment
- Schedule checkups and procedures at the appropriate times
- Eliminate unnecessary veterinary expenses

Banfield Wellness Plans are designed to make preventive care more accessible and affordable by including the following services, which we recommend each year:

- Complete wellness exams
- Vaccines
- Lab work
- Dental cleanings
- Unlimited office visits

“We believe that by detecting problems earlier, pets and working dogs can live longer, healthier lives. Our prepaid Wellness Plan packages include a complete array of preventive care services, free office visits for life, and substantial discounts on any veterinary services not provided under the Plans,” says Karen K. Faunt, DVM, MS, DACVIM, Banfield Chief Medical Officer.

By providing superior-quality vaccine boosters, Wellness Plans protect your dog from diseases that other practices might not vaccinate against. While they are not insurance plans, our Wellness Plans are designed to help make pet healthcare more affordable by offering packages of preventive care services at a 50 percent discount, which can be paid in advance or in low, monthly payments during the contract year.

Optimum Wellness Plans, which can be transferred to a different hospital should your family decide to relocate, are designed to save you money on the routine medical needs of your dog. An affordable alternative to pet health insurance, Wellness Plans provide customized levels of coverage for your working dog.

To date, more than two million clients across the country have enrolled in Banfield Wellness Plans. This is a testament to the widespread influence Banfield has had on strengthening the value of Pets in families.

Urgent care: bringing affordability, convenience and quality during off-hours

Understanding that healthcare emergencies do not always happen during daytime business hours, Banfield provides several urgent care hospitals designed to help meet the need for after-hours pet healthcare. Banfield provides after-hours urgent care in its hospitals in Tualatin, Ore., Westminster, Colo., Portland, Ore., and North Denver, Colo.

“Banfield’s mission is to offer our clients affordable, convenient and high quality medical care for their pets,” Faunt says. “Our extended hours and urgent care services help us to meet the growing need of our clients and the communities we serve – and thereby help to fulfill our mission.”

Clients coming to Banfield urgent care locations can look forward to being offered affordable and reasonable pricing of after-hours healthcare for their pets and working dogs.

How to Apply for Banfield’s Grants for Financial Assistance

To qualify for one of Banfield’s 24 free Wellness Programs, please provide the following information:

- Your name
- full address including city, state and zip
- phone and e-mail
- your assistance dog’s name, breed, age and
- a statement saying he/she is in good health
- your IAADP membership number and expiration date
- the approximate distance from your home plus
- the street address of the Banfield Hospital closest to you.

Please send this information to Dianne McGill, Executive Director, Banfield Charitable Trust, P.O. Box 13998, 8000 NE Tillamook Street, Portland, OR 97213-0998. Recipients will be randomly drawn from those applying for the grant.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Access Problem?

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

Email: ada.complaint@usdoj.gov

More “News” from the New Rule

by Joan Froling

In May 2008, the long awaited Final Rule amending the Air Carriers Access Act was published by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). In the Preamble which runs over 150 pages, the DOT responds to comments and details the changes contained in its service animal Guidance document and the New Rule itself.

Two of the changes will be discussed in separate articles. The front page article addresses the issue of seating large assistance dogs in the plane cabin. The second will discuss the anti-fraud measures impacting travel with a task trained service dog for a psychiatric disability. In this article, I shall briefly highlight some other newsworthy changes.

The New Rule will require foreign air carriers to abide by the ACAA regulations in accommodating disabled passengers on all flights that begin or end in the USA, as well as in some codesharing situations. While foreign air carriers do not have to carry service animals other than dogs, they do have to modify their policies and transport passengers with dogs who qualify as service animals under the ACAA definition. The Preamble discusses the fact some foreign carriers have a policy of only carrying assistance dogs in the plane cabin which have been certified by certain organizations. Others refuse to carry any service animals or may restrict the number or where they may be seated. Under the New Rule, those airlines must comply with the DOT’s requirements for U.S. carriers on accommodating passengers with dogs that function as a service animal, including the type labeled emotional support dogs. There will be few if any exceptions, though there is an appeals process if there is an actual law in the country where the airline is based, rather than a policy, which is in conflict with the U.S. law, the Air Carrier Access Act.

The New Rule states that for flight segments scheduled to take eight hours or more, the carrier may require advance notice and may ask for documentation that the service animal will not need to relieve itself or can do so in a way that will not create a health or sanitation issue on the flight.

Perhaps the most exciting news for assistance dog teams traveling in the USA concerns service animal relief areas. I contacted the DOT to find out if my interpretation of that section was too optimistic. I include their reply to ensure accurate reporting:

Hello Joan,

...the following statements accurately reflect the intent of the provisions:

1. U.S. and foreign air carriers, in cooperation with airport operators and in consultation with local service animal training organizations, must provide (establish) animal relief areas for service animals at terminal facilities the carrier owns, leases or controls at a U.S. airport by May 13, 2009; and

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More “News” from the New Rule

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2. U.S. and foreign air carriers must, on request, provide for escorting a passenger with a service animal to an animal relief area at terminal facilities the carrier owns, leases or controls at a U.S. airport by May 13, 2009.

These provisions are meant to apply at existing airport facilities, not just new airports or new terminals as you suggest in option 3 below. If you or your members have further questions, please let us know and we'll get back to you.

Best regards,
Kathleen Blank Riether
U.S. Department of Transportation
OST, Office of the General Counsel
Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings

Tribute to Dr. Chris Branson

On December 3, 2007 IAADP lost a former board member and advocate for the right of people with disabilities to be accompanied in the workplace by their assistance dogs.

After obtaining her medical degree at Northwestern University, Dr. Chris Branson was employed at Lakeside Veteran's Hospital in Chicago. After several years on the job, Chris was paralyzed in a horseback riding accident. Continuing her employment at the hospital as a staff physician, she began having upper body strength problems and decided to partner with a service dog from Paws With A Cause.

When Chris notified the hospital administration about her decision to work with a canine assistant, the response was an emphatic denial. Unwilling to accept this outrageous position, she hired an attorney who brought suit on her behalf against the hospital administration. Although it took more than two years, Chris had her day in court and was vindicated when a jury awarded her a large sum and all legal fees. Furthermore, the federal judge hearing the case ruled that the hospital had to admit Chris and her yellow Labrador Retriever service dog Nolan. This was a landmark case since it was argued in a federal court, rather than being settled through negotiations or mediation.

IAADP supported Chris during her long legal battle. After the case was decided, she joined the IAADP board and took on the role of secretary. Shortly after training with Nolan's successor, a service dog named Data, Chris had a massive stroke causing her to retire from work and from the board. Data was subsequently adopted by the attorney who favorably argued her case.

It is always difficult to say goodbye to an advocate who would not be intimidated by a massive federal bureaucracy unwilling to follow the law. Quiet and unassuming, Chris had the inner strength and tenacity to persevere against tremendous odds. Well done, Chris. We will miss you!

Olympic Torch Relay with Caesar

by Wendy Morrell

April 6th 2008 was a momentous day for my assistance dog, Caesar and I! We had been chosen to take part in the Olympic Torch Relay in London, indeed, a privilege and an honour.

As Caesar was to be the only animal to take part in the London leg of the relay, and I was one of only two wheelchair users, I was aware that all eyes would be upon us!

I'd known for several months that we would be taking part, but nevertheless, it remained a complete surprise. I was nominated by my friend Karen Ruddlesden in a competition organised by Samsung to find “Real Life Heroes,” and to my delight was one of four winners. Two winners to carry the torch in London, supported by the other two winners who will carry the torch in China, and we in turn will travel to China to support them.

It didn't take me a moment to accept such a wonderful prize, not only for the personal honour, but also because I already knew that Samsung do great things in the dog world, having been major sponsors of Crufts since 1993, their tremendously valuable work in the field of the human-animal bond and also with assistance dogs in South Korea. It also dawned on me that it was a great way to get the message out about the essential role assistance dogs play in the lives of many people with disabilities.

Even before torch relay day came, I had done a lot of soul searching about whether or not to take part in view of the political events, but had concluded, not only was this a chance in a lifetime, but more importantly, politics must not be allowed to interfere with the greatest show of unity on earth, the Olympics. The torch relay is after all, the Journey of Harmony.

The day before the torch relay, we had to attend City Hall in London for a briefing and uniform fitting...that's when we got the opportunity to pose for the attached picture where Caesar is showing a keen interest in the torch! On the relay day itself, we had a very early start and travelled to Wembley Stadium to see Sir Stephen Redgrave (five times Olympic Gold Medallist in rowing) start the proceedings off. Snow had been falling for a couple of hours at this point, but our high spirits meant we didn't feel the cold too much! This was a really special moment as Sir Steve had chaired the judging panel in the Samsung competition, and we had met him at a presentation evening in London before Christmas.

After seeing the torch on its way, we headed back into central London and assembled at the Waldorf Hilton Hotel with many of the other torchbearers. An opportunity to get something to eat and chat with others involved with the relay. Also, this was the time when I had a special bracket fitted to my wheelchair for the torch to sit in, as I had decided to self propel my manual wheelchair, Caesar as usual on my left side, and the torch on my right. Just time to get changed



and catch the relay on the news before we headed off on the torchbearers bus.

The news was showing some disruption to the relay, so everything was up in the air, whether the relay would be rerouted or even stopped. Once on the bus we did see some protestors, and at one stage our bus was caught up in heavy congestion. It did cross my mind that it might not be safe for either Caesar or myself to take part, but we trusted in the excellent advice we were being given by the organisers. I must stress if that at any time I had thought it to be not in Caesars' best interests we would have withdrawn on the spot, but it has to be remembered he is a mature and very experienced assistance dog, has travelled extensively, thrives in new situations, and also I had the knowledge of knowing he coped admirably when we were inadvertently caught up in an anti war demo in London two years before. In fact the latter was far worse than anything we saw on torch relay day!

There was constant communication between The Metropolitan Police, London 2012 and BOCOG about what was to happen next. At one stage, it looked like the relay may be abandoned, but thankfully, that did not happen, it was rerouted. (Caesar was so unphased by it all, he spent a good deal of time on the torchbearers bus snoozing)! So instead of taking the torch along Canon Street in the City of London (behind St. Pauls Cathedral), we actually carried it a section of King William Street from the Monument to almost half way across London Bridge. The rerouting had worked to our advantage, the torch was originally meant to be on a bus in this area, so no protestors had congregated there at all! Any of my previous worries about safety fizzled away as we were cheered on by an enthusiastic but quite small crowd and Caesar looked every bit as happy as he does on a usual walk in the park.

All too soon we had covered just over a tenth of a mile and were handing the torch on again, then came a quick television interview and some photographs before the next torchbearers' bus collected us. Eventually we were back at The Waldorf Hilton, watching snatches of the relay on television again; it all seemed a bit of a dream! Once we had had the bracket taken off my wheelchair, met up again with friends and family, grabbed some refreshments, there was time for a couple more television interviews before we headed off again.

This time we were destined for Greenwich, which was the end of the torch relay in London, we made it in plenty of time for the lighting of the cauldron, and were able again to mingle with other torchbearers, before the torch finally made its way across the River Thames in the very capable hands of Dame Ellen McArthur, solo round the world sailing record holder, (who Caesar and I had the honour of meeting a few years ago), and then onwards into Peninsula Square, held aloft by Dame Kelly Holmes (double Olympic gold medallist, running).

Whilst in Greenwich I had the opportunity to meet some other wheelchair users who had come to watch the show, their opinion was that it was right to continue and take part, that it was a tremendous message to the world that people with disabilities and for that matter, assistance dogs are at the very heart of society here in the west and if any of the images of us in the torch relay make it to China that's the message they will carry.

Overall it was a fantastic opportunity, and has given me memories to cherish forever. As far as we know Caesar is the only dog to have ever taken part in the torch relay in the United Kingdom.

Next stop, China, but sssssshhhhh don't mention it to Caesar as he will be taking a holiday with his puppy socialiser whilst I travel to Xi'an with Karen and a delegation from Samsung. There are many reasons why Caesar will not be coming to China, not least because it is not a DEFRA listed country, so any British animal entering China would have to undergo six months quarantine upon their return. Just for the record, if someone visited China from the United States or anywhere else with their assistance dog, they would also have to wait at least six months before they could enter the United Kingdom.

Since being chosen to take part in the Torch Relay myself, I have been keeping a watchful eye on news stories about Ping Yali, a Chinese paralympic athlete from Beijing and her Golden Retriever Guide Dog, Lucky. She has been chosen to carry the torch in China and was unsure if she could be accompanied by Lucky as there was a local law which stated that people with disabilities could not go out in public with dogs weighing more than 40 pounds alone. A bit self defeating for an assistance dog team! I can only imagine the frustration that must bring, and have often thought about this lady, half a world away, and how she is coping.

Imagine my delight to read at the end of April, barely a couple of weeks after my torch run with Caesar, that there has been an amendment passed to the Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons, it afford more freedom to people with disabilities but in particular the lifting of the ban of large dogs in public places if they are assistance dogs caught my attention.

"Explaining the law amendment to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), Minister of Civil Affairs Li Xueju said it was necessary to make a change to allow the guide dogs into public places as many other countries do.

"In bidding for the hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games, our country has also made a commitment to foreign athletes for them to bring guide dogs to China," he said.

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Olympic Torch Relay with Caesar

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However, although the law amendment grants the blind the right to take guide dogs to public places, detailed rules are needed to facilitate its implementation, Ma Yu'e, deputy director of the legal department of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, said.

Ma said that the federation is now working with public security departments in Beijing and "it's very likely that a detailed rule on guide dogs will be made before the Paralympics."

Ma said such a change marks great progress in safeguarding the rights and interests of the blind.

"The misunderstanding that guide dogs are pets must be corrected," she said. "They are working dogs just as police dogs are. And guide dogs are intelligent and friendly. They won't cause any safety issues."

Official figures show about 12.3 million people in the country suffer from visual impairments and there is an increasing demand for guide dogs."

As part of my work as a member of The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, which advises the government here in the UK on the transport needs of people with disabilities, I have been involved in the discussions regarding the transport plan for the 2012 Olympic Games which are due to be held in London. There, much of the talk is not about what happens at games time, but legacy, i.e. what is left in the host nation after the Olympics have packed up and moved on. If nothing else, and I am sure there is plenty more, the legacy for Beijing 2008 will be greater permanent freedom for guide dog partnerships in China. Delightful!

Quote taken from China Daily online: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/olympics/2008-04/25/content_6643477.htm To view Wendy's participation in the Torch Relay, visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3c2sawbuu14>

Photo Contest



New Horizon Service Dog, Toby, takes out the trash for his partner who is a stroke survivor with balance and stability problems.

Paws Across The Pond, Part II

by Oak Wilkins

Hello again. Remember me? I'm the Yellow Lab guide dog whose mum is the Canadian vice-president of the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners – IAADP. Last Fall, she suggested that I give you a play-by-play of the steps that she and I have had to go through to make sure that I can go to England with her in June to attend the first-ever IAADP conference to be held in Europe.

When we talked last October, I had received a rabies booster, and was just about to get my blood tested to make sure that I had a level of immunity sufficient to protect me against the rabies virus. It's called a Titer test. The blood sample had to be sent all the way to a lab in Kansas. That would have cost my mum a lot more than it did if she hadn't been able to take advantage of the discount offered by that lab to IAADP members.

A couple of weeks later, we received a good result, and the six months of waiting began. It's kind of like doing the time in quarantine, except that I can continue guiding my mum anywhere she wants to go in North America. In November, for example, we celebrated Mum's birthday with family in Quebec and Vermont, and in December, we celebrated Christmas with friends in Peterborough and more family in Ottawa. In late February, we went on a business trip to London all right, but that London was right here in Ontario.

When our six-month waiting period is finished in April, Mum will have to talk to Dr. Jackie again, and make sure that all the details in sections 1 to 5 of the official third country veterinary certificate have been filled in. The certificate will then have to be endorsed by a vet approved by the Canadian government. During our travels, we will have to carry my vaccination record and blood test result both showing the microchip number.

No less than 24 hours and no more than 48 hours before we check in with British Airways, I will have to be treated for ticks and tapeworms. Oh, joy! I hope the medicine won't give me a humongous case of the runs, or Mum will really be in a flummox.

Because we're flying with a British owned airline, Mum will also have to purchase a safety harness. From what I understood when my friend Caesar's mum, Wendy, demonstrated it at a previous IAADP conference, the safety harness will be hooked both to my harness and to the seatbelt in the plane to make sure that I don't go flying around the cabin in the event of extreme turbulence.

Well, folks, I may have something to write for the June issue of *The Harness*, but if not, I'll wait until September to tell you all about our trip. So as the British would say, cherio for now.

Simba Saga Continues

by Nancy Cave

As most of you may remember, my son, JT and his hearing dog Simba were denied access to JT's high school beginning in December of 2006 and continuing to date. We filed a federal law suit against the school district in February, 2007 after a huge media blitz failed to bring the district in line with federal and state laws regarding assistance dog access. Following a more than week long hearing to gain injunctive relief, Federal Judge Arthur Spatt basically threw out the ADA, misinterpreted the New York State Department of Human Rights (NYS DHR) regulations, redefined the state Civil Rights law by stating that a classroom is not a public place (the law states otherwise) and informed us that we had not exhausted our administrative remedies under IDEA. The 2nd Circuit Federal Court of Appeals threw out Judge Spatt's decision, stated that a school district must consider an assistance dog under IDEA (this is an educational law) and informed us that all of our protection was under New York state law and that we should go directly to state court. They dismissed our case without prejudice.

While all of this federal litigation was unfolding, the NYS DHR began an investigation of the school district for violation of NYS DHR regulations. A three day hearing was held in October and November, 2007. In March, 2008, the NYS DHR ruled that the school district was in violation of several regulations and ordered that Simba be allowed to accompany JT to school. The district once again denied access to JT accompanied by Simba and appealed the NYS DHR ruling. However, the pertinent fact here is that they denied access prior to filing their appeal.

Also going on throughout the various litigation was a push in Albany to "clarify" the NYS DHR regulations and efforts to pass a penal law with regard to interfering with assistance dogs. The "clarified" NYS DHR regulations and the penal law both passed over the summer of 2007. NYS DHR regulations took effect on October 3, 2007 and the penal law on November 1, 2007. In spite of this overwhelming legal and legislative support, the school district continues to deny access to JT accompanied by Simba. The school district's appeal of the NYS DHR ruling is pending. Unfortunately, the Nassau County District Attorney seems to have some question regarding the "intent" of the penal law and has made no move to enforce the criminal aspects of the denial of access.

After a great deal of discussion with our attorney and even more soul searching, we finally made the decision to file yet another law suit against the school district in state court. This was done in early May. We are once again requesting injunctive relief and filing suit for discrimination under the NYS DHR regulations and the NYS Civil Rights Laws. Of course, the absolute irony of this is that there are assistance dogs in schools with both adults and students across the country – including in New York state. There are quite a number of school districts right here on Long Island that have had or currently have assistance dogs in their

schools. It makes one wonder why the East Meadow School District administrators, school board, lawyers and insurance company believe they are so completely above the law that they can continue their blatant defiance, all the while throwing away hundreds of thousands of tax payer dollars and publicly ridiculing the efforts of a disabled teenage boy to overcome the limits of his disability and exert his right to independence by utilizing a hearing dog.

Some people have said that we have taken legal action, not in an effort to protect JT's rights, but in anticipation of a large "pay day." Ignorance is a terrible waste of brain power. We discovered that JT was deaf when he was three years old, after spending two years being told by medical and educational "experts" that he was 1) speech delayed 2) learning disabled 3) cognitively delayed (mentally retarded). Since then, we have worked diligently to provide him with every possible educational accommodation and independent life tool available to him at age appropriate milestones. And invariably, we have had to battle the school district every step of the way. We have always had the same developmental expectations of JT that we have had for his twin sister and older brother, in spite of his disability. JT has never let us down. He thrives on being as independent as his peers. He fights the limitations of his disability every day, stubbornly advocates for himself and has overcome obstacles with a determination not found in most adults. JT chose this battle and this battleground because he refuses to allow ignorant, spiteful administrators to trample his ability to achieve his full potential of independence. If in fighting this battle he is able to save just one other person from facing such blatant discrimination, it will make his ultimate victory worthwhile.

The fight for Simba has taken a terrible toll on our family. Our frustration over the slow moving wheels of justice is so over the top that it's probably hanging out with space debris at this point. While we have enjoyed overwhelming support in our community, the children are constantly in the public eye and every move they make is judged by the few who take their rights for granted or who believe that all disabled children should be segregated into "special" schools. Vindictive behavior by a few can often outweigh the unconditional support of the majority. The emotional trauma and mental distress from this exhaustive battle have literally torn our family apart. Faced with the constant upheaval, emotional stress and never ending public scrutiny, my marriage has suffered irreparable damage.

For those who question our actions, I can tell you that there is no amount of money that can ever repay what our family has gone through in order to protect the rights of JT and his ever devoted Simba. The day that JT is able to enter W.T. Clarke High School with Simba at his side will make the battle worthwhile. However, nothing will ever repair the damage that has been suffered from "fighting the good fight."

Grant Request Deadline Reminder!

Just a reminder the deadline for submitting your application for the Royal Canin USA grant involving their veterinary diets, formulated to help our canine partners challenged by allergies, digestive or other medical problems is July 30, 2008. Royal Canin USA has made a grant to subsidize veterinary diets for individuals who show financial need. If you would like to apply for a grant, please provide the following information, and you will be notified if you are in receipt of a financial grant. Each IAADP member who qualifies is only eligible for one grant per calendar year.

Royal Canin USA Veterinary Diet Grant Request

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

IAADP Member Identification Number _____

Name and breed of assistance dog _____

My dog is a: __guide __hearing __service dog

Veterinarian's Name _____

Veterinarian's Address _____

Veterinarian's Phone Number _____

Type of Royal Canin Veterinary diet and health issue

How long has your dog been eating this food? _____

Please send copies of sales receipts for your last two purchases of Royal Canin Veterinary Diet

Signature of IAADP partner member

Please send to Tanya Eversole, P.O. Box 531086, Cincinnati, OH 45253

Hope You Will Support IAADP!

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Anti-Fraud Measures in Final Rule

by Joan Froling

Here is what the new Guidance document contained in the New Rule has to say about task trained service dogs for individuals with a psychiatric disability. Such dogs are frequently labeled a "psychiatric service dog," (psd) by their disabled handlers and the media.

There is a separate category of service animals generally known as "psychiatric service animals." These animals may be trained by their owners, sometimes with the assistance of a professional dog trainer, to perform tasks such as fetching medications, reminding the user to take medications, helping people with balance problems caused by medications or an underlying condition, bringing a phone to the user in an emergency or activating a specially equipped emergency phone, or acting as a buffer against other people crowding too close. As with emotional support animals, it is possible for this category of animals to be a source of abuse by persons attempting to circumvent carrier rules concerning transportation of pets. Consequently it is appropriate for airlines to apply the same advance notice and documentation requirements to psychiatric service animals as they do to emotional support animals.

The DOT, when queried by me, states this is not really a change but just a clarification of their current policy. The DOT said it has never made a distinction between emotional support and psychiatric service animals, but has always permitted carriers to require medical documentation from their handlers under the May 2003 Guidance.

In order to permit the airlines to have time to assess the authenticity of the passenger's documentation, the New Rule will permit carriers to require 48 hours' advance notice of a passenger's wish to travel with an emotional support animal or psychiatric service animal. Another anti-fraud measure is to specify the documentation prepared by a licensed mental health professional must contain information about their license and other details once the New Rule takes effect in May 2009. Until then, the kind of letter prescribed by the 2003 Guidance will suffice.

The Preamble to the New Rule clarifies the DOT is leaving the door open to carriers imposing documentation requirements on other categories of service animals, if members of the public persist in abusing the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA). It states: *Should the Department encounter a pattern of abuse concerning service animals in other categories, we can consider additional safeguards with respect to those categories as well.*

ADI President Takes Part In Flight Simulation Exercise

Peter Gorbing, chief executive of Dogs for the Disabled and President of Assistance Dogs International visited the Bocalan Foundation in Barcelona in April to deliver a lecture on the work of Dogs for the Disabled. As part of the trip, Peter was also invited to take part in an airline simulation exercise involving the safe evacuation of assistance dogs, organised by Speed Fly and observed by representatives of the Catalan Government and the Sabadell Airport Director from AENA (Aeropuertos Espanoles y Navegacion Area). Here he describes what happened:

“Improving access for disabled people with assistance dogs is a key issue for all assistance dog programmes. With new EU Regulations on the rights of disabled persons travelling by air coming into force in July 2008, disabled people with assistance dogs will have to be catered for by all airports and airlines across Europe. This is a significant step forward which is welcomed by all assistance dog organisations.

One of the issues thrown up by the new regulations is to work out how airlines should best deal with various situations involving assistance dogs travelling in the cabin. The aim of the simulated flight was to see how various scenarios might work out and to learn from the experience. During the flight, there was a simulated fire, serious turbulence, decompression and an emergency evacuation. A full briefing was given to the participants prior to going onto the plane by Josep Aguilera (an airline pilot), Teo Mariscal (Director of the Bocalan Foundation) and Francesc Ristol (Bocalan Director and retired airline pilot).

The dogs taking part in the exercise were all assistance dogs being trained by the Bocalan Foundation and no qualified dogs were involved. It was noticeable that throughout the exercise the dogs were exceptionally calm and well-behaved. This was probably helped by the fact that the handlers were aware of what was going to happen in advance. One of the major issues that a real ‘live’ situation could throw up is how significant it would be if the dogs picked up on any panic being shown by the dogs handler/partner. This could make it much more difficult to manage a dog during an emergency. The dogs sat in the footwell of the passenger seats and were secured with a simple harness.

One issue that loss of air pressure throws up is what to do with the dog when passengers are required to wear an oxygen mask. The Bocalan Foundation has developed a special mask that is suitable for a dog and this was tested during the flight. Getting the mask onto the dog did not prove to be a significant problem, but there is still work to do on the design and the issue of whether it should be attached to a portable tank (as was the case here) or an adaptation to the passenger supply.

On-board fires are obviously a major issue for airlines. The simulated fire was very unpleasant and the smell and lack of visibility are a problem. Despite this, the dogs remained calm and in place throughout this part of the exercise.



The calmness of the dogs was also noticeable during the ‘turbulence’ phase of the exercise. Many of the dogs just lay down on the floor and dozed despite the noise.

The final part of the exercise involved an evacuation of the plane via the emergency chutes. The evacuation proceeded in a very orderly way. The most important thing here was to work out the best way to hold and support the dogs as they go down the chute. Once the dogs were held from underneath with all four legs firmly within the handlers arms, the dogs seemed quite content to go down the chute with their handler.

So, what were the key things learnt from the simulation exercise? The dogs were very calm and took the whole thing in their stride. The major problem to overcome is how to ensure that the various elements of the exercise can be replicated, should they be required, in a real live situation and to identify who will take responsibility for the various things that will need to happen to support the dog in the event of a problem on the flight. In any emergency situation, the cabin staff have a significant number of things to do and ensuring the needs of the assistance dog are met may get lost during a specific incident. This requires further discussion with the airlines.

The Bocalan Foundation is to be congratulated on undertaking this simulation exercise which was a critical step forward in ensuring that safe and considerate air travel is available to all assistance dog clients who want to travel with their dogs and all airlines need to ensure they are ready to meet their obligations in July.”

Peter Gorbing
May 2008

A Tail To Tell

by Toni and Ed Eames

Lots of exciting things have happened for us and for IAADP during the time covered by this column!

Under Fort Dodge Animal Health sponsorship, we attended the North American Veterinary Conference (NAVC) in Orlando during January. Fellow IAADP Board Member and Database Manager Tanya Eversole and her Labrador Retriever service dog Brooke were able to join us and our Golden Retriever guide dogs Keebler and Latrell. After meeting with top officials of Hills' Pet Nutrition, the company became the seventh sponsor of the Veterinary Care Partnership Program. One of the results of meeting with the CEO of Banfield, The Pet Hospital, is that this issue of *Partners' Forum* is co-sponsored by them. It was also rewarding to meet with the CEO and other leaders of Bayer Animal Health, IAADP'S first corporate supporter, and receive encouragement and commitments for increasing support from them. As you can well imagine, the three of us were glowing with the success of our mission in Orlando!

One of the fun activities at NAVC is investigating the exhibit hall. As we walked down one aisle, Joyce Holt from Sound Technologies approached us with the request to borrow one of our dogs to demonstrate her portable ultrasound machine!

Latrell was the perfect candidate, since he loves lying on his back with paws waving in the air. After having his harness removed, he became the poster child for this new piece of technology. As the necessary goomp was rubbed into his belly, Latrell obligingly lay on his back and let the good times roll! Fortunately, no abnormalities were discovered and for the rest of the conference, hundreds of veterinarians got to see his innards!

On returning home, we received a call asking if we would be at the next big veterinary meeting in Las Vegas. Seems the crowd Latrell drew to the Sound Technologies booth gave them the great idea of doing demonstrations twice a day during the three days of the Western Veterinary Conference! Since we were not planning to attend, we provided the names of several Las Vegas IAADP members, three of whom were delighted to have their dogs assume the role pioneered by Latrell!

During NAVC, we attended a session on the human animal bond and a lecture and reception in the evening for Aaron Catcher, one of the first psychiatrists to scientifically prove the power of pets on people. During the session a question was raised about veterinarians providing discounted fees to disabled clients partnered with assistance dogs. We were delighted when the first panelist to address the question stated the two experts in this area, Toni and Ed Eames, were in the audience and could best answer the question!

Dr. Barbara Eves, our contact at Nutramax Laboratories, co-sponsors of this issue, joined us for dinner at our hotel. Nutramax has been so good to IAADP, and it is their staff who administer VCP.

Leaving NAVC, Tanya drove us to the University of Florida vet school in Gainesville where we had a great time with the students at our presentation. It was hard saying

goodbye to Tanya after such a wonderful week together. We've been to many veterinary conferences without a sighted companion, but having her with us made things go much more smoothly! As a fellow IAADP board member, we acted as a team of three and were able to present our ideas to the sponsors collectively. And, the Golden loves having their Labrador cousin around to round out their wrestling matches!

Since March 1 is the fourth anniversary of the partnership between Toni and Keebler, Emily Simone, Guide Dogs for the Blind's field manager for this area, got together with us for a follow-up visit. One of the springtime strolls we particularly enjoy is walking north on Wishon, the street on which our town house is located, for about a mile before turning around to return home. The problem with this walk is there are no sidewalks, lots of small quiet side roads and Wishon is a wide street with very little traffic. The dogs have to maintain their line on the left side of the road so oncoming traffic can see us. Occasionally, without our realizing it, the dogs drift away from their left shoulder position. We worked with Emily and she returned in a few weeks to reinforce their training, so we can safely do this walk on our own. In addition, she hung a battery operated remote control bell on a light pole about half a mile north, so when we approach it and Toni presses the hand held mechanism that triggers the bell ringing, we know exactly where we are on the walk. Technology is really great!

In the middle of March we resumed our lecturing activities by speaking at a national student veterinary symposium at Auburn and Tuskegee. At the student symposium, we attended sessions describing a typical night treating cases at a veterinary emergency room, working in a wildlife preservation setting and caring for exotic animals employed in making Hollywood movies. Critters this vet cared for varied from snakes to camels to bears to lions and tigers. His fascinating description of helping in the birth of a camel and working to imprint human handling and familiarity during the first 72 hours after birth was only surpassed by the description of getting an endoscopy tube into a 20 foot coiled snake.

We had lunch with John Saidla, who just retired as director of the Auburn Veterinary Teaching Hospital. It was John who established a no fee policy at the hospital for assistance dog partners. Following lunch, we did four hours of presentations and completed the day by attending a banquet dinner. Our lunch presentation at the University of Georgia following the Symposium went well and we were delighted to meet a couple of vet students who had been puppy raisers for guide dog schools.

Ed has been involved in a number of legal issues over the years as an advocate for people with assistance dogs. Usually these access denials are settled before going to court, but one case that seems destined for the legal arena involves a service dog partner who owns a condominium in Florida. The condo board has not only said no pets, but more recently has established a policy of no animals on the

grounds! That must include raccoons and squirrels, as well as dogs and cats! Anyway, Ed was deposed as an expert witness on March 28. When the deposing attorney asked if Ed thought the condo board was acting unreasonably by denying the condo owner the right to have his service dog in his apartment, Ed quietly said yes, he believed they did act unreasonably. He really wanted to say that they were acting like a bunch of idiots!

On April 2 we took off on a multi-city adventure. Vicki Thorp, a travel agent we met at a conference several years ago, was our hostess for the first night. Vicki arranged for us to speak to a Denver-based group of puppy raisers and assistance dog partners in the evening.

Vicki told us the next morning it had snowed a bit during the night, but by the time we got in the car for the trip to Windsor, the snow had stopped and we didn't get wet from the drizzle that replaced it. Vicki dropped us off at the office of Dr. Robin Downing, the veterinarian working with IAADP to distribute the heartworm medication, Sentinel Flavor Tabs. Having read about under water treadmills for helping dogs and cats recover from surgery and exercise arthritic limbs, we were thrilled to get a tactile glimpse of one at Robin's hospital. After a lovely Hawaiian lunch with Robin and her life partner Sharon, it was off to a presentation at Colorado State.

In January at the veterinary conference in Orlando, we met Nicole Ehrhart, a surgeon at Colorado State and a puppy raiser for Guide Dogs for the Blind. Nicole drove us to the Denver airport the next day to catch a flight to Washington, D.C. where we visited several friends and met IAADP member Cara Miller, a deaf graduate student at Galaudett University partnered with Labrador Retriever hearing dog Maya. As an excellent speech reader, the conversation flowed, and we spent hours getting to know one another.

Then it was off to the Dulles airport for a quick flight to Buffalo. Don and Carol Fleischman were our hosts for the next few days. As we approached their Niagara Falls home, Keebler sat up in the car in recognition of her play date with Carol's Labrador guide dog Nadine.

Carol stayed home Thursday morning, while Don drove the 150 miles to Ithaca, the home of Cornell University. With the entire first year class of 85 enthusiastic veterinary students in the audience, we spent an exhilarating two hours describing preferred patterns of interaction with disabled clients. Between that lecture and our evening presentation, we met with the dean to discuss issues related to disabled applicants seeking admission to the vet school. In the evening we spoke with students, faculty and a few Guiding Eyes puppy raisers.

When you read our next column, we'll be sharing the exciting events at the IAADP London conference!

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

Sentinel Distribution for IAADP

by Dr. Robin Downing

Beginning in 2006, Novartis Animal Health made a very generous in-kind grant to the IAADP. Novartis manufactures Sentinel[®], the once-per-month anti-parasite medication for dogs. Their in-kind grant was designed to provide IAADP working dogs with protection from heartworms, intestinal parasites, and fleas. This grant, however, came to the IAADP with a "catch."

Sentinel is a prescription pharmaceutical agent, and as such falls under the rules and regulations of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA has quite specific requirements for the distribution of prescription medications – one of which is the existence of a doctor-patient relationship – in this case, a veterinarian-client-pet relationship. This requirement prohibits Novartis from sending Sentinel directly to the end-consumer – the IAADP member.

I have had the pleasure of serving the IAADP for several years in an advisory capacity, but have wondered what I might be able to do in a more active capacity. When this Novartis grant became a reality, the answer to my question emerged. Here was Sentinel awaiting distribution to IAADP members in the USA, but Novartis had no way to get it into the hands of the intended recipients.

By thinking creatively, we were able to devise a way to "bend" the veterinarian-client-pet relationship requirement just a bit. I agreed to allow my veterinary hospital, Windsor Veterinary Clinic, PC, to serve as the conduit through which the Sentinel would find its way to IAADP members. I agreed to act as the veterinarian of record for Novartis in order to satisfy the FDA. And I devised a method for documenting that the Sentinel was being prescribed for the assistance dogs by a primary care veterinarian.

IAADP members who have taken advantage of the Sentinel distribution program know that they have had to take a few steps in order to have Sentinel sent to them. I created a form that serves to document several key pieces of information:

1. The individual receiving the Sentinel is an IAADP member
2. The assistance dog has a relationship with a primary care veterinarian
3. The veterinarian has performed a heartworm test with a negative result within the past twelve months.

To summarize how the process works, the first step is for the IAADP member to acquire the request form. The form is completed with the requested information including details like:

1. The IAADP member's ID number
2. The name, address, and phone number of the member
3. The name, address and phone number of the primary care veterinarian

continued on page 14...

Sentinel Distribution for IAADP

Continued from page 13

4. Details about the assistance dog, including weight
5. Verification by the primary care veterinarian of a negative heartworm test within the past twelve months
6. The signature of the primary care veterinarian verifying the request for Sentinel for the assistance dog.

The form is then faxed or mailed to Windsor Veterinary Clinic. Once we verify the information is complete, we package and send the Sentinel. This document creates a “paper trail” to support the appropriate use of Sentinel in these important dogs. This system satisfied the decision-makers at Novartis Animal Health, and the product was shipped to my clinic.

Once the Sentinel was at Windsor Veterinary Clinic, it was time to take the next step in distribution to IAADP members. It remains my responsibility to ensure that all the veterinarian-client-pet relationship requirements are in place, and the assistance dog has a current negative heartworm test. But I could not complete the distribution of Sentinel to IAADP members without the key activities of two members of my veterinary health care team.

Shawnee Urano, one of our Client Care Specialists, receives the faxed and mailed Sentinel request forms. She

ensures all the required information is complete. If it is not, (which happens surprisingly often), she takes the necessary steps to gather any missing data. Once the forms are complete, Shawnee passes them on to me. I review the document, determine the size of Sentinel that will be sent, and then I hand off the requests to Melissa King, one of our veterinary assistants. Melissa volunteered to be the one to assemble the Sentinel and a letter from me into packages that our clinic mails to IAADP members.

The veterinary health care team at Windsor Veterinary Clinic, PC takes great pride in helping IAADP assistance dogs enjoy enhanced health through protection against the most important canine parasites. It is a treat to read the cards and letters that arrive to thank us for providing a way for Sentinel to end up in IAADP members’ mailboxes.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the generous action of Novartis Animal Health to provide Sentinel for distribution to IAADP members in the USA. In fact, this in-kind grant was just renewed, and we recently received a shipment. It has been a pleasure to work with the folks at Novartis Animal Health. They have “walked their talk” in supporting enhanced protection of guide, hearing and service dogs against parasites that can, at the very least, compromise life-quality, and at the worst shorten life expectancy.

Thanks, Novartis!

Virginia Grants Access to Team Facilitators!

Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine signs two laws in support of Assistance Dogs

Story and Photos by Marty van Duyne, Member, Dog Writers Association of America

Richmond, Va. – Gov. Tim Kaine signed two pieces of groundbreaking legislation on May 6 in support of Assistance Dogs. Flanked on the right by Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) Service Dog Cal (Calder) and on the left by 4 Paws for Ability Service Dog Grizwald he ceremoniously put pen to paper.

By signing the laws, he extended a hand that will extend the reach of some helping paws. Both laws amend and re-enact the Virginians with Disabilities Act (55.5-44).

Matt’s Law

Kaine first signed Matt’s Law, named for the young man that was the catalyst for the legislation. Brought before the legislature as H.B. 214, it adds the terminology “public entities, including schools,” to the list of public places in which persons with disabilities are entitled to the same full and free rights as other persons.

Campaigning for Constituents

In the fall of 2007 Virginia Del. Mark L. Cole, R - 88th District was knocking on doors. With his district being 50 miles south of Washington, D.C. he was accustomed to being approached with concerns about base realignments, government benefits, and traffic congestion.

What he was not accustomed to was what he confronted

when he knocked on the door of Tom and Sharon Hoioos.

The couple’s youngest child, Matt was born with the rare genetic disorder X-Linked Hydrocephalous. Matt, who was 9 at the time, is confined to a wheel chair and weighs a mere 35 pounds. But standing in support at his side, anticipating his every move was a golden haired dog.

Calder is a CCI Service Dog and had been by Matt’s side since Nov. 2006. However, the dog is mostly by the boy’s side at home because the Stafford County School System will not allow the dog to attend classes.

But the problem went deeper than the classroom. “When we first got Cal, he accompanied us to an after hours concert at North Stafford High School at which Matt’s siblings were performing,” said Tom. “We were challenged by school officials about the Service Dog even being allowed in the building.”

The Hoioos, who with Cal and Matt make up a 3 unit Service Dog Team, were eventually allowed into the event, but were told to stay in the back of the room. They were told that this accommodation was not to be taken as blanket approval for bringing the Service Dog to future events.

The family has been in discussions with the school ever since in an attempt to allow Cal to attend class with Matt. However, the Stafford County School System’s position has been that the dog must be included in Matt’s Individual Ed-

ucation Plan (IEP)

Despite the fact that the ADA specifically addresses Assistance Dog access, and nowhere does the law require the dog to provide an educational benefit to a student, the Stafford County School System has used the IEP as a litmus test for accessibility.

In Matt's case, they have determined that Cal does not provide an educational benefit and therefore cannot attend class.

Birth of the Bill

Cole was disturbed by what he heard from the family saying he thought the ADA settled the question of Assistance Dog access years ago.

He researched public school access both through legislative services and the Virginia Attorney General's Office and found that Stafford County School's position did not have any legal standing.

"If challenged in court, the school system would lose," he said. "I felt the best way for the county to avoid a costly suit would be to enact a law."

H.B. 214

Cole wrote and pre-filed H.B. 214 on Dec. 27, 2007. He included the specific terminology "public entities including schools" so there would be no question that public school systems are required to abide by the law.

The delegate indicated that it was basically just a matter of drafting the legislation and submitting it. "There was no opposition to the bill within the legislature," Cole said, adding "Most of the members couldn't believe it was even an issue."

The bill was referred to the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions. On Jan. 10 after several delegates were assured that no retrofitting of schools or extra expense would be incurred, the bill passed the committee by unanimous vote of 22 - 0.

Senatorial Support

After the house committee vote, the Hoioos' met with Sen. Richard H. Stuart, R - 28th District to enlist his support.

The newly elected senator has a daughter with special needs and knows the obstacles that anyone with a child with disabilities faces on a daily basis. Stuart immediately signed on as Senate patron of the Bill and said, "I understand the significance of helping them be as independent as possible."

After H.B. 214 passed the full House on a unanimous Block Vote of 98-0 on Jan. 15, it was sent to the Senate on Jan. 16 and referred to the Senate Committee on Education and Health. On Feb. 14, the bill was re-referred by unanimous vote to the Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee.

Opposition

Cole said he initially addressed a few concerns from citizens but he indicated that they had no problem with constituents after explaining the laws concerning Assistance Dog access.

Although the bill had gone unopposed in the House, when H.B. 214 was read on Feb. 26 prior to the Senate Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee hearing, Kathleen S. Mehfoad, a lobbyist with Reed Smith of Richmond, representing the Virginia School Board Association

(VSBA) voiced opposition.

After alleging that the Service Dog would create problems concerning allergies, safety, and could possible exhibit disruptive behavior, she was quickly silenced by the members of the Senate with Stuart taking particular umbrage to her remarks.

Intervention

Cole clarified that the terminology was 'public entities' and not 'public accommodations' as Mehfoad stated.

Sen. Ken T. Cuccinelli, II, R - 37th District, asked a few brief questions of Mehfoad and concluded "you seem to only have concerns relating to dogs."

Stuart seemed extremely offended and in no uncertain terms voiced his disdain concerning her remarks about accommodations that had to be made for students with disabilities. He said, "If public schools are not places of public accommodation they should be" and added, "It is incumbent upon us to help them in any way we can."

Sen. George L. Barker, D - 39th District also voiced his concern about the Virginia School Board Association's position.

The senators' comments voiced agreement that burdens borne by the parents, family, and child with a disability do not need to be exacerbated by placing undue limitations on their avenues of support whether that is through the use of Service Animals or any other source.

Executive Director of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities for the Commonwealth of Virginia Heidi Lawyer addressed the assemblage. She stated "The schools are definitely covered under Title II of the ADA and as such have to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities."

Several minutes later H.B. 214 passed by unanimous vote of 15 - 0. According to Cole's Legislative Assistant Karen Stuber, they only became aware of the opposition late in afternoon the day before the Senate hearing. Cole said, "Usually if a group opposes a bill they will come in to speak to you beforehand." Mehfoad never contacted the senator or the Delegate.

On Feb. 26 the full Senate passed the bill by unanimous block vote of uncontested Bills and it was enrolled on Feb. 28. "Basically it went through unopposed," said Cole. "Sen. Stuart got it through the Senate and the administration supported it."

The Next Step

Despite the bill's passage, in April the Hoioos' were still being denied access by Stafford County Schools based on Matt's IEP.

According to Cole, the state education department will issue guidelines concerning implementation before H.B. 214 goes into effect on July 1. "Hopefully with the governor's stated support and the guidelines being issued it will take care of that problem," he said.

However, he conceded that sometimes school systems can be arrogant and obstinate on issues, saying, "I would not be surprised if they had to go to court to force them to comply."

But with Kaine's signature on the law, Sharon hopes to have Cal accompany Matt to summer school.

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Virginia Grants Access to Team Facilitators

Continued from page 15

H.B. 853 Becomes Law

Standing to his left as Kaine signed H.B. 853, Nancy Hemenway said, "Virginia is the first state in the country to pass this type of law." This law adds "individuals and persons who are part of a three-unit service dog team" and who are conducting continuing training of guide dogs, hearing dogs, or service dogs to the list of persons entitled to the right to be accompanied by those dogs in public places.

Del. Adam P. Ebbin, D - 49 District, Arlington, introduced the legislation on behalf of his constituents Nancy and David Hemenway.

The couple's 8 year old daughter Rebekah suffers from a number of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) concerns. Both husband and wife wanted the right to take their daughter's 4 Paws for Ability Service Dog Grizwald out without Rebekah in order ensure that the dog maintained his full capabilities. The couple's 12 year old daughter Zoe accompanied them to the signing ceremony.

Passage of the legislation allows any individual member of a 3 unit Service Dog Team the same access given to the team as a whole.

Unexpected Bonus

Although the main goal of the Hoioos was to gain access to the classroom for Cal, passage of H.B. 853 will hopefully solve another problem. Sharon has not even been allowed to bring Cal to the school when she goes to pick up Matt.

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