

Tuesday, Dec 18, 2007

[Click here to go back to search results.](#)



Oakland Tribune, The (CA){PUBLICATION2}

June 13, 2002
Section: Bay Area Living
Article ID: 671461



Dogs are name of Diane **Bassett's** game

Dhyana Levey - Contributor

Everyone loves Diane **Bassett's** dogs. In fact, **Bassett** estimates she gets stopped about 25 times a day by people wanting to admire and discuss her furry friends. She schedules an extra half-hour a day for running errands because she gets interrupted so often.

These dogs are not your average healthy, good-natured canines. They are being trained to help people who have physical limitations caused by multiple sclerosis, strokes and serious accidents.

So all the attention in public is a good thing because interacting with people is an important part of their training. Service dogs must be monitored in every situation and must be focused and physically sound, says **Bassett**, a puppy-raiser for Canine Companions for Independence, an organization that provides dogs to the disabled.

"They must have extraordinary personalities and be interested in working with people," she says. **Bassett** just brought a new puppy to her home in San Bruno to start training. Nika is a 13-week-old yellow Labrador/golden retriever mix. When Nika was 9-weeks old, **Bassett** picked the pup up at CCI's headquarters, where the organization has its own breeding program. **Bassett** will train Nika until the dog is 1 1/2 years old.

"She is already learning really quickly," **Bassett** says. "She comes from a good gene pool, and we have very high expectations for her." Nika is being taught how to be appropriate while **Bassett** is getting ready for her day. Nika must be calm and focused even while activity takes place around her. At this point, she stays home most of the time.

"She is not quite ready to go out yet, but when she is a little older I will start taking her to the grocery store, BART, restaurants, church," **Bassett** says. "I've even taken a dog with me to the ballet before."

She says it is very important to get the dogs used to going everywhere they will go with their new owners. They wear yellow jackets to identify them as service dogs in training, which makes it easier to take them to places where canine attendance is normally prohibited. Nika is the ninth puppy **Bassett** has raised. Before Nika can go on to become a service dog, she must pass strict requirements.

Once a dog finishes its education with a puppy raiser, it goes on to advanced

Search

The **InsideBayArea** network of sites —

Choose a Publication

- REAL ESTATE
- RENTALS
- CAREERS
- AUTO
- CLASSIFIEDS

[Shop local sales and specials from our newspapers](#)

NEWS

- Local and Regional
- State, Nation, World
- Obituaries

SPORTS

- Raiders
- 49ers
- Warriors
- Sharks
- Prep Sports
- Cal Sports
- Columnists

BUSINESS NEWS

BAY AREA LIVING

- Food
- Health
- Travel

SPECIAL REPORTS

- Multimedia Features

OPINION

InsideBayArea **Buy Yo**

RESOURCES

[Contact Info](#)

[Subscriber Services](#)

[ANG Jobs](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Teacher Support](#)

[Contests](#)

[RSS Feeds](#)

training. This where the dog learns specific commands and obedience training to act as the arms, legs and ears for people with mobility or hearing impairments. These dogs have excellent retrieval skills and can do anything from turning off a light switch to giving a cashier money. If a dog cannot meet the challenges presented in advanced training, it does not graduate to become a service dog.

If a dog does not graduate it has a "career change." This means the dog becomes a regular pet and the puppy raiser or someone on a long waiting list has the option to adopt it. Many people are interested in adopting these dogs because, although they did not meet the requirements to become service dogs, they are still in great shape and incredibly well-behaved.

"Not every dog makes it," she says. "But getting that phone call regarding your dog's career change is so heartbreaking. You just want your dog to graduate so bad."

Four of **Bassett's** puppies have not graduated. She says the average success rate for puppy trainers is about 50 percent.

Bassett has been raising puppies since 1990. She says the biggest fear she had about the process was the thought of getting attached to a dog and then having to give it back. It was not as bad as she thought it would be.

"It's kind of like sending your kid off to college," she says. "It's not 'goodbye' forever. A lot of times I've stayed in touch with the person who received a dog I trained."

Bassett shares the same passion for marketing and business as she does for dog training. She spends her days doing marketing work for high-tech and bio-tech companies in the Bay Area.

Elise Rosenzweig, an old friend of **Bassett's** and a former co-worker, believes **Bassett** is a good dog trainer for the same reasons she is a good businesswoman.

"She is incredibly knowledgeable, open-minded and easy to approach," Rosenzweig says. "This makes her very successful. People can come to her with their problems, and she is non-judgmental and a great problem solver."

In addition to marketing work and puppy training, **Bassett** also has her own business, Dog Training With Diane. She teaches canines and their owners proper training techniques at San Bruno and Pacifica Parks and Recreation.

She has two dogs of her own: Daisy, a sheep dog, and Piper, a Gordon setter. These dogs also make their contribution to society. Daisy and Piper are certified therapy dogs for Stanford Hospital. Every Friday, **Bassett** takes them to the psychiatric ward to interact with the patients.

According to Rosenzweig, no matter how busy **Bassett** gets, she always finds a way to keep dogs in her life. "I come from a family of dog lovers," **Bassett** says. "With a name like **Bassett**, we kind of have to be a family that loves dogs."

(c) 2002 The Oakland Tribune. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Media NewsGroup, Inc. by NewsBank, Inc.

[Mortgage Rates at 4.](#)
\$170,000 loan for \$65
See New Payment - N
Rqd. Save Now!
[Refinance.LeadSteps.com](#)

[Mortgage Refinance](#)
\$170,000 loan for und
\$560/month. Get 4 Fre
Refinance Quotes Fast
<http://Refinance.4Mortgag>

[Mortgage Rates at 5.](#)
Fixed
Fed Fund Rates Drop .
Lower Your Monthly
Act Fast!
www.MortgageSavingZon

[Mortgage Rates at 4.](#)
Get \$225,000 loan for
\$914/month. Lower Y
Monthly Payment. Ac
Refinance.LoanOffer.com

[Select Comfort Beds](#)
Luxurious Comfort an
Rest. The Sleep Numb
<http://www.SelectComfort>

InsideBayArea **Buy Yo**
Click here to adv

 **Health I**

 **Daily Vi**
Casting a l
Net on Lt
Cancer

[View All Health Top](#)

[Allergy](#)
Allergy treatment
information.

[Asthma](#)
Info about the con
recent treatments.

[Pregnancy](#)
Learn how to have
healthy pregnancy

[Skin Health](#)
Treatments and
symptoms of skin