

Seeing-eye dogs take a ride on the Strasburg Railroad

BY SUZANNE KEENE
STRASBURG — The train lurched, the whistle shrieked and the rain poured, but the seven Labradors and golden retrievers riding the train at the Strasburg Railroad last Sunday were un-

concerned about the unfamiliar environment around them. The dogs, which will eventually become seeing-eye dogs, were accompanied by their temporary guardians, members of the Lively Leaders 4-H Seeing Eye Puppy

Club from Wenonah, New Jersey. The group makes an annual trip to the railroad to expose the dogs to a new situation, club leader Lorraine Hudson said. Club members receive the puppies when they are about eight weeks old, raise them for 12 to 14 months, then say good-bye to their friends when they leave for formal training in Morristown.

During those months, the 4-H'ers teach the dogs four basic commands - Come, Sit, Down, and Rest - and how to sit and rest at the end of a lead.

However, "The main thing is to teach them to respond to love," Lorraine said.

The idea, she continued, is not to beat the dogs into submission or to be harsh. When correction is necessary, a quick jerk on the choke collar usually does the job.

The Seeing Eye school in Morristown could raise all the dogs they need in the kennels, Lorraine explained, but added, "that doesn't make the best dogs."

Dogs raised in a family atmosphere, she continued, become accustomed to people and noise, and don't spook easily. The dogs also receive more individual attention in homes than they would in kennels.

Club members Steven and Michele Dubois are working with their second seeing-eye dog, Poker, who took his train ride all in stride. He sat between his guardians, apparently undisturbed by his environment.

Poker began his stay with the Dubois family in October, helping to relieve the gap that opened when the family's first dog, a black Labrador, left for school. Michele and Steven's parents, John and Barbara, take an active interest in the dog's as well.

John said Poker moved in with the family about one month before their first dog, Dega, left, helping to make the transition easier. Even so, saying goodbye was difficult.

"It was hard, but you knew it was going for a good cause," Steven said, explaining his feelings about Dega's leaving.

"I was the basket case," their mother, Barbara, confessed. "I had a rough night the night before."

John, a Methodist minister, said that Dega became a member of both the family and the congregation. Dega attended church every Sunday, napping under a pew during the service.

"He would go to sleep for the

sermon and wake up for the benediction," John joked.

At first, John said, he was skeptical about how the congregation would react to having a dog in church. But to his delight "they really took to it. Now they expect to see the dog," he continued.

Sometimes, a dog isn't able to progress in the program because of health or temperament problems. For example, Tony Kaminski said his family was able to keep two-year-old Wicki, a golden retriever they raised for the customary year but which did not pass the physical because of cataracts.

"After a year of training, we'd certainly like to have any of them back," he explained.

When the dogs have finished their training at the school, the 4-H'ers are permitted to observe them working with the trainers from a distance, but are not permitted to greet the dog.

"When you see the dog with the trainers, there's no way in the world you would really want to take it back," Barbara said.

Lancaster County is forming its own seeing-eye dog program this summer. Anyone between the ages of 8 and 19 interested in raising a seeing-eye dog is invited to attend an organizational meeting to be held at the Farm and Home Center on July 3 at 7:30 p.m.



Steven and Michele Dubois, pose with Poker, a seeing-eye dog they will be caring for during the next several months.



Yellow Labrador Fax seems to be enjoying his ride on the train at Strasburg Railroad, while his guardian, 4-H'er Jennifer Carrigan, keeps a close eye on him.

Five Solid Ways To Improve Your Farm:

1

UPRIGHT BUNKER SILOS

- Low cost storage
- Fast installation
- Moveable



2

MANURE PITS

- Poured in place or precast concrete
- Above or below ground
- SCS approved



3

FEED BUNK

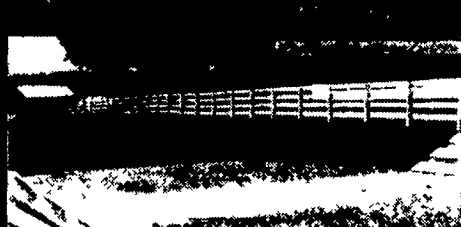
- Long lasting reinforced precast concrete
- 3 styles of H-Bunk available
- 4 styles of J-Bunk available



4

CATTLE GUARDS

- No more opening and closing gates
- 12' and 16' available
- Maintenance free precast concrete



5

MONOLITHIC CONCRETE SILOS

- 6" steel reinforced solid concrete walls
- Conventional top unloading
- Oxygen controlled bottom unloading



Sollenberger Silos Corp.

A Nitterhouse Company
 Box N Chambersburg, PA 17201 [717] 264-9588
 A Producer of Quality Concrete Products Since 1923

Sollenberger Silos Corp
 Box N, Chambersburg, PA 17201

Please send information on

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

1. Upright Bunker Silos
 2. Manure Pits
 3. Feed Bunk
 4. Cattleguards
 5. Monolithic Concrete Silos