ALUMNI NEWS

Volume 31 – Number 1

Pete Berg, Kelly Egan, Cheri Owen, and Theresa Stern, Editors

Audio version voiced by Cliff Hahn, Cliff Hahn Sound

We love your participation in this newsletter. Send submissions to the editor via phone, mail, or e-mail tstern@guidedogs.com or alumninews@guidedogs.com

Alumni Association Mission Statement

The Alumni Association will support the vision of GDB, “using our power of partnering to improve quality of life”, by building a strong sustainable community of support among our Alumni. We will work to support Alumni success with their guide, in building relationships with others, and actively participating in the greater GDB community.

Alumni Association Board of Directors Mission Statement

Connecting our community through leadership, advocacy, communication, and outreach

Alumni News is available electronically, in Braille (upon request), and on audio CD (upon request). The audio version of this newsletter and Guide Dog News can be found on our website, guidedogs.com. If you are able to access email and would like future issues sent to you electronically, please let Theresa Stern know at tstern@guidedogs.com Email allows us to get the news to you in a timely manner and is easy on the environment!

NEW! Alumni News is now available as a podcast, you can find it at Apple Podcasts, search for Alumni Updates. Please note that the recording of the newsletter takes some time so issues will post at a later date than the email version.

We'd like to send our very special thanks to all of our Alumni who, by their efforts and their examples, refer others to our program.

Interested in a career with GDB? Check out our opportunities at: <http://guidedogs.com/careers>

Browse all GDB’s newsletters, including back issues of Alumni News at [www.guidedogs.com/news](http://www.guidedogs.com/news)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. FROM YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
	1. [Spring Means Green and Green Means Go!](#a)
	2. [Resources for Handling Rideshare Denials, by Pete Berg and Team](#b)
2. SPRING INTO NEW BEGINNINGS
	1. [K9 Buddies, Myra and Abery, by Maile George](#c)
	2. [Putting Pep Back in My Step, by Pete Berg](#d)
3. SPRING FORWARD WITH FOOD AND FUN
	1. [Martinez’ Lemon Drop Cookies for Humans, by Cheri Owen](#e)
	2. [Martinez’ Baseball Dog Treats, by Cheri Owen](#f)
	3. [Martinez’ and Friends at the Ballpark, by Cheri Owen](#g)
	4. [Pete’s Playlist – Spring Renewal Songs, by Pete Berg](#h)
4. IN GRATITUDE
	1. [In Gratitude, A New Column in Alumni News , by Maia Scott, with a Submission from Barbara Mills](#i)
5. AS WE SEE IT
	1. [Making the Reconnection, by Calynn Hendrickson](#j)
6. [IN MEMORIAM, IN MEMORY, IN TRIBUTE](#k)
7. [ALUMNI BULLETIN BOARD](#l)
8. [GIFT SHOP NEWS](#gift)
9. [ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS](#board)
10. [ROSTER OF ALUMNI CHAPTERS](#Chapters)

# FROM YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## Spring Means Green and Green Means GO!

As we all emerge from our winter cacoons and pandemic restrictions your GDB Alumni Association Board of Directors thought we could all use some tips on renewing our partnerships with our guides by getting out and about!

Here are a few words of wisdom from a Q and A with three of our amazing Field Service Managers, Will Henry, Melanie Bell, and Michelle Cliborn:

Q: What are the most common challenges and pitfalls you encounter among grads when you’re out in the field?

A 1: Not carrying your dog’s Gentle-Leader with a young, new dog. You never know when you might need it., and not bringing along your white cane with you when working a new dog, you never know when you might need it to complete a route, pattern your new guide to find something in the environment, or explore a new area safely.

A 2: The use of variable food reward to maximize a dog's performance. It is quite common to reward too much, creating a dog that expects to get a reward every time they stop and then they become reluctant to keep going. Reduce the food rewards, but don't completely eliminate them! It should be a surprise when they get it and only given when the grad is 100% sure that they are at a spot where they want to stop again in the future. The surprise part adds to motivation because the dog will keep going and keep trying until they get the reward.

A 3: Managing a guide’s weight is a struggle for many clients, and lifestyle changes since COVID has exaggerated this challenge.  Spring provides an excellent opportunity to add exercise; look for organic ways throughout the day to increase walking, or perhaps find an enjoyable new destination where you can treat yourself for the walk.

Q: If you could give Grads three reminders about the care and nurturing of a solid partnership, what would they be?

A 1: Make sure your dog is at a healthy weight, make sure your dog is at a healthy weight, and make sure your dog is at a healthy weight!. Keeping them at a healthy weight is one of the best things you can do for the health of your guide and the longevity of your partnership. Remember that your vet is used to seeing very overweight and obese dogs and will most likely not make a big deal about your dog’s weight gain.

A 2: Pet your dog sometimes when they stop at curbs. They love physical praise. Practice the basics. Take yourself back to class training and remember the formal mechanics of how you moved and directed your dog. This is familiar to them and they like the structure of that formality. You may notice improved responsiveness. Set aside time to do your dog’s favorite thing. Do they like tug or chewing a bone? Hold it for them. Enjoy petting the most? Give them a massage. Running around in the yard. Is food their favorite? Train a new trick or put part of their meal in a food dispensing toy and cheer them along as they figure it out.

A 3: Be the handler you would want if you were a guide dog. If your guide is struggling with a task or behavior, break it down into smaller steps which can provide opportunities for success.  Remember, progress isn’t linear so don’t worry about speedbumps, just keep looking for ways to progress forward. progress is rarely made during moments of frustration. If you’re feeling frustrated with your dog, stop, breathe, give both you and your dog a break.  Switch to a positive activity or just love on your dog for a minute.   Sometimes they just need to know you’re on their side.

Q: Do you have any suggestions, tools, ideas, tricks, or techniques for handling and caring for a guy dog in our pandemic affected society?

A 1: Make sure they are at a healthy weight. If your routes have been shortened, then you may need to change your dog’s daily ration of food.

A 2: Thankfully, we are slowly inching back to the way things were. Social distancing, masking, occupancy limits, etc. are fading away. My main suggestion is to get back out there! If you’ve been reluctant to go out because of COVID, we now know risks are very low for transmission outdoors, so start with an outdoor exercise walk in the neighborhood. Getting outside and moving are great for the physical and mental health of humans and dogs alike.

Q: If you could write the ultimate motivational quote to empower the interdependence of guide dog teams at large, what would you say?

A: Working a guide dog is one of the most special bonds anyone can have with another species. Like any good relationship, make sure you are always doing more than your 50%, never keep score and always make time for a play session at the end of the day.

## Resources for Handling Rideshare Denials

By: Pete Berg with Lloyd and the GDB Alumni Board Rideshare Project Team

During our last Alumni Association Speakers Series, the members of the GDB Alumni Association Board gave useful information regarding dealing with rideshare denials due to traveling with a guide dog. They prepared this resource document that contains helpful contact information as well as scenarios that illustrate what you can do if you experience this type of discrimination. Please note that the recording of this Speakers Series webinar is currently being edited and transcribed and will be available in the Alumni section of guidedogs.com soon.

Notice:

This resource is intended to inform you on your rights and options when you face a trip denial from a Rideshare driver because of your guide dog. Knowing your rights and your options for filing complaints empowers you to make decisions best suited for your situation.

If you are ever in a situation where you are threatened or do not feel safe call 911. Remember that police do not enforce federal civil rights laws, (ADA), or local/state laws prohibiting discrimination based on disability. Federal/state laws are enforced by other agencies.

### Contacting the Rideshare Company

US

Lyft

844-554-1297

-Can also contact via the ap

Uber

(833) 715-8237

-Can also contact via the ap

Canada:

Uber Service Animal Policy and Complaint Filing

<https://www.uber.com/legal/ro/document/?country=canada&lang=en&name=service-animal-policy>

### Filing Complaints under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)

<https://www.ada.gov/file-a-complaint/>

State Human/Civil Rights Agencies

-Contact your regional ADA Center for information on your state’s human/civil rights agency

### Filing Complaints in Canada

Accessible Canada Act Complaints

<https://www.accessibilitychrc.ca/en/complaints>

Connect with your provincial Human Rights Commission offices.

### Advocacy Organizations and Resources for Information

US

-National Disability Rights Network

<https://www.ndrn.org/contact/>

-Find your states Protection and Advocacy agency providing legal/advocacy assistance

ADA National Network

(800) 949-4232

[www.adata.org](http://www.adata.org)

-Federally funded network providing information and resources on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Canada

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/>

### Emotional Support

Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB)

Jason Doorish, PhD

Psychosocial Support Specialist

(800) 295-4050

### Scenarios

Situation 1: You request a ride and receive notification a driver has been assigned

Actions/Response:

-Take screen shot of driver’s information

-Message driver

Driver states that they are not required to take pets

Actions/Response:

-Inform driver that your guide dog is not a pet

-Explain that ADA and state/local laws require that they transport you

Situation 2: Driver states that you must request a pet service

Actions/Response:

-Explain that you do not have to request pet service as your guide dog is not a pet

-Explain that ADA and state/local laws require that they transport you

Situation 3: Following your ride you are charged a cleaning fee

Actions/Response:

-Request verification of what done to the vehicle requiring cleaning

-Challenge the cleaning fee explaining that they may not simply charge you because you were accompanied by your guide dog

Situation 4: You request a shared ride and your driver says they can't take you in a shared ride because you have a dog and other passengers might be allergic.

Action/Response:  You inform the driver and passengers that, according to the ADA, you may utilize any service option the public is offered.

# SPRING INTO NEW BEGINNINGS

## K9 Buddies: Myra and Abery

By Maile George

If you’re anything like me, you’ve spent at least a bit of time wondering if your age or other disabilities could someday keep you from enjoying the companionship of a Guide Dog.

I was pleased to recently learn more about GDB’s K9 Buddy program and how it might offer hope to some of us with that concern.

Though the K9 Buddy program has been around since the 2000’s, it’s now growing and filling a void in the greater community. As of this writing, about 160 American applicants have graduated with a K9 Buddy, and the program will soon be available to those living in Canada.

I learned more from my longtime friend, Myra Carey,   and her new K9 Buddy when we recently met for coffee at Peets. Myra has lived most of her life partnered with a guide from Guide Dogs for the Blind. In 1967 when she was just 16, she graduated with Selma. She then married and had two children.  When her children grew to be young teenagers themselves, she was matched with Wendy. After her partnership with Wendy ended, she graduated in the first class from the Oregon campus with Dru. After Dru came the beautiful Veanne and then faithful Scotty. Each of Myra’s dogs have accompanied Myra through all the ups and downs of her life: through her teenage years, into her marriage, parenthood, and grandparenthood, and now into her senior years. It’s become clear to me that Myra conscientiously lives the guide dog lifestyle, but as we all know, it’s not just independence a guide dog offers, but also a unique and loving bond that only other guide dog handlers truly understand.

When Scotty retired, Myra wanted another guide, but due to increasing health challenges, she found herself often feeling disoriented. Fortunately, through a local O&M trainer and friends, she acquired confidence as she navigated around her immediate environment, but mostly used the human guide technique when she ventured beyond her neighborhood.

Still, she desperately desired the companionship her dogs had always offered.

When she learned about the K9 Buddy program at GDB, she was quick to apply.

Shortly after submitting her application, the K9 Buddy manager, Kelsey Gilbert called,   and Myra was excited to be considered to be a participant in the program. Kelsey conducted a home interview with Myra, and she introduced Myra to a K9 Buddy named Aberforth.   Myra learned that Aberforth was not eligible to become a Guide Dog because he is a genetic carrier for Stargardt disease.

Later, when Kelsey called Myra to inform her a match had been made, Myra couldn’t have been happier when she learned the match was to be Aberforth!

When D-day arrived, Kelsey spent the afternoon reviewing basic dog care tips and giving Myra additional information about the background of her new dog. For example, one of the Canine Welfare techs taught Aberforth to spin and take a bow!  After that, Aberforth was Myra’s K9 Buddy! Myra decided to nickname Aberforth, and now calls him. Abery, who she believes could have easily become a Guide Dog because he’s so incredibly smart, patient and affectionate.

Shortly after the match was made, and GDB graduations resumed post-pandemic, Myra and Abery took part in a graduation ceremony in December 2022.

Because I found Myra’s story so personally compelling, I contacted Kelsey directly and she readily answered my many questions. Read on to learn the things I learned.

* The dogs working as K9 Buddies do not possess all the qualities needed to be a GDB breeder dog or guide dog, but have the potential to be an amazing companion.
* A K9 Buddy is not a service dog and performs no specific tasks to mitigate a disability and is therefore not legally allowed to travel on public transportation or into places open to the public.
* Along with O&M Immersion and the Guide Dog training programs, the GDB K9 Buddy program meets the needs of many, wherever a person may be in their life journey.
* There’s no need to be legally blind to qualify for a K9 Buddy; however, applicants must have a significant visual impairment. (Many children and adults are diagnosed with conditions that could lead to eventual legal blindness.)
* Applicants need not be affiliated with GDB in any way.
* As with other GDB programs, the K9 Buddy program is tailored to the needs of the individual.
* The program is constantly evolving. Kelsey envisions future online learning for k9 Buddy clients who want to learn more about the guide dog lifestyle, obedience and the basics of caring for a dog.
* Except for the K9 Buddy’s food and grooming needs, there’s no cost associated with obtaining a K9 Buddy
* Those who are successfully matched with a K9 Buddy are eligible to participate in GDB’s VFA (Veterinary Financial Assistance) program.

To learn more or apply, visit [www.guidedogs.com](http://www.guidedogs.com)

Follow the links to apply and then find the K9 Buddy link, or call GDB at 800-295-4050.

## Putting Pep Back in My Step

By Pete Berg and the Labrador Named Lloyd

February/March to me means spring training and the return of baseball. It is a time of year I look forward to as it also means in the mid-west the return of warmer weather. I have always enjoyed baseball and going to games. Attending games became less frequent following my vision loss.

Since getting Lloyd the Labrador I am again going to baseball games. Last year we went to games in Oakland, Houston, Chicago (Wrigley), and Baltimore. I have visited six ballparks with Lloyd so far. This year there are plans to attend games in Tampa, Kansas City and again Chicago (Wrigley) with more baseball outings to come.

As with many, my confidence to travel and to get out into the community has increased dramatically since getting a guide dog. I appreciate the opportunities having a guide dog gives me to challenge and push myself to do things I may not have done in the past. Having a guide dog also allows one to renew activities one may not have done in a while.

Going to baseball games may not be for everyone. However, as we move into spring there are certainly activities that you enjoy and can reengage in as spring approaches. It can be a time of renewal so you can put pep back in your step!

# SPRING FORWARD WITH FUN AND FOOD

## Martinez “Spring Forward” Lemon Drop Cookies (For Humans)

BY: Cheri Owen with Martinez

**Ingredients**

2 tsp lemon juice (for cookies)

2 tbsp lemon juice (for glaze)

2 tsp lemon zest

1/3 cup whole milk

1/2 cup butter (softened)

1 egg

¾ cup sugar (for cookies)

¼ cup sugar (for glaze)

1 ¾ cup all purpose flour

1 tsp backing powder

¼ tsp baking soda

**Recipe** (Set your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit)

1. Dry ingredients: In a large bowl, mix the flour, baking powder and baking soda and set aside.
2. Wet ingredients: In a large bowl, cream together the butter and ¾ cup of white sugar until fluffy and light. Beat the egg and 2 tsp of lemon juice into the mixture.
3. Stir in the lemon zest and 1/3 cup of milk.
4. Combine the flour, baking powder and baking soda and blend into wet ingredients.
5. Once combined, put spoonfuls of cookie dough onto your baking sheets (I usually do 12 per sheet) lined with parchment paper or silicone baking sheets.
6. Bake the cookies at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes until the edges are lightly browned.
7. Allow the cookies to cool for 15 minutes and then transfer them onto a wire rack to cool completely.
8. To make the glaze, stir together remaining 2 tbsp of lemon juice and ¼ cup sugar then brush onto completely dried cookies.

## Martinez “Spring Forward” Baseball Dog Treats (For Dogs!)

By: Cheri Owen with Martinez

Hello everyone! Spring is here and this is a super simple recipe for our beloved canines.

**Ingredients**

½ cup plain yogurt

1 cup natural peanut butter

3 cups rolled oats

**Recipe**

1. Mix all the ingredients together.
2. Scoop out small balls with a spoon and separate.
3. Chill for at least an hour and then go treat!

You can freeze them in a freezer-safe Ziploc for up to a week but trust me, they won’t last that long!

## Martinez and Friends at the Ballpark

By: Cheri Owen and Martinez

Cheri, Jenni, and Martinez had just arrived in New York City the day prior. The next morning, Martinez ate his breakfast heartily, gave one last chomp, and finally looked up from his empty bowl to find Cheri, who was putting her shoes on, getting ready to go out into the big city. Ralph had been sleepy from the trip, and was hiding in the corner, waiting patiently for Cheri to open her backpack so he could jump in.

Within minutes, Cheri, a creature of habit, had unzipped the top compartment, felt around for her phone, and then got up to go find it in the other room. Martinez waved his paw a little and whispered to Ralph: “Go, go now.” Ralph scurried from behind the corner chair and leaped into the bag, hunkering down under a baseball cap and a bottle of sunscreen. Ralph sniffed. “That smells like coconut,” he said to himself, but he didn’t have time to deliberate if he should try it. He heard Cheri coming back and burrowed himself deeper in the bag, grabbing his tail and wrapping it around his little body, so he looked as cute and compact as a swirled cinnamon bun.

Cheri called for Martinez, and like the working dog he was, he came immediately. She put his leash and harness on, and the two of them—but really all three, unbeknownst to Cheri— left the hotel room. Martinez had no idea where they were going today, except he knew Cheri was excited and was about to meet someone named Lloyd.

Martinez didn’t know any friend named Lloyd. He knew Cheri had friends named “Unbelievable,” “You must be kidding me,” and “Seriously,” but he had never heard of a friend yet named Lloyd. They walked for a very long, long while, and Martinez remained extremely focused on Cheri’s commands. He had never heard so many car horns honking, people talking and yelling, and so many smells from street vendors.

He made a record of how many streets he crossed and finally they walked down some stairs that went underground. “This is interesting,” Martinez noted.

Ralph popped his head out and looked around. “Subway,” Ralph read out loud, adding

happily: “Subway! I love their meatball sandwich.”

“Shhhh, Martinez shushed him. Martinez came to bump dots which seemed to be on the edge of a train stop but a train was coming fast ahead. Cheri could hear and feel the noise and air currents change and stepped backward. Martinez followed suit. A train stopped right in front of them. Jenni said, “Let’s go! Doors open!”

Ralph looked around and gasped, putting his little paws over his mouth: “Oh my gosh, Martinez. Look, look over there.” Ralph, astonished, pointed ahead.

“They are the famous pizza rats! I’ve heard of them. They are rock stars.

Three New York subway rats were carrying a huge slice of NYC pizza down the subway staircase, chomping as they hurried down. “Holy pepperoni!” Ralph proclaimed.

Jenni, Cheri and Martinez started moving into the train car, so Ralph tucked himself back inside Cheri’s backpack. The subway went fast. Martinez braced himself against Cheri while Cheri held onto a pole beside her.

They swayed side to side and the last stop of the line, Cheri said, “Come, Martinez. Forward.”

Martinez walked forward off the subway, and onto the platform. They made a left and went up a single, narrow staircase, navigating a crush of people. “Oof, thank heavens,” Martinez thought, “So good to be back outside again!”

Cheri and Martinez followed the crowd. “Go Yankees!” People were chanting this puzzling phrase, over and over. Ralph popped his head out again, and looked down at Martinez: “What is a Yankees? I’m getting hungry, man. This is a long way from California. I miss my garden.” Martinez looked back and smiled. “You’re not going to starve, Ralph. I promise you.

There’s Jenni, he warned, “You better hide. Quick! Ralph snuggled back into his hiding spot.

Jenni got separated on the subway staircase and found Cheri and Martinez. Cheri asked: “Do you see Pete?” Jenni replied: “We still have a block to go until we get to the stadium. I’ll find him.” Martinez thought to himself, “Who’s Pete? I thought we were meeting Lloyd.”

After a brisk walk across a crowded street, Jenni spotted Pete and called out his name. They begin to walk over to him. Suddenly, Martinez spots another dog. A big dog, like him. And Ralph peeks out and sees the big dog too! Pete is holding onto a harness, just like the one that Martinez himself is wearing.

Ralph whispers to Martinez, “That sure doesn’t look like Betty Sue.”

Martinez is curious. As they approach, it dawns on him. Lloyd has the same job as him! Pete is his person.

Martinez puts his nose in the air and sniffs hard. “Yep, he’s a friendly one” he thought, satisfied. Martinez and Cheri pick up the pace and before they know it, Cheri gives Pete a hug and they are talking a mile a minute. Martinez is curious to meet Lloyd, who seems extremely disinterested in return. Martinez and Lloyd both guide Cheri and Pete into the ballpark and they sit in accessible seating, so Lloyd and Martinez have plenty of room, alongside right field.

Lloyd and Martinez lay down and face each other. Lloyd finally makes eye contact with Martinez and says: “Look at these bozos sitting near the field. Can you believe it? Now we have to hope a left hander doesn’t pull the ball hard and hope that a left-handed batter doesn’t foul it or we are screwed. So make sure if you hear the bat hit the ball, look up and watch out. We are on double duty today.” Martinez nods in agreement. He has no idea what Lloyd is taking about, but he hears “ball,” and knows to be on the lookout. Lloyd lays his heads on his front paws, turning away from Martinez. Martinez copies him, settling in on the warm concrete. Ralph, in the meantime, has wrenched himself from his hiding place. He is a row behind them, scurrying across the long block of seating. Martinez’s ears perk up. In the distance, he hears, “Take that, Pizza Rat! I found nachos,” Ralph announces, helping himself to a half-eaten tray of chips, the gloppy cheese crusted at the surface, but intact below.

Martinez hears jets flying above and looks up and around. He looks over at Lloyd, who is completely unimpressed, and musters the courage to ask, “So, do the New York Yankees have a good outfield?”

Lloyd yawns, “Oh, absolutely.”

“What’s the right fielder’s name?”

“Why do you care?” Lloyd asks.

“I don’t know. I’m just curious since we are sitting here waiting to be blasted by a ball.” “Well, I thought I just told you.”

“Then tell me who’s playing right field?”

“Who’s playing first. Lloyd gives him a side eye.

“I don’t care about the infield! What is the right fielder’s name?”

 “Why,” snorts Lloyd.

“Because” Martinez says.

“Oh, he’s center field” Lloyd responds.

Wait a minute. Do you have a pitcher on this team?” says Martinez.

“Wouldn’t this be a great team without a pitcher?” says Lloyd.

“Okay, fine, just tell me the pitcher’s name then” says Martinez.

“Tomorrow,” says Lloyd.

Martinez shakes his head and sighs, “You are unbelievable, Lloyd.”

Lloyd gives a huge grin. both Martinez and Lloyd touch noses and settle in for the day.

Meanwhile, Ralph listens to the whole back and forth, completely confused, chomping on a nibble of pepperoni pizza, and thought to himself: “This is when I really miss Maria.”

## Pete’s Play List

## Spring-Forward/Renewal Songs

BY: Pete Berg with Lloyd

Don’t Stop Believing - *Journey*

Here Comes the Sun - *The Beatles*

Can't Stop the Spring - *The Flaming Lips*

Eye of the Tiger - *Survivor*

Waiting on a Sunny Day - *Bruce Springsteen*

Beautiful Day - *U2*

Learning to Fly - *Tom Petty*

Mr. Blue Sky - *ELO*

Roar - *Katy Perry*

Up with the Birds *- Cold Play*

Keep Your Head Up - *Andy Grammer*

April Come She Will - *Simon and Garfunkel*

A Beautiful Morning - *The Rascals*

Walking on Sunshine - *Katrina and the Waves*

Take it to the Limit - *Eagles*

# IN GRATITUDE

# In Gratitude – New Alumni News Column!

BY: Maia Scott with Gleam

This is the place  to give a shout out to your guide’s or canine buddy’s raiser,
here’s your chance. If you were just in class and feel inclined to send
kudos to someone who made your stay on campus extra amazing, we’d
love to hear. Or maybe your guide did some epic maneuvering through a
trying environment and kept you feeling safe even in foreign lands, how
about a thumbs / paws up to the trainer who primed you and your dog for
success. Likewise, if that cane is behaving nicely and not attempting to
rearrange your innards, the floor is yours to say thanks to your OMI team.

If you are feeling an attitude of gratitude and want to speak out about one
of the amazing humans in our GDB community, please send us your
sentiment in 100 words or less to alumninews@guidedogs.com with
Gratitude in the subject line.

For this issue, we have the following submission to share with you.

## From Barbara Milles with GDB Pixel, a Brindle female lab.

Today marks my two-year anniversary with my devoted Guide Dog, Pixel.
There are so many apt adjectives that describe this truly amazing dog, Ms. Pixel Perfect is precious, playful, professional, proficient, passionate, pure pleasure! As my fourth
guide Dog, her abilities to focus, work with purpose, and devotion to my safety continue to amaze me daily. She is rather remarkable, and we make a terrific team!

At two years, we have hiked many trails, navigated multiple airports (no easy task for even the
sighted!), and survived COVID! , Pixel is in many ways a COVID pup, who was raised during the
pandemic which limited her indoor training activities such as working in restaurants and
theaters. Despite such restrictions, Pixel is eager to check out new areas and always has our safety in
mind.

She has proven to be a trusted traveler, flying with me to Pennsylvania, San Juan Islands,
Washington, Florida, and we are planning our first international trip to Portugal this Spring. She also
yawns gracefully during my yoga practice while lying beside me during class, and will accompany me to
a weeklong yoga retreat off the coast of Mexico in April.

She is a true perfect picture fit for me, and I will state how surprised this has made me given my first three guides were German Shepherds. She has proven that breed need not matter, but most important is the training and match making. Thank you
Guide Dogs for the Blind for teaming me with this amazing “Pixel Perfect” pup!

# AS WE SEE IT

## Making the Re-connection

Calynn Hendrickson with Melon (Milan)

I came home with my 10th guide this past March.  After waiting a year between losing my 9th dog, Ben, who died unexpectedly at only five years of age, and my new guide, Milan, I was feeling pretty shaky, both physically and emotionally.  After walking slower than slow with a cane in my right hand for that year, I was suddenly working with a new young guide back on my left side again.  My center of balance was completely screwed up.  I felt constantly like I was going to fall.  Though I am 69, going on 70, I am in really good health for my age.  I am very active, going up and down stairs in a three level town house countless times a day, taking walks of at least one mile several times a week, as well as doing yoga, and in the summertime, swimming.  So, I thought I should be up for working with this new, young guide.

But, after coming home from class, I had one warm day for a good workout, then was hit with a stretch of unpredictable Minnesota spring weather.  Ice and snow obliterated the landmarks I was trying to teach Milan, and the high winds made hearing for traffic almost impossible.  It prevented Milan and I from getting out on regular workouts for a couple of weeks.

When we finally headed out again on my usual routes, my confidence had dropped.  So, as a result, his confidence dropped,  His pull into the harness became tentative.  Without that steady pull to show me that we were making the series of right and left turns on the curving road leading out of my townhouse complex, I would become disoriented.  My confidence dropped still more and I couldn’t give him the reassurance he, as a new guide, desperately needed.

We were in a vicious circle.  We started losing trust in each other and, as a result, our fragile bond began breaking down.  We were  becoming unsafe as a team.  I was really starting to worry that I would have to call it quits, and need to send my sweet Milan back to Guide Dogs.

 Then magic happened.

Milan and I went into downtown Minneapolis for a two-day seminar.  We traveled along city blocks, crossed streets, went down long, sweeping hallways through the indoor  skyway system connecting the convention center with our hotel.  Even though I didn’t remember it step by step, I had traveled there with several previous guides and really enjoyed it.  We walked around- and through- crowds of people, in and out of elevators and crowded convention hall rooms and… something happened between us.

While I was downtown, I was going to the seminar with sighted friends.  They were telling me the directions- the lefts and the rights- to get where we needed to go- sort of a human GPS.  I think that, because I didn’t have to worry about keeping close track of where I was, I could concentrate fully on learning to move confidently with Milan again.  And, knowing I wouldn’t get lost, Milan could pick up- through the harness- that I was feeling more confident.  So, his confidence started to grow again.  We reversed the downward spiral and started rebuilding our trust in one another.

Suddenly, we were striding out.  Milan was giving me a strong, steady, confident pull. I started standing up, straighter and taller.  The feeling of falling was fading away.  After two days of this, I came home feeling like maybe, my guide dog working days weren’t over after all.

Milan and I have been out on our same old familiar home routes again, and- what a difference!  Milan is pulling strong and steady and…

I feel at least ten years younger!

# IN MEMORIAM, INMEMORY, IN TRIBUTE

In Memoriam – Remembering GDB Clients Who Have Passed

Jean Cronje of White Bear Township, MN with male Black Lab guide Adrian (CA 909)

Curtis Miles of Louisville, KY, with Tropic, female Yellow Lab guide (CA 706)

Mark Israel of Phoenix, AZ with Sonny, male Black Lab guide (OR 131)

Pierre “Pete” Nalda of Abilene, TX with Hawthorne male Yellow / Golden Cross (OR 353)

## In Memory – Remembering Guides Who Have Passed

Chili, male Yellow Lab guide for Laurie Mehta of Cincinnati, OH (OR 188 – October 2010)

Apex, male Black Lab guide for Sue Vandergrift of Ocoee, FL (OR 170 – January 2010)

Van Dyke, male Yellow Lab guide for Judith Lung of Sunnyvale, CA (CA 726 – August 2011)

Ventana, female Yellow Lab guide for Nancy Prior of Santa Clara, CA (CA 746 – August 2012)

## In Tribute – Honoring Guides Who Have Retired

Walsh, male Black Lab guide for Kelsey Sparks of Portland, OR (OR 284 – October 2014)

Joelle, female black lab guide for John Prescott of Oakland CA (CA 743 – July 2012)

Emidio, male Black Lab guide for Carl Belnap of Dayton, Oregon, (OR 353- October 2017)

# ALUMNI BULLETIN BOARD

GDB Alumna Elena Thomason recently published an article in *The Blind Californian* regarding her frustrations with the unsafe and unfair practices of her local paratransit company, if you are also having issues she would like to hear from you. She hopes that by working together we can make change. You can reach her at Elenathomason1@gmail.com

# GIFT SHOP NEWS

## GIFT SHOP NEWS *– April 2023*

By: Michelle McNew

Listed below are new items that have arrived in the gift shop recently:

3 Stages of a Guide Dog Umbrella – gray $25.00

**Stay out of the rain with this adorable GDB umbrella. This design features the 3 Stages of a Guide Dog design repeated in bright colors along with the GDB Logo on a gray background. Diameter measures 40 inches , folds to 10 inches and weighs 9 ounces. Fit for travel with a gray sleeve with a black GDB logo.**

**11 inch Two Tone Cutting Board with Braille $18.00**

**This is a must have for any kitchen or on the go! This lightweight and durable bamboo makes for a beautiful cutting board.  Easy care: simply had wash or wipe with a damp cloth: do not soak in water or wash in the dishwasher. Adorned with the GDB logo on one side and Guide Dogs for the Blind in braille on the opposite side.  Great gift ! Get them while they last!**

**16 ounce Vacuum Tumbler $27.00**

**This white 16 ounce Vacuum Tumbler adorned with the GDB logo in black is sure to keep your coffee hot! Features 18.8 dual wall stainless steel with copper-lined, deep draw liner. And a Lead Free Vacuum seal and spill proof flip top AS plastic lid featuring unique Tritan snap locking closure.  Hand wash only. Product size 8.75 " H x2.75" W x 2.75" D.**

**18 ounce Etched Stemless Wine Glass Set $34.00**

**This set of 18 ounce stemless wine glasses will sure be the talk of your next dinner party! The GDB logo is etched on one side and a braille etching of Guide Dogs for the Blind on the opposite side. It's a one of a kind gift!**

**25 ounce Tritan Water Bottle $22.00**

**This BPA free 25 ounce Tritan bottle! Featuring a one touch push button lid, locking mechanism, silcone drinking spout, inner spout straw and dual tone silicone accent and carrying handle.  Adorned with the GDB Logo in black on both sides between the light blue silicone upper sleeve and the darker blue silicone lower sleeve. For cold beverages, hand wash only.**

**30 ounce Treat Jar with Braille $28.00**

**This 30 ounce glass container features a nice secure rubber bottom glass top that with keep those treats nice and fresh! Adorned with a green GDB logo on one side and GDB spelled out in green braille on the opposite side.  Your dog will thank you!  6"H x 4" Diameter**

**Contoured LS V Neck Wordy Tee $30.00**

**Layering has never been so easy! This buttery soft v neck tee is made of 50/25/25 poly/combed cotton/rayon. Featuring a dog design on the back of the tee consisting of words that represent what a GDB dog means to our communities.  Some words include love, adventure, companion , etc. and our logo on the front left chest in white. Available in Heathered Teal in sizes Small through 3XL. Get them while they last!**

**Contoured 3 Breeds 3 Stages Tee $25.00**

**Brighten up your wardrobe with this new GDB tee! Made of 60/40 combed ring spun cotton/poly and adorned with the every so popular GDB 3 Breeds 3 Stages design on the front with the logo under it in black. The design features a black lab puppy in the play bow position, a yellow lab adolescent in a sit position and a golden retriever in harness standing. Enjoy them while they last! Available in turquoise in sizes Extra Small through 2XL. To ensure a great fit, please refer to the size chart below.**

Contoured Drop Shoulder Tee $30.00

**This super lightweight tee is great for layering or stand alone. It features a hemmed sleeve and bottom . Made of Polyester/Rayon Jersey Knit at 3.8 ounces. Adorned with a teal blue GDB logo on the left chest. Available in Sea Green in sizes Small through 2XL.**

Contoured Soft Shell Jacket $58.00

**This Soft Shell jacket works great in the office and on the go! A water resistant shell with a breathable mesh liner gives this jacket an all season wear with plenty of stretch for movement. Made of 100% polyester knit shell bonded to a water resistant film insert and a 100% polyester mesh interior. 1000mm fabric waterproof rating. Featuring a contrasting black front center zipper, contrasting black elastic binding cuffs and a white GDB logo on the left chest. These will not last!   Available in Cyan Blue in sizes XS through 4XL. machine wash cold. gentle cycle. tumble dry low. do not dry clean.**

**GDB Braille Hat $23.00**

**This hat has the letters GDB written in braille on the front with a GDB logo embroidered on the back. The khaki hat is adorned in black and the royal blue hat is adorned in white.**

**Pup and Guide Collar $15.00**

**Our newest GDB dog collar. Featuring  our popular Pup & Guide Design. A black lab puppy in green puppy jacket in a sitting position is facing a yellow lab in guide dog harness in a standing position. Available is an aquamarine blue and raspberry.  Outfitted with a black plastic buckle and chrome D ring. Fully adjustable- fits 18 inches to 26  inches. Fits most medium to large adult dogs.**

**Relaxed 3 Breeds 3 Stages LS Tee $30.00**

**Get into the GDB Spirit with this super soft long sleeve tee! Made of 60/40 combed ring spun cotton/poly and adorned with the every so popular GDB 3 Breeds 3 Stages design on the front with the logo under it in black. The design features a black lab puppy in the play bow position, a yellow lab adolescent in a sit position and a golden retriever in harness standing. Enjoy them while they last! Available in heather gray in sizes Extra Small through 3XL. To ensure a great fit, please refer to the size chart below.**

**Relaxed 3 Breed 3 Stages Tee $25.00**

**Get into the GDB Spirit with this super soft long sleeve tee! Made of 60/40 combed ring spun cotton/poly and adorned with the every so popular GDB 3 stages 3 breed design on the front with the logo under it in black. The design features a black lab puppy in the play bow position, a yellow lab adolescent in a sit position and a golden retriever in harness standing. Enjoy them while they last! Available in a silk/sand color in sizes Extra Small through 3XL. To ensure a great fit, please refer to the size chart below.**

**Relaxed GDB Letters Zip Hoodie $38.00**

**Another favorite design returns to the GDB Store! The front of this zip hoodie features a white gdb logo on the left chest. The back design contains the letters GDB. Inside each of the letters are various illustrated items: bowls, bones, paw prints, collars and hearts. This fun GDB Letters design zip hoodie is available in rust in sizes XS through 3XL and is made of 80% Cotton and 20% Polyester.**

**Quick Dry Hat $15.00**

**The Quick-dry Breathable Outdoor Sport Cap is very comfortable and cozy to wear. The unstructured cap is made with polyester material and has ventilation holes on top side with mesh panels to relieve from hot air. The moisture wicking sweatband is another way to keep you dry. It is a good choice for runners, golfers, tennis players, and any indoor or outdoor activities. Adorned with the GDB logo on the front left corner. Available in Pink or Royal.**

**Here is a list of items on order:**

**Photo Frame with Braille**

**Tees with braille letters GDB on the back**

**Power of Partnership waterproof sticker**

**Member of the Pack waterproof sticker**

**Hunter green mug with GDB logo and braille in white**

**Pride Tee**

**Pride Sweatshirt**

**Pride Waterproof sticker**

**Contoured ¾ Sleeve Henley**

**Contoured SS Polo**

**Relaxed SS Polo**

**Contoured Dri wick Long Sleeve with Hood**

**Lanyard in new design**

**Auto Shade with new 3 guide design**

**Notecards with braille**

**Luggage Handle Cover**

**Click Pens**

All orders are subject to applicable tax and shipping fees.

You can order Gift Shop merchandise online 24/7 at www.guidedogs.com, or you may call our customer service number at 503-668-2115 and leave us a message. We return phone calls and ship online orders on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, only. For faster service, order 24/7 at [www.guidedogs.com/shop](http://www.guidedogs.com/shop).

Gift cards can be purchased and redeemed online, as well as in person and over the phone.

Please check our website periodically for new merchandise updates.

If you have product suggestions, feel free to email me at mmcnew@guidedogs.com.

# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Officers:**

**Chair – Amy Salger/*Marsala***

**Vinton, IA**

**asalger@guidedogs.com**

**Vice-Chair - Cheri Owen/*Martinez***

**Goleta, CA**

**cowen@guidedogs.com**

**Secretary - Leigh Moss/*Aviva***

**Austin, TX**

**lmoss@guidedogs.com**

**Members at Large**

**Peter Berg / Lloyd**

**Naperville, IL**

**pberg@guidedogs.com**

**Deborah Cook/ *Praline***

**Clarkston, WA**

**dcooklewis@guidedogs.com**

**Kelly Egan/*Caspian***

**San Diego, CA**

**kegan@guidedogs.com**

**Lui Greco/*Reid***

**Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia** **lgreco@guidedogs.com**

**Maia Scott/*Gleam***

**San Francisco, CA**

**(415) 290-6242**

**mscott@guidedogs.com**

**Claire Stanley / Tulane**

**Rockville, MD**

**cstanley@guidedogs.com**

**Melba Velez Ortiz/*Chad***

**Allendale, MI 49401**

**mvelezortiz@guidedogs.com**

**Chris Yoon/*Sadie***

**Bellevue, WA**

**cyoon@guidedogs.com**

**EX-Officio Members**

**Amit Ahuja / *Tashi***

**Santa Barbara, CA**

**aahuja@guidedogs.com**

**Vice President Interdisciplinary Client Services and Engagement**

**Theresa Stern / *Wills***

**Novato, CA**

**tstern@guidedogs.com**

# Guide Dogs for the Blind Alumni Chapters

## USA

### Arizona

*Desert Dogs of Phoenix*

Location: Phoenix, Arizona

President: Scott Wilcock, stitchbert@gmail.com

Vice-president: Brian Mucyo, brianmucyo@gmail.com

*Northern Arizona High Country Walkers*

Location: Northern Arizona

President: Patricia Clingman, patriciaclingman@yahoo.com

Vice-president: Doug Reber, dougib4586@gmail.com

Secretary: Vicki Reber, vreber78@gmail.com

### California

*GDB Alumni Foggy Doggies*

Location: San Francisco, California

Email: fogdog@groups.io

Co-president: Lauri Shay, laurishay@gmail.com

Co-president: Jan Robitscher, jbrobit@aol.com

Secretary: Alysa Chadow, chadowab@gmail.com

*OC Guide Dogsfor the Blind Alumni Chapter*

Location: Orange County, California

Web Site: ocguidedogs.com

President: Mindy Wulff, minwulff@gmail.com

Vice-president: Jeff Senge, jcsenge@outlook.com

Secretary: Carla Ross, info@ocguidedogs.com

*Paws of Fame Guide Dogs for the Blind Alumni Chapter*

Location: Los Angeles County, California

Web Site: [www.pawsoffamela.com](http://www.pawsoffamela.com)

President: Joseph Landau, jklandau@yahoo.com

*Sacramento GDB Alumni*

Location: Sacramento, California

Email: sacgdbalumni@gmail.com

Web Site: [www.sacgdbalumni.com](http://www.sacgdbalumni.com)

President: Christopher Pitcher, christopher.pitch@icloud.com

Vice-president: Debra Thompson, adrinamom@gmail.com

Secretary: Shelby Haines, Shelby-Haines@scusd.edu

*San Diego Alumni Chapter of Guide Dog Handlers*

Location: San Diego, California

President: Launa Hardy, Launahardy@gmail.com

Vice-president: Monique Fenton, Moniquegdb14@gmail.com

### Colorado

*Colorado Rocky rovers*

Location: Denver, Colorado

Email: CoRockyrovers@gmail.com

President: Beth Gustin, bethglpc@gmail.com

Vice-president: Veronica Rodriguez, Veronicarodriguez1954@gmail.com

Secretary: Pat Hein

### Florida

*Sunshine Guide Dog Teams of Florida*

Location: Florida

Description: We talk about our guide dogs and support each other with once a month calls and a once a year in person meeting.

Email: GDBSunshineGuideDogs@groups.io

President: Marcia Bukala, mjbukala@yahoo.com

Vice-president: Jim East, jim.east.mhs@gmail.com

Secretary: Reggie Alvarado, reggie.alvarado@gmail.com

### Illinois

*Windy City GDB Alumni*

Location: Chicago, Illinois

Description: Chicago and Northern Illinois

President: Pete Berg, pberg55555@gmail.com

Vice-president: Terry Ann Saurman, saurmann@access4less.net

Secretary: Marian Roberts

Secretary: Maureen Reid.

### Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio

*Guide Dog Handlers of the Midwest*

Email: GDB\_Midwest@groups.io

President: Deanna Lewis, Deannakay03@gmail.com

Vice-president: Paul Walker, herospaw2002@gmail.com

Secretary: LuAnn Bowers

### Montana

*GDB of Montana Alumni Chapter*

Location: Montana

President: Ed Worrell, ed.worrell@icloud.com

Vice-president: Chandra Scheschy, kryodragon7@yahoo.com

Vice-president: Jeniffer Robinson, legacy\_eternaldragon@yahoo.com

Secretary: Aaron Page, ampage87@gmail.com

### Oregon

*GDB HaRT of Oregon (Handlers and Raisers Together)*

Location: Portland, Oregon

Description: Join Oregon Handlers and Raisers as we learn, have fun, and strengthen our shared bonds.

Email: GDBHaRTofOregon@groups.io

Web Site: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gdbhartoforegon>

Co-president: Chari Chauvin, finn986@gmail.com

Co-president: Jenny Collins, puppycruisedirector@gmail.com

### Utah

*Greatest Paws on Earth GDB Alumni Chapter*

Location: Utah

President: Sandy Ruconich, sruconich@gmail.com

Vice-president: Patty Mueller, plmueller@q.com

### Washington

*GDB Washington State Alumni*

Location: Washington State

Description: Supporting each other and keeping everyone up to date about GDB

Email: wagdbalumni@groups.io

Co-president: Holly Turri, holly.turri9@gmail.com

Co-president: Danette Dixon, danettedixon63@gmail.com

## Canada

### British Columbia

*BC Dogwoods GDB Alumni*

Location: British Columbia

Email: BC Dogwoods Alumni Group talkadvocacy@hooh.ca

President: Heather Walkus

Advocacy: Lisa Bentz

Outreach: Matt Salli

### Quebec

*Isee Paws Guide Dogs*

Location: Montreal, Quebec

President: Kim Holdbrook, kimholdbrook3@gmail.com

## Special Interest

### GDB Bibliodogs

Description: The GDB book club. Meets on the third Thursday of each month at 4:00 pm Pacific.

Email: GDBBibliodogs@groups.io

President: Leigh Moss, lparkermoss@gmail.com

Vice-president: Sue Wilkening, smsw57@gmail.com

Secretary: Robin Gray, ms.gray@shaw.ca

### GDB Creative Tails writing group

Description: Writing

Email: GDBCreativeTails@groups.io

President: Lisa Gilmartin, lsg1144.lg@gmail.com

Vice-president: Dorianne Pollack, Doriannepollack@gmail.com

Secretary: Launa Hardy, launahardy@gmail.com

### GDB Guide Dog Handlers All Ways

### Description: GDB grads and other guide dog handlers with multiple disabilities

Co-president: Kim Kilpatrick, kimjkilpatrick@gmail.com

Co-president: Jo Elizabeth Pinto, jopinto@msn.com

Vice-president: Sarah Gales

Secretary: Deanna Lewis, Deannakay03@gmail.com

### GDB Mommies with Guides

Description: Focus on parenting

President: Tara Chavez, tmatzick06@gmail.com

### GDB Paws Around the World

Description: Travel

President: Sue Wilkening, smsw57@gmail.com

Vice-president: Erika Wolf, wolf67120@gmail.com

Secretary: Lillian Goodman, lilliangoodman98@gmail.com

### GDB Raisers and Handlers

Description: Bringing raisers and handlers together.

President: Danette Dixon, Danettedixon63@gmail.com

Vice-president: Paul Walker, herospaw2002@gmail.com

Secretary: Mary Flynn

Outreach: Andrea Barnhurst, atl\_braves1fan@yahoo.com

### GDB Tech Dogs

Location: International, meets via Zoom

Description: Sharing tips, tricks, and techniques related to technology

Email: techdogs@groups.io

Web Site: [www.tech-dogs.net](http://www.tech-dogs.net)

President: Deborah Kendrick, Kendrick.deborah@gmail.com

Vice-president: Paul Walker, herospaw2002@gmail.com

Gdb Stitch and Bitc*h*

Description: Needlecrafting of all types

Email: GDBStitchAndBitch@groups.io

President: Dorianne Pollack, Doriannepollack@gmail.com

Vice-president: Jack Heim, john@johnheim.com

Secretary: Deanna Lewis, Deannakay03@gmail.com

Please send updates to jheim@guidedogs.com. Last updated: Wednesday, March 02, 2022