

GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA Partners

summer 2007 volume 22 number 2

GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR PUPPIES-IN-TRAINING: FORMAL TRAINING BEGINS

Puppy turn-in day often is referred to by the puppy raisers as the day they send their puppy off to college. From that day, up until graduation, there's much for the puppies to learn.

After evaluating each puppy to determine its physical ability as well as willingness to work as a guide dog, the puppies are divided into "strings"—groups of about 20 dogs. Each string will stay with the same trainer throughout formal training—approximately four to six months. During this time, and the additional month the dog will spend training with a GDA student that it has been matched with, there are two training sessions per day.

Training begins with the introduction of the harness. Once the puppies get used to it, a trainer will take the handle and formal training begins! The first skill to be mastered is walking in a straight line. Turns

"Formal Training" continued on page 3 >



**Summer
Refresher Courses**
-Guide Dog Access & Etiquette 101
-When You Meet a Blind Person 101
-The Making of a Guide Dog Team
...learn all this & more
on pages 6-7
inside >



VET'S CORNER DOG DAYS OF SUMMER: WARM WEATHER TIPS TO KEEP YOUR DOG HEALTHY AND SAFE

We know what to do to make ourselves more comfortable when the summer heat is on, but dogs rely on us to help them beat the heat. The following sun protection tips will help you and your dog enjoy a healthy and comfortable summer:

- **Start Out on the Right Paw.** Make your first summer outing a trip to the veterinarian to ensure your dog is in good health and vaccinations are current.
- **Road Trip.** Never leave your dog in the car. Even in the shade and with open windows cars can become dangerously hot in a matter of minutes and lead to hyperthermia (heat stroke), which is often fatal.
- **Made in the Shade.** A shady spot to rest will provide your dog the best heat relief. Dog houses are not ventilated and can trap heat. For beach or park outings, make sure there's a shady spot and plenty of fresh water for your dog.

*"Dog Days of Summer"
continued on page 4 >*

THE JOB OF A PUPPY RAISER: A LABOR OF LOVE

Ask a GDA volunteer puppy raiser about what the “job” requires and you’ll learn that raising a puppy-in-training isn’t a job, but a labor of love.

Even though the puppy raisers don’t consider it work, GDA’s Puppy Department recognizes them as the backbone of the organization.

“Puppy raisers are the foster families to our puppies and play an essential role in preparing them to learn guide work,” said Yvonne Martin, Puppy Department.

**“Puppy raisers
are the foster
families to our
puppies...”**

—Yvonne Martin
Puppy Department

“We want the puppies to be comfortable in a variety of environments including learning to ride public transportation, sitting quietly beside a desk, getting on the puppy raiser’s schedule, and becoming accustomed to surface changes.”

Socializing and exposing the puppy to as many different situations as possible will result in having to make fewer adjustments when it’s time for formal guide dog training.

Puppy raisers teach only basic obedience, such as how to walk on a leash (on the left and slightly out in front), how to sit, stay, lie down, and come when called. They are responsible for taking the puppy through an approved basic obedience class offered by GDA, and attending monthly meetings with their puppy raiser groups. At the meetings, the puppies have the opportunity to interact and socialize with other dogs.

Throughout the average 17 months a foster family will raise their puppy, they have the support and encouragement of the extended GDA family – the Puppy Department, puppy raiser groups (there are eight groups from San Luis Obispo to San Diego, including one in Washington), and veteran puppy raisers.

So what is the job of a puppy raiser? It’s a labor of love that takes a squirmy seven-week-old puppy and returns it to GDA as a well-adjusted, well-socialized, good house-mannered, and obedient dog ready for its next lesson. 🐾

For information about becoming a puppy raiser, contact Louise Henderson at (818) 833-6441.



A Whale of a Good Time

Thar they go! This past spring, more than 80 puppy raisers and about 40 puppies-in-training from all over Southern California set sail from Dana Point on a whale watching trip. This was the eighth trip for Jack and Jacque Butler, who organized the outing. “This was the best trip so far,” said Jacque. “We saw plenty of whales as well as dolphins.” All the passengers and pups extend a special tip of the sailor cap to Dana Wharf Sport Fishing and the Dana Point Doubletree Inn, both of which were very accommodating to the puppy raisers and their dogs.

People and Puppies Posing in Pasadena

A group of 35 puppy raisers along with 15 puppies-in-training hit the rail and headed to Pasadena. During their stop, the group enjoyed lunch after which they paws-ed for this great group photo before returning to Union Station in Los Angeles.



PARTNERS IN TRUST

Just as blind men and women partner with GDA’s remarkable dogs for additional independence and mobility, generous friends and supporters partner with GDA to help us carry out and maintain our mission. Become a member of the Partners in Trust Society by naming GDA in your will or trust and receive this beautiful, crystal biscuit jar.



Please call Rhonda Bissell at
(818) 833-6432 for more information.

IN MEMORY

With sadness we note the recent loss of two members of the GDA family:

Twyla Cruz – Graduate
Margaret Savage – Graduate

We also note with sadness the passing of the following GDA guide dogs, who dedicated their lives to ensuring the safety and independence of their partners:

Ben – Class #307
Kari – Class #294

We also note with sadness the passing of one of our breeders:

Winnie – Breeder



Partners newsletter

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NEW EMPLOYEES

Please join us in welcoming to the GDA staff:

Ann-Marie Esposito - Full-time Kennel Tech

Ajay Borbon - Part-time Kennel Tech

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



Class #354 GRADUATES from LEFT to RIGHT (Puppy Raiser in parenthesis): Roy Novotny & **Merrick** (Lewis & Elizabeth Hall), Bonita Thompson & **Kamra** (Denise Brown), Maria Garcia-Deer & **Janna** (The Havron Family), June Berner & **Rumor** (Sheila & Shelly Harvey), Janet Perry & **Nathan** (The Miller Family), Lorita Betraun & **Valor** (Gordon & Trish Geddes), Carol McConnell & **Woodrow** (Reid & Shaunna Thomas), Don Smith & **Nate** (Paul Blank & Francois Leclair)

INSTRUCTORS standing LEFT to RIGHT:

Patty Elizondo, Wendy Roof, Steve Burkman

"My confidence in Vienna and her confidence in me started in Sylmar, California during training and grew. The real benefit started when my family began to have confidence and trust in us. A great load was lifted from them when they saw how well we communicated and that we were a team. The worry is gone from their voices when I strike out on my own with Vienna. Vienna's calmness and sureness gives me freedom." LAURE NOBLE, GRADUATE

FORMAL TRAINING continued from pg. 1..

are next and learned through a combination of voice commands, hand gestures, and footwork that cue the dog to turn right or left.

"Right turns are easier to learn," said GDA Apprentice Ashley Hermans. "Left turns require the dogs to take a couple of steps back to make sure clearance is provided for obstacles such as a sign post or traffic signal."

Obedience training is a part of every day. Behaviors such as positioning and heeling all must be done within the parameters established by the California State Board of Guide Dogs. Trainers also will introduce distractions that working guide dogs will encounter beyond traffic and street noise — among them, other dogs, bouncing toys, and food.

As training progresses, trainers begin to move from minimal traffic areas to

heavy suburban traffic. To prepare the dogs for potentially hazardous situations presented by increased traffic, the trainers introduce the concept of "intelligent disobedience," which is a dog's refusal of a command.

"If a dog refuses to go forward, make a turn, or cross a street it is up to the handler to determine if it is safe to proceed," said Hermans. "The dog's refusal is usually an indication that something is not as it should be."

As training progresses, routes are extended to build stamina. Trainers also introduce the dogs to increasingly new environments, such as building interiors, escalators and elevators, the

To prepare the dogs for potentially hazardous situations, the trainers introduce the concept of "intelligent disobedience."

metro rail, city areas with congested foot and vehicle traffic, and shopping areas.

At the end of formal training, these well-trained guide dogs-to-be are matched with a blind student partner and for the next month will learn to work together before graduating as a working guide dog team. Among those attending graduation

will be the puppy raisers. With pride they will witness their puppies' transformation to guide dogs, with graduation marking the beginning of a career all GDA puppies are bred and born to have. 🐾

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER continued from pg. 1...

- **Water, Water Everywhere.** Be sure your dog has plenty of fresh, cool water throughout the day. Bring water for both you and your dog when you go out for exercise.
- **Water Hazards.** A consistent source of fresh water also can prevent your dog from quenching his or her thirst in potentially hazardous ways — either from “tanking up” (drinking large amounts of water), which can make your dog very sick, or drinking from puddles in the street that may contain poisons such as antifreeze. If you suspect this is the case, contact your vet immediately.
- **Ouch!** Dogs can get sunburned too. Apply a sun-screen formulated for animals to your dog’s nose and ear tips to protect sensitive areas.
- **Paw Protection.** Avoid prolonged exposure to hot asphalt or sand, which can burn your dog’s paws. Protective booties should not be used as they can prevent your dog’s natural ability to release heat through his or her pads.
- **Buzz Off!** Fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes, which carry heartworm disease, are more prevalent in warmer months. Ask your veterinarian about heartworm and flea preventatives.
- **Dog Paddle.** While most dogs are great swimmers, a tired or dehydrated dog can easily drown. If you have a pool, teach your dog where the steps are located. A small wading pool filled with a few inches of fresh, clean water offers a safe place to cool off.
- **Good Morning, Sunshine.** Early morning and evening, when the sun’s heat is less intense, are the best times to exercise outdoors. Avoid strenuous exercise on extremely hot days.
- **Respect Your Elders.** Pay special attention to elderly and/or overweight dogs that can be especially sensitive to heat. 🐾

“Since I received my guide dog Venus in January 2005, I have traveled extensively on public transportation, taking the bus and Light Rail transit around the city of Sacramento. Also, I have felt more confident about traveling with my daughter Beverly who is 10 years old. We go everywhere together; Beverly, me and my “Venus-Mobile!” JEANNIE GREEN, GRADUATE

“Before receiving Fargo I would not have had the confidence to return to college, where I am working on a Substance Abuse Counseling certificate.” MARK OSWALD, GRADUATE

RAFFLES



QUEEN-SIZE QUILT HAS GONE TO THE DOGS

Beautifully hand-crafted by the Santa Clara Quilt Guild, each intricately detailed square in this one-of-a-kind masterpiece is a work of art. Donated by the Guild for GDA’s annual fundraising raffle, this gorgeous queen-size quilt measures 96” x 106”. Raffle tickets are \$2 each or 6 for \$10. To purchase tickets: Call GDA at (818) 833-6429 or complete and return the “Order Form” on this page. Raffle will be held December 8th at GDA’s Puppy Raiser Meeting. (Winner does not need to be present to claim prize.)



\$10 CAN GET YOU THIS CUSTOM PRO STREET BIKE

For the price of a \$10 raffle ticket, this stunning blue and silver Pro Street Bike custom painted by Justin Barnes of JB Graphics can be yours. Don’t miss out on your chance to win this 113-inch, 6-speed transmission, custom motorcycle. Buy your ticket (or tickets) by November 12, 2007 at GDA or complete and return the “Order Form” on this page. To safely and securely purchase tickets online using a credit card, go to the GDA web site (www.guidedogsofamerica.org). The lucky winning ticket will be drawn on November 17, 2007 at the Guide Dogs of America Annual Banquet in Las Vegas. (Winner does not need to be present to claim prize.)

19 BREEDS, ONE GREAT CAUSE: KITCHEN TOWEL PROCEEDS BENEFIT GDA

100% Egyptian cotton dish towels in 19 breeds, including *three new breeds added this year*: Yellow Lab, Boxer, and Shih-Tzu.

Towels measure 17" x 31" and are sold in sets of two for \$15. See "Order Form" on this page for additional information. For questions contact Cherry Teter at (818) 342-4952.



T-SHIRTS FOR WARM SUMMER DAYS, SWEATSHIRTS FOR COOL SUMMER NIGHTS

Support GDA while adding to your summer wardrobe. The 100% cotton, pre-shrunk, white t-shirt pictured here with its adorable "Our Family" puppies design is \$18.*

A white, cotton/poly (50/50) blend sweatshirt with the same design is also available for \$25.*

*prices include shipping and handling.



CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Start your Christmas shopping early by purchasing GDA's Christmas cards. These full-color cards (5" x 7") are sure to "brighten" the season with a festive design and clever greeting. Price for this year's original GDA Christmas card is \$20 for a pack of 15 cards with envelopes. See "Order Form" on this page for additional information.

Outside message: Merry Chris-Moose and Hoppy New Year.
Inside message: Seasons Greeting.



2ND ANNUAL "PARTNER'S" AWARDS DINNER AND CASINO NIGHT.

A sure bet for a great evening is our 2nd Annual "Partner's" Awards Dinner & Casino Night honoring puppy raisers Jacque & Jack Butler and Teri & Jerry Dillingham. The evening will include mingling with our puppies-in-training, tours of the museum and Air Force One, silent and live auctions, and Las Vegas style gaming. Join us on Saturday, August 18 at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley. Tickets are \$150.00 per person. For ticket/sponsor package information, contact Debbie Sands at (818) 833-6433 or email dsands@guidedogsofamerica.org.

SUMMER ORDER FORM

Mail this entire form with your payment. Please note the deadline dates for the raffle ticket purchases to ensure your eligibility.

CUSTOM PRO STREET BIKE raffle

To be eligible entry must be postmarked by November 1, 2007.
Ticket Price: 1 ticket for \$10.00

Number of tickets: _____ \$ _____

HAND-CRAFTED "DOG" QUILT raffle

To be eligible entry must be postmarked by December 1, 2007.
Ticket Price: 1 ticket for \$2.00 or 6 for \$10.00

Number of tickets: _____ \$ _____

2nd Annual "PARTNER'S" AWARDS DINNER & CASINO NIGHT

Event Date: August 18, 2007, Simi Valley, California
Ticket Price: \$150 per person.

Number of tickets: _____ \$ _____

MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM:

Dog Breeds Dish Towels

	Quantity	Price	Subtotal
<input type="checkbox"/> Bichon Frise		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Labrador		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Boston Terrier		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Boxer NEW		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Chihuahua		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate Labrador		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Corgie		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Dachshund		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> German Shepherd		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Retriever		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Kittens		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Poodle		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Pug		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Puppies		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Rottweiler		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Shih-Tzu NEW		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Westie		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Labrador NEW		\$15	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Yorkie		\$15	\$

Shipping and Handling: One set of 2 Dish Towels \$5.00
Orders of 3 or more to same address please call
Cherry Teter at (818) 342-4952.

GDA "Our Family" Shirts

<input type="checkbox"/> Short-sleeved t-shirt	\$18	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-sleeved sweatshirt (not pictured)	\$25	\$

GDA Christmas Cards

<input type="checkbox"/> Pack of 15 cards with envelopes	\$20	\$
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Shipping & Handling: 1 pack is \$4.00, 2-4 packs is \$5.00
5 or more, please call GDA at (818) 833-6429

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$

Payment Information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Credit Card (check one) ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

Expiration Date: ____/____/____

Card Number: _____

Signature: (required for credit card purchase) _____

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

Mail to: Guide Dogs of America, ATTN: Spring Order Form
13445 Glenoaks Blvd., Sylmar, CA 91342

OR USE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE



"While my partner Mitch was born and trained in California, he has adapted well to our Rocky Mountain environment. At first, he asked, 'What is all this white stuff and why are my paws so cold?' Now he loves to frolic in the stuff. His eagerness to go walking and hiking has enabled us to experience new adventures in the great outdoors. And just for fun, we mixed it up with some 47,000 runners and walkers in the Bolder Boulder 6k event on Memorial Day."

JOE MORGAN, GRADUATE

"Two things I've accomplished due to having my guide dog are: I joined Curves and I became employed at McChord Air Force Base as a switchboard operator. I'd still be sitting at home if I didn't have Gidget."

SUE BURDYSHAW, GRADUATE

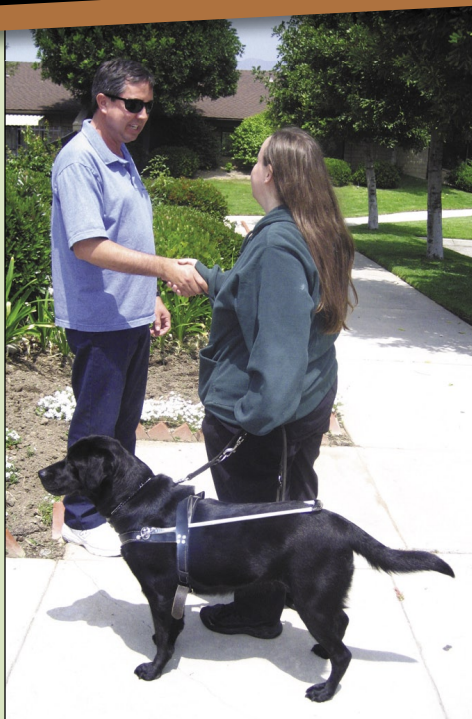


One of these pups is not like the others.

But which one? It's not uncommon to see mixed colors in one litter in the GDA nursery. Even though this is a typical occurrence, it's not the case in these photos. While the yellow lab breeder and the golden puppy share coloring, surprisingly, the pup is not hers. In fact, they aren't even the same breed. Having given birth to the four black lab pups just two days earlier, the yellow lab mother readily adopted the little golden retriever pup when its birth mother was unable to care for her single puppy. "It doesn't happen often, but when it does it's the best thing for the puppy," explained Meri Forman, manager, GDA Breeding Department. "Without siblings, single puppies don't always learn important social behaviors and pecking order, which will help them later during training."



Summer Refresher Courses



When You Meet a Blind Person 101

When you meet or approach a blind person, there are several ways you can make him or her feel more comfortable right from the start. By keeping the following in mind, you will make a great first and lasting impression.

- **Allow Me to Introduce Myself.** When entering a room, identify yourself and, if you know it, use the person's name so he or she knows they are the one being addressed. For example: "Hi, Jim. It's Jane Smith." Also, be sure to let them know when you are leaving.
- **Back in a Minute.** If you are leaving a blind person alone in an unfamiliar area, provide a point of reference. You can help orient that individual by describing where he or she is in the room or by offering to take his or her hand and providing a tactile point of reference such as a counter, wall, or piece of furniture.
- **Details, Details.** Make an effort to be verbally descriptive when talking to a blind person. Instead of saying "over there" or "this way," offer a more detailed or specific direction, such as "ten paces in front of you" or "turn right when the carpet ends."
- **Lending a Helping Elbow?** Instead of extending a helping hand when offering sighted assistance to people who are blind, offer your elbow or arm so they can follow your lead. Allow them to tell you if they want to take your arm, or if they prefer to use their cane or guide dog.
- **Sight Words.** Sayings such as "see you later" or "looking good" are part of everyday conversation. Don't be embarrassed if you use these phrases with a blind person. In fact, he or she will probably say it right back.
- **Being Direct.** When speaking to anyone, it's common courtesy to address that person directly. Extend the same courtesy to a person who is blind. Treat him or her with friendliness and consideration, and speak directly to the person, not to the people they may be with.

Keeping these simple tips in mind will earn you high marks when you meet someone who is blind and send you right to the head of class. 🐾

Guide Dog Access & Etiquette 101

School is always in session at Guide Dogs of America. Whether it's the four or five times a year when students come to the GDA campus for first time training or retraining with their new guide dog; future guide dogs learning how to work in harness and with a handler; or puppies-in-training participating in obedience classes as part of their "early education." GDA's dedication to education also reaches far beyond its campus. Whether it's speaking engagements, GDA-sponsored events, or this newsletter, GDA is always working to ensure the safety of guide dog teams.

These "refresher courses" provide helpful information and useful reminders to share with others about the special considerations to observe when someone first meets a guide dog team.

- **Sound Advice.** Loud or unfamiliar noises can be distracting. Calling out or making noises (barking, meowing, clucking) to get a guide dog's attention can distract a working guide dog and jeopardize the safety of both the dog and his or her blind partner.
- **Talk to the Handler.** Always ask the handler's permission before petting a guide dog. Please respect that they may have a busy schedule when they have to decline your request or do not have time to stop and chat.
- **Lying Down on the Job.** A guide dog in harness is "working," even when sitting or lying down.
- **Red Light, Green Light.** When it comes to traffic light crossings, it's the handler that listens to the traffic flow and other environmental sounds to decide when it's safe to cross a street. It is then up to the guide dog to determine if the command given should be completed.
- **Right of Way.** Remember that guide dog teams always have the right of way!
- **Please Don't Feed the Guide Dog.** Never feed a guide dog without the permission of its handler; while it may seem like "one little bite," it could lead to big problems.
- **Taking Life by the Harness (or Leash).** If the handler looks like he or she needs assistance or is in a dangerous situation, offer aid verbally and with a calm approach. Suddenly grabbing the harness and/or making physical contact can disorient the team and complicate the situation.
- **Learning Through Mistakes.** If a guide dog makes a mistake, the handler will use proper and humane verbal reprimands or leash correction techniques taught during their training at GDA.
- **It's a Guide Dog's Life.** With the passage of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act and State Laws, guide dog teams are granted the right of access to any public place — restaurants, grocery stores, offices, hospitals, hotels, churches, as well as travel by bus, taxi, and airplane. So...

...don't be surprised when you see guide dog teams joining in on the fun at amusement parks, movies, and concerts. More importantly, don't forget to follow these simple guidelines to help guide dog teams feel safe and secure while out enjoying life side by side. 🐾

Accelerated Course: The Making of a Guide Dog Team

There's no accelerated course for our students or our guide dogs. There is so much each must learn on their way to becoming a guide dog team. It's a lot of work and requires a lot of practice while at the school and when they go on to their new home.

However, as part of this issue dedicated to teaching and learning, we're offering our readers an accelerated course, "The Making of a Guide Dog Team," filled with interesting and useful facts.

Class is in session:

- **Prep School.** Both dog and human must be individually trained before coming together as a team. Before being accepted to the Guide Dogs of America training program, applicants must be "experienced, independent cane travelers" through formal Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training or with mobility skills learned from years of experience.
- **Graduate and Post-Graduate Work.** New teams spend 28 days at GDA, but it takes approximately six months to one year for the team to develop a rhythm and trust. Similar to learning to dance, both partners know the steps but it takes time to learn to move as one.
- **"Intelligent Disobedience."** Guide dogs rely on the skills and training of their handlers to tell them when to proceed. If the dog perceives a danger, such as an approaching car or a hole in the street, it will display "intelligent disobedience" and refuse the command. At that point the handler must determine what the danger is and wait until it is safe or change the route. Of course, the dog is given lavish praise for a job well done!
- **Recess!** Guide dogs are not working 24/7. When they are at home, they are very much family dogs — playing with the kids, chewing on a (dog-safe) bone, or snoozing at their partners' feet.

Everyday and in myriad situations guide dog teams use the skills they've learned to pursue their goals of independence and greater mobility. Whether you're meeting a guide dog team or person who is blind, we hope this issue of *Partners* has provided a good study guide for making the grade.

Class dismissed!





GUIDE DOGS
OF AMERICA

13445 Glenoaks Blvd.

Sylmar, CA 91342

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For many of us, summer is a time to explore new activities and places. For GDA graduates, everyday presents the opportunity to confidently try new things and visit new places. We thought you'd like to hear from our graduates about some of those experiences...so we asked them, "Name one or two things you have had the confidence to do since receiving your guide dog that you wouldn't have done before." Several of their responses appear throughout the newsletter.

"I returned to college to take a history of cinema class and never would have had the courage to do that without my guide Mojo. We would negotiate getting from the bus to my class and travel around the campus with ease. He was a big hit in class, too!" DEBBY KALFIN, GRADUATE



GDA'S 4TH ANNUAL "RIDE FOR GUIDES" MORE THAN TRIPLES THE FUN. Nearly 500 riders on just fewer than 400 motorcycles vroomed their way through a 100-mile ride that started at GDA and took riders along the scenic Angeles Crest Highway during the 4th Annual GDA "Ride for Guides." According to Lorri Bernson, who organized the fun and fundraising event, the ride attracted more than triple the number of riders from the previous year. Along the route, riders were greeted by dozens of puppies-in-training and GDA volunteers, as well as several GDA graduates. At ride's end, everyone enjoyed a delicious BBQ lunch at GDA, during which great raffle prizes were awarded, lots of photos were taken, and everyone talked about already looking forward to next year's ride.