



Best Dogs in Sight

Newsletter of Guide Dogs of Texas
San Antonio, Texas

www.guidedogsoftexas.org

FALL 2004

A PUBLICATION OF GUIDE DOGS OF TEXAS, A 501 (C) (3) ORGANIZATION

I DIDN'T EVEN FALL!

By Jose Martinez

Being a "Puppy Walker" is great! It is also a very unique experience, but in my case, the word "unique" can't even describe it. You see, I am an inmate at the Dominguez State Jail, and I am also part of the "Pawsitive Approach Program" for Guide Dogs of Texas. Being a Puppy Walker in prison is not much different than being a Puppy Walker in the free world. Even though we are in two different worlds, the job goals remain the same, no matter which side of the barbed wire fence you are on. Our job consists of raising a puppy that will one day graduate and be given to a visually impaired person.

Being in a prison environment, I was given the opportunity to be part of something very special. I was given a second chance to give back to the community I left behind when I was placed at Dominguez State Jail. The job was not given to me merely at my request or simply because I wanted to do it. I had to go through an interview process to become a Puppy Walker. My objectives are: to love, care for, and do my best to raise a guide dog for someone who is visually impaired. I've learned and benefited so much from participating in this program, that words cannot describe how thankful I am.

On June 23rd, a fellow Puppy Walker and I were notified that we would be doing a "blindfold walk" in order to have the experience of walking "blind" with a guide dog, and to learn exactly what all our hard work is for. The next morning we were off to experience something that words cannot really describe or put into perspective.

At first we didn't know what to expect. All we knew was that we would be blindfolded and "walked" by a future guide dog named Mikey. I guess

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WE HAVE A SPECIAL RADIO STATION!

By Bill Patterson

What better way to keep up with all the news than to have your own radio station? Owl Radio, located on N.E. Loop 410 in San Antonio, provides daily broadcasts for persons who are unable to read standard print materials due to a visual, physical, or reading impairment. The station operates 24 hours every day of the week on a special FM signal provided by Texas Public Radio; it can be received in the San Antonio area in a range of about 50 miles from the transmitter near Helotes, Texas. Specially built, single-frequency radio sets that receive the broadcasts are loaned free of charge to qualified applicants.

Volunteers read the *San Antonio Express-News* on the air every day between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., with a re-broadcast each evening. Instead of the abbreviated "news clips" that you hear on other radio or TV sources, Owl Radio covers virtually everything in the newspaper, including feature articles, sports news, letters to the Editor, horoscopes, and even the obituaries.

A team of two volunteers handles each hour of reading the *Express-News*. They arrive at the station 1 hour before broadcast time and rapidly (sometimes frantically) cut articles out with scissors and arrange them in the order in which they will be read. A quick perusal is made for hard-to-pronounce words or names, sometimes checking a dictionary for pronunciation. One of the team members acts as program "engineer," adjusting the volume and transmitter controls, and they both take turns reading their articles. At the same time, another pair of readers has started cutting out other pages of the newspaper to do their live reading in

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Michael Mason

We are nearing the end of 2004 and looking forward to a new year with new challenges. We plan on placing three dogs with clients by the end of the year and hope to place seven more dogs by the end of 2005. We are excited to be able to place more of our excellently trained dogs and to help more blind persons gain independence and mobility.

We are in the process of constructing our 2005 budget, coupled with a strategic plan. With careful planning and an increase in revenues, we hope to hire an additional trainer, which will enable us to increase the number of "teams" we graduate per year. We also plan to certify Sandy and Ariel, our apprentice trainers as full fledged Guide Dog Mobility Instructors in 2005. We want to grow our eligible client wait list, add a new van for the new trainer, and replace the Puppy Walker Program Manager's van, which currently has close to 180,000 miles.

We also hope to hire a kennel assistant who will work weekends at our training annex, thereby relieving our training staff of the extra duty. We also hope to be certified as a full member of the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) by June of 2005. The certification process mandates a lot of hard work on our part to get ready for the assessment, which is handled by a dog trainer from England.

As you can see, we will be very busy this spring raising more funds to support our new "planned" activities plus preparing for the IGDF certification.

I want to thank all of our volunteers who lend so much support and enable us to fulfill our mission. Otherwise, we could not conduct client training classes and take care of meals, house cleaning, and the myriad number of tasks that must be accomplished with each training class.

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you can say we were "in the dark" about what we were about to experience. On the trip into town, we went back and forth on who would go first. Then the question arose: "What happens if we fall?" We were so nervous, our stomachs were in knots. But when we finally made it to our destination, the nervousness changed to excitement, and falling down didn't worry us anymore. We wanted to experience our blindfold walk at any cost, even if it meant the chance of falling.



Jose Martinez and his current puppy, Tucker

After our arrival, the trainers, Ariel and Sandy, introduced us to Mikey and gave us a complete run-down on all the basics and an idea of what to expect after the blindfold went on. Then after everything was explained and all our questions were answered, the question was asked: "Who wants to go first?" Without even thinking twice, I volunteered. While Ariel was going over everything again, I thought to myself, "What am I getting myself into?" All of a sudden the butterflies in my stomach were back. Even though I was reassured over and over and knew Ariel would be right there just in case a problem came up, the fact remained—I would be blindfolded. To be honest, that really bothered me. However, after a couple of deep breaths I gave into the excitement and put the blindfold on.

One second I was in daylight, and the next—instant darkness! And there was no turning back. I put my trust in Mikey to get me through the walk, safe and sound. After Ariel made sure I couldn't see, I gave the command of "forward"

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(Continued from page 2) I Didn't Even Fall!

and Mikey and I were off on our walk. And you know what? At first I got a little dizzy, but after that feeling went away, Mikey made this walk seem to me that I was using my very own eyes. We were on the same page every step of the way. He maneuvered me around all kinds of obstacles and helped me to distinguish between stepping up to and down from curbs. He also helped me if I didn't need any help at all! He made left and right turns and kept me from wandering into traffic.

To make a long story short, the walk went great, even though I was a little nervous. Mikey helped to calm my nerves and got me safely where I needed to go. He helped me take a walk that I never thought I would experience.

When all was said and done, I had experienced briefly what it meant to lose what most of us take for granted—our sight. Having that blindfold on and being in a pitch black environment enhanced my hearing and sense of smell. The smell part I couldn't really explain; it was as if not having my sight anymore doubled and tripled all of my senses. With my sense of smell enhanced, I could smell things as though I could see them, and it helped me try to visualize my surroundings.

As for my sense of hearing, it came into play a lot more than you could imagine, especially trying to figure out which way traffic was going or if it had stopped. I cannot even think of a word that describes what I felt when I was at a corner or intersection trying to cross without knowing exactly where traffic was at the time. At first it can be described as confusion because I didn't even know what to listen for. Then after calming down and concentrating, I started to listen to my environment and even for little things so I could distinguish which way traffic was moving. Before I knew it, I was able to tell the difference in traffic patterns. When my walk with Mikey came to a conclusion, I came to realize why our training as Puppy Walkers is so important to future guide dogs.

A visually impaired person is going to put all his or her love and trust into this animal, and at all times the dog will maneuver him (or her) around all kinds of obstacles and get him where he wants and needs to go. We shouldn't take any of our training with our puppies for granted. Right when you think there is no more training that your puppy

can go through, you're wrong. There is always something you can improve on with your "future guide dog." One thing is for sure, after being on a blindfold walk and putting all my trust into Mikey, now I know why the school and the trainers stress straight sits, why your pup should respond to the very first command, and why we should not teach our pups to "count."

I don't know if a walk like the one I took is available to every Puppy Walker out there, but if the opportunity comes around, you should take a blindfold walk. I guarantee you will not be disappointed. If anything, you are going to look at your job as a Puppy Walker in a whole new way and take more pride in raising a future guide dog. Some lucky person will appreciate all the work you did in raising your puppy. And you will also be reminded of what all your hard work is really for. After all was said and done and I realized that everything that I was working so hard for had a good ending, I can happily say, "I didn't even fall!"



THE PREACHER'S SERMON

by Ron Huether

When our pups reach the age of about five months, we start taking them to church with us. More accurately, church and then out for Sunday brunch with friends. Our first pup was no problem since she just slept through most of the service.

But our black lab pup has one embarrassing quirk. Though we train the vocalization out of our pups early, our black lab has insisted on one unique vocalization—each time he yawns he lets out with the loudest yawn in two counties!

So it was last Sunday when the preacher was at the peak of his sermon, telling us all to pay attention to his (and God's) important words, that our pup yawned. And I MEAN *yawned*. The whole church looked in our direction to see just who the obnoxious sinner was. And, as experienced guide dog puppy trainers, the wife and I both turned around and looked at the persons in the pew behind us!!

(Continued from page 1) Special Radio Station

the next hour. The end result of this hectic-paced work is—hopefully—a program that is both informative and interesting to the listeners.

Other volunteer readers produce recorded programs in the studio to be broadcast at different hours, some on a weekly schedule and others either bi-weekly or monthly. These special interest programs include book reviews, recipes, business news, pet care, and department store or grocery ads. The remaining hours not devoted to locally produced programs have verbatim readings from nearly 100 other local and national newspapers and magazines provided from satellite transmissions.

Owl Radio is a division of the San Antonio Low Vision Club, a 501(c)(3) non-profit tax-exempt Texas corporation that was started in 1997 by a San Antonio lady, Bonnie Truax. She was inspired to form the organization after her diagnosis of legal blindness 5 years earlier, when she found little community support for people with vision loss. Since that time, the San Antonio Low Vision Club has grown to more than 700 members. It meets monthly for socialization and information at the UT Health Science Center in San Antonio. The radio station began operating in March, 2002.

Studies have shown a growing need for reading services due to an aging population. In the State of Texas, more than 800,000 people have difficulty reading or are unable to read newspaper print. In Bexar County alone, nearly 33,000 people over the age of 18 years are blind or visually impaired. These numbers do not reflect the uncounted ones who are print impaired due to accident, stroke, or other disability. Owl Radio's immediate goal is to provide service to every qualified candidate in the broadcast area.

Do you think that you might qualify for a radio receiver from Owl Radio? Submission of a completed application form, along with a statement from a health care provider certifying one's disability, is all that is required for participation. Applications can be obtained by downloading from the website www.owlradio.org or by calling Owl Radio at 829-4223 and leaving your name and address. There is no charge, but a \$25 donation to cover the cost of the radio is appreciated.

short takes

LET US DEBIT YOUR ACCOUNT

... for the training staff relief fund. Guide Dogs of Texas now has the capability to receive electronic transfers from your bank account. At your request, we will send you a form and once we have the appropriate information your account can be debited each month. The money will be used to hire kennel assistants to work every other weekend at the training annex. That will provide relief for staff, who are currently having to work weekends.

LCRA gives grant to GDTX

Through the generosity of the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) Employees' United Charities, Guide Dogs of Texas recently received a grant of \$1,000 to support the Pawsitive Approach Program. LCRA maintains a program of corporate philanthropy aimed at assisting organizations, programs and activities that benefit LCRA communities. The LCRA is committed to providing its resources and talents when and where they are deemed most appropriate. We are very appreciative of the LCRA employees who use payroll deduction to provide funds to be distributed through the United Charities division of LCRA.

Re-homing Policy - Guide Dogs of Texas

We get several calls a month about "adopting" one of our dogs that does not make the grade for a guide dog. We do have a policy on "re-homing" these dogs. The Puppy Walker who raised the dog has first choice to rehome the dog. We accept applications from individuals who want to adopt one of our dogs and we use the following criteria: a minimum donation of \$250 escalating to \$650 for all applicants living beyond a 200 mile radius of San Antonio; applicants must agree that all rehomed dogs will have an annual vet exam and a form completed and signed by the vet that speaks to weight, eye sight, hips, knees, and general health; if a rehomed dog cannot be cared for, the dog must first be offered to GDTx before any other placement options are considered; and follow-up visits will be on-site at 3 and 12 months after placement and the annual vet certification thereafter.

EAR PROBLEMS: The Most Common Complaint Amongst Dog Owners

By Dr. J. Dan McElhenny

Ear problems, which include infections, allergies, trauma, and blood supply restrictions, are the most common problems veterinarians face from day to day. In this article, we will address only external ear infection(s). Other ear infections include middle and internal ear infections, as well as hematoma of the ear flap (pinna).

Why do dogs get ear infections?

Most of our canine patients with ear problems are either allergy-prone pets or have some factor that predisposes them to ear problems, such as breed, anatomy, weather exposure, or age.

Breed: Flop-ear dogs are more prone to external ear canal infections. Therefore, if you own a lab and have a swimming pool, I say that your dog will likely have ear problems. High humidity and flop ears increase the pet's chance of infection. Pets with erect ears also get ear infections, but not as often. The Shar Pei breed is another that has more than their share of ear problems.

Weather: Dogs in high humidity areas are more prone to ear problems.

Age: Younger and older dogs are both prone to ear infections, but for different reasons. Younger dogs are more active and get into everything; thus they have more exposure to triggers that cause ear infections. Older dogs are more prone to ear infections because they are sedate and not as active, and therefore get a wax build-up in their ear canals and secondary infections.

Allergy-related: We see many allergy-related ear infections caused by inhalant, food, or contact allergies.

How can you prevent ear infections?

Rinse or flush the ear canals with ear cleaner solutions that will dry and disinfect the ears. There are several products on the market such as CHX Flush, Oti-Calm and Epi-Otic. Always clean the ears after a bath and when increased period of humidity occur. If your pet has allergies you may need to clean the ears once or twice a week.

How do you know when your dog needs to see the vet for an ear problem?

When your dog shakes his/her head, holds one ear down, has an ear odor or attempts to pet or touch the heard are unsuccessful. Additionally, when the ear or ears are red and inflamed the dog experiences loss of balance or the dog develops a head tilt.

How does the vet diagnose an ear infection?

Ear cytology (doing a culture of ear material to see what organism grows) can determine if the infection is bacterial, fungal, or yeast. Another part of the lab test, called a sensitivity test, reveals the best antibiotic to treat the infection.

How is an ear infection treated?

Initially we clean the ears by flushing with an antiseptic agent. Sometimes this has to be done with sedation or anesthesia because the ear canal is so sore. We also send appropriate ear medicines home with the owner. Medicines include ear cleaners, medical drops, and - occasionally - oral medicines. Other treatments include surgery and - most radical - resort treatment - the removal of the total ear when no other alternative is available.

In conclusion, ear infections can be very simple or they can plague a pet for life. We take ear infections as a very serious issue and try to control and stabilize early in life. Often it is difficult to communicate the serious nature of ear infections to owners and the consequences if not treated quickly. Some pets become "head shy" because their ears hurt so badly they are reluctant to allow the owner to rub their head or ears. Because the disease is so insidious, pet owners may not be aware of the complications that may arise in the future from untreated or recurrent ear infections.

SANTA PAWS

Please join us at Rob Cary Pet Resort on Nov 28th from 1 to 5 pm, Dec 3rd from 1 to 6 pm and Dec 4th from 10 am to 4 pm. You can have a photo of your pet taken with Santa Claus and help Guide Dogs of Texas at the same time. Rob Cary is located at 14824 Bulverde Rd in San Antonio.

GDTx PRESENTATION to the TEXAS DEPARTMENT of CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

by Gail Walden

On September 23, 2004, representatives from Guide Dogs of Texas and the Pawsitive Approach program, a collaborative effort with the Dominguez State Jail, made a presentation to the Texas Criminal Justice Board. Their goal was to report on the program's success and significance, as well as to express the gratitude of Guide Dogs of Texas for the Board's continued support of the program.

This was an especially poignant presentation as, among the representatives, were two Offenders/Puppy Walkers with their charges at their feet—Elmo (a 5-month-old Labrador) and Tucker (an 11-month-old Golden Retriever/Labrador cross).

The behavior of both the offenders and puppies was exemplary, and although they may have been a bit nervous, they were a testament to the success and impact of the program. Michelle Pelletier, Puppy Walker Manager for Guide Dogs of Texas, reported on the expansion of the Pawsitive program with the Dominguez State jail—especially the profound impact of the offender/handlers' off-site training walks with their puppies. The dogs now come to their formal training phase better prepared, more stable, and with more consistent and favorable outcomes. Guide Dogs of Texas' Training Director, Phil Stanley, reminded everyone of the need in Texas for quality guide dogs, by reporting statewide statistics regarding the numbers of visually impaired individuals, both present and future. He also reiterated the fact that Guide Dogs of Texas is the only guide dog school in the state, and that while small in comparison to the national guide dog

schools, extends itself to serve deserving individuals from border to border of the state.

Finally, Ms. Gail Walden, who is both a client and a Board Member of Guide Dogs of Texas, approached the Texas Criminal Justice Board to offer her unique insights as to the import, impact, and benefits of the Pawsitive program. With Louise, her guide dog of four years, at her feet, she drew upon her experiences as a guide dog owner as well as her training as a Public Health professional. She described the collaboration with the Dominguez State Jail as a true "win-win" effort that benefits not only Guide Dogs of Texas, but also the Criminal Justice system, the offenders themselves, and hence, ultimately, the



The Dominguez Team and their dogs

community at large. She further pointed out how important a well socialized puppy is for its future as a guide dog, how the off-site puppy training walks serve to re-socialize and re-introduce the offenders to the general community,

and how the requirements, demands, and responsibilities of the Pawsitive program and their puppy charges teach the offenders skills that promote good citizenry.

The Texas Criminal Justice Board and their audience were extremely receptive of and responsive to the presentation, to the extent that the presenters received applause from both the Board and the general audience. A member of the board, while still in session, suggested that the program be expanded to include the female correction institutes. During a Board session interlude, the Guide Dogs of Texas representatives were approached by several members of the Texas Criminal Justice Board, including the Chair. All expressed their sincere thanks and support, referring to the presentation as "inspiring."

got empties?

Purchasers of toner and ink cartridge empties.

By Michael Glover

New and inventive forms of fund raising are rare and often cost-prohibitive to implement. However, "got empties?, Inc." has a very simple, **low effort** way to raise cash for schools, churches, sports teams, scouts, and other programs. "CA\$H FOR TRASH" is a local fund raising program that also offers our program an additional way to recycle used inkjet and laser toner cartridges. You probably have a printer, fax, or copier near you as you read this. You might also have one at home. Now, multiply that by the number of students or staff who also have printers (mostly inkjet) in their homes and--for the students--the number of printers found in their parents' work places.

got empties?, Inc. provides all the material needed (including collection barrels, flyers, posters, and so forth) to help in this collection effort. Flyers, posters, and sample letters can be downloaded at www.gotempties.com. The intent is that the students and staff will collect and bring back to their participating program empty ink and laser toner cartridges from the home or work place. The empties are then placed in a CA\$H FOR TRASH container at a designated area in the participating facility. got empties?, Inc. then picks up the empties and mails the collectors a check. **No packing involved and you get a check fast!** The value of the empty print cartridges ranges from \$1 to \$8 (check website for current prices).

For complete details about this recycling effort for your program, contact Michael Glover at 210-287-1727 or at mikeg@gotempties.com, or visit the website at www.gotempties.com.

RECYCLING FACTS

Did you know that...

- more than 300 million used ink & laser cartridges are thrown away every year in the U.S.? In terms of weight, that is equivalent to 30,500 African elephants!
- only 10% of cartridges are recycled in the U.S.?
- laid end to end, empty cartridges thrown away in 1 year would cover a distance of more than 24,000 miles—long enough to circle the earth?
- If the thrown-out toner cartridges from last year were stacked together, they would form a pile LARGER than the Sears Tower, one of the world's tallest buildings?
- reducing the amount of newly manufactured ink jets can help reduce landfill waste up to 50%?
- a half-gallon of oil is conserved for every inkjet cartridge and 3 1/2 quarts of oil are used for every laser cartridge produced?
- 2 1/2 ounces of oil are used for every inkjet cartridge and 3 1/2 quarts of oil are used for every laser cartridge produced?
- With the U.S. consuming approximately 700 million gallons of oil a day, we are helping to conserve a valuable natural resource. Remember: oil is a nonrenewable fossil fuel, and it cannot be remade.

LOYALTY

Author unknown

God summoned a beast from the fields and He said, "Behold people created in my image. Therefore, adore them. You shall protect them in the wilderness, shepherd their flocks, watch over their children, and accompany them wherever they may go—even into civilization. You shall be a companion, an ally, a slave."

To do these things," God said, "I endow you with instincts uncommon to other beasts: faithfulness, devotion, and understanding surpassing that of people. Lest it impair your courage, you shall never foresee your death. Lest it impair your loyalty, you shall be blind to the faults of people. Lest it impair your understanding, you are denied the power of words. Let no fault of language cleave an accord beyond that of people with any other beast—or even with other people. Speak to your people only with your mind and through your honest eyes."

"Walk by their sides; sleep in their doorways; forage for them; ward off their enemies; carry their burdens; share their afflictions; love them and comfort them. And in return for this, people will fulfill your needs and wants—which shall be only food, shelter, and affection."

"So be silent, and be a friend to the people. Guide them along the way to this land that I have promised them. This shall be your destiny and your immortality." So spoke the Lord. **And the dog heard and was content.**

TAILS FROM THE PUPPY SIDE

By Michelle Pelletier

A lot has happened in the land of puppies since the last time we chatted. We have had many puppies graduate into advanced training and a whole new score of furry faced recruits.

Yukon and Autumn came to us from Guiding Eyes for the Blind in New York. Autumn is a spunky little yellow lab female and Yukon, who is four days older, is an eager beaver black lab. Yukon and Autumn are both being raised in prison as part of the expanding Pawsitive Approach Program.

Stella is a smart little black lab girl from right here in New Braunfels, Texas. She comes from a breeder who has supplied puppies to us in the past. Stella is being raised in Austin by Tracy Schagen. Tracy runs the Greenwood School for pre-schoolers where Stella spends her days doing her homework along side the other children.

Willow and Tucker are two more wonderful black labs that have come to us from Guiding Eyes for the Blind in New York. Willow, the little girl, is also being raised in Austin. Phil and Sharon Schermerhorn share puppy walking duties. Sometimes Willow is at a veterinarian's office with Sharon, and sometimes she is at the HP office building with Phil.

We are excited to announce our first set of triplets in the puppy program! **Huey, Dewey and Louie** joined the ranks in March. These three brothers are adorable black labs who came to us from Guiding Eyes for the Blind in New York. Huey is being raised in Fredericksburg, with the Huethers. Dewey is with first-time puppy walker, Kathy Zaborowski, in Pflugerville and Louie is with Patsy Moore, another first-time puppy walker in Atascosa. I am very excited to watch the growth of our first set of "ducklings"!

Our newest puppies come to us from British Columbia Guide Dog Services in Canada. These two new baby boys are too cute to be true. **Elmo and Elliot** are yellow lab/golden retriever crosses. These two yellow fluffy boys look like yellow labs with slightly fluffier fur. Elmo is a part of the Pawsitive Approach program and is being

raised in jail, and Elliot is with long time puppy walker, Teresa Beck. Teresa is raising her fourth puppy for us!

Tail wags...and congratulations to our graduating puppy teams!

Bob Laurence who graduated Milo
Teresa Beck who graduated Larry
Carol Deil who graduated Bonney
Ron and Sue Huether who graduated Vicki
Robert Sierra who graduated Chip
Sam Grandy who graduated Delta

Special thanks....

My heartfelt thanks to Carol Deil and Michelle Dolan for going above and beyond the call of duty. Carol's pup Bonney and Michelle's pup Cooper both tore ligaments in their knees. Carol's hard work paid off and Bonney has just graduated into advanced training, and Michelle's pup Cooper is still in the early stages of physical therapy and rehabilitation. Thanks to the great results Carol achieved, we know Michelle and Cooper can have the same success. Thanks guys!

More Special thanks.....

Without the extreme dedication to the Pawsitive approach program by Officer Steve Clayton and "Super Volunteer" puppy walker, Larry Gelvin, we would never have been able to achieve the volume of puppies at the Dominguez State Jail. Having four dogs at a time in the Pawsitive Approach Program is such a great community service program, and I am very grateful to them for helping make it such an awesome program! Thanks guys!

Welcome Aboard!

Thank you and congratulations to our newest puppy walkers who are waiting for their first assignment: Karey Packard and Tami Schmitz are waiting patiently for me to find puppies for their families!

And to David Peters, who has joined the Pawsitive Approach team as a volunteer walker, who will be working with Larry, Steve and myself to get the pups at the prison walked as many times as possible.

A big thank you to all the guys in the Pawsitive Approach Program who are working so hard to train fantastic puppies—Tommie Villareal, Michael Lares, Gino Rodriguez,

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8) *Tails From the Puppy Side*

Robert Rodriguez, Charles Ketner, Randell Hansen, Cortney Brown, Kenneth Olivarez, Rene Canales, Guy McKinzey and Abel Chavera.

Congrats to our released teams of handlers:

- Robert Sierra
- Randy Levine
- Jose Martinez
- Kenneth Adler

You have all done a fantastic job and I hope we get to work together in the free world!



Autumn and Cortney Brown working

Reader Survey

Guide Dogs of Texas would like to know what you think about our newsletter and what would interest you in future editions of **“Best Dogs in Sight.”**

Please let us know what you like most about our current edition of **“Best Dogs in Sight.”**

- General articles of interest—OWL radio, TDCJ presentation article
- Guide Dog Training articles—Tails From the Puppy Side, The Preacher, Martinez (Dominguez State Jail)
- Articles about the organization—From the Desk of the ED, Annual Giving Levels, Short Takes

What would you like to see more of in future editions of our newsletter?

- Puppy and Dog Training programs?
- Pawsitive Approach articles (Dominguez State Jail program)?
- Volunteer related articles?
- Articles about the organization—future plans, the new “home,” what’s happening in the organization, Short Takes?
- I want to continue receiving **“Best Dogs in Sight.”**

-Would you like us to change the way we address your newsletter? If so, please indicate in the space below, how you want your name styled (Mr. & Mrs., Ms., First and Last Name, etc.).

Coments: _____

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire!

Please return to: Guide Dogs of Texas, 11825 West Ave, Ste 104, San Antonio, TX 78216

ANNUAL GIVING LEVELS

by Michael Mason

After much thought and staff input, the giving levels are being revised. Club 300 will no longer exist, based primarily on the fact that one level of giving is not necessarily more important than levels higher than \$300. Plus we want to offer benefits for our supporters that do not “cost” the organization additional dollars for pins, buttons, or other small gifts. We prefer to spend all the gifts sent to Guide Dogs of Texas for support of the mission of Guide Dogs of Texas.

Effective January 1, 2005 the annual giving levels for Guide Dogs of Texas will be:

\$1 —\$99 —	“Puppy Pals”
\$100-\$499 —	“Puppy Patron”
\$500-\$999 —	“Pick of The Litter”
\$1000-\$2499 -	“Top Dog”
\$2500 and above -	“Perfect Partnership”

As a supporting partner of any of these levels you will receive the quarterly newsletter, “*Best Dogs in Sight*,” and additional mail-outs during the year, including Christmas Cards. Supporters at \$500 and above will be invited to our annual Supporter’s Day party. Supporters that give \$2,500 or more will be invited to participate in a “blind-fold” walk or tag along to watch the process.



2005 PUPPY CALENDARS are available for \$10.00 plus shipping from the office of Guide Dogs of Texas. Please call us at 210/366-4081 to place your order. See our website for a picture of the calendar.

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