

GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA

Partners

Following in Decker's Pawprints



VOLUME 18
NUMBER 3
WINTER 2003



See inside
for special
Holiday
gifts.



Mary Yoshisato with
guide dog Decker.

When Mary Yoshisato received a *Community Animal Protection Award* from the Nevada Humane Society on October 3, 2003, she was just following in the pawprints of her beloved guide dog Decker. In 1998, Decker was inducted in the Nevada Animal Hall of Fame. He was also named Dog of the Year in three categories, *Hero*, *Companion*, and *Professional*.

No doubt about it, Mary and Decker were an award-winning team.

Mary began to lose her sight in her adult years, as the complications of her premature birth caught up with her. She learned to use a white cane, but never felt comfortable with it. "I learned daily living and computer skills, but my mobility was still very limited. All I could do was walk back and forth across my backyard and around my house. I felt like a prisoner and the boundary of my cell was the perimeter of my property."

All that changed when Decker came into her life. "The most difficult part for me was to trust that my new friend was not going to get me hurt. Once I gained that trust it is a feeling that I cannot easily put into words. One trainer told me, 'If you think this is good, you just wait ... it gets better and better.' I now know what he meant."

As Mary and Decker became a team, Mary's life changed dramatically. She went back to work. She began to visit friends again. She felt she could go anywhere. And rather than get her hurt, as she first feared, Decker made her feel safe and sheltered.

Decker even saved her life, when he pulled her into a ditch to avoid a jackknifing tractor trailer. It was that heroic and intelligent action that won Decker the *Hero* award from the Nevada Animal Hall of Fame.

Over the years, as the bond deepened between Mary and Decker, she came to appreciate him even more.

"Without Decker, I would have been the typical couch potato. We were out and about every day and both of us loved a challenge. If he will not do what I ask, then I know it's not safe and we take another route.

"We would go to the grocery store or to the post office and he finds the line and keeps me in it. I can go to a busy doctor's office and say, 'Decker, find me a seat,' and he does. He can also find the stairs or the elevator in any building."

It was because Decker came to be such an important part of her life that Mary became interested in changing laws affecting guide dogs. She helped write a law that made it a crime to deny access to a disabled person and his or her dog in a public place in Nevada. After a woman harassed her and Decker one day, Mary helped create and get passed a law that made it illegal to harass a guide dog while it is working.

When Mary and Decker were attacked three times by dogs in her neighborhood in Carson City, Nevada, she helped create and get passed a law that makes it a felony to allow a dog you

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continued from page 1

own, harbor, or control to attack a service animal. And it requires the owner of the dog to pay restitution for any damage done to the dog's ability to serve as a guide dog.

Now, Mary is working with Guide Dog Users, Inc., a group of service animal handlers, to get relieving areas for service animals in all U.S. airports.

It was because of all her service on behalf of service dogs and service dog users, that Mary received the prestigious award from the Nevada Humane Society. None of us who know her and know of her dedication and passion were the least bit surprised to see her follow in Decker's pawprints.

Both Mary and Decker are now retired; Decker after 10 years of extraordinary service. As a twelve year old yellow lab, Decker is pretty well up there. His sight has now faded, and he is losing his hearing. But though he can no longer guide her, Decker is still Mary's best friend. "He's a sweetheart" she says.

Mary recently returned to GDA to be trained with Flora, a two-year-old black lab. "Flora is an airhead around the house, but she is all business when she's working. She's great. She truly impresses all the legislators and public officials I meet.

"It's also touching to see the way she honors Decker. She keeps an eye on him and is always respectful. Though he is a bit frail these days, she still lets him be top dog."

Flora is now trying hard to follow in Decker's big pawprints, as well. It's a tough act to follow, but Mary thinks Flora is up to the role. She wouldn't be surprised if someday Flora is an award winner, too. It seems to run in the family. 🐾



Mary with guide dog, Flora.



PARTNERS NEWSLETTER

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A Message of GOOD WILL AND GRATEFULNESS

from GDA President Jay Bormann

It is not uncommon for us to reflect about the year that is coming to a close while wondering about what the New Year will bring us.

Thanks to the thousands and thousands of people who care deeply about our mission GDA had a very good year. No doubt about it, the miracles of the puppy births, the training of our intelligent dogs, and the pairing of these guides with blind men and women who want to live more independently would come to a halt without each and every one of you.

I am very grateful and take great comfort in knowing that GDA can rely on your support and generosity in 2004. Thank you and best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year.

WISH LIST

We're wishing and hoping that some of our friends will be able to donate:

Always in Need

- Sterilized bones in all sizes
- Twin/full size 50% polyester/50% nylon blankets
- Dog & puppy toys – all shapes and sizes

For the Training Department

- Heavy duty canvas folding chairs for students in class when working at a site that does not offer seating (We need 10.)

GDA Employee Updates

GDA depends on the hard work and commitment of its staff (along with all our wonderful volunteers!) to manage the planning, paperwork, and preparations required for the breeding, raising and training of our dogs for the blind men and women who come to GDA for their canine partners.

- **Andrea Alfaro** was promoted from Kennel Lead to Apprentice Trainer. Congratulations Andrea!
- **Lindsey Gleason** recently joined the GDA staff as our friendly receptionist/volunteer coordinator. Welcome Lindsey!
- **Angela Rice** was promoted from Kennel Tech to Kennel Lead. Good work Angela!
- **Wendy Roof** came to GDA as an experienced apprentice trainer and we're happy to welcome her. 🐾

Partners in Trust Forever

The following **Partners in Trust Society** members recently informed us that they have named GDA as a beneficiary in their will or trust. We are very grateful to them for their thoughtful generosity.:

- Kathy Faries & James Braun
- Lola Hagstrom
- Mrs. Abe Lander
- Gene & Lucille Peters
- Laura & Steve Shambeck
- Alik Stilianos

If you have named GDA in your will or trust, or you plan to do so, please call Rhonda Bissell at (818) 362-5834, ext. 229 to make certain that you are thanked and recognized for your support. 🐾



Great Holiday Gift for your Favorite Dog (or Cat?) Lover!

These cozy pillows with clever sayings about a canine or feline are certain to bring smiles to all who see them. Only \$10 each plus shipping. Durable polyester cover with polyester fiberfill.

100% of the proceeds from this all-volunteer effort go to GDA!

Orders must be received at the address on the order form below (do not mail to GDA!) by December 5 to ensure delivery by Christmas.



A. My goal in life... is to be the kind of person my dog thinks I am.

MADE in the U.S.A.



E. No outfit is complete without DOG HAIR!



F. Life without dogs... I don't think so!



I. No outfit is complete without CAT HAIR.

Orders must be received by December 5 to ensure delivery by Christmas!

ORDER FORM—DO NOT MAIL YOUR ORDER TO GDA.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Phone (____) _____

Pillow	Quantity	Price	Subtotal
A. My goal in life...		\$10.00	
E. No outfit is complete... dog hair		\$10.00	
F. Life without dogs...		\$10.00	
I. No outfit is complete... cat hair		\$10.00	

*SHIPPING & HANDLING	
QUANTITY	COST
1-2 pillows	Add \$5

Call 818-362-5834, ext. 309 to inquire about shipping rates for three or more pillows

Complete this form and mail it with your check made payable to Teri Chang to:

Teri Chang
 19360 Rinaldi St., #229
 Northridge, CA 91326

Pick up at GDA? Yes No

*Shipping & Handling:

TOTAL ENCLOSED:

Your purchases help support the work of Guide Dogs of America. Please allow 2 weeks for processing and delivery. Complete and mail this entire form with your payment in the enclosed envelope. THANK YOU!



Introducing "Ozzie" The Kennel Cat

One of the key traits of a good guide dog is the ability to ignore distractions. And one of the most difficult distraction for any dog is a cat. That's why we always keep a "kennel cat" at GDA to help us train our guide-dogs-to-be. Recently, we had to sadly say our good-byes to **Ben**, our kennel cat for 16 years.

Now, we have a new kennel cat, **Ozzie**. Ozzie's mother was found on the campus with kittens last year. After rescuing mother and babies and sending them to a shelter for adoption, we kept little Ozzie to be our pampered assistant guide dog trainer. No one will ever take the place of Ben, but Ozzie has already become a favorite of all. 🐾



Guiding To Victory!

Congratulations to **Yvonne Martin**, who recently completed the long road to becoming a Licensed Instructor. Yvonne first completed three years of apprenticeship here at GDA, and then had to pass three different examinations by the California State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind.



Tested on the streets of San Leandro, California, a blind-folded Yvonne and one of our best guide dogs, **Nacho**, guided to victory with flying colors. We welcome Yvonne to the ranks of the licensed guide dog instructors, and thank Nacho for his partnership in success! 🐾

Dobie: Teacher's Pet

Being a GDA Puppy Raiser can change your life, but not usually as dramatically as it changed Andrea Dicterow's life. Andrea was finishing up a degree in Psychology when she became the puppy raiser of Dobie, a yellow Labrador guide-dog in training.



Andrea became so interested in Dobie and in GDA's work and our mission, that she decided to change careers and become a veterinarian who cares for service dogs.

This meant going right back to school, however, to fill in some biology courses before applying to veterinary schools.

She had some concern about what to do with Dobie during her classes. Luckily, Dr. Fred Schreiber, Chair of the Biology Department at Fresno State, offered to share his office with Dobie while Andrea is in class. The arrangement has worked perfectly, except that when students come to his office, Dr. Schreiber is no longer sure if they are there to see him or the extremely popular Dobie.

Good luck to Andrea and Dobie! 🐾

IN MEMORY

We note with sadness the passing of the following members of the GDA family:

- Guide Dog "Yoli"
- GDA kennel cat "Ben"

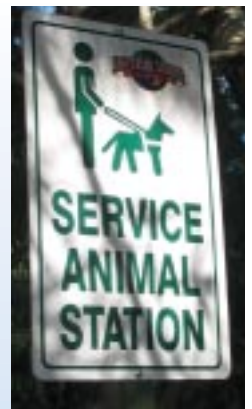


What A Relief!

It started out as an innocent question. David Danon, a vice-president at the Universal Studios Hollywood theme park, asked his neighbor, Nancy Robb, who raises puppies for GDA, how she handles relieving her puppy at the park.

When Nancy responded that it was a real challenge, David decided to make it easier. The result is three newly designated relieving areas for service dogs at Universal Studios. The doggie rest rooms are small fenced in areas with a mulch-type surface, "busy bags," and a trash disposal. The signage includes Braille to help the visually impaired use the special areas with their dogs.

We applaud Universal Studios Hollywood for being the first theme park of its kind to have service dog relieving areas. What a relief! 🐾



TAKING A PAWS FOR THANKS

In addition to the many friends who make regular contributions by mail or payroll deduction, GDA is grateful to those who conduct special events or donate goods or services to help us carry out our work.

Lap Tops for Lab Dogs

Our thanks to Amy Thaler and her employers, Joe Dugan, CEO, and Michael Christensen, CFO, of Vizional Technologies, Inc. The company has supported Amy's commitment to being a puppy raiser by letting her bring her dogs to work, and donating meeting space for the Westide Puppy Raiser Group. And when Amy heard that GDA needed laptop computers, she asked Vizional to donate three laptops the company wasn't using. She received an immediate and enthusiastic approval. Our thanks to Amy and Vizional.

What's a Dorm Room Without a Mini-Fridge?

We needed just six more mini-fridges to complete our goal to put one in each dorm room for the convenience of our students. Donna Stroud, a member of the National Charity League, came through by providing all six. Our thanks to Donna for a very cool gift!

Playground Dogs

Thanks to excellent bidding for "A Day With the Trainers" at our Open House last summer, we were able to purchase playground equipment for our dogs. While undergoing training, our dogs will now be able to let loose on three tunnels, three stairways, and three ramps. The dogs love them!

Thanks for Vital Volunteers

Kathie Stegemann has served GDA as our weekly volunteer in charge of scheduling tours, our tour guides and speakers for the

past several years is about to "retire." We thank Kathie for her dedication and welcome new volunteer Judy Reilly for taking charge of these essential responsibilities. We're grateful that Kathie and her husband Bob, will continue to puppy raise and volunteer for GDA.

A Bus-full of Puppies

We encourage our Puppy Raisers to expose their puppies to as many types of public transportation as possible. So we're especially grateful to the Orange County Transit District for offering several buses for puppies-in-training from GDA and other service dogs. The Orange County Puppy Raiser Group took advantage of the opportunity, and enjoyed themselves immensely when the buses dropped them off at Knotts Berry Farm and the Buena Park Mall. These attractions provided further training for the puppies in avoiding distractions. Thanks to the Orange County Transit District for this helpful program!

The Coolest Beds in California

Kirk Stanley recently made a wonderful donation of two "Canine Coolers" to GDA. These special 3 foot by 4 foot beds become a cooling system when filled with water and are enjoyed by any hot dog looking to cool his buns. They are also great for dogs recovering from surgery or from orthopedic problems. Thank you Kirk!

Thanks to all who donate, volunteer or raise money for GDA. We are so grateful for your dedication and hard work!! 🐾

Oops! A Doodle Gone Wrong

The last issue of Partners (Fall, 2003) contained an article about GDA's trial of Labradoodles, Goldendoodles, and Standard Poodles as guide dogs. The new breeds are being tested because they are less allergenic to people with an allergy to dogs. In the article, it mentioned that if these new breeds work out well, GDA may begin a breeding program. The article should have made it clearer that GDA has no plans to breed the two mixes, Labradoodles and Goldendoodles, but may breed purebred Standard Poodles. 🐾

Gently Training Puppies

If you've been around the GDA campus lately, you've probably noticed that we're sometimes using a new kind of collar, the *Gentle Leader*. Because it has a strap that goes over the dog's nose, at first glance, many people mistake the Gentle Leader for a muzzle. But unlike a muzzle, the "head collar" does not restrict a dog's ability to open its mouth, bark, or eat.

The Gentle Leader uses a dog's natural instincts to give a handler greater control than with a standard collar, and often better control than with a training collar. This is especially useful to our Puppy Raisers in their training of our youngest dogs. Because the new head collars work so well, and so gently, many of our trainers and kennel techs now use the Gentle Leader with their own family pets. 🐾





GRADUATE GUIDE LINES

The Unseen Bean

Gerry Leary isn't one to back down from a challenge easily, whether it's learning how to get around with his canine partner

Midnight, or learning to roast coffee beans perfectly without sight.

A master coffee roaster often judges when coffee beans are done by the color. That's why when Gerry, blind from birth, decided he wanted to be a coffee roaster, he met stiff resistance. Still, he persisted, and eventually enrolled at the San Francisco Coffee Training Institute. There, he learned to use the sounds and smells of roasting coffee beans to compensate for his lack of sight.

When he finished his training, he bought himself a coffee roaster and a couple of hundred pounds of coffee beans, and opened his new business: **The Unseen Bean ... Blind Roasted Coffee.** As always, it takes a while for a new business to get perking, but Gerry now has 25 fiercely loyal clients who love the way he custom roasts their favorite beans.

As Gerry was following his dream, Midnight was always by his side, helping him get back and forth to classes and do the traveling and shopping needed to start his new business. Gerry recognized his debt to Midnight by creating a logo for The Unseen Bean that features Midnight smelling a steaming cup of roasted coffee.

We wish Gerry and Midnight the best of luck and success! 🐾



Gerry Leary with his guide dog, Midnight.

The LUCKY 13th— Our Annual Golf Classic

Superstition suggests that our 13th Annual Guide Dogs of America Foundation Golf Classic would have been jinxed. But superstition could hardly have been more wrong.

On September 29th, over 100 golfers enjoyed a perfect Southern California day on the links. The Oaks and Lakes course at the North Ranch Country Club in Westlake Village, CA was gorgeous, and the golf was fabulous. Everyone started the day with a great breakfast provided by puppy raisers Mary Ball and Cherry Teter. Players later paused from the competition for a delicious box lunch provided by puppy raiser Melissa Hyams.

In the evening, golfers enjoyed a silent auction and dinner with a live auction. They were inspired by passionate speeches by GDA graduates Don Kanallakan with his guide Kojack, and Lorri Bernson and her guide Nigel.

Thanks to the Golf Committee for all their hard work, and for the money raised for GDA. And a special thank you to Sophia and Boris Brodetsky of the Valley Inn, Sherman Oaks, California for their generosity and ongoing support of this event.

Now that the 13th year jinx has been conquered, we're looking forward to the 14th. See you next year! 🐾

Dalmatian For A Day

The human friends who took guide-dog-to-be Cordell to Pacific Palisades Fire Station #69 all had a great time imagining themselves as fire fighters for a day, but Cordell had an even better time being a Dalmatian for a Day.

When Antoinette Johnson made the highest bid for a gourmet dinner from Fire Department foreman Dennis Hain at our Open House in June, she won the chance to bring a group of friends to the special fire station event. She invited Nancy Hayes, Cordell's Puppy Raiser, as well as GDA kennel technicians Louise Grimm and Jamie Waters, and apprentice trainer Kris Schmidt.

The dinner was wonderful and the tour of the fire station was fascinating, but the highlight of the evening was a ride in a fire truck down Pacific Coast Highway. Cordell got to sit up front, just like a Dalmatian, and even beeped the horn once by mistake.

Our thanks to Dennis Hain, and all the members of Station #69 Platoon C for their hospitality. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the humans, and an even more thrilling evening for Cordell: Dalmatian for a Day. 🐾



HOLIDAY SHOPPING AT GDA

Orders must be received at GDA by December 10 to ensure Christmas delivery!



GDA Holiday Cards are a great way to share your holiday wishes with family and friends while helping GDA. Our cards come in packages of 20 cards with envelopes. Each package is \$15 plus \$3 for shipping & handling.



A Puppy on a Sled

Inside message: 'Tis The Season



B Boy by Window

Inside message: blank



Start Collecting this Series of Breed Pins.

GDA 2003 Lapel Pin

This 1" x 1" lapel pin of a handsome black Labrador is fun to collect and wear and costs only \$8. What Lab-lover wouldn't enjoy receiving one this holiday season! (#1 in a series of five.)



GDA 2004 Calendar

Order this stocking stuffer for your dog-loving friends today. Our full-color 9.5" x 11.5" calendar features photographs of GDA puppies and dogs and is only \$15 plus \$2 for shipping and handling.



GDA 2004 Lapel Pin

Reserve your 2004 Golden Retriever pin today for delivery after 1/1/04. \$8 each. (#2 in series of five)



GDA MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Telephone Number (____) _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION: Visa MasterCard Discover Signature _____
 Card Number _____ Exp. date ____/____/____

Check: Please make payable to Guide Dogs of America and mail it to GDA in the enclosed envelope.

Mail this entire form with your payment in the enclosed envelope.

Holiday Cards	Quantity	Price	Subtotal
A. Puppy on a Sled		\$15.00	
B. Boy by Window		\$15.00	
2004 Calendar	Quantity	Price	Subtotal
GDA's 2004 Calendar		\$15.00	
Lapel Pins	Quantity	Price	Subtotal
2003 GDA Black Lab Lapel Pin		\$8.00	
2004 GDA Golden Retriever Lapel Pin		\$8.00	

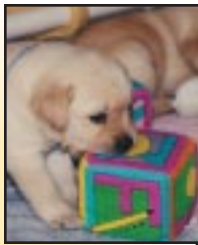
Your purchases help support the work of Guide Dogs of America. Please allow 2 weeks for processing and delivery. Complete and mail this entire form with your payment in the enclosed envelope. THANK YOU!

*Shipping & Handling: _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

*SHIPPING & HANDLING	
FOR CARDS	
QUANTITY	COST
1 package	Add \$3
2-4 packages	Add \$6
5-10 packages	Add \$8
10 or more packages— Call GDA at 818-362-5834, ext. 0	
FOR CALENDAR	
QUANTITY	COST
Any qty of calendars	Add \$2
FOR PINS	
QUANTITY	COST
Any qty of pins	FREE

The Puppy Corner

We've welcomed three new litters of pups to the GDA family this fall. Congratulations to their parents, the puppy breeding staff, and to the puppy raisers who will raise these little treasures as though they were their own.



Breed	# of Puppies	Date of Birth
Black Labradors	11	9/2/03
Black Labradors	7	9/11/03
Black Labradors	8	9/12/03

If you'd like to be a puppy raiser to one of these future guide dogs and live on the west coast, please call Louise Henderson at (818)362-5834, ext. 234. 🐾



GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA

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The Blessing of the Guides

Many of us think GDA's guide dogs and puppies in training already have heavenly inspiration. But just to make sure, Father Doug Glassman recently blessed guide dogs and future guide dogs at GDA.

Father Doug reminded us that we are blessed to have these wonderful dogs in our lives. "Who are we to bless them?" he asked. "They are the ones who bless us." All the friends of GDA, GDA staff, and puppy raisers who gathered for their dogs to be blessed agreed completely. 🐾

Graduation Day

Class #339.5

Front Row - Graduates, left to right —Bob Sheff and "Penelope", Nikki Jeffords and "Noel", Richard Orozco and "Kansas", Mel Dalton and "Marion"



Back Row - Instructors, left to right—Steve Burkman, Trina Began, Bob Wendler

Puppy Raisers:

Penelope, The Riggall Family, Noel, The Arriola Family, Kansas, Linda Jo Wirtzer, Marion, The English Family.

Flying High On Generosity



Thanks to so many friends of GDA who donated their airline frequent flyer miles, GDA has been able to save over \$11,000 in airline travel over the past year. We use the free flights to bring students to our campus, send our trainers to follow-up with students, and for other necessary travel.

If you have frequent flyer miles with United Airlines Plus, Northwest AirCare Miles, Alaska Airlines, American Airlines or Southwest Airlines, you can donate them to help GDA provide guide dogs to people who are blind.

For help to donate your **Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, or Southwest Airlines miles**, please call Rhonda at (818) 362-5834, ext. 229. With your account number and pin, you can directly contact:

Northwest WorkPerks (800) 327-2881 (code 13)

United Airline Plus (800) 421-4655 (customer service)

Northwest WorldPerks members can also receive 500 bonus miles by donating \$50 or more to Guide dogs of America. Call (818) 362-5834, ext. 229 for more information.