



GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA

Partners

Spring 2012 volume 27 number 2

GDA and Grads Get it Right The First Time

And The Next And The Next...



GDA Grad Courtney Mazzola and Chandler.

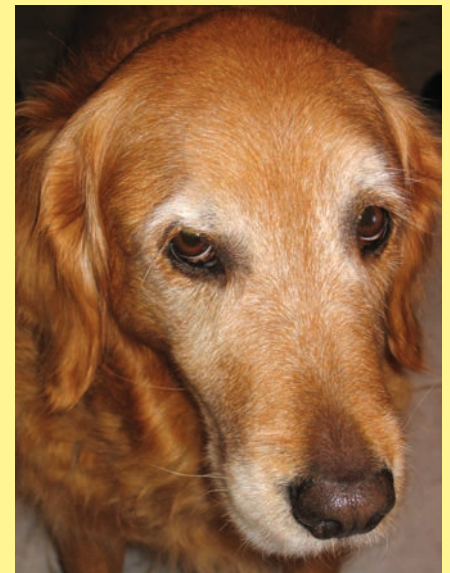
she had to learn Braille and adaptive technologies. But it wasn't until she turned 18 that she could enroll at GDA. Class started three days before the end of her senior year, which meant she had to miss her high school graduation. A month later, Mazzola did make it to graduation, but this time it was from GDA with her first guide dog, Tess. That fall, the team started college.

Courtney Mazzola has had two guide dogs. Bobbi Bubier just graduated with her fifth. When a graduate retires a guide, they return for a 21-day class (versus 28 days for first-time students), where they are carefully matched with a new dog. Then it's back to life as usual, which for Mazzola means logging the 3,000 internship hours needed to earn her license to practice somatic psychotherapy and travel...a lot. And for Bubier, it means a return to her home in Maine where she lives with her husband of two years and writes romance novels; her second book, *Cobwebs*, will be published this spring. (Her first book is titled *Wishes*.)

Mazzola's vision loss was caused by Retinitis Pigmentosa. By the time she was in middle school, it had progressed to the point that

Vet's Corner

Aging or Arthritis?



As our dogs get older, many of us start to notice little changes in their behavior that we often chalk up to old age. They may be a little slower getting up in the morning or might not be as quick to fetch their favorite toy. But how do you know if this is just normal aging or if it may indicate something more?

One of the most common orthopedic problems we see in older dogs is arthritis, or degenerative joint

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Mission Statement

Guide Dogs of America is dedicated to its mission to provide guide dogs and instruction in their use, free of charge, to blind and visually impaired men and women from the United States and Canada so that they may continue to pursue their goals with increased mobility and independence.

As an undergraduate, Mazzola stayed close to home in Southern California, graduating with a bachelor's in psychology. The team headed to San Francisco for graduate school to attend one of two universities offering a degree that blended her professional interests — psychology and massage therapy. (She had earned her massage therapy certification prior to entering college, which she did to help pay for her education.) In 2008, she graduated with her master's degree in somatic counseling psychology.

Currently, Mazzola is working toward completing her internship hours, and is halfway there. Tess was with Mazzola throughout college and for the beginning of the internship program. The team worked together for 10 years. When Mazzola retired Tess, she returned to GDA for her second guide dog, Chandler. When they aren't working at Mazzola's internship, this busy and adventurous team can be found just about anywhere except at home.

"I never want to be the person who goes to work in the morning and comes home every evening," said Mazzola. "I love learning what's out there — experiencing new things, meeting new people and going new places."

Mazzola brings her "the sky's the limit" attitude to everything she does. Whether she is learning to sail, which she did with Chandler; practicing the martial art of jujitsu; riding horseback; or traveling, both domestic and abroad, Mazzola's travels have taken her all over the country and the world. As soon as she finalizes plans for one trip, she's thinking about where to go next. She is making plans now for a trip to Europe with Chandler.

"Having Chandler with me makes so many of the things I do and the traveling so much easier," said Mazzola. "I feel like there's nothing I can't do. The difference is there are some things that I have to do with assistance."

Like Mazzola, Bobbi Bubier has never let her visual impairment keep her from doing whatever she puts her mind to.

Bubier's visual impairment started when she was 19 years old and her retinas bilaterally detached. Multiple surgeries on both eyes helped, but she was left without peripheral vision. At 28, she fell from the countertop while lining shelves. The concussion from the fall took her remaining vision. It was 1972 and this single mother of two children, ages 5 and 6, was determined that her kids not look at her handicap, but rather her ability. She knew it was "mission accomplished" when her now-grown son said to her, "Growing up we knew you were blind, but we never really looked at it that way. We never realized you were 'that' blind."

Bubier graduated from GDA with her first guide dog Wicket, in 1984. She has returned to the school four times and, this past December, she graduated with Honora, her fifth guide dog. In between, there have been three other guide dogs, Lincoln, Crystal and Caddy.

For Bubier, GDA feels like home. "The continuity of having some of the same staff there every time I am at school is so comforting," said Bubier. "I have worked with several trainers more than once and that makes it easier. I know them and they know me. Everyone there is so



GDA Grad Bobbi Bubier and Honora.

compassionate and encouraging. Even though we are a part of a class, they give each student so much personal attention and work to accommodate our needs."

It's been 27 years since Bubier first arrived at GDA. In those years, she has raised her two children; raised a foster child; written four romance novels; and, two years ago, found a romance in her own life that just could provide the inspiration for her next novel.

"Writing is a passion," said Bubier. "When I write, I don't feel blind. I write about what I know and the characters become real to me." Bubier's very real romance with Richard could easily be titled "Puppy Love," as her guide dog Caddy is at the center of their love story. The two met shortly after Bubier graduated with Caddy. A bad knee sent Bubier to rehab. The pastor at the pair's church sent Richard to Bubier, who needed someone to walk her new guide. Richard came to the rehab facility every day to walk Caddy and soon the couple found themselves taking a walk together...down the aisle.

"I have a new marriage, a new guide dog and a new book coming out. Does being blind get any better this? I am rich with a home full of love," Bubier said from the heart.

Mazzola is enjoying her own happily ever after thanks to Chandler and GDA. "The school does an excellent job of matching the students and their guides. Chandler is one of the smartest dogs I've ever met. We are able to communicate. He knows what I want and need, and I can feel what he wants," said Mazzola.

When Bubier is asked why she comes all the way out to California from Maine for a guide dog, she tells people, "When you're choosing a university, you want to go to the one that will give you the best education. At GDA that's what I get and, I get to be a part of this wonderful family." 🐾

disease. There are multiple factors that can ultimately cause arthritis but, regardless of how arthritis develops, the result is deterioration of joint cartilage, which can lead to inflammation, pain, and bony abnormalities. Unfortunately, arthritis often goes untreated in older dogs because the symptoms are sometimes assumed to be a normal part of aging.

Some of the most common indicators of arthritis include:

- Slow to rise from a seated or lying position
- Stiffness after exercise or after rising from a lying position
- Reluctance to jump
- Joint pain (licking at a particular joint may indicate discomfort)
- Swelling of the joints
- Limping or lameness

If any of these symptoms are present, we recommend scheduling an appointment with your regular veterinarian for a routine checkup.

If arthritis is the culprit, there are many options to consider when it comes to treatment. Simple changes around the home can make a huge difference, such as getting a raised bed or a well-padded bed; elevating food and water bowls; using ramps to get in and out of cars or furniture; and using slip-free floor coverings. Maintaining a healthy weight and keeping them active with low impact activities is also important. Supplements can be used such as glucosamine, chondroitin, MSM, fish oils and certain vitamins. Prescription medications such as Rimadyl, Metacam, Etogesic, Previcox, Deramaxx, and injectable Adequan are also available. Some alternative treatments to consider include physical therapy, hydrotherapy, massage therapy and acupuncture.

Early detection and treatment of arthritis are key in keeping your dog healthy and happy, so make sure to schedule those annual checkups with your veterinarian.

Kids' Questions

GDA Puppy Raisers Share School Kids' "Questions Asked and Lessons Learned"

Many times, we get calls to have a speaker go out to schools or we have children who come out to tour the Guide Dogs of America campus. Our volunteer puppy raisers and their puppies-in-training teach the students about what it takes to become a guide dog. After the presentation, the kids are encouraged to ask questions and share what they have learned. We asked our volunteers to share some of the most memorable questions asked and lessons learned. What follows is a collection of some of the comments that have made them smile:

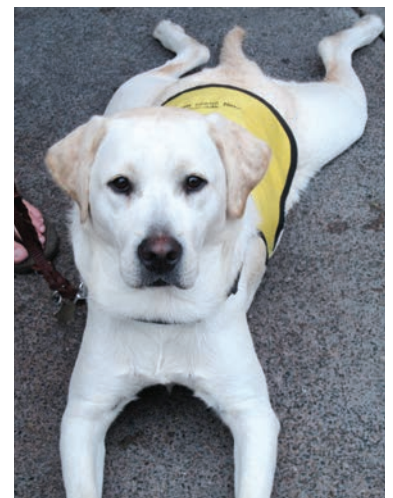


Questions Asked...

- How does a dog put on its harness?
- Can you train my dog?
- Does he miss his mom?
- Is he a Vanilla Lab?
- Is he always this calm?
- How does your dog help a blind person cook?
- Why don't you use Chihuahuas?
- What does the dog do when the blind person is driving?
- How does your dog tell a blind person how to drive a car?
- Can the dog read Braille?
- Does the dog go to the movies?
- How does the dog know where to go in the supermarket?

Lessons Learned...

- I learned that people don't need a dog in the shower.
- I learned that GDA dogs own two collars.
- One of the things I learned was that the guide dog's owner had to go to school.
- I learned that you can't pet the guide dogs.
- A good guide dog does NOT chase cats.
- A guide dog cannot be lazy or always be tempted by things or be scared when a noisy thing comes.
- If the guide dog is not perfect, it cannot go to college.
- My dog would never go to "Guide Dog College" because she is WAY too crazy!



Donor Spotlight

They Did the Math and it Added up to GDA

Doug and Judy Fisher have been doing their homework together since they met in 10th-grade geometry class. That was 45 years ago. So when it came time to do their estate planning, the couple did their homework, and again, the subject was math. Everything added up to naming Guide Dogs of America in their trust.

“We love dogs and want to help people. Giving to GDA was the ideal way to do both,” said Doug Fisher. “When we learned how much of every dollar goes directly into the program, we were impressed. It made the decision to give to the school very easy.”

The Fishers visited GDA when they retired to tour the campus and meet the staff. They saw first-hand the work and dedication that goes into training a guide dog and were in awe of what they saw and what they learned.

“A guide dog gives a blind person abilities that they don’t have,” said Fisher. “When you give to GDA, you know that your donation dollars are making a difference. You can see the results. We plan to visit the school next year and attend a graduation. Just thinking about seeing the students graduate with their dogs brings tears to my eyes.”



Partners in Trust



Make your gift to Guide Dogs of America last a lifetime and beyond. The Partners in Trust Society was established by GDA as a way to recognize and honor the generosity of those who have included the school in their planned giving. Providing Life Income Gifts and Bequests lets your gift continue working beyond your lifetime to help others achieve their goals with increased

mobility and independence through a partnership with a loyal and loving guide dog. Charitable organizations are not subject to gift or estate taxes so your gift continues to support the causes close to your heart, like Guide Dogs of America, without being diminished by the IRS.

You will receive our special “Partners In Trust” crystal jar as a way of thanking you that you can display proudly, knowing the difference you are making in the lives of others through supporting Guide Dogs of America. Please call Rhonda Bissell at (818) 833-6432 for more information.

Open House – Save The Date

“Saddle Up for Western Day at GDA” – Saturday, June 9

Yee-haw ya’ll! It’s Western Day at GDA’s Open House on Saturday, June 9. This rootin’ tootin’ fun-filled day includes Puppy Trials, Guide Dog Demos, Puppy Kissing Booth, Tours, Crafts and Merchandise, Kids’ Korner and tons of food from the Chuck Wagon!

We’ve rounded up some great items for our popular Silent Auction and, this year, even if you can’t mosey over to the Open House, you will have the opportunity to bid on some of our travel and sports packages. We’ve added an online auction site to give our supporters across the country an opportunity to participate. To view items prior to bidding opening, access our online auction site via the GDA website homepage (www.guidedogsofamerica.org) and click on “2012 Open House News Flash” for the link to the auction site. Preview the auction beginning in May. Bidding opens on May 23rd.

Admission to the Open House is free. There is food available for purchase. Gates open at 11 a.m. and close at 4 p.m. Events begin at 11 a.m. and end at around 3 p.m. We do ask that you leave your personal pets at home.

2012 Raffles



2012 Quilt Raffle

This year's quilt, "Knick Knack Paddy Whack," was made and donated by the Orange County Quilt Guild. Each panel features an adorable bone-bearing pooch in a dog house. The quilt measures a generous 99" by 110" and will fit a king- or queen-sized bed.

Purchase tickets using the order form on this page and mail it to GDA postmarked by Dec. 2, 2012. Tickets are \$2 each or six for \$10. The drawing will be held at the GDA December puppy raiser meeting on Dec. 8, 2012. Winner does not need to be present.

2012 GDA Bike Raffle

This year, the GDA motorcycle raffle is for a 2012 Harley Davidson Ultra Classic. The winning ticket will be drawn on Nov. 17 at the Guide Dogs of America Annual Banquet in Las Vegas. (Winner need not be present to win.) More details and photos will appear in the next newsletter.



"A Day with the Trainers" – The Experience of a Lifetime

This extremely popular annual raffle prize takes you behind the scenes of GDA, where you will observe the trainers working with our incredible dogs. Two lucky people will spend "A Day with the Trainers," accompanying them on training routes; observing daily training exercises; and, after being blindfolded by a trainer, taking harness in hand and being led on a route with a dog to experience how it feels to walk with a guide dog. Winners must be at least 18 years of age and able to walk four to five miles in one day near our campus.

Use the order form included in the newsletter or purchase tickets at GDA before or on June 9 (Open House). Tickets are \$5 each or five tickets for \$20. Winner will be notified on June 14. Training day date to be announced after the drawing.

SPRING 2012 Order Form

Questions? Call (818) 833-6429. ***All Shipping & Handling is included*** Mail this entire form with your payment.

Raffle Tickets — \$5 per ticket or \$20 for 5.

2012 Harley Davidson Ultra Classic \$ _____

A Day with the Trainers \$ _____

Quilt Raffle — \$2 per ticket or \$10 for 6.

Raffle Tickets \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Credit Card (check one) Visa MasterCard Discover AMEX

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: ____/____

Signature: _____ CVC: _____
required for credit card purchase 3-4 digit code

Check (make your check payable to **Guide Dogs of America**)

Mail to: Guide Dogs of America ATTN: Spring Merchandise Order Form, 13445 Glenoaks Blvd., Sylmar, CA 91342 **Or use the enclosed envelope.**



Published by: Guide Dogs of America
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In Memory

With sadness we note the passing of the following guide dogs:

Destiny – Class #335

Worthy – Class #333

Yecca – Class #328

Zest – Class #341

GDA Las Vegas Charity Weekend

Save the Date – Nov.15-17

The 32nd-Annual Charity Banquet & Golf Tournament will be held Nov. 15-17 at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, and Revere Golf Club in Henderson, NV. In addition to the motorcycle ride on Nov. 15, there will be a Skeet & Trap Shoot at the Clark County Shooting Park. All details will be included in the invitations mailed early this summer and posted on the GDA website.



New Employees

Kristy Olson, Animal Health Director, RVT
 Chandra Conway, Volunteer Coordinator

2012 Holiday Card Contest

Congratulations to GDA Puppy Raiser Denise Brown as the winner of our 2nd-Annual Holiday Card Contest. Brown submitted this festive photo of her puppy-in-training Gentry that will be featured on our 2012 holiday card. We'd like to thank all of those who entered photos. The Holiday Card order form will be included in the August issue of *Partners*.

