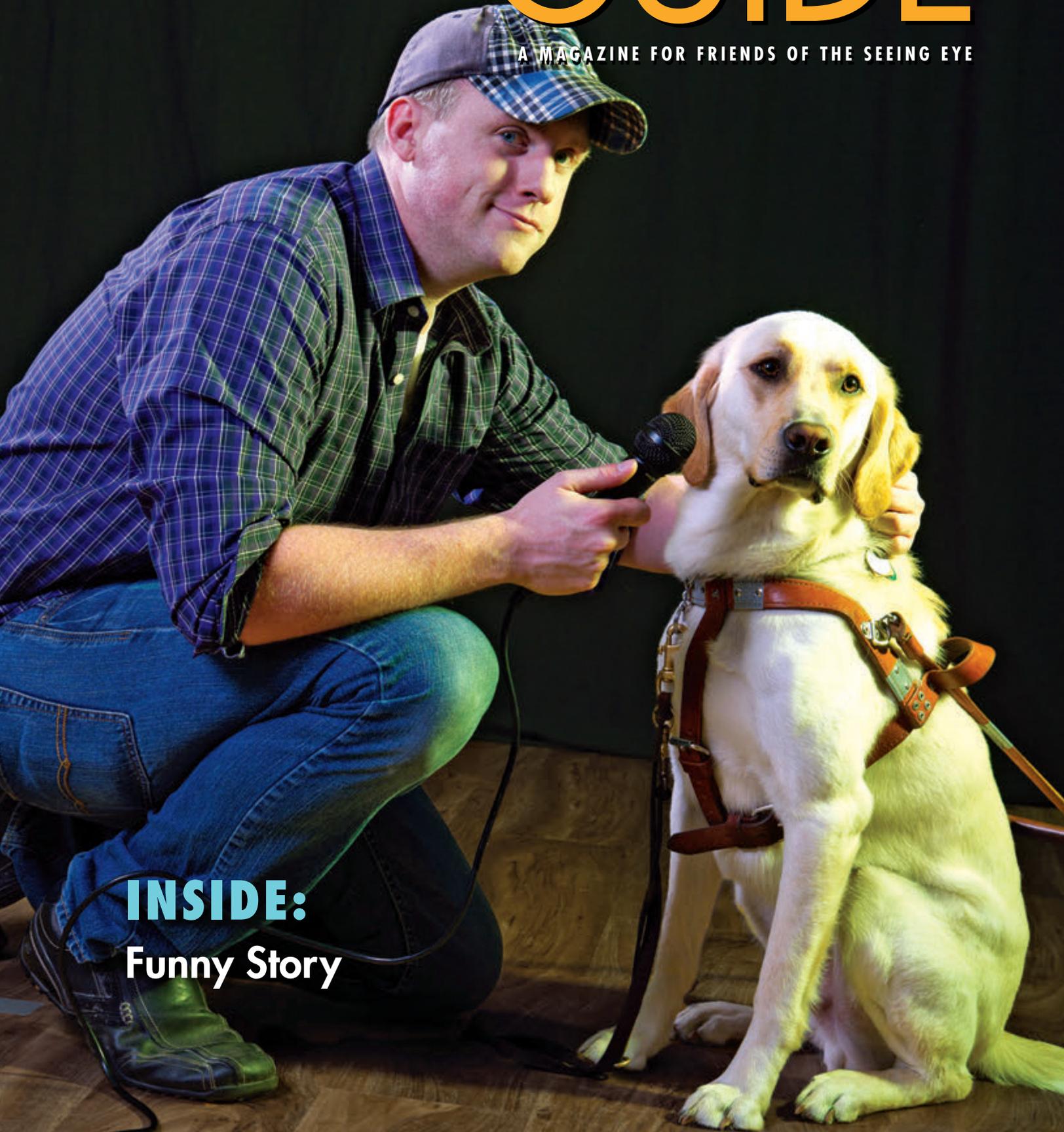


Summer 2015 | Volume 81, Number 1

The Seeing Eye® GUIDE

A MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS OF THE SEEING EYE



INSIDE:
Funny Story

The Seeing Eye® GUIDE

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ON THE COVER:

Michael Dougherty, a stand-up comedian, trades jokes with his Seeing Eye® dog Mac.

Photo by Lori Ryan.

A Seeing Eye Perspective

Last year we celebrated the 85th anniversary of The Seeing Eye's founding. This year, we're celebrating 50 years of being on our current campus in Washington Valley... and our new website!

Morris Frank signed the papers incorporating The Seeing Eye in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1929. But the hot southern summers proved to be difficult for dogs, not to mention our students and instructors. A northeastern state would be more temperate, closer to our dog breeder and donors, and a more convenient destination for more students.

In 1931, Dorothy Harrison Eustis purchased a 25-acre property in Whippany, New Jersey, with a grand old mansion in a state of disrepair. As the story goes, some area residents didn't like the idea of a school for blind people and their dogs. They complained to town officials, but the local zoning board had no law on the books to prevent the school from opening. Morris and Dorothy came up with a strategy: Open the school before a law prohibiting it could be passed! When purchased, the house had no lights, no telephones, and no running water – but after some quick repairs, we were able to have eight students and eight dogs in residence before the zoning board's next meeting.

Over the next 30 years we outgrew that home and needed a new facility, one that was purpose-built to house students, dogs, and our growing staff. We scouted around and settled on the 120-acre Kemeys Estate in the beautiful Washington Valley section of Morris Township, just outside of Morristown. The asking price was \$250,000 (in 1963 dollars). As it happens, Bell Labs had offered The Seeing Eye that exact amount for the 25-acre Whippany property. What a deal! We later sold about 60 acres to the state, which needed the land for a reservoir, helping to pay for the construction costs. The cornerstone of the new building was laid on June 5, 1965, and the first Washington Valley class graduated in October of that year.

Fifty years later, we completed an entirely different kind of construction project with the launch of a completely revamped website. It can still be found at www.SeeingEye.org, but the new website offers many great new features, including lots of stories about our graduates, our instructors, and of course, our dogs.

From a house with no electricity to launching our new website... how times have changed! But what hasn't changed is our commitment to our graduates and their Seeing Eye® dogs, and our gratitude to you for helping to make everything we do possible.

Sincerely,

James A. Kutsch, Jr., President & CEO, The Seeing Eye



Dear Seeing Eye:

I am writing to thank you for the beautiful pin you sent to my mother in recognition of her membership in The Shepherd Society. Almost 102, she is not in the best of shape these days, but a reference to The Seeing Eye can always bring a smile to her face. My mother has been supporting your organization every year since 1945 – it's hard to imagine you have many donors who can match or exceed that record!

Thanks again for the lovely pin. May The Seeing Eye continue to thrive!

Frederica Gamble

Editor's Note: *The Shepherd Society was recently created to honor friends of The Seeing Eye who made 25 or more donations over 25 years.*

Dear Seeing Eye:

I have been working with my fourth Seeing Eye dog, Kismet, for 10 years now. My plan has been to let her work at her own pace, as long as she's healthy and willing, and to retire her when she is ready for her next phase in life.

Just when I think Kismet is ready to hang up the harness, she surprises me with a brilliant piece of work. Last week I had the opportunity to spend a day of errand running with another grad, April Martin. She trained with her dog (Trevor) in December so he's sorta at one end of the spectrum and Kismet's at the other. We had errands all over town. A work colleague who retired recently was our chauffeur. The two dogs had a little competition going on. They both worked brilliantly . . . everywhere we went . . . all day . . . all over town!

Sue Martin
Seeing Eye graduate

Dear Seeing Eye:

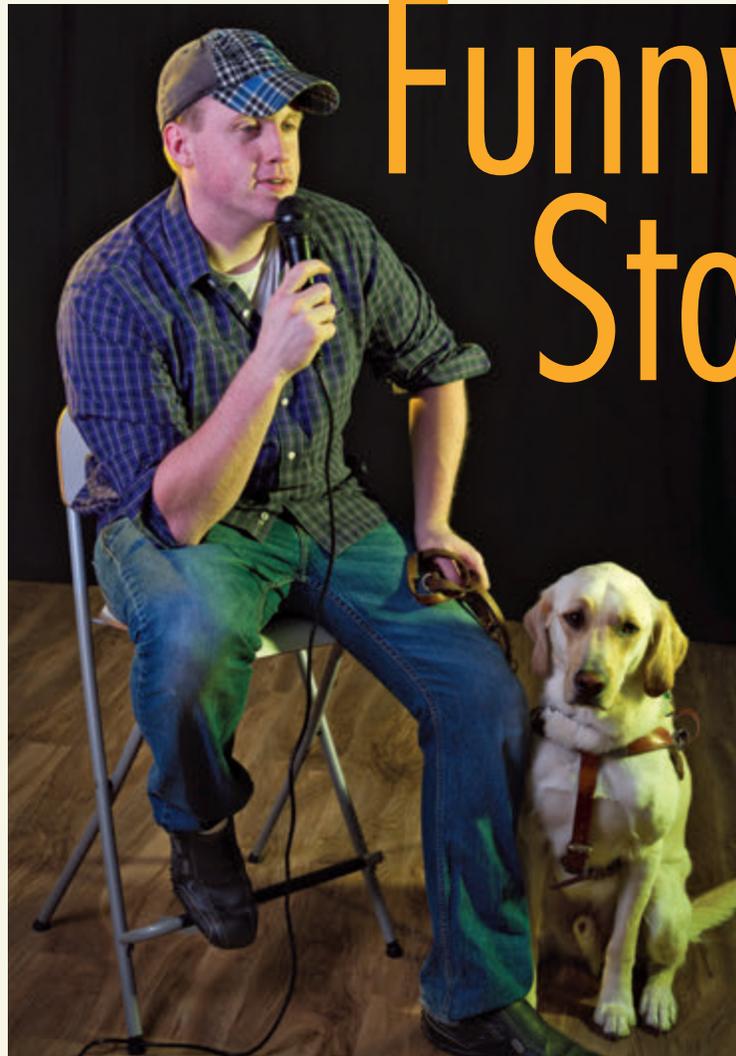
The students at George Ross Elementary School in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, celebrated the 100th day of school by bringing in 100 pennies each. We are happy to donate this money to The Seeing Eye's Pennies for Puppies® program. Your organization does an amazing job in training the puppies to help blind people. Please give the puppies a hug from all of us.

Kay Graybill
School Nurse

Brotherly Love!

These five fine fellows are brothers... and all graduated in the same class! The Labrador/golden retriever crosses, from left, are Trevor, Titus, Teddy, Tucker, and Toby. They were born on April 19, 2013, and all graduated together on December 18, 2014. Their brothers Tony and Travis also are working with Seeing Eye graduates, and sister Tawny is in our breeding program! In the background are tactile maps of Morristown for our students.





Funny Story

When life knocks you down, the only thing you can do is stand up.

When Michael Dougherty was 12 years old, he was diagnosed with Type I diabetes. Ten years later, he was diagnosed with leukemia. And a few months before his 28th birthday, he lost his sight.

So he decided to become a stand-up comedian.

"It gets to the point where you just have to start laughing about it," Michael said.

Audiences laugh, too. Michael, who lives in Hawley, Pennsylvania, has performed at numerous venues throughout the Northeast, including a performance at Gotham Comedy Club in New York City that can be found on YouTube. In the video, Michael comes on stage with a white cane and introduces himself as a professional racecar driver.

Nowadays, Michael goes on stage with a comedy partner – his first Seeing Eye dog, a yellow Lab/golden cross named Mac.

Michael and Mac also are partners at home, where Michael is raising his daughter, Mchaley. "I don't know how many times I've tried to put Mac into the high chair and taken Mchaley outside to park," Michael jokes.

Michael also does volunteer work with senior citizens, Boy Scouts, and local schools, and does motivational speaking to large groups.

"But my first job, my most important job, is single dad," he said. "My day begins when one of them licks me to wake me up. Then it's just making sure each one is eating their own breakfast and we're off."

When Michael isn't doing stand-up, volunteering, or speaking, he's helping to run a bar – Cora's 1850 Bistro. The bistro hosted several comedy nights with proceeds benefiting The Seeing Eye. Michael had been a bartender there before losing his sight, and sometimes still gets behind the bar. "I know what's in

each bottle and where they are," he said. "I haven't mixed a drink yet that had to be poured down the drain."

Since he was paired with Mac, Michael says, his walk to work has gone from 45 minutes to 12. "I used to be able to listen to an entire CD, now I only get through two or three songs," he said.

The route he takes includes a stretch along the riverfront. "If you go too far to the left you fall down the hill, and if you go too far to the right you fall down the hill," he said. "Walking it with a

GRADUATE PROFILE Michael Dougherty

cane, I just didn't have a lot of confidence. It was very slow going. Now we just fly along.

"The day I folded up my cane was like a new chapter of my life beginning," Michael said. "It's a completely different method of mobility. You're working with somebody. It really is like getting a working set of eyes."

Dog and daughter have a wonderful relationship, he said. "It's obvious The Seeing Eye took into consideration that he was going to go into a home with a little girl, because Mac is so comfortable around Mchaley," he said. "He's a big dog, but he's really just a big baby. He loves to be loved."

One activity Mac can't do with them is swimming at the pool. While Mac watches, Michael and Mchaley get into the water together. "Mchaley will take my hand and lead me to the stairs, and she says: 'Now I'm the Seeing Eye dog, daddy.'"

When Michael was 12, he went to the doctor with a cold. He woke up in the hospital after falling into a coma, and was told he had diabetes. His blood sugar level was 2,350. (Over 120 is considered bad.) He learned years later that it was at that time the highest blood sugar level ever recorded. "They tested me seven times. They just couldn't believe it," he said.

Ten years later, Michael hurt his shoulder playing football, and a routine blood test turned up more troubling news. "The doctor told me to come in to talk about the results," Michael said. "I joked to my friends, 'Well, at least I know it can't be cancer –

I already have diabetes.'"

But it was. Michael had chronic myelogenous leukemia, cancer of the white blood cells. The two were unrelated – "Two bad rolls of the dice," Michael said, one genetic, the other a chromosome disorder.

His blindness, however, was caused by the combination of the two. When his sight began to decline, and told he would likely soon lose it all, Michael said he began "practicing."

"I actually started doing things around the house with my eyes shut. I would wash dishes with my eyes closed, and do laundry, and whatever else I could do around the house. Then I could open my eyes and see how I did," he said.

He lost most of his usable sight five days before he found out his child was coming. "If there's a perfect time to go blind, this was the perfect time," he said. "Don't get me wrong. Losing my sight wasn't easy. But after 20 years of diabetes and 10 years of leukemia, I had already punched my pillows and cried my tears. I knew I just had to do it.

"The only thing I wanted was to see Mchaley. When she was born, I had only a little bit of light perception left. It was just enough to see the light reflecting off her eyes, so I knew her eyes were open and looking at me. I've never been able to see her smile, but I can hear her laugh, and we're doing just fine. She's perfect. She's 2 ½ and she's already reading – not *War and Peace*, but she is reading, and I'm so proud of her," he said.



Photos by Lori Ryan

donor profile

KARIN *and* BARRY KOLSKY



Karin and Barry Kolsky inside Speedwell Design Center in Morristown with their 'career change' dog, Bacchus.

CELEBRATING... WITH THE SEEING EYE

When long-time Seeing Eye supporters Karin Stoetzer and Barry Kolsky got married, they knew they'd get a lot of gifts – but they didn't want any.

Instead, Karin and Barry asked those attending their wedding to make donations to The Seeing Eye.

"I just love everything you do at The Seeing Eye," Karin said. "The training that goes into the dogs at The Seeing Eye in order to help people be more independent is just amazing. The Seeing Eye proves that dogs can do magical things that no human or machine could do."

Barry, the owner of Speedwell Design Center in Morristown, is a long-time supporter of The Seeing Eye. In fact, he made a gift to name a Seeing Eye puppy Speedwell – an apt name if you've ever seen our graduates and their dogs!

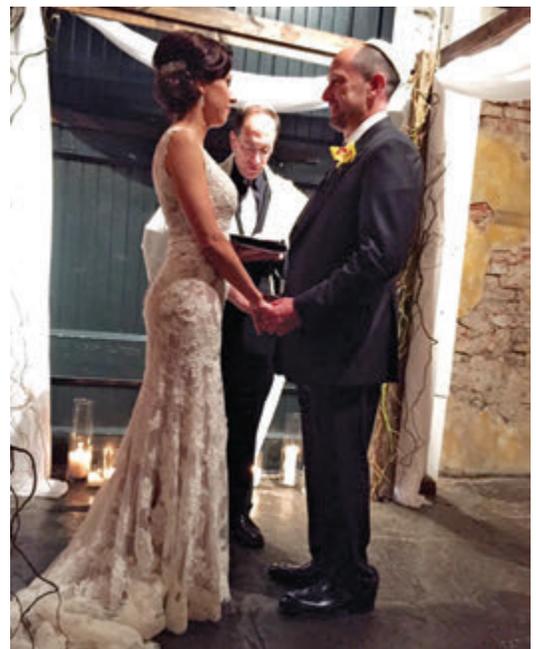
In addition to doing marketing for Speedwell Design Center, serving as yoga program director at BeWell Morristown, and teaching yoga herself, Karin has been volunteering for The Seeing Eye for more than five years.

She also does pet therapy with her dog Bacchus – a German shepherd "career change" dog she adopted from The Seeing Eye – at Morristown Medical Center, nursing homes, and other locations.

"We stay very busy," she said. "Although he is 85 pounds, I take him with me almost everywhere."

Barry and Karin were married in April 2015 in New Orleans during the first weekend of the New Orleans Jazz Festival, which they've attended together for the last seven years.

"The Seeing Eye, in a way, brought me back to life after I was laid off when the homebuilding industry crashed," Karin said. "After I was laid off, I decided to volunteer while I figured out what to do with my career. I fell in love with The Seeing Eye, made great friends, and eventually adopted Bacchus. Barry and I continue to be blown away by the work The Seeing Eye does to improve the lives of those who are visually impaired."



puppy raisers

The Sherman girls with their first Seeing Eye puppy, Orli in April 2010. From left, Sydney, Danielle, and Jacquelyn.



The Family that Raises Together...

"How can you give back such a wonderful dog?"

It's a question Seeing Eye puppy raisers hear all the time.

"It's not easy," said Diana Sherman, leader of the Lower Bucks Pups Puppy Club in Pennsylvania. "But honestly, it's harder for me when the dogs don't get accepted into the program. It's like when your child is old enough to go off to college – of course it is bittersweet. You don't want them to leave, but you want them to succeed in their next stage in life."

With very few exceptions, Seeing Eye dogs are born at The Seeing Eye's breeding facility and spend their first eight weeks there. But then they are taken to volunteer families who live within driving distance of the Morristown campus, who raise the puppies until they are 14 to 16 months old, when they return to The Seeing Eye to begin their training. The puppy raiser family teaches basic obedience and good "house manners," goes on outings to restaurants and stores, and attends monthly puppy club meetings where the dogs learn how to behave around other dogs and people.

Diana, along with her husband, Rush, and daughters Danielle, 20, Sydney, 18, and Jacquelyn, 16, are now raising their fifth puppy for The Seeing Eye. Sassy, like the previous four, is a female German shepherd. Diana explained that their "forever dog" is a male Labrador retriever, and her daughters wanted to ensure he would always have a unique place in their home.

Like all puppy raisers, the Shermans got their start as a foster family – taking in

puppies from Seeing Eye puppy raisers in their area who were going on vacation or otherwise needed a puppysitter. It's a great way for potential puppy raisers to learn firsthand if the program is right for them; it's also good exposure for the puppies, who learn at an early age to adjust to new people and new surroundings. Most families foster for a few months before they get their first puppy, but not the Shermans.

"For us, fostering made sense, so we did that for almost two years," Diana said. They finally took home their first puppy, Orli, on Christmas Eve, 2008.

"It was fun for the kids to have a puppy in the house for a few weeks – sometimes more than one puppy," Diana said. "And it was easier to give the puppy back, because the kids knew going into it that someone else was raising it and we were just puppysitters. And then they got to see the puppies at the club meetings."

The puppies really got an education when they were staying with the Shermans. They live on a family farm with chickens, horses, pigs, and other animals. "We have the club picnic at our house every year, so every puppy gets a chance to meet a chicken and a pig and a pony," she said. "It's like a puppy petting zoo!"

Diana thinks Sassy has what it takes to be a great Seeing Eye dog.

"She's very sharp. She really stands out," Diana said. "She is very confident and obedient – but she also can be quirky and playful."

Sydney, who graduated from high school, will attend the University of Texas at



Diana and Rush Sherman with their daughters, from left, Sydney, Jacquelyn, and Danielle, their current Seeing Eye puppy Sassy, and family dog Coco.

Dallas this fall with the help of a Josephine Aresty Seeing Eye Puppy Raiser scholarship. She intends to study biomedical engineering with the hope of doing research into neuro-electrophysiology – designing nerve implants that would replace disabled nerves, giving doctors the ability to treat diabetes, hypertension, and other diseases without medication.

After raising five puppies, Sydney said it does get easier to give the dogs back – but she admitted it won't be easy to say good-bye to Sassy.

"She's just an amazing dog, with a great personality," Sydney said. "But we raised her knowing she has a special purpose."

50 years ago

The original beech tree, taken in 2010 about a year before it was killed by a Halloween snowstorm.

GROWING ROOTS

Fifty years ago, The Seeing Eye set down roots in the Washington Valley section of Morris Township. And this year, fittingly, we set down roots again.

In the early 1800s, a sapling took root in a field overlooking a bucolic valley, not far from the town where just a few years before General George Washington had made his headquarters between December 1779 and June 1780.

The sapling, a European beech, grew to a magnificent size. And in 1965, it was here when the property in the area now known as Washington Valley was sold to The Seeing Eye. The student dormitory wing of the Main House was built in its shadow. And its huge limbs, with its vibrant red leaves, spread out over a wooden patio built for students and their dogs for relaxation and conversation after a long day of training.

Over the years, age and a parasitic mold infection known as Phytophthora severely weakened the tree. Efforts were made to extend its life, but the final blow came in October 2011, when a freak Halloween snowstorm ripped off several huge branches. A massive crane had to be brought onto the site to remove the huge trunk, as big around as a dinner table.

But, thanks to the efforts of Seeing Eye employees and a biology professor, the story didn't end there.

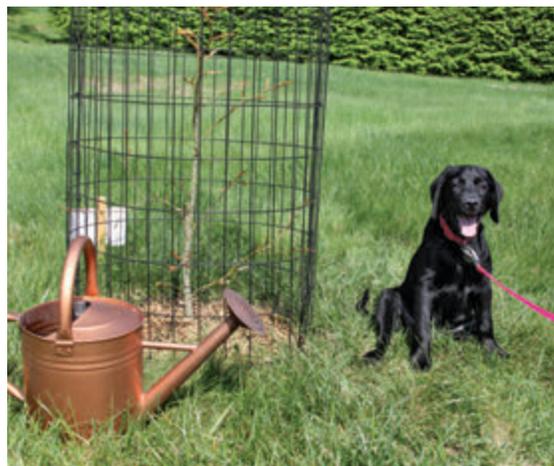
Seeing Eye employees Jennifer Lieberman, Candace Zeman, and Craig Garretson consulted with

Dr. Thomas Ombrello, a biology professor at Union County College in Cranford. The professor, one of the nation's foremost experts on growing offspring from historic trees, advised the employees on what to do next – gather as many beech nuts as could be found under the dead tree, take the seeds out of the soft-shelled nuts, and float them in a bucket of water. The seeds that sank to the bottom were viable. Out of the more than 100 nuts gathered, only 13 sank. The 13 lucky seeds were taken to the college's tree nursery. It took more than three years, but under Dr. Ombrello's

care, two of the saplings have grown to about 3 feet tall – large enough to return to The Seeing Eye campus.

On Arbor Day, April 24, the trees were unveiled to staff in their new home on the front lawn of the 60-acre campus.

"The Seeing Eye, as the world's oldest guide dog school, has always been interested in history," said Seeing Eye President & CEO Jim Kutsch. "It's very fitting that we will be able to preserve some history with the planting of these two saplings, and in the year of our 50th anniversary in Washington Valley. It's our hope these trees will flourish and be here to provide shade for generations of students and their Seeing Eye dogs, just as their progenitor was. They are symbolic of our commitment to our graduates and supporters that we will be here as long as people need Seeing Eye dogs."



Seeing Eye puppy Xylar, a female black Labrador/golden retriever cross, sits next to the newly planted beech tree. In a few years they will both be much bigger!

Seeing Eye Trustees Host Fundraisers

Fundraising at The Seeing Eye got its start in the 1930s with Dorothy Harrison Eustis and her friends hosting cocktail parties in Philadelphia and New York City. In one famous story, told by Morris Frank in *The First Lady of The Seeing Eye*, Morris was speaking to a potential donor about making a gift. After listening to Morris's appeal, the man handed over a generous check. As Morris stood to leave, he heard Buddy's feet hit the floor – and Morris belatedly realized “she had been making herself comfortable on a luxuriously upholstered sofa.”

Morris went to scold her, but the donor stopped him. “Don't say a word to her,” he said. “All the time you were talking she had her head on the arm of the sofa, gazing straight at me. It wasn't what you said that made me give you the thousand dollars; it was looking into that dog's eyes – I just couldn't refuse her.”

Trustees, graduates, and Seeing Eye dogs are still a winning combination today! This year, Seeing Eye Trustees Ari Benacerraf and Karon C. Bales have hosted events, welcoming dozens of donors and friends, and in September, Board of Trustees Vice Chair Tom Duffy will host another. Lloyd Burlingame and his third Seeing Eye dog, a yellow Labrador/golden cross named Al, attended the Benacerraf event, held in New York City. Kay Leslie and her fourth Seeing Eye dog, a golden retriever named Jordan, joined Bales at the Verity in Toronto. Seeing Eye President Jim Kutsch, with his eighth Seeing Eye dog, Vegas, and Director of Instruction & Training Dave Johnson attended both events.

Our graduates spoke eloquently about the tremendous self-confidence, mobility, and independence that Seeing Eye dogs bring. But as Morris discovered more than 80 years ago, there's nothing more persuasive than looking into a dog's eyes!



Seeing Eye Trustee Ari Benacerraf and his wife, Margarita, hosted a friends' event at their home in May.

GOING... GOING... GONE!

The Seeing Eye held its sixth annual online auction this spring, raising more than \$86,000!

We had many one-of-a-kind Seeing Eye experiences offered, including a tour for two of The Seeing Eye breeding station, which sold for \$2,050, and spending a day in New York City with Seeing Eye instructors, which sold for \$2,000. A customized Seeing Eye jacket, donated by Pinnacle Graphics, sold for \$1,200, and a custom-designed Seeing Eye leather harness, donated by Hava Hegenbarth, sold for \$700.

Long-time Seeing Eye supporter Betty White donated autographed copies of *Betty White: The Illustrated Biography* and *Betty & Friends: My Life at the Zoo*, which sold for \$710 and \$550, respectively.

Thank you to all our bidders and item donors, and also to our auction sponsors: the Pangere Corporation, National Industries for the Blind, NK Architects, McCarter & English, and BAUM Retec.



Raisin, a female German shepherd, retired from her work as a Seeing Eye dog and was adopted by Ralph and Helen Birkel. As is the case with many “retirees”, Raisin wanted to keep busy and found a second career in the Reading for Dogs Program at the Live Oak Public Library in Savannah, Georgia. In this photo, Raisin listens patiently as young Meredith Hartley reads to her. The program, for readers aged 5 and up, encourages children to practice their reading skills by having them read to patient, loving dogs. The Birkels and The Anton and Augusta Birkel Foundation have been generous supporters of The Seeing Eye since 1998.

To Boldly Go Where No Puppy Has Gone Before!

Seeing Eye puppy Albus, a yellow Labrador/golden cross, and his puppy raiser, Katie Letson, attended the Wizard World Convention in Philadelphia in May.

Attending a bustling convention full of people wearing strange costumes is great exposure for Seeing Eye puppies, who have to be prepared to go just about anywhere and meet almost anyone... even Hollywood stars!

Katie, who is the Washington Valley Kennels supervisor, snapped a great picture of Karl Urban, who plays Dr. McCoy in the new *Star Trek* movies, hugging Albus while the puppy was wearing his blue *Star Trek* T-shirt!

She also took a picture of Albus wearing

his Seeing Eye Puppy Raiser Program vest (appropriately green) while being hugged by Stephen Amell, who plays the Green Arrow on the CW series *The Arrow*.

Amell shared the photo with his Facebook followers and it reached more than 1.37 million people!

The Seeing Eye has nearly 100,000 followers on Facebook. Join us at www.Facebook.com/SeeingEye.



Karl Urban, who plays Dr. McCoy in the new Star Trek movies, hugs Seeing Eye puppy Albus at the Wizard World Convention, held in May in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Photo courtesy of Katie Letson



www.eone-time.com



www.HealthyVisionAssociation.com



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Volunteers Help with Spring Cleaning in May

Givaudan Fragrances Corporation sent 10 volunteers to help The Seeing Eye with spring cleaning in May. They came ready to work, pulling weeds, planting flowers, and raking mulch! But it wasn't all hard work as they got a chance to meet Seeing Eye puppies.

If your corporation is interested in having employees volunteer to spend a day at The Seeing Eye, contact us at (973) 539-4425.



The Seeing Eye

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Seeing Eye® is a registered trademark for guide dogs of The Seeing Eye, Inc., and is its registered service mark for training dogs as guides and instructing visually impaired individuals in their use and care. The Seeing Eye admits and offers students of any race, color, religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or ancestry all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or ancestry in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

The Seeing Eye follows the guidelines recommended by the Council of U.S. Dog Guide Schools for the humane care and training of dogs to be guides, and the instruction and graduate services offered to people who are blind or visually impaired.

The Seeing Eye is an accredited member of the International Guide Dog Federation. The mission of The Seeing Eye is to enhance the independence, dignity and self-confidence of people who are blind, through the use of specially trained Seeing Eye dogs.

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