The Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and IAADP conferences in 2007 will be held at the beautiful Marriott Inner Harbor Hotel at Camden Yards in Baltimore, Maryland. This city was proposed by Fidos for Freedom, a nearby ADI member program that trains hearing and service dogs. Their Executive Director Joe Swetnam, himself partnered with a service dog from Fidos, is coordinating things locally. He is familiar with the hotel and assured us it is very accessible.

The date of IAADP’s conference has changed from what we announced in our last issue of Partners Forum. The board of ADI invited representatives of IAADP in July to their mid-year board meeting in New York City. We held a fruitful discussion about continuing the tradition of holding a joint conference. At ADI’s suggestion, IAADP has agreed to take the last day of this four-day event instead of the first day in 2007. ADI will have its three-day conference for assistance dog training programs from January 27-29. Only guests of programs or the ADI board may attend the ADI conference this year. IAADP’s board members will continue to be invited to ADI’s Conference to provide consumer input. IAADP’s Conference Day will be held on January 30 and it is open to everyone with an interest in assistance dog partnership.

ADI’s conference has been reformatted so it will begin on the afternoon of the 27th and end with a full day of workshops and meetings on January 29. The ADI and IAADP Banquet will be held on the evening of the 29th. Anyone coming just to attend IAADP’s conference is cordially welcome to buy a ticket to attend the banquet the night before. Our annual conference celebrating assistance dog partnership will begin at 9 a.m. sharp, the next morning.

IAADP’s keynote speaker on January 30 will be Marcus Engel, a Seeing Eye graduate. His newly released autobiography, “After This” details his battle to survive and overcome the horrific injuries inflicted by a drunk driver when he was eighteen years old. He will discuss the role that partnership with a guide dog played in his efforts to rebuild his life and share with us some of the lessons he learned on his long journey.

“The DOT On Service Animals and Public Transportation” is workshop that will give officials from the U.S. Department of Transportation the opportunity to have a dialogue with IAADP and ADI members and other conference guests about the DOT’s position on training for service animals and other issues. Will the service animal definition under the Air Carriers Access Act (ACAA), which is inclusive of emotional support animals, influence the DOT’s position on ADA related questions about service animals on other kinds of public transportation? We have invited Kathleen Blank Riether to educate us about the DOT’s intentions and to address audience concerns. She has been in charge of gathering input from the assistance dog partner community to update the TSA screening guidance and for two DOT guidance documents on air travel in

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IAADP Conference in Baltimore
Continued from page 1

recent years. We are pleased to learn that the DOT will also be sending Mike Spollen to our conference. We are told that he is their historical expert on the development of policy involving service animals within the DOT. He will be able to assist with answering some of the questions the audience may pose.

Saving Lives with Diabetic Alert Dogs is a workshop that will introduce the pioneering work of Mark Ruefenacht, a diabetic determined to help other patients with insulin dependent Type I diabetes by providing them with a new kind of assistance dog. Mark spent five years researching the feasibility of teaching dogs to reliably detect and alert to potentially life threatening attacks of hypoglycemia, working with members of the medical profession, crime lab consultants, search and rescue trainers with expertise in scent work, trainers at Guide Dogs for the Blind and the San Francisco SPCA Hearing Dog Program to develop an effective training protocol. Guide Dogs for the Blind has supported his work by donating dogs to Dogs for Diabetics, a non-profit ADI member program launched in 2004 by Mark and the trainers he recruited to prepare dogs for placement. Besieged with requests for training information from professional dog trainers, other assistance dog programs and patients, Dogs For Diabetics has graciously agreed to share its ground breaking research with us at the IAADP Conference in 2007.

Emergency Preparedness & Disaster Relief for A-dog Teams will be a short presentation detailing IAADP’s research on this topic, our participation in planning sessions with the representatives of public and private agencies and our current efforts.

Beyond the Fear: Learning to Love Dogs will be a short talk by guide dog partner and author, Carol Fleischman. She will draw on her personal experience, for she was deathly afraid of dogs but wanted the independence a guide dog could provide.

The Changing Boundaries of the Service Animal Concept will be a panel discussion by ADI board member, Nancy Fierer, IAADP board member Joan Froling, partnered with a service dog and Michael Osborn, an internationally renowned advocate partnered with a guide dog. The panel will look at the current political climate, media reports, proposed legislation to grant public access rights to disabled, sick or elderly persons with pets if they have a note from a medical professional, the concerns of our constituents, what we’ve done to date and where we go from here. The audience will be asked to share their views with us through a survey after listening to the panel discussion.

Share Equipment, Tasks, Products, Ideas! This popular annual workshop fosters the sharing of information between partners and programs. Members of the audience are invited to contribute a video or show and tell display of equipment, useful devices, interesting products, service dog tasks, access tools, travel tips, money saving ideas, ways to reduce kennel stress and much more.

A sit down lunch, lots of door prizes and plenty of gifts to delight the assistance dogs in attendance are some of the amenities in store for conference guests. Join us for a wonderful time! Be sure to call early for hotel reservations, especially if you need a wheelchair accessible room.

Rooms: $129 per night. Phone: 1-410-962-0202 Toll-free: 1-800-228-9290

Scholarship for 2007 Conference Available

Come Join us in Baltimore!

Scholarship is available for the 2007 IAADP/ADI Conferences.

IAADP is looking for the future leaders of the assistance dog movement. Thanks to Fort Dodge Animal Health, IAADP will be able to provide a scholarship to someone in 2007 who wants to participate in IAADP’s conference and learn more about issues of importance to consumers in the assistance dog field.

The scholarship will cover travel, hotel and registration for the IAADP and Assistance Dogs International conferences, January 27-30, 2007. Meals and other incidentals will not be covered.

Please provide the following background information:
1. Name
2. Address
3. Telephone
4. Name and breed of assistance dog
5. Type of assistance dog (guide, hearing or service)
6. IAADP member number

Please give us your thoughts on the following four questions: (No more than 500 words per question)
1. What has been your involvement with the assistance dog movement?
2. What do you hope to get out of attending the conferences?
3. What do you see as the major issues confronting the assistance dog movement in the next few years?
4. What role do you see yourself playing in addressing these issues?

Please email your completed application to Ed and Toni Eames at eeames@csufresno.edu or send it in print, braille or on cassette to 3376 North Wishon, Fresno, CA 93704. Applications must be received by December 15, 2006.

Election Update

In September 2006, the three members of IAADP accepted an appointment to the Nominating Committee. These volunteers are Pam Albertson, partnered with a service dog trained by Paws’itive Teams, Leonard Kessler, partnered with a program-trained hearing dog, and Marcia Carlson, partnered with an owner-trained service dog. We appreciate their willingness to participate in IAADP’s election process by reviewing all the resumes and letters of reference submitted from the members who have offered to stand for election to the board of directors. It is the job of the Nominating Committee to recommend a slate of candidates to the membership for election. Ballots will go out as soon as we receive their recommendations.
Access Denial from Paramedics

Paramedics refuse to transport a guide dog with its owner (Florida, May 16, 2006)

By Kathryn Bursch

Brooksville, Florida – Dave Bearden is nursing a twisted knee and a strained elbow, but perhaps his most serious injury is to his spirit.

Dave Bearden, Guide dog owner:
“I’m not really angry, as much as I am hurt and sad.”

On Monday night Bearden was taking a walk around his neighborhood with his guide dog Isaac, when a pitbull suddenly attacked.

Dave Bearden, Guide dog owner:
“That was kind of scary. It was a little terrifying.”

While trying to fend off the pitbull with his cane, Bearden injured his arm and leg and later called for an ambulance. But when paramedics arrived, they refused to transport Bearden and Isaac to the hospital together.

Bearden says that goes against both state and federal laws.

Dave Bearden, Guide dog owner:
“At that point I said, ‘no, you will not separate me from my dog…that’s illegal.’

And the President of the Florida Association of Guide Dog Users agrees. Marion Gwizdala says when he needed an ambulance, his guide dog went along for the ride.

Marion Gwizdala, Blind Activist:
“To me an ambulance is a healthcare facility…it’s on wheels, but it’s a healthcare facility.”

But Hernando’s Assistant Fire Chief stands by his crew. Frank Defrancesco says paramedics feared Isaac might become aggressive and they offered to take the dog to the hospital in a separate car.

Frank Defrancesco, Assistant Fire Chief:
“They did the appropriate thing to try and make the patient and everyone satisfied with the situation and they did it in a professional manner.”

But for people who depend on their guide dogs for freedom, separate cars just doesn’t cut it. And Bearden says he expects more from health professionals.

Dave Bearden, Guide dog owner:
“They’re paid public servants…this is their job.”

Defrancesco says he’s willing to sit down with the blind activists and discuss the situation and possibly review the department’s policy.

Thank You VCP Fund!

Dear VCP Sponsors:

My name is Karyn LaGrange. I am partnered with my wonderful sidekick, a combo service dog named Chimette (AKA Met). We were recently a recipient of a substantial VCP grant. I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you what a difference this is making in our life and in Met’s ability to regain his place working again faithfully: guiding me, alerting me to important sounds I can’t hear, and performing numerous service related tasks both at home and in society to enable me to be the individual I am today. Without this grant, I have no doubt that his ability to continue working would have been hampered at best.

When Met developed a growth on his foot recently, I had no idea how I was going to help him on my fixed income. I had such an anguishing feeling come over me wondering how I was going to manage everything financially, physically, and emotionally.

Frontier Veterinary Hospital made contact with you at VCP discussing the tests that were needed to properly diagnose Met which you promptly approved for us. When it was determined that surgery was needed, once more you assisted me with the financial worries I was feeling by paying for the majority of this cost as well. This financial relief really allowed me to focus on getting Met through surgery and recovery. Knowing he had a previous bad reaction to anesthesia, it was a real relief to be able to focus on him rather than on how I was going to pay his bills.

The recuperation period following surgery was not easy, but thanks to your generosity, I was able to look more optimistically at the situation as a temporary period of recovery and loss of Met’s assistance. Today Met is at about seventy-five percent of normal with a prognosis of full recovery. I know without your generous contribution to us, the outcome would have been far different than this.

It seems next to impossible to find a dog that so gracefully mitigates an individual with multiple disabilities such as myself. Often times they work great for one or two areas, but not all. It’s a wonderful realization that this setback was only to be temporary and not going to change our partnership in any way other than by strengthening our bond to one another.

I just don’t know how to explain the feelings I have inside for what you have done for us as a team. A mere thank you just does not suffice. You people have hearts of Gold!

Karyn LaGrange and Chimette
Forest Grove, Oregon USA

IAADP WEBSITE
www.iaadp.org
Service Dogs for Autistic Children

Service dogs celebrated - Cambridge-based provider marks 10th year of helping autistic kids

By Melinda Dalton, Philip Walker, Record.com Staff

Crew, a 10-week-old Yellow Lab, rests under a shady table during the 10th annual National Service Dogs celebration on Saturday in Cambridge. Crew will be placed in a volunteer’s home for the next year-and-a-half to learn socialization skills before training for service.

WATERLOO REGION (Aug 8, 2006)

Splashingly in a wading pool, eight-year-old Todd Alves never leaves the sight of his buddy Boomer.

The pair have been practically inseparable since they met nearly three years ago — going everywhere from school to the beach side by side.

And that’s just the way Todd’s mother wants it.

Todd was diagnosed with autism early in his life. He is nonverbal and often darted off, unaware he was putting himself in harm’s way.

Todd, a service dog, is Todd’s anchor, ensuring the boy doesn’t dash into the street or other places where his safety would be compromised.

Todd’s mother, Diana Alves, remembers what life was like before the family got a service dog.

“You see the parents who are still on the waiting list, with that death grip on their child’s arm so they don’t run away,” Alves said, pointing to a parent running frantically behind a wayward child.

“Without Boomer, I would have never been able to stand here and have a conversation. I would have had that death grip trying to keep him from running into the road.”

Todd, now tethered to his highly trained companion, is another success story for the Cambridge-based National Service Dogs, which celebrated its 10th anniversary on Saturday.

Bringing together kids and service dogs from across the country, the celebration was a reunion of sorts for many. Some people saw the puppies they’d raised now working alongside children. Others saw friends they’d met during parent-handler training sessions.

For the organization’s founders, the event was a chance to reflect on the success of the program, which has not only helped dozens of children but also eased the minds of parents.

“It’s just amazing to look back on all the families we’ve been able to help,” said Chris Fowler, the program director and a cofounder of the organization.

“We’ve been able to retain volunteers for seven, eight, even nine years, all because of the reward of seeing that child and dog walking together down the sidewalk.”

From its first year, when one child was linked up with one service dog, until today, when more than 100 dogs help keep autistic children across the country safe, the organization has seen an explosion in demand.

“There’s been an incredible increase in the number of children diagnosed,” said Fowler. “When we started it was one in 1,000, now it’s one in 166.”

About 70 families are now on the waiting list for a service dog. The wait can last a year.

Many families, already accustomed to waiting lists for therapy and social services, are willing to be patient, knowing how much help a service dog provides.

“I hope the people who run this know the good they do,” said Shaune Copeman-Botosh as children fawned over some of the organization’s newest puppies.

“These families would be lost without these dogs,” Copeman-Botosh, who lives in Burford, is waiting for her daughter, Maggie, to be paired with a service dog.

While Maggie’s safety is her primary concern, Copeman-Botosh also hopes the dog will help the girl live a more normal life and aid her socialization.

“She’s young and so far she hasn’t come up against too much from her peers,” the mother said. “But I think the dog would attract kids to be around her. Everybody wants to belong. Even an autistic kid wants to belong to somebody.”

The majority of the dogs are bred through National Service Dogs’ breeding program and placed in volunteers’ homes to learn socialization skills.

Some are donated by local breeders and some even by similar organizations from other countries.

The puppies attend obedience classes and, with the aid of their volunteer puppy raiser, become accustomed to crowds and well socialized.

When they’re old enough, and if they meet intelligence and adaptability requirements, they return to National Service Dogs’ kennels in Cambridge for training.

The entire process, including raising, training and placing a dog, costs about $18,000 — a figure that represents the cost over the dog’s entire 10 years of service.

Families are responsible for raising part of that cash, but most said it’s a small price to pay for the relief the dogs provide.

The Alves reached out to their community when trying to generate enough cash for Boomer. The fund-raising drive turned Todd and Boomer into local celebrities in their hometown of Ingersoll.

“Once we got started it just snowballed,” Diana Alves said. “Everybody in town knows Todd and Boomer now.”

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A Tail To Tell

By Toni and Ed Eames

In our last column we focused on Toni’s medical issue and its impact on her mobility. Despite needing wheelchair assistance, we made a trip to the south to do two Fort Dodge Animal Health sponsored veterinary school presentations in March. We flew from Fresno, through Atlanta to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, meeting delays in Salt Lake City due to snow and Atlanta due to rain. When we left Louisiana on route to Mississippi, we were delayed due to fog! It was a weather driven trip.

Both presentations went well and we had lots of future veterinarians in the audience. In fact, more than 125 Mississippi State students gave us an extremely warm southern welcome!

In April, we were able to combine IAADP outreach efforts with our veterinary presentations. New IAADP board member Tanya Eversole with her Black Labrador service dog Brooke met us and our Golden Retriever guide dogs Keebler and Latrell at a friend’s home in Akron, Ohio and drove us to Fairport Harbor, the home of Ourpets. Dr. Steve Tsengas, CEO of the company, has been a strong supporter of IAADP. He arranged a presentation to his staff and some assistance dog partners in the area. It was very rewarding, particularly since we all came away with bags full of new dog and cat toys and a promise to supply more goodies for the next conference in Baltimore.

Tanya was a real trooper on this trip, driving all over Ohio and pushing Toni in the wheelchair when needed. We left Fairport Harbor for Columbus where we had a fabulous dinner at Schmidt’s, a German restaurant which prepares its own outstanding sausages. Not only is the food fantastic, but we are enamored with the spicy sausages called Bahama Mamas.

Our presentation the next evening at Ohio State was a real turn on! We are always stimulated by large audiences, and this time there were over 150 students in the audience! A great dividend was sharing dinner with several of the students afterwards. Generally, we don’t get to know the students arranging our presentations, so this kind of gathering is so much fun.

Back home, we had to deal with other family health issues. Cali, our 16-year-old calico cat’s appetite was poor and she wasn’t grooming herself. Her kidney failure would not stabilize and the prognosis was that she would continue deteriorating over time. So we made the tough but necessary decision to have veterinarian, Cheryl Waterhouse, come to our home on July 12th to help us say farewell to our little teddy bear. Cali’s tail was shorter than most cat tails and she was very expressive with it. We’ve known Cali since she was a kitten living with our friend Elise. When we visited Elise, despite the presence of the dogs, Cali would roll over for a belly rub. But one did not rub for too long, or Cali would nip. When Elise was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, we gladly took in 7-year-old Cali and incorporated her into our family. She’s been our main cuddler ever since. Toni loved to hold Cali upside down in her arms and kiss the furry tummy. Cali was a gentle soul, good with children and other animals. She was a sun worshipper and spent many hours on our enclosed patio drinking up the hot rays. When Toni would lie in bed or on the couch, Cali would perch on top of Toni, making Toni think of her as the candle on top of the cake! Euthanasia is peaceful and we did not have to see our beloved girl deteriorate from progressive kidney failure and gallstone problems. We truly miss her head butting.

We’ve often said that special angels come into our lives when we desperately need them and this time it was Tanya Eversole. Tanya came into our lives when she won the Fort Dodge-sponsored IAADP scholarship in January. There was an instant bond, and we felt totally drawn to one another. The Tanya Angel offered to fly from her home in Cincinnati to care for Toni during her medical treatment. We rented a hand-controlled van and Tanya drove us the 200 miles to the University of California San Francisco hospital where Toni underwent spinal fusion surgery. Having tried epidural shots, physical therapy, chiropractic treatments, acupuncture and spinal decompression, the only option remaining was surgery. During Toni’s five day hospitalization, Tanya drove Ed and the dogs to and from the hotel, cared for Toni in the hospital, drove us back to Fresno and stayed for an additional week to care for all of us!! Don’t you agree she deserves the ANGEL OF THE YEAR AWARD?

On Wednesday July 19 we trooped off to the hospital for the big event. Throughout our stay, Latrell, Keebler and Brooke were warmly accepted by the medical staff. A nice patch of grass near the hospital entrance where the dogs relieved became a source of entertainment for passersby!

Toni’s Recollection

Tanya and Ed and the dogs were allowed to stay with me in the pre-operation room until I was ready to be wheeled away to the surgical suite. When I woke up in recovery, Tanya brought Keebler in and my usual non-licker, kissed my hand. The nurses were practically in tears from the emotionality of the scene!

All the nursing staff were terrific making me feel safe and cared for. I woke up the day after surgery feeling really good, except for the pain from the surgery site. The spinal fusion was at the Lumbar 4/5 level and there is a six inch incision going down my back. The physical therapist couldn’t believe how mobile I was, no dizziness or postsurgery nausea. I took a short walk with the therapist in the hallway. Getting in and out of bed was the most painful part, but once on my feet, I was so delighted the leg pain was gone that I ambulated around the room and hallways with great joy! Later that afternoon, I took my first walk with Keebler in the hallway. Friday was a bad day, with much pain and disorientation. Saturday and Sunday were days were I felt stronger and more ready to come home.

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Continued from page 5

Visits by friends broke the monotony for Tanya, Ed and me. They were wonderful troopers during my hospital stay. Keebler seemed particularly aware of my pain level and was slow and careful on the many walks we took along the eighth floor hallways.

The big return home time came on July 24 and it seemed to take forever for the paperwork to be completed. I was fearful of the 4-hour ride home, but with pillow support in the front seat of the van, I was relatively comfortable. We left San Francisco’s moderate temperatures to arrive home in Fresno’s 113 degree heat!!

Several months before Toni’s surgery, we arranged to attend the Central Veterinary Conference in Kansas City, Missouri and do a presentation at Kansas State. With Toni’s surgery, we were sure Ed would have to take on this commitment by himself. However, Toni’s rapid recuperation enabled her to make the trip on August 26. With the consent and advice of the surgical nurses, Toni built in down time during our five-day excursion into the heartland.

Not knowing how much energy Toni would have, we arranged for the rental of a wheelchair in advance of our trip. Delighted it was waiting for us when we checked in, our delight soon turned to disgust on discovering the wheelchair was not functional and was useless. Fortunately, the Marriott security staff saw the dilemma and offered the use of the hotel wheelchair during our stay.

Part of the attraction of this trip was the time we would be spending with Athens, Georgia-based artist Ceil Moore. Fort Dodge also sponsored Ceil’s trip to the conference and purchased 300 copies of her “at your service” print featuring Latrell and Keebler. These portraits were so popular that Ceil, president of Barx Brothers Card Company, made a generous donation to IAADP. With each print, we distributed signed copies of our Partners In Independence books.

Over the years we have stayed at this Kansas City Marriott several times and love the idea that we can go from the hotel to the convention hall through an under-ground tunnel. In fact, Toni’s former guide Escort knew the route so well we could traverse the tunnel on our own. By the third time we traveled the route with Ceil, Keebler had conquered this underground maze and she and Toni took the lead without hesitation.

During the next three days we were at the Fort Dodge booth in the exhibit hall spreading the word about IAADP, giving away our books, meeting veterinarians and veterinary technicians and chatting with anyone coming by.

The night we arrived was the only time Toni needed the wheelchair. From then on, it was primarily used to transport Toni’s knitting bag, a backpack and the goodies we gathered in the exhibit hall from dog and cat food manufacturers and companies providing door prizes for our forthcoming IAADP conference in Baltimore.

Tuesday the 29th was another exciting day. Breakfast with Dr. Robin Downing and her life partner Sharon deNayer gave us the opportunity to thank them for their help with our latest IAADP project. Robin and her staff are distributing Novartis’ heartworm preventative Sentinel to our members. She is also a member of IAADP’s Animal Health Care Community Advisory Board.

Following breakfast and some down time in our room, Dean Ronnie Elmore of Kansas State University picked us up for the trip to Manhattan, Kansas. Our VIP status was confirmed when we checked into the room and found a basket of superb fruit awaiting us! The evening presentation went well and it was fun resuming our career as itinerrant lecturers! In fact, one of our previous KSU lectures led KSU faculty member Dr. Pat Payne to become a puppy raiser for KSDS and she was in the audience with her second foster puppy, a 16-month-old Yellow Lab. The evening ended with an outstanding meal shared with Ronnie, wife Carol and Pat.

The IAADP mid-year board meeting held in Michigan in September was a great time for work and play. Most of the play was done by the seven dogs in attendance who romped in Board Chairperson Joan Froling’s back yard! New board members Tanya Eversole and Wendy Morrell fit right in and became active participants in the three days of discussions about IAADP’s goals and mission, national and international outreach and recruitment efforts, and the future of the organization.

This trip ended with a presentation at Cornell, Ed’s alma mater. Flying into Buffalo, New York, we were met by friend Don Fleischman and spent the next few days with Don, wife Carol and her guide dog Nadine. Carol will be one of the featured speakers at the January conference in Baltimore. In her writing and presentations, Carol combines a unique blend of humor and education that has always delighted us. This amiable fun and food loving couple drove us to Cornell and made sure we made our flight back to Fresno. While at Cornell we met with Dean Don Smith who passed on to us information about the most recently adopted veterinary teaching hospital discount policy for assistance dogs, which has been posted to the IAADP website, www.iaadp.org.

We want to end this column on the happy note that Toni went back to San Francisco on September 18 and her surgeon was extremely pleased with her progress. It was an exhausting day trip, but the results were worth it!

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

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**Apology for Identity Error**

The photographer incorrectly identified one of our members, Jerome Pacquette, whose photo in the last newsletter showed him having his CCI hearing dog microchipped. As editor, I had tried to double check the name. Trusting the info as coming from a signed photo release, I used the same [wrong] name when writing an article on IAADP’s conference that told readers how he generously donated the grand door-prize he won to IAADP. He wanted the Circle E Gift Certificate for a harness valued up to $275 to go to someone who could not otherwise afford one. Jerome, please accept our profound apology for this mix up!
Service Dog Comes Through For Partner

She's looked at PAWS from both sides now! Some of those old song lyrics really do apply for Marilyn Boes. She has certainly seen love and life “from both sides now” and it’s made all the difference in the world for her.

In 1995, Marilyn was living quite a normal life. She had never owned a dog. And her only contact with Paws With A Cause® was the money she and her husband designated to the group through his United Way workplace campaign.

An unfortunate back surgery found Marilyn unable to work, causing her to spend large amounts of time at home. But, as she puts it: “I wanted to get out there and do something!”

So at the urging of her husband, animal-lover Marilyn contacted PAWS to check out volunteer opportunities. After a visit with Mike Sapp, Marilyn had her new assignment.

For the next ten years, every Wednesday, Marilyn drove to PAWS to take Assistance Dogs-in-training out to play. In rain, in snow, no matter what the season, Marilyn arrived faithfully to lend her valuable assistance. No letter carrier ever delivered more determined service. (Of course, no letter carrier ever sought out dogs, either!)

Even after a progressive illness required Marilyn to spend most of her time in a wheelchair, she persevered in doing her weekly duties, providing plenty of assistance to the Assistance Dogs-in-training!

Another wonderful service provided by Marilyn is the photo album she maintains of the Assistance Dogs trained by Paws With A Cause. She makes a special point of capturing on film each dog that goes through the program, providing a warm and memorable history and testament to all the engaging canine personalities and the many clients they’ve helped over the years.

It’s pretty clear that volunteers are a rather unselfish bunch. So it’s no surprise that Marilyn continued her work for PAWS faithfully, though the physical challenges she faced in her own daily life were increasing.

So it caught her somewhat by surprise when one spring day, Mike Sapp rather matter-of-factly asked her, “What about an Assistance Dog for you?”

Forced, for perhaps the first time, to look at her life from both sides, she realized it was not so farfetched a thought. Few knew better than Marilyn just what a difference an Assistance Dog could make in the lives of people who were dealing with similar challenges.

So after some thought, Marilyn agreed. So, she filled out the application to be considered for an Assistance Dog.

Once funding was secured, Marilyn underwent her official “Needs Assessment” process to determine exactly what an Assistance Dog could do for her, and what training the dog should receive in preparation. After that, she was placed on what is informally called the “Find a Dog” list.

As a volunteer at PAWS National Training Center, Marilyn sees most of the Assistance Dog candidates that come in for testing. And she’ll never forget the day she first encountered Argon.

“We made eye contact, and I KNEW he was my dog,” she relates. She even raved to the trainer about Argon. But she knew there was far more to it than that. PAWS takes great care to match each client with a dog that is ideally suited in temperament, capabilities, and various other intangibles. If Argon were a better fit for someone else, then “someone else” would receive him. (And she would get the dog best suited for her; no “playing favorites” allowed.)

She dared not even hope for such a pairing.

And sure enough, Mike Sapp visited her in the training room and broke the news that a client had, in fact, been selected for Argon. Marilyn’s spirits sank as he mentioned the irony that Argon would go to a young woman in a wheelchair, about her age, and living in her community.

But different tears filled her eyes as Mike’s expression turned to a smile and applause rose from the staff members who had silently filed in behind her for the moment. That lucky client was, indeed, Marilyn. She would have Argon after all.

Starting in the fall and throughout the winter, Argon underwent his specific training, and Marilyn was able to work with him briefly during her weekly volunteer visits. Then on April 12, 2005, Marilyn received Argon as her Assistance Dog. (And “soul mate,” she would add.)

Argon was still getting used to Marilyn (and vice versa) when an opportunity arose for him to demonstrate just how important an Assistance Dog can be! On July 5, Marilyn fell in her kitchen and hit her head on the table, leaving a large a cut on the back of her head, bleeding profusely.

continued on page 8...
Service Dog Comes Through for Partner

Continued from page 7

She felt herself going into shock, but as she lay on the floor, she instructed Argon to get the phone, from the spot he had been trained to look for it. Unfortunately, Marilyn had moved the phone to another room in anticipation of doing some work in that room.

Aragon was more than up to the challenge. Not finding it in its proper place, he began to scour the house, pulling things off dressers and tables, searching for the phone. Finally, he located it and brought to Marilyn, who was able to summon her husband and emergency services.

After delivering the phone, Argon lay down next to Marilyn, ignoring the blood and placing his head in her lap. Doctors confirmed that, had this help not been called for in time, Marilyn might well have bled to death.

Marilyn’s husband feels much more comfortable leaving her at home now with Argon around. And obviously, Marilyn feels a unique bond with Argon, a special sense that defies description.

“He’s very intuitive — there’s some kind of heart to heart connection between us. There’s just no human explanation for it.”

Marilyn’s experience with Argon has inspired others, as well. Her friend, a teacher in Fort Wayne, involved her school’s 500 students in fund-raising efforts to help sponsor Argon’s training. And when Marilyn and Argon paid them a visit to thank them, it was a highlight of their year. (And they are continuing to help PAWS on a regular basis!)

And, after witnessing the love and critical help Assistance Dogs provide, Marilyn’s teacher friend has since become a PAWS Foster Puppy raiser!

Marilyn is also very grateful to her church, Calvary Church, for providing a significant portion of the $18,000 sponsorship of her Assistance Dog.

Marilyn stills comes to PAWS on Wednesdays, and brings Argon, of course — who gets groomed while “mom” works with those other dogs. Recently, Marilyn has been certified to do presentations to schools and other organizations on behalf of Paws With A Cause, a “labor of love” if there ever was one.

“Argon will be my heart and soul for the rest of our lives,” Marilyn says. “And I can never thank PAWS enough for helping people like me get moving, and out into society. “From now on, that will be my passion in life: getting the word out through education,” a determined Marilyn promised.

Marilyn has seen life and PAWS from both sides now. And we’re grateful and honored to have her on OURS!

Getting Service Dogs Hard Wired Into Society

The Yomiuri Shimbun

With a scant 30 service dogs for the disabled nationwide, knowledge among the general public about what the dogs do and the training involved is understandably low. To overcome this, blogs and books on the subject are being produced in a way accessible to both adults and children.

The National Support Dog Association, a Hachioji, Tokyo-based social welfare corporation runs a blog at http://dogblog.magnet.ne.jp, where members of the general public can get a glimpse into the training the dogs go through — all written from the point of view of a 9-month-old pup called Ekubo. “Today,” Ekubo writes, “an intern here who is studying to become a service dog trainer took me out for a walk.”

The blog is even easy for children to read, as it incorporates many photos and icons and provides the readings for difficult kanji.

The association launched the blog in December. Misaki Ito, 30, one of the four interns at the training center charged with maintaining the site, said: “It’s pretty hard for me to keep up the blog while I study [to be a service dog trainer], but I want people to know the important role these dogs play. I feel really encouraged by messages we get from our readers, saying things like, ‘Hang in there Ekubo!’”

Service dogs work as the arms and legs of their disabled owners, fetching items and picking up what they have dropped. The dogs also perform simple but necessary tasks such as switching on an appliance or pushing an elevator button.

Service dogs, like their counterparts for the deaf and the blind, are categorized as assistance dogs. They are fully backed by the law concerning assistance dogs for the disabled — enacted in October 2003 — to accompany their owners into supermarkets, hospitals and restaurants.

“In the past, shop assistants used to be wary of letting handicapped people bring their service dogs into their stores,” Yasuyuki Sasaki, spokesman for the association, said. “So we have decided to appeal to adults and children on behalf of the service dogs and their owners.”

The Internet is not the only medium being used to enlighten the public. Picture books on the subject have also been published.

“Hana-chan and Happy, the happiest dog in the world,” published by The Mainichi Shimbun in March tells the story of a shy dog named Happy, who becomes a service dog for a wheelchair-bound girl. It grows to truly enjoy its life as an assistance dog.

The book also features a question-and-answer section on the life of a service dog. “Shiro, Kuro and Gure,” published by Sumitomo Life Insurance Co. in February as one of its charitable contributions toward the increased training and use of the dogs, is the story of a service dog, a guide dog, and a hearing dog. The story was written by actress Yuri Nakae. (May. 30, 2006)

http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/20060530TDY04005.htm
Many assistance dog partners who must rely on a taxi cab to get to the airport, a medical appointment, a job interview or some other destination have been the victim of taxi cab drivers who think they are “above the law.” The embittering encounters I’ve had over the last 15 years still weigh heavily on my mind each time I have to call for a cab. So it is nice to find out that the tide seems to be turning and cab companies are not as tolerant as they used to be of this discriminatory conduct.

Two news items came across my desk this year that I’d like to share with you.

The first was a story in the *CALGARY SUN* by Bill Laye on March 3, 2006. Titled “Taxi driver parked over guide-dog snub,” the incident took place in Alberta, Canada.

Bill Laye wrote: “The city cabbie who refused to take a blind Calgarian and his guide dog into his car has been parked indefinitely, says his boss.

And until the driver, who refused to serve Bill Eng and his service dog Pomona on February 19, can provide proof the animal allergy he claimed was the reason for his actions is legitimate, he won’t be working for Associated Cabs again, said company president Roger Richard.

“He was supposed to bring in a medical report and he hasn’t,” Richard said yesterday.

He said the conduct of the unnamed driver, who’d been with Associated about a year and was immediately suspended after the firm learned of the incident, was in direct violation of company policy and when he bluntly refused Eng service.

“That is something that is not acceptable and in our training that’s made very clear — so there is no excuse,” Richard said.

IAADP salutes the company President, Roger Richard, for suspending this driver. The reporter referring to it merely as a “guide dog snub” clearly never tried to put himself in the shoes of the recipient of this inhumane treatment.

In JACKSONVILLE, Florida, dated Wednesday, April 5, 2006, the news item was titled “2 Cabbies Fired After Denying Blind Woman Ride.” The story is attributed to News2jax.com, Florida. A photo caption read: “Mahalah Va Shem was upset when two cab drivers refused to allow her guide dog to ride in their taxicabs.”

The article began with: “Two Gator City cab drivers lost their jobs recently after a blind Westside woman said she was denied taxi service twice.

Mahalah Va Shem is legally blind. She can see a little, but needs her service dog, Burgee, to get around.

Tuesday night she was not able to get far. Va Shem said she called Gator City Cab to take her to the store. However, when the driver arrived, she said he refused to allow her guide dog in the cab.


Va Shem called for another taxi, who took her and her dog to the store, but allegedly refused to bring her home.

She said from there, things only got worse. When she was done grocery shopping, she had a store employee call another cab to take her home, and the same thing happened.

“The girl working at the store comes back and says, ‘You are not going to believe this. Their lady dispatch says they don’t accept service animals period, and hung up on me,’ ” Va Shem said.

A police officer who was at the store confirmed what happened.

Va Shem ended up walking home with her dog and the groceries.

“When I got home last night I was in tears, and I called. I got a new dispatcher because they changed shifts, and this gentleman was very nice and very upset with the way I was treated,” Va Shem said.

Channel 4 talked to a Gator City Cab representative, who confirmed that the incident did occur, and said they’ve already taken steps to make sure a similar incident never happens again.

“We felt this was such a serious infraction that we made a decision to terminate their contracts and they won’t drive with us. In the future, we won’t tolerate that. We have a zero tolerance for mistreating anyone,” said Mark Hayden of the Jacksonville Transportation Group.

IAADP applauds the management of the Gator City Cab company for taking swift action against the drivers that violated their company policy and treated a customer so cruelly. It will send a message to other drivers, other cab companies. I know I will be much more likely to take the time to pursue an access complaint if denied transportation by a cab driver in the future, after learning how Va Shem’s case was handled.

Something else I found uplifting was the discovery that New York City is now enforcing a Taxi Passenger Bill of Rights. There was a sign detailing this innovative approach in the back seat of each cab I took during a trip to Manhattan this past summer with my service dog. One third of the way down the laminated list, I spotted a heartwarming sentence affirming that disabled passengers with service animals have the legal right to ride in taxi cabs. Drivers can no longer pretend to be unaware of the access rights of assistance dog partners like myself. As a bonus, everyone who rides in cabs will be educated about the access rights of disabled persons with service animals if they take a few moments to read this sign. It is an outstanding idea for combating the problem of access denial, one you might consider suggesting to the authorities if you live in a city where this problem is still commonplace.

In past issues of Partners Forum, I recall publishing articles that said taxi cab access denial was the chief access complaint in the U.K., New Zealand and Australia. It certainly has been the most frequently reported access problem in the USA and Canada, over the years. The good news is that what was true a decade ago is not necessarily the case today, as diligent efforts by partners, programs and local government may finally be paying off.
Quarantine Exemption News

Travel to Ireland Now Possible!

Dear IAADP Board:

This is Michael Osborn and I would like to provide updated information on traveling with an assistance dog into Ireland.

Following our successful campaign to have the British Pet Travel Scheme amended, as well as the implementation of the EU Pet Passport and regulations relating to the free movement of non-commercial animals within the European Community, the government of Ireland now allows assistance dogs to enter their country. It is important to note that an assistance dog may travel in the passenger cabin at the feet of the disabled passenger provided the carrier they wish to travel on allows for this. Following the lead of the United Kingdom, the Irish government leaves it to the sole discretion of the commercial airline to decide whether or not they wish to carry the assistance dog in the passenger cabin.

This would be a good time to provide you with an important update. The United States Department of Transportation has worked for over a year on a service animal guidance document that deals directly with the issue of transporting service animals into the United Kingdom. The document has been reviewed by pertinent governmental agencies in England and very soon it will be circulated among air carriers and key members of the disability community for final comment. Once it is published, all United States air carriers will be required to transport assistance dogs in the passenger cabin or face severe penalties. If air carriers refuse to accept a booking on a flight directly into Ireland this guidance document will most likely affect their policy making decisions in the near future.

There are a total of five documents attached that will be helpful in preparing an assistance dog for import into Ireland. Please note that this is general information and references to pets going to Lissenhall for checking and entry at Dublin only can be disregarded in the case of service/assistance dogs. The Irish authorities will allow an assistance dog team to enter their country at three different ports of entry. Please note that this is general information and refers to assistance dogs. The Irish authorities will allow an assistance dog team to enter their country at three different ports of entry as long as proper notification is provided. This is extremely good news, as it is an exception made only for service/assistance dogs. The Irish government leaves it to the sole discretion of the commercial airline to decide whether or not they wish to carry the assistance dog in the passenger cabin.

This document has been reviewed by pertinent governmental agencies in England and very soon it will be circulated among air carriers and key members of the disability community for final comment. Once it is published, all United States air carriers will be required to transport assistance dogs in the passenger cabin or face severe penalties. If air carriers refuse to accept a booking on a flight directly into Ireland this guidance document will most likely affect their policy making decisions in the near future.

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I have provided below just one of the documents, in order to provide the listeners with general information:

How to Travel into Ireland With Your Pet Dog or Cat (except from the U.K.)

Conditions for Travel:

Under the EU pet passport system it is possible to bring accompanied pet dogs and cats into Ireland without the need for quarantine from a range of countries deemed low risk for rabies provided that certain conditions are met.

To be able to travel into Ireland with your pet you must be in a position to answer “yes” to all of the following questions:

1. Are you traveling directly from an eligible country?
2. Are you traveling with an approved carrier?
3. Is your pet over three months old?
4. Will your pet be accompanied?
5. Has your pet been microchipped?
6. Has your pet, following microchipping, been vaccinated against rabies?
7. Has your pet been successfully blood-tested?
8. Have you a passport/certificate completed by a vet-certifying to identification (section III), vaccination (section IV) and blood test (section V)?
9. Has at least six months expired since a successful blood-test?
10. Has your pet been only in an eligible country during this six months?
Your pet may enter Ireland only when at least six months has expired since a successful bloodtest. This provision is to ensure that your pet is not incubating rabies. If your pet has had a break in its vaccinations and has had to repeat the bloodtest, six months must pass from the date of the most recent test before your pet can enter Ireland. If your pet has spent any time in a country that is ineligible for this system, please consult us (contact details on this leaflet) about the conditions that will apply.

11. Has your pet been treated for tick and tapeworm between 24 and 48 hours before check-in at ferry terminal or airport?
Between 24 and 48 hours before you check-in for travel you must bring your pet to a registered veterinarian to be treated against tick and tapeworm. This is to prevent a risk of potentially serious disease entering Ireland. The tick treatment must be other than by a collar impregnated with acaricide. The tapeworm (echinococcus multilocularis) treatment must contain praziquantel as an active ingredient.

The veterinarian must complete the relevant sections of the passport/certificate, i.e. section VI (tick) and section VII (echinococcus), noting down the time of treatment as well as the date.

If you are able to answer ‘yes’ to all eleven questions above, your pet may enter Ireland without undergoing quarantine.

If you are resident in Ireland and wish to get an EU pet passport for your pet, phone the help-line (details on this leaflet) for a ‘passport pack.

For additional information on importing an assistance dog into Ireland, please note: HELP-LINE: +353 1 607 2827 (From the USA precede with 011). Email: pets@agriculture.gov.ie Website: www.agriculture.gov.ie/pets

In conclusion, please let me also provide you with contact information for Liz Shickle. Liz can assist with specific information for importing your guide into the United Kingdom. She is the best contact for all questions relating to travel into England, and I suggest that all listeners keep her information handy for future use:

Liz Shickle - Veterinary Officer, State Veterinary Service
The Residence, Animal Reception Centre
Heathrow Airport TW6 3JF
Phone: +44 208 759 7002 (from the US precede with 011)
Fax: +44 208 564 8939 (from the US precede with 011)
Email: Elizabeth.Shickle@svs.gsi.gov.uk
Website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/pets/index.htm

I hope that this information is helpful. Although I have yet to travel to Ireland with my guide Hastings, we have been able to visit the U.K. on two different trips. I would be happy to discuss our experiences directly with you and may be reached at michael.hastings@cox.net.
All best wishes,
Michael Osborn

**Partner Member Benefits**

*Free benefits unless otherwise noted*

**All Members Worldwide**
- “Partners Forum” Newsletter
- Emergency Recovery Kit - Bayer funded
- International Help-line [call or write]

**Available in United States**
- Sentinel [heartworm preventative] from Novartis
- Advantage or Advantix from Bayer
- Cosequin from Nutramax Laboratories
- Welactin from Nutramax Laboratories
- Denosyl from Nutramax Laboratories
- Avid Microchip - Avid ID System Inc.
- Registration in Pet Trac and/or the AKC Companion Animal Recovery
- Veterinary Care Partnership Grant (eligibility guidelines on website)
- KV Vet Supplies offers 15% off all non-pharmaceutical products
- Veterinary Care Centers - 10% discount
- Ruff Wear toys, products - up to a 50% discount
- Ft. Dodge - vaccine rebate up to $20
- Access & Education brochure

**Available in Canada**
- Advantage-Multi from Bayer (heartworm, fleas, other parasites)
- Advantage flea control from Bayer
- Hills’ Prescription Diet food
- Cosequin from Nutramax
- Rebate check for Wyeth vaccines
- Avid Microchip

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

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**INFORMATION & ADVOCACY CENTER**

Phone: (760) 439-9544 or iaadp@aol.com
THEO, the Dual Purpose Dog

By Neil Ewart

Imagine having very poor vision and then waking up one morning with a trapped spinal cord and to be told that you’re your ability to walk or even bend down will be severely restricted for the rest of your life!

This happened to Jennie Hall who is visually impaired and lives in Abergale, North Wales.

Jennie has had guide dogs for many years and her latest is Theo, a black Labrador X Golden Retriever who was bred by Guide Dogs.

Theo was born in 1999 and after being successfully puppy-walked in Birkenhead he was matched with Jennie at the Guide Dogs’ Training Centre in Bolton. Incidentally, this was the same place where, nearly twenty-five years ago, she met her husband who was also in training with a new guide dog.

When she was informed that her spinal condition would mean her movements would be severely impaired her first thoughts were not self-pity but that Theo would inevitably be taken from her due to his young age and quality. He obviously could easily be re-matched as a guide to another person.

Guide Dogs Staff Member Andy Jones paid a visit and wisely decided that Theo could be retrained to meet this new situation. Instead of acting as a guide dog he could find a whole new career as an “Assistance Dog” to help Jennie, for example, to retrieve dropped articles which she was now finding impossible.

As part of a new and very welcome ethos amongst the U.K. Assistance Dogs charities there is a recognition of the benefits for all by working much closer together.

Andy chose to contact Val Strong who heads an organization called ‘Support Dogs’ for some expert advice.

‘Support Dogs’ are actually based in Sheffield but provide services throughout the UK. They train dogs to assist people with a variety of physical disabilities. The dogs are taught to provide stability or carry out tasks such as opening and shutting of doors, picking up dropped items, operating light switches and fetching the post or the remote control. Although similar to ‘Dogs for Disabled’, ‘Support Dogs’ specialize in training dogs that are already owned by the person who then requires the extra help their dog can give. Therefore, their skills were ideal to train Theo who already had an established role within Jennie’s home.

Interestingly, these dogs are now also being trained to provide support and assistance to people with other specific medical conditions such as hypoglycaemia, Meniere’s Disease or agoraphobia.

‘Support Dogs’ is now the world leader in training Seizure Alert Dogs for people with epilepsy. This program is proving invaluable for people with epilepsy for whom conventional treatment has proved to be ineffective.

A sobering statistic is that epilepsy is the most common neurological illness with over 420,000 cases in the UK, a figure that equates to 1 in 130! There are 82 people newly diagnosed every single day. Only 60% of epilepsy is controlled by medication, leaving the remaining 40% living with the fear of an attack that can strike at any time without warning.

By giving significant advanced warning Seizure Alert Dogs remove the danger from everyday activities such as cooking, taking a bath or shower or even crossing the road which can be potentially life threatening to anyone suffering from epilepsy.

Back to Jennie.

Recently, Val has been working in conjunction with Andy at Jennie’s house. In a very short time Theo is developing new skills to selectivity retrieve articles and to open and close doors. He will also pick up washing and happily walks alongside a wheelchair. Jennie does have some very restricted mobility with the aid of crutches and Theo will gently keep to her side.

Being a Labrador crossed with a Golden Retriever he has inherited traits from both breeds. He is basically a very gentle dog and although he does enjoy retrieving he is not obsessive. Over exuberance could be a problem! But, good friends and family ensure that Theo gets plenty of exercise as required by any dog.

Back to Jennie.

Here is a situation where two charities have worked in partnership to produce a good result for both parties, the owner and the dog. Theo remains in the home where he is very settled and loves the company of Jennie’s husband’s present guide dog, ‘Dane’.

What of the future? Theo is a young dog and should have a long career ahead of him. He will still be “classed” as a guide dog, which means Guide Dogs will continue help financially and that regular visits will be made to help in any way.

Working in partnership also means that staff from both organizations learn new techniques from each other which will help them more accurately assess situations when similar cases crop up in the future.

One day, in the distant future, a replacement will be required. By working together, Guide Dogs and others in Assistance Dogs UK group should, by planning well ahead for the inevitable, ensure those suitable replacement dogs are always available.

This is a quote from Jennie “All my Guide Dogs have made a huge difference to my life but since I damaged my back, Theo has given me a different independence for the second time.”

I recently wrote about a lady living in Cheshire who suffered a dramatic loss of vision. She already has had several hearing dogs, as she is profoundly deaf. ‘Guide Dogs’ trained a dog to act as a guide and ‘Hearing Dogs’ trained this dog to indicate sounds going off…Another true dual-purpose dog.
Writing Competition Entry

Stasha’s Maiden Voyage

By Shiela Henry

Stasha, my new assistance dog, and I had been together for seven months when my husband, Mike, and I were invited to visit our son, Ryan and his girlfriend, Mel, who were living in Belgrade, Montana. Since the town of Belgrade was located approximately one and a half hours from Yellowstone National Park, it was a great chance to see the park. Traveling from Dayton, Oregon, where we lived, Mike and I decided to travel by airplane. It would be a great opportunity to expose Stasha to the world of air travel. I hoped that Stasha would be up to the challenge.

Stasha was very young – barely 2 and half years old. Leslie Rappaport, of Kings Valley Collies, Stasha’s trainer, had asked me to be patient with my beautiful sable and white collie until she had developed the maturity of an experienced assistance dog. Because I had known for Leslie for 11 years, I was certain that she knew what she was doing when she had envisioned us as a team. Mike and I knew that we had to be prepared to deal with Stasha’s reaction to many new things.

Traveling with an assistance dog meant a trip to the veterinarian for a travel permit for my canine partner. At home, Stasha, along with a cane, supplied me with the balance that I often lacked due to my relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis. Because my M.S. also affects my stamina, I took a manual wheelchair to use when I needed to walk further than six or seven blocks.

Under the American with Disabilities Act, assistance dog teams were able to fly together in the cabin of an airplane. However, earlier that year I had read in The Partners Forum, a newsletter produced by the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners, that some airlines were attempting to impose new air travel rules for assistance dogs. Although I was wary of possible controversy, Big Sky Airlines made me feel very comfortable as we boarded the airplane. Later, I learned that the new rules applied to longer flights; however, I felt a little uncomfortable when an elderly gentleman grumbled because he had had to change his seat arrangements because of “that dog.”

Through out the last ten years, my canine partners and I, along with our human companions, had traveled through the Panama Canal, floated on a barge down the Mississippi River to enjoy the Mardi Gras and journeyed to the Mayan Peninsula to explore the ancient ruins. Blessing, my first canine partner, was a great traveler; however, Sega, my second partner had a difficult time adjusting to air flight, so I was not sure what to expect from Stasha. Fortunately, through all the commotion that occurs in an airport, along with all the attention that she received, Stasha seemed to take everything in stride. In fact, she, unlike me, didn’t react when our small airplane was forced to endure a thunder and lightning storm.

Mel was waiting for us when we arrived at the Belgrade Airport where we rented a Dodge Durango for the weekend. That evening, we hosted a dinner for Ryan, Mel, and their roommate at a local restaurant. Although Stasha and I had some problem because of an open grate in the floor, I was able to guide her around it to avoid possible injury. After dinner, we spent the night in a “dog-friendly” motel and ate breakfast at a neighboring restaurant.

The next morning the five of us, along with Stasha, and Ryan’s dog, Sydney, headed for Yellowstone. We entered the park through the Roosevelt Arch – a memorial to President Theodore Roosevelt who helped establish the nation’s first national park.

Although there were a number of ways to enjoy everything that Yellowstone had to offer, we opted to drive the Grand Loop Road. Since I often need “potty stops,” I was pleased to note that there were restrooms located within easy access everywhere. Since Mel had worked for a season at the park, she had suggested that we needed to make an early start in hopes that we might be able to see some of the 60 animal species that called the park home. Since the wild animals were free to roam at will, unless they proved to be a threat, the chance of seeing one was often based on luck; however, our chances increased immensely due to our early arrival.

When we pulled into the ticket booth, where we paid our entry fees, we were given a handout – Your Pet and Yellowstone.

The following said it all – Yellowstone National Park is a

continued on page 14…
designated natural area where wildlife is free to roam undisturbed. Park visitors should be able to enjoy native wildlife in their natural environment without the disturbance of other people’s pet. For this reason, pets are prohibited in the backcountry and on trails and boardwalks.

Since Stasha was an assistance dog with all the privileges that her life’s work afforded her, much did not apply; however, it was always my responsibility to follow the rules as much as possible.

Before the day was over, we saw our share of animals. It was easy to tell when an animal was within view because there were at least two to three vehicles stopped with their occupants snapping pictures. We saw a number of buffalo, deer, and elk, but when we had the opportunity to snap pictures of a grizzly bear and a mother black bear with her two cubs, we knew our trip had been worth it.

The park had many geological features to offer as well. There were hot springs, geysers, boiling pots of molten rock, and bubbling pools of steaming water to mention a few. Since the park was located in an extinct volcano, the smell of sulfur fills the air. That there were wooden ramps for easy view for everyone added to the enjoyment. The Yellowstone River wound along the road, creating a number of fantastic views as we drove through the park.

After about eight hours of driving with a number of stops, I was pleasantly exhausted. It was obvious that Stasha was tired as well, when in front of Old Faithful Lodge, I learned what “refusal” in equestrian terms meant. Perhaps it was the unfamiliar smells or the rumblings of the earth below our feet, but when Stasha refused to move, it was obvious that my canine partner needed a well-earned break. I couldn’t blame her.

All in all, it was a great trip. Despite her slight problem in the park, Stasha did quite well. We got to spend time with our loved ones, and we got to enjoy all the great sites of Yellowstone. Being a national park with completely handicapped facilities, it made for a wonderful vacation spot.

**Note About the Author:** Shiela Henry and her canine partner live in Dayton, Oregon, with their human partner, Mike and Sega, a retired assistance dog. Stasha job is to help Shiela with balance.

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**FYI - Public Transportation Resource, USA**

On behalf of IAADP’s Information & Advocacy Center, I answer upwards of two hundred inquiries a month by email, phone and letter. A few weeks ago, a clinic got in touch with us with a complex question about paratransit, one that required balancing the rights of one assistance dog team against another’s. I did not know how the Department of Transportation (DOT) might rule when interpreting the Americans With Disabilities Act, which has jurisdiction over public transportation other than the airlines. I did not want to give the wrong advice. I contacted someone I knew at the DOT to seek clarification. She referred me to a government resource I was not familiar with. I thought the information I received might be useful to other IAADP members someday. I learned there is an ADA team at the Federal Transportation Authority (FTA) Civil Rights Office. They have both an ADA Assistance toll-free hotline number, 1-888-446-4511, and an ADA Assistance email address, ada.assistance@fta.dot.gov, for ADA-related transit questions. So if you have a question that does not involve air travel, but rather, involves a bus, train, subway, taxi cab or paratransit, this resource “hotline” could be a way to obtain interpretative guidance or a place to contact if seeking help in resolving a complaint.
The attack finally ended after the woman heard people yelling and car horns honking and felt water being thrown on her and the dogs.

The woman was treated at Huguley Memorial Medical Center. Off-duty paramedics took Ryder to the I-20 Animal Medical Center in Arlington. Moore said that the guide dog survived his injuries but remains in therapy.

After the attack, officers found a brown 4-year-old female pit bull and white 3-year-old male in the area, their coats stained with blood. A third pit bull, a white 1-year-old female not involved in the attack, was found in the front yard of the Vazquez home on nearby Longmeadow Way.

Vazquez told police that the dogs were kept in a kennel in the back yard, which is also fenced. He said the dogs had been let out of the kennel that morning and had apparently escaped through an opening in the fence, the affidavit states.

“I knew this was going to happen if they got out,” the affidavit quotes Vazquez’s 19-year-old son as telling officers at the scene.

Officers noted that the fence was in poor condition and had a “Beware of dog” sign attached to it.

“They knew these dogs were mean. They knew they should have kept the dogs in the kennel in the back yard,” Moore said. “They let them out of the kennel when it was obvious the fence was in disrepair.”

Vazquez relinquished all three pit bulls to animal control officers to be euthanized.

His son, Lazaro Vazquez Jr., previously told the Star-Telegram that the family had never seen the pit bulls behave aggressively toward people or other dogs and that they were sorry for what happened. The family did not return a message seeking comment Friday.

Animal control officers issued nine citations to the senior Vazquez after the attack: three for not having proof of rabies vaccinations, three for not registering the dogs with the city and three for not restraining the animals.

Moore said that to avoid double jeopardy, investigators went to municipal court last week and had the citations – which had not been paid – dismissed.

Rarely used law
Under a Texas law that went into effect in September 2003, people commit a crime if they intentionally, knowingly or recklessly incite or permit an animal they own or that is in their custody to attack, injure or kill an assistance animal.

The crime is a Class A misdemeanor if the assistance animal is attacked, a state jail felony if it is injured and third-degree felony if it is killed.

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Australia FAQ on Access Rights

It is interesting to note that Australia has been struggling with some of the same problems regarding access for disabled persons with guide, hearing and service dogs that have arisen in the USA since the Americans With Disabilities Act was signed into law. It is not just Americans who are “pushing the envelope.” A number of Australians have exploited the law intended to provide access for disabled persons with well-trained assistance dogs in Section Nine of the Disability Discrimination Act. Some have gone so far as to bring dingoes on the trains claiming the animal is an assistance animal, according to the Transportation Agency. The Disability Discrimination Commission issued the following statements for clarification purposes.

Frequently asked questions: Assistance animals

Can a service or accommodation provider exclude a person because he or she is accompanied by a guide dog or hearing dog?

No. This is unlawful under the DDA [Disability Discrimination Act] unless unjustifiable hardship can be shown, which in the Commission’s view will very rarely be possible. See the decision of the Commission in Brown v Birss Nominees. Note also the Commission decision in Jennings v Guan Lee that it was discriminatory to require a guide dog to be left outside.

Does the DDA apply to companion animals?

The DDA applies directly to discrimination because a person is accompanied by a guide dog, hearing dog or other animal trained to alleviate the effects of a person’s disability. A companion animal is not within this definition. The fact that an animal is house-trained or has had obedience training is not likely to be sufficient for this purpose.

Note the following decision by the President reviewing a decision by the Disability Discrimination Commissioner to decline a complaint:

Companion dog not assistance animal for DDA purposes

A man complained that he had been discriminated against by a country rail service provider’s refusal to permit him to be accompanied in the passenger carriage by his companion animal, a Chihuahua dog. The President confirmed the Acting Disability Discrimination Commissioner’s decision to decline the complaint. She found that the fact that the man had trained the animal to provide him with companionship was not sufficient to establish that it had been trained to alleviate the effects of his disability (2 December 1998).

DDA section 9 prohibits discrimination only against people with a disability. It does not apply to anyone who does not have a disability but wishes to be accompanied by an animal. A need or desire for companionship does not in itself amount to a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Assistance animals other than guide or hearing dogs are

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covered by the DDA. Note, however, that access to premises with these animals is not necessarily covered by rights of access provided for guide dogs under other legislation. Any right of access under the DDA is subject to possible claims of unjustifiable hardship and would also require evidence of the animal being trained to meet a need for assistance because of a person’s disability.

Editor’s Note: in November 2003, the Commission solicited public comments on what action should be taken to ensure assistance dogs are properly trained and identified in Australia. A number of training programs and individuals and agencies responded with formal public comments. Their thought provoking suggestions and the Commission’s response to each of the 20 or so submissions and its conclusions are available at the following url: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/inquiries/animal03/report.htm A final resolution of these issues is still pending.

Addresses for Where Do I Send It?

How To Reach Us By E-mail

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New Address & Phone Number for Renewals, Other Membership Matters

IAADP c/o Tanya Eversole
P.O. Box 531086, Cincinnati OH 45253
Phone: 513-245-2199

Membership Information

Membership Dues: $20 - Partner Member, $20 - Renewal; $20 - Friend Member; $25 - Provider Member. Send check with signed application from website at http://www.iaadp.org/membership.html

to IAADP c/o IAADP c/o Tanya Eversole, P.O. Box 531086, Cincinnati, Ohio 45253. You may also obtain a Membership Application with S.A.S.E., by fax ($1.00 extra), or send a letter with your signature attesting you’re partnered with an assistance dog. Specify Print, Cassette, Disk.

Renewal Date: All members should check their membership expiration date, which now appears on the mailing label of the most recent copy of Partners Forum. Partner Members will also find their expiration date on their Membership Card. Renewal notices may or may not be sent out, so members should be careful to renew their memberships 45-60 days in advance of the expiration date to maintain coverage for benefits.

Questions? Contact our Information & Advocacy Center
Call (760) 439-9544 or e-mail IAADP@aol.com or the IAADP website: www.iaadp.org. You can also contact us by mail at IAADP, P.O. Box 1326. Sterling Heights, MI 48311.

International Association of Assistance Dog Partners

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

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In memory of my beloved partner who’s life was devoted to me, so that I could regain mine. I will always be profoundly grateful to him.

–Brad Strause

Coming to me at the beginning of this long, difficult journey
You brought confidence and grace
Through those alien places and wrenching changes
You gave comfort from the loneliness and fear
In that growing darkness and despair
You led the way back to hope and joy
In all our glorious time together
In every moment, at every step
Sometimes foundering, sometimes soaring
You were my lifeline And my wings

In memory of my beloved partner who’s life was devoted to me, so that I could regain mine. I will always be profoundly grateful to him.

–Brad Strause