

Trainers Reports

Puppy Raiser's Report

February 2011

Darcy is now nearly 5 months old and turning into a very entertaining and interesting dog. She has a mind of her own but is keen to please and very interested in following any commands or requests that have chicken as a result! We are still having problems with lead walking but if the environment is interesting enough (ie Westfield) she is very willing, and escalators and travelators are great fun. Her barking has reduced to an occasional "wuff" and I hope it will be phased out very soon. The hot weather wasn't a problem as she had 3 swims a day for exercise and the rest of the time was spent in the cool kitchen.

March 2011

Darcy is growing up beautifully and growing out of her reluctance to walk on lead and barking at the occasional passerby. She is a very sociable little girl, loves to go to school and into the shops. She also enjoys the dog park, and is very submissive with other dogs. She is about to go for desexing and preliminary Xrays of hips and elbows. We've had a big breakthrough with the halti and she now accepts it.

Ann Barnacoat, Puppy Raising Coordinator



Barnaby and new recruit, Darcy

Trainer's Report

February 2011

Barnaby is repeating daily the tasks he knows and is now more reliable in his performance. A few new tasks have been achieved and he now

opens the pedal bin and stands up on the foot plate of the wheelchair. He has started to manipulate me in public but Pauline has come to the rescue and I think we can fix that. He is generally very well-behaved when out, and he recently enjoyed The Kings Speech. He seems to be comfortable working around the wheelchair. We just need to do more distance work.

March 2011

Barnaby is progressing well and becoming more confident with his tasks. He had a "meet and greet" on Thursday with a potential ASDOG recipient at Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, which appeared to go very well.

Ann Barnacoat, Trainer

Bronte

All puppies are adorably cute, but some have just got that something extra that makes people go all gooey and silly when they meet them. Bronte, our newest assistance dog puppy, is one of those puppies. My husband Warren and I have been dutifully taking Bronte out to shopping centres a couple of times a week to condition her to the sights and sounds of the world she will have to work in as an adult dog and we have found that it is all but impossible to get any shopping done. We are inundated with people of all types and ages wanting to admire and pat our lovely puppy.

Bronte is showing signs of having just the right temperament for an assistance dog. Nothing seems to worry her for very long. After luring her onto the escalator twice with a piece of food, on the third attempt Bronte promptly leapt onto the escalator like she was off to a party, then spun around and looked at us as if to say, "How clever am I?" Some dogs are reluctant to pick up or retrieve metal objects, but Bronte seems to enjoy it. At only 14 weeks of age she carried an aluminium drinking can all the way home on a walk. The two dogs accompanying her on the walk were very pleased about this, as it meant that their tails and ears were safe from Bronte's busy mouth. The frogs in our backyard probably don't feel quite so safe and secure in their pond since Bronte has moved in. The metal grid covering our frog pond seems to be no deterrent to Bronte's curious ramblings in the garden. She is happy to walk over the grid even when a foot



Clockwise from left: Learning to place chin in hand; perfecting social skills at playgroup; sitting and waiting at the door.

Bottom: "Chewing the shoe... who, me?"



occasionally slips through into the water, probably causing frenzied activity in the water below.

Puppies are a delight to train, as they are eager and learn so readily. An essential first lesson for any Labrador puppy is to learn to be calm and remain still when required. Bronte has already learnt to sit at doors and await permission to enter and exit and to sit or lie still when being given food.

The amount of self restraint required for her to accomplish the latter is evident in her subtly shuffling feet while she holds position and the explosive lurch forward to the food when she is released to eat it.

Bronte has won the hearts of our family and it will be difficult to let her go when she is ready to move on to her career, but we have no doubts that she will become an excellent assistance dog.

Pauline Dickerson, Training Coordinator



Newsletter

No. 34
AUTUMN
2011



The Quarterly Newsletter of Australian Support Dogs, Inc.

President's Report

The year has begun with a flurry of activity for ASDOG. In January, we acquired Bronte, a delightful golden Labrador puppy. Bronte and Darcy, our two new recruits, join Barnaby on the path to becoming Assistance Dogs. We are excited about our new additions and look forward to reporting on their progress over the coming months and years.



Our newest recruit, Bronte. Read more about her and fellow ASDOG puppy, Darcy, in this issue.

In February, we were very pleased to host Sheila O'Brien from Assistance Dogs International for two days as she reviewed our application for accreditation. I am delighted to report that Sheila has indicated she will unconditionally support our application for accreditation. This is great news for our organisation as it will allow us to continue to expand the work we are doing in the community.

It was a great honour for us when Sheila also invited us to present our ASDOG training manual to the international forum in Barcelona later in the year. This is a tremendous endorsement of our training methods and recognition of the outstanding work done by our Training Coordinator, Pauline Dickerson.

We are now in a position to expand our presence in the community and the work we are doing. However, in order to do that we need both funds and hands. If you are in any way able to help us raise community awareness or if you have an interest in helping us with fundraising we would be very pleased to hear from you!

Danielle Press, President, ASDOG



Thank You...

We have received assistance and donations from the following people and organisations. Thank you for your generosity.

- N.G. Somerville • Henry & Sue Ellen Stenning
- V.B. Rawlings • Maria L. Evans
- H.J. Tatham • G.C. and J.A. Blackler
- CJ Pet Mart, Hornsby • J.N and Y.M. Almgren
- Deborah A. Lappan

And once more our special thanks to Moyna Smeaton, moynzart@skymesh.com.au, who designs and produces our newsletters.

And thanks, as always, to the Belrose Bowling Club, Jackie and all the staff there, for generously allowing us to use one of their rooms for our monthly meetings, and also for our ADI accreditation meeting.

And welcome to our New Member: Mrs Carol Randall, Marrickville

Assistance Dogs International (ADI) Accreditation

The Assistance Dog International (ADI) accreditation process is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence through the promotion and achievement of industry wide compliance of established standards and practices. It is a voluntary peer-review process for ADI member organisations to determine if all current policies, procedures and organisational practices are in compliance with the established industry standards. To demonstrate compliance, participating organisations must submit a comprehensive portfolio of working documentation and undergo an accreditation survey by trained ADI assessors. This involves inspection of all operational sites, observation of services and activities such as dog training sessions, and interviews with a range of ASDOG personnel including students, graduates, puppy raisers trainers and Management Committee members. Following initial accreditation, organisations must demonstrate continuing compliance by submitting an Annual Statement of Accreditation Compliance. Organisations are required to undergo a re-accreditation assessment every 5 years.

ASDOG, being a full voting member of ADI, uses their minimum standards and ethics (listed below) to underpin all of its policies and programs.

- **Assistance Dogs in Public:** guidelines on the public appropriateness, behaviour and training expected of a dog working in the public.
- **Clients:** guidelines for the rights of clients partnered with an assistance dog and the rights of the community as understood by ADI.
- **Dogs:** guidelines for the standards and ethics regarding the training and placing of Assistance Dogs.
- **Dog Partners:** responsibilities of a person partnered with an assistance dog.
- **Programs:** standards for all member programs.
- **Service Dogs:** guidelines for the minimum training standards for a service dog.
- **Trainers:** minimum guidelines for trainers.

Sheree Hurley, Management Committee

Information sourced with thanks from www.assistedogsinternational.org



ASDOG Newsletter is published quarterly by AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT DOGS INC. (ASDOG) CFN 15815 Registration No. Y2581122

PO Box 5492, West Chatswood NSW 1515 Enquiries: Phone 1300 788 721

Email: information@asdog.org.au Website: www.asdog.org.au

ASDOG is a full member of Assistance Dogs International

An afternoon with Allan and Rayner

Two of us were very privileged to spend an afternoon recently with Allan and Rayner, his support dog.

Upon our arrival, Rayner let Allan know that we were there and we were soon welcomed into their home. We had a lovely chat with Allan, mostly discussing the true value of having a support dog and in particular – Rayner!

Longer standing members will recall from previous newsletters that Allan suffered polio as a child, and as a result has spent many years in leg callipers, on crutches and most recently in an electric wheelchair. But he has lived life to the full, and has managed to gain several degrees, has worked, married and raised a family.



“Bless you” –an early ASDOG poster featuring Zuga

First there was Zuga, and some of you may remember that Zuga starred in an early ASDOG poster. At this time Allan needed to have a brace to help

him transfer from his car and onto his crutches. Zuga did this job for him as well as retrieving dropped items including, sometimes, the fallen crutches!

Then, after Zuga died, along came Jacko. His role differed from Zuga’s as increasing muscle weakness caused Allan to resort to a wheelchair, but they adapted well together, with some assistance from ASDOG, to cope with these changes. Jacko was a calm gentle Golden Retriever; but sadly he died after a short illness.

Rayner is therefore Allan’s third dog, and he is definitely is very good match, both physically and intellectually. Allan recognises that Rayner has high energy levels and he caters for his needs and wellbeing admirably. In return, Rayner looks after Allan’s needs beautifully and with enthusiasm.

Indoors, he picks up things for Allan, of course, and he opens and closes doors etc. He is always alert to requests for his services, and is also a very pleasant

companion for whom Allan has great respect.

But outdoors he shows his high energy! It was 3.45pm walk time... Allan prepared himself with his reflective jacket and torches, treats and bag of useful things, and then we accompanied them both to the dog park, which was a delightful experience for us all.

First, Rayner needed to close the front door for Allan, which he did willingly and effectively! Since we were hoping to get a photograph of his expertise, he was asked to repeat the process for us and did so with good humour (guess his mind was focused on that doggy park!).

Well, it was delightful to witness the pure joy that Rayner showed as he trotted off beside that speeding wheelchair! He was up on his toes with his head held high; a lovely sight. We had quite a job to keep up with them both (and we were in the car!) En route, it was wonderful to observe just how many



Rayner closing the door behind us.

people and dogs know and look out for this pair, very impressive.

When we were safely in the fenced park area, Rayner followed Allan’s direction beautifully, performing a delightful obedient recall before Allan set him free to join his canine friends, chase their balls, socialise and run around. This is a twice a day routine



‘Dynamic Duo’ ... Allan and Rayner on their way to the dog park

that they both enjoy, a truly good social outlet amongst some lovely people.

After chatting to some of their human friends, it was heartening to hear just how they felt about this remarkable pair. One lady told us how she frequently brings along shampoo and towels etc and gives Rayner a bath. I’m sure Allan appreciates this even if Rayner perhaps doesn’t (though he did seem to like the big puddle that the little ones were paddling in – I guess, being the social man that he is, he feels he should join in with them!) There were many people at the park who enjoy a daily chat with Allan, and many dogs only too happy to play with Rayner. It was brilliant for us to watch and participate.

In short, Rayner is a great help to Allan in his daily life, is a pleasurable companion and through their joint outings together, a fantastic morale booster. Allan’s words on having Rayner, “I feel very lucky: he is smart, a blessing and just the best dog really. We have a connection. I recognise his needs and he mine...”

Joan Minns



Above: Allan and ?????????? Left: Two of Rayner’s doggy friends



On arrival at the dog park, Rayner performs a recall for Allan before going off to play with his friends.



1 and 2 ... and then there were...3!

A big welcome to ASDOG's newest recruits!



Darcy the otter puppy, with her playmate Jody



Darcy

Barnaby now has a new playmate named Darcy, who began her ASDOG life at the end of 2010.

Darcy really is a Labrador. But to see her swimming underwater and retrieving items from the bottom of the pool, you would be forgiven if you thought that she was an otter puppy...

She is a very happy girl who displays a lovely temperament.

Darcy was carefully selected for her promising temperament, which is very important for a support dog.

Bronte

Bronte is our most recent recruit - a tiny girl but with plenty of big ideas. As you can see, she likes to get “down and dirty”! Watch out, there’s a Bronte about...!

Pauline is puppy raising Bronte and finds her truly delightful.



Bronte – “down and dirty”!



Barnaby

Barnaby continues to progress well with his training and is still as nonchalant as ever! He is very gentle with Darcy who is merciless with him!

Both live with Ann who is currently wearing her two hats very admirably. Ann is Barnaby’s Trainer and Darcy’s Puppy Raiser.

Barnaby has about 3 or 4 more months of training to complete and is on target with his many tasks.