

Creature Comforts ~ Service Dogs

By Victoria K. Guerrero

Isn't it sweet to remember those old black and white episodes of Lassie? Timmy was always down in a well near death, and Lassie was always at the saving end of his rescue. I experienced a similar situation when my now 19 year old daughter was saved, yes, by a collie. My daughter who was two at the time, often traveled across the dusty road to the open field across from where we lived. The collie, Orca, spent his days meandering around with the kids, when one of the kids tottled away, Orca faithfully followed. Before I could make it to my little girl's rescue, I watched help- less as blond curls bounced and her little feet breezed toward the dirt road, and the house. Orca was hot on her tail, as he saw a car speeding down our dirt road. Much to my daughter's dismay, Orca knocked her over and lay on her little squirming body as the car sped by. Tears ran down my daughter's dusty face as she cursed poor Orca, not realizing he had possibly just saved her life.

I am sure that wasn't the only time Orca saved a child, I know the com- fort he provided so many of us young and old. He was a perfect gentleman as he soaked up tears into his thick black fur. He listened so well to our troubles, and took many untold secrets to his un- known grave. Of course Orca wasn't the first dog that I personally found com- fort in, nor was he the last. I'm amazed at how resilient dogs are, taking on so much human emotion, without being troubled by it. I speak for many who are grateful for the endurance they show and ability to intuitively know when they are

needed. Orca would have made the per- fect Therapy Dog, or Service Dog com- forting folks far and wide.

At that time, twenty years ago, a Service Dog was exclusively known as a Seeing Eye Dog. Often appearing in business windows, bold 'GUIDE DOG ONLY' signs appeared and were respect- fully obeyed by the general public. Many things have changed in twenty years and 'SERVICE DOGS ONLY' is the sign of changing times for the dog.

There are many forms of 'Ser- vice Dogs', and ser- vices they provide, as well as types of dogs being em- ployed from the 200 pound Mastiff, to the 4 pound Chihua- hua. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires businesses to allow service animals onto business premises where customers are generally allowed. According to the State of Oregon, a Service Animal is any Guide Dog, Signal Dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assis- tance to an individual with a disability. However, not just any animal can go to dinner or shopping with you. The animal providing the service must be trained not to bark, bite, defecate, or cause a nu- sance in the public business, or by law it can be asked to be removed from the business. (Source U.S. Department of Justice)



It is surprising how many differ- ent Service Dogs live in our little town of Vernonia. We see them often, and know the service some of them provide. In the news lately have been Autism Service Dogs, and Psychiatric Service Dogs.

An Autism Service Dog is much like a Service Dog for the Hearing Im- paired. Among many other tasks, this specially trained Service Dog helps its handler process sensory informa- tion. This dog can alert the handler when there are im- portant noises by simply placing a paw on the han- dler, a cue to get the handler's attention. Although to most folks, it seems like a simple thing, but to a person with Autism, what a blessing to have a safe reliable dog on duty.

A Psychiatric Service Dog (PSD) is specially trained to assist a han- dler with disabilities such as Post Trau- matic Shock Disorder, Schizophrenia, and Bi Polar Depression to name just a few. The challenge for handlers own- ing a PSD is public stigma. While see- ing eye dogs, hearing impaired dogs, and assistance dogs used for persons in wheelchairs are widely accepted in soci- ety, Psychiatric Service Dogs are yet to

be widely accepted in society as public stigma against mental illness contin- ues to be misunderstood. Not having a physical disability yet using a service dog in public takes humility, and per- sonal strength. Unknown to many is the emotional struggle a PSD handler goes through to receive the comfort, support, and stability from their PSD. Often times these individuals have mental conflicts that keep them from doing daily tasks in public, thus the need for a PSD.

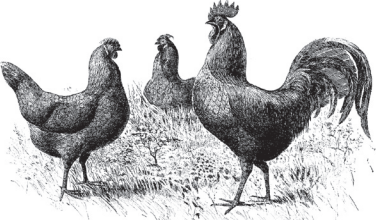
Service dogs are wonderful! There are a wide variety of services dogs can do, from providing an alert to a handler with high or low blood sugar, to warning of an impending seizure.


For more information about service dogs, check out Service Animal Registry of America at 206-376-8931. Or to inquire about your dog's ability to become a therapy dog for others, contact the Oregon Humane Society 503-285-7722.

As a service to the beloved ser- vice dogs in our community, Creatures Pet Store is offering for the entire month of November free nail trims to our local service dogs! This is an exclusive "let's get acquainted" offer, as we look forward to meeting and supporting all our local service dogs. After the month of Novem- ber, local service dogs will receive 50% off of monthly nail trims. Nail trims are by appointment only, call any time Mon- day -Friday 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM, and Saturdays from 10:00 AM -5:00 PM- 503-429-PETS!

Raising Urban and Suburban Homestead Poultry

Saturday, November 12th, 2011
10:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m.
St. Helens Library
375 S. 18th Street, St. Helens, OR
Cost: \$5.00





This shortcourse will cover:

- Starting chickens right (brooding baby chicks and other poultry)
- Breeds worth knowing
- How feeding layers and broilers are different and other feeding topics
- Cooped in: Coop and yard designs for many situations
- Things that make chickens droopy (diseases and parasites)
- Predators
- Home processing
- Final thoughts and more time for questions

For more information, call OSU Extension/Columbia County
503 397-3462 or email chip.bubl@oregonstate.edu.

Senior Center Activities

5-Area Luncheon: There are no lun- cheons scheduled for November and December.

Connie's Fabulous Breakfasts: Fab- ulous breakfasts are available to the public on Fridays for a cost of only \$3.50. The event happens at the Senior Center (446 Bridge Street) from 7:30 to 9:00 AM each Friday. Meal price in- cludes a beverage, too. Enter through the side, parking lot door. What a deal!

Week Day Lunches: The Vernonia Senior Center offers nutritious and tasty lunches each weekday for a \$4 donation for seniors over 60; cost is \$5 for anyone under 60. To-go meals are available for \$5. These are available to the public, not just Senior Citizens. (Mealtime is noon; late arrivals may not be served.) You can reserve your lunch by calling by 11:15 AM, or fur- ther in advance if possible, to assist the cooks as they prepare the day's meals. Meals on Wheels are available for a \$4 donations for seniors over 60. Please contact the Senior Center for an appli- cation.

Maple Bars available locally! Con- nie King, the cook at the Senior Cen- ter, is making maple bars each day. The maple bars are available to the public, too, and only cost \$1 each. Availabil- ity is subject to quantity on hand. You can assure yourself of a good supply by pre-ordering them directly from Connie by calling the Senior Center

(503-429-3912) any week day, from 7:00 AM-3:00 PM. Please allow one day lead time for larger orders. The Center's front door opens at 9:00, but the side parking lot door opens at 7:00. Ah, sweet treats!

Thrift Store: Bargain prices can be found in Vernonia's Senior Center in their Thrift Store. The retail store is open Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM. The Thrift Store provides funds for the Senior Center's facility and its many activi- ties. Donations can also be dropped off during those same hours, and donated clothes need to be clean and in good condition so they are "sales ready". We are offering half off during the first week of each month. Buy locally and support your local Senior Center.

For after hours drop-offs please con- tact Pauline 503-429-5810.

Special Days: On the last Wednesday of the month Wauna Credit Union will be serving ice cream. On the last Fri- day of the month we will serve birth- day cake and ice cream to celebrate that month's birthdays.

Membership Dues: Another way to support Vernonia's Senior Center is to pay the \$15 annual membership dues. Checks may be mailed or dropped off at the Senior Center. Anyone 50 and older may join.

Questions? Call: (503) 429-3912



Old,
worn out
and rusty?
Need body
work?
Call...

Meyer's Auto Body
•493 Bridge St.
VERNONIA
503-429-0248