

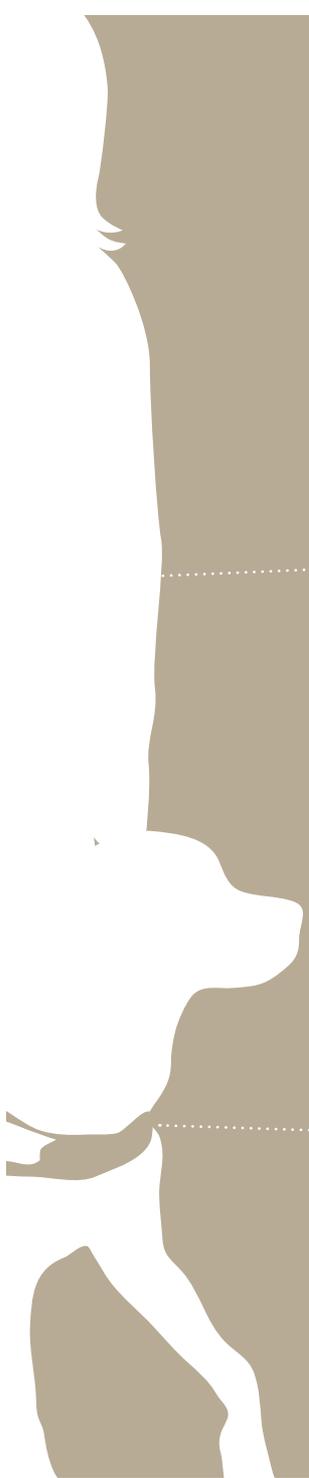
STATE BOARD OF GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

[re]view 2008

by ANTONETTE SORRICK, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

guide dog board





STATE BOARD OF GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

PRESIDENT: Jeff Neidich

VICE PRESIDENT: Tom Scott

SECRETARY: Tony Candela

BOARD MEMBERS: Amy Lyons, Belinda Barragan, Eric Holm, Lindsay Schnaidt

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2008

was a busy and productive year for the State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

We held 5 Board meetings and 6 committee meetings, increased our outreach, began a new strategic plan, created a new Web site, and accomplished many other things.

And, for the first time in many years, the Board now has a full complement of members with new members Amy Lyons, Belinda Barragan, Eric Holm, and Lindsay Schnaidt.

Here is a brief look at our activities in 2008.

“ [On Guide Dog Day the] spirit of this partnership between all three California guide dog schools, the Board, and the assistance dog community was evident during the school updates, the ADA panel discussion, and the roundtable discussing emerging issues. ”

—Keith Tomlinson, Instructor
Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc.

STRATEGIC PLAN

We began a new five-year Strategic Plan with input from guide dog instructors, Board members, and guide dog users. The plan will be completed by August 2009.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- ★ **Guide Dog Day: Harnessing the Power of Partnership** was held November 18, 2008, in Los Angeles. Consumer groups, guide dog schools, and service animal organizations met to discuss such topics as ADA regulatory changes, services, and new and emerging issues. The program was part of the Department of Consumer Affairs’ Professionals Achieving Consumer Trust (PACT) Summit, which brought together nearly all of DCA’s licensing entities and their stakeholder groups.
- ★ Board members and staff attended several conferences this year, including:
 1. **California Association of Guide Dog Users Annual Seminar**
(Board President Neidich and Executive Officer Sorrick).
 2. **California Council of the Blind Spring Convention**
(Board Secretary Candela and Executive Officer Sorrick).
 3. **California Council of the Blind Fall Convention**
(Board Secretary Candela).
- ★ Board President Neidich and Executive Officer Sorrick gave educational presentations on guide dogs and guide dog users to eight third-grade classes.
- ★ Board President Neidich, Secretary Candela, and Member Barragan toured Canine Companions for Independence, an assistance dog school in Santa Rosa.
- ★ We launched a new toll-free number—866.512.9103—for in-state callers.

LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND ADVOCACY

- ★ **JULY 2008:** We deleted Sections 2274 and 2277 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations that mandated disclosure requirements that are now outdated and violate the Americans With Disabilities Act and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act. We also made a minor change to Section 2250 to reflect our current address.
- ★ **AUGUST 2008:** We initiated a legislative proposal to make the Board fiscally solvent by 2010. The bill will be introduced in the 2009–10 legislative session.
- ★ **SEPTEMBER 2008:** We held our first Practice Task Force meeting. This task force will review statutes and regulations for Board action.
- ★ Also in 2008, we formally supported State Senate Bill 1174 (Lowenthal) and House of Representatives Bill 5734 (Towns). Support letters are posted on our Web site.

INSPECTIONS

We inspected all three Board-licensed guide dog training schools. All three passed inspection.

WEB SITE

Our Web site now has a new look and feel. It is now more user-friendly and fully loaded with information on State and Federal laws and regulations. It includes a license lookup feature that allows employers and consumers to search for the license status of a school or guide dog instructor. Check it out at www.guidedogboard.ca.gov.

We also created an e-mail subscription service to share news and updates from the Board.

NEW EXAMINATION

In February 2008, we began a new testing procedure. The testing procedure had not been changed since the Board's inception in 1947. The occupational analysis is currently being reviewed by the International Guide Dog Federation.

LOOKING AHEAD

As a result of the Board's hard work in 2008, we are well positioned to meet the challenges of 2009. Among the things we'll be focusing on are finalizing the Board's Strategic Plan and continuing to update our Web site to make it a premiere resource for stakeholders. We will also be making additional efforts to leverage partnerships to address emerging issues, such as vicious dogs, accessibility, and overall outreach and education about issues involving guide dogs and guide dog users.

