

# Leader dog, master are inseparable team

by Tom Anderson  
NU School of Journalism

Six months ago a Lincoln man nearly gave up being a door-to-door salesman. He found it a nightmarish experience. He is blind.

Today Richard D. Zlab, 42, continues to earn his living as a door-to-door salesman. But he now enjoys the job.

The reason is Limpopo, a Labrador retriever that has been trained to act as his eyes.

"TRICYCLES, lamp posts, open manholes and crossing streets in heavy traffic are simply not the great problems they used to be," he said.

"It's hard to tell a sighted person what it means for a blind person like me to be able to get around independently."

Zlab, blind since birth, previously used a cane when walking without the assistance of a sighted person. This was satisfactory at times, he said. But in many situations he found that a cane was inadequate.

"More than once I have stood on a street corner for what seemed like hours before I got the courage to cross," he said.

Zlab got his dog from Leader Dogs for the Blind, of Rochester Mich. The school, a nonprofit institution founded in 1939 by two Lions Club members, trains leader dogs and their eventual masters.

"I GOT TO the point where I was about to give up being a salesman," he said. "I had heard about these dogs before, so I finally talked to a man in the department for the visually handicapped at the Capitol.

"I never realized before the great opportunity I had been passing up. If you are qualified, it is very easy to get a dog."

There are two other schools of this type in the country: The Seeing Eye Inc., of Morristown, N.J., and Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc., of San Rafael, Calif. All three have similar qualifying procedures.

Applicants must:  
—be legally blind, meaning a minimum light perception of 20-200 or less.  
—be at least 16-year-old because dogs need a mature master.  
—have good character references.  
—be able to walk briskly two miles twice each day.

—promise that the leader dog will not be used for begging purposes.

Zlab sent in the necessary forms. Within two weeks, he was contacted by the school about a convenient time for him to attend the 28-day course. Two months later, he flew to Rochester.

"It was a fabulous experience," he said. "In those 28 days I was taught, by a very good instructor, how to use my leader dog, Limpopo."

"In that short time we became a team that is hard to describe. We have the utmost respect and affection for each other."

Here he learned such basic information as the commands to use on the dog, the way in which a dog transfers information to his master through the harness, disciplinary procedures to be used with the dog, and general feeding and medical care instructions.

After the first week he began to work with Limpopo. The dog had already gone through a strenuous four-month training program at the school.

At first, Zlab, the dog and an instructor worked for short periods on a practice course. After a week they moved to the streets of Rochester. And finally, as a graduation exercise, to the busy streets of Pontiac, Mich.

"After I was introduced to Limpopo, he never left my side," Zlab said. "I fed him, bathed him and slept in the same room with him. We became an inseparable team."

LIMPOPO'S TRAINING costs about \$2,500. But the dog was given to Zlab at no charge.

The school is financed by the Lion's Club, by various groups such as the Kennel Club of America, and by individual grants. Since its founding in 1939, the school has trained 2,612 leader dogs and 1,283 masters.

Limpopo and his fellow leader dogs are an elite group of animals.

Of all the dogs selected by the school to go through its training program, only 30 per cent are graduated. The most intelligent, friendly, physically sound, responsible and easily taught dogs are selected.

German shepherds, Labrador retrievers, boxers and Golden retrievers are the most commonly used dogs. All dogs must stand between 22 and 26 inches high when fully grown.

Expert instructors who have gone through a four-year apprenticeship program checked Limpopo's basic intelligence, the durability of his nervous system, his sleeping habits, his tendency to bite strangers and his consistency of attitude.

At the same time, the instructors were looking for traits that would disqualify him for leader dog service.

When Limpopo had satisfied the instructors that he was the high-quality dog they were looking for, he was assigned to the man who would be his teacher for the next four months.

"I have never gotten over the excellent job

that the instructor did in teaching Limpopo," Zlab said.

THE DOG WAS taught to lead his master any place he wants to go. Through a series of commands, the blind person can direct the dog.

Limpopo will keep Zlab out of dangerous traffic, will let him know when he has come to an obstacle, will guide him around danger and will retrieve anything the man has dropped. The dog cannot read traffic lights, but is taught to observe closely approaching cars.

It works basically on a system of repetition and reward for work well done.

"The thing that amazes me most about Limpopo," Zlab said, "is what the instructors call intelligent disobedience."

He said that if he and Limpopo come to a curb, Limpopo will sit there until Zlab orders him to cross the street.

"IF THERE IS danger in crossing the street at that time, Limpopo will ignore my order. He will wait until he thinks it is safe to cross."

Zlab said that Limpopo is really two different dogs.

"When we are at home and his harness is off, he is a playful, friendly barking family pet. He wrestles and plays with my son Jim, and loves to ham it up. He is always learning a new trick, and we love having him around."

His other side comes out when the harness is on. Limpopo is all business then. The dog becomes erect and alert, and never barks or runs when he is in harness.

THE DOG GOES everywhere with Zlab. They have ridden together on buses, trains and airplanes. They stay in the same hotel room when traveling.

Limpopo is usually at his feet when Zlab visits the doctor, gets a haircut, or goes to the dentist.

All leader dogs are allowed by law to go any place that the blind persons goes, he said.

"However, I have been in a few restaurants where the owner would not let a dog in. Whenever this happens I feel as if a member of my family has been insulted."

There are about 350,000 blind people in the nation, with about 30,000 added each year. Of these, about 3,500 have leader dogs.

"I can't understand why more blind people don't get dogs," he said. "It costs no more to feed Limpopo than an ordinary dog his size."

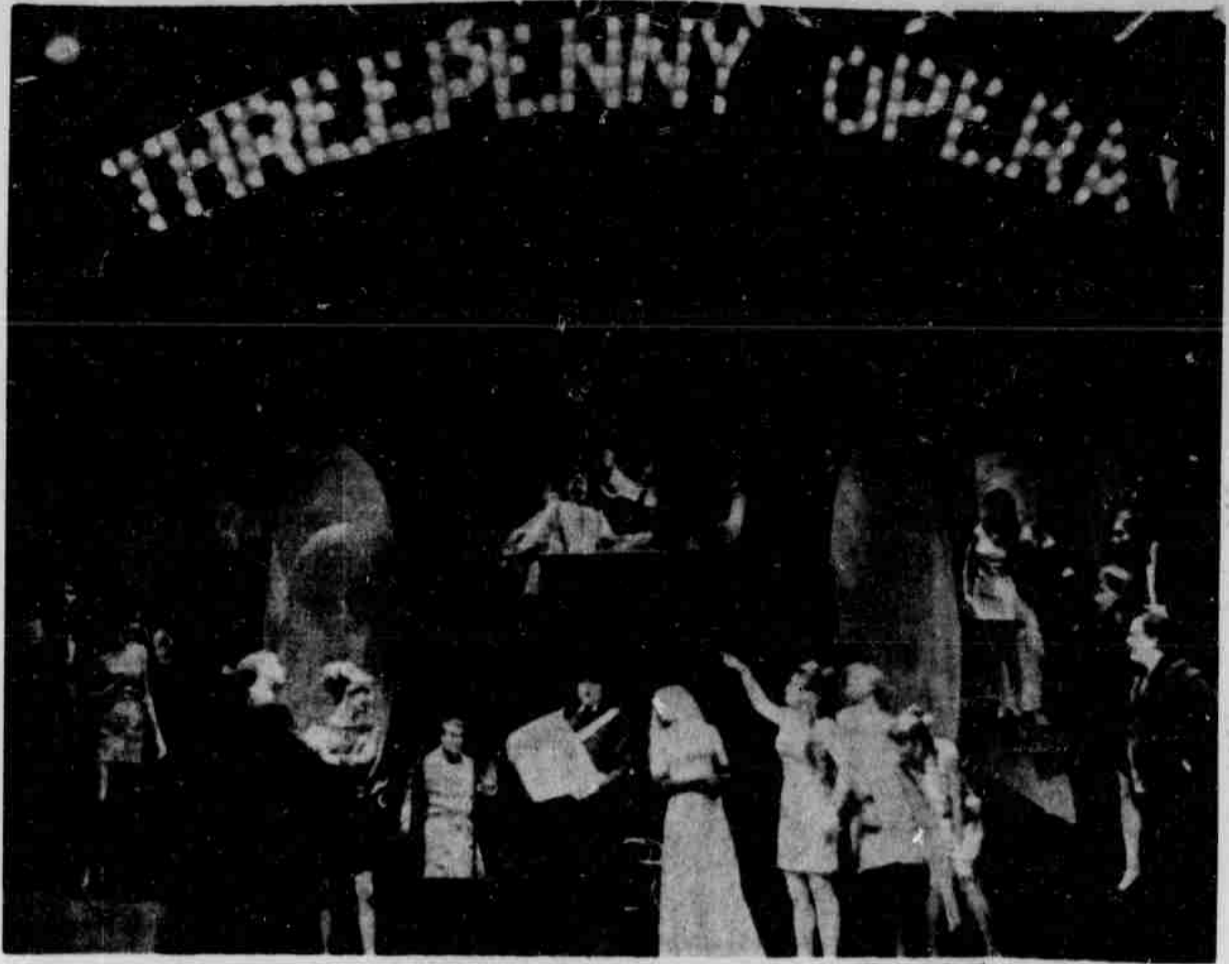
Zlab spends about \$20 a month for Limpopo's food, and he takes the dog to the veterinarian twice a year for a checkup.

R. E. CLARK, who works in the State Department for the Visually Handicapped, said that many blind people do not get a dog because of the responsibility involved.

"Many people feel that a dog would just be too much for them to care for," he said. "Also, many blind people are not physically fit enough to work a dog four brisk miles a day."

Mrs. Alice Negley of Lincoln said that she would not have a dog because it would probably pull her down the street and she would "always be afraid that it would start howling in church or something."

To this Zlab said, "And the dog would probably sound better than most people."



"Threepenny Opera", the musical with a blatantly theatrical touch is playing tonight at 8 p.m. on the Howell stage. Other performance dates are July 25, July 29 and Aug. 2. The summer of repertory theatre ends Aug. 2.

## Union hours

**Monday through Friday**  
 Building 7 a.m. — 8:30 p.m.  
 Crib 7 a.m. — 8 p.m.  
 Main desk 7 a.m. — 8 p.m.  
 Games 8:30 a.m. — 8 p.m.  
 Cafeteria 11 a.m. — 1:15 p.m., 5 — 6:30 p.m.  
 Colonial Dining Room 11:45 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.  
 Barber Shop 8 a.m. — 5 p.m.  
 Bookstore 8 a.m. — 5 p.m.

**Saturday**  
 Building 7:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.  
 Crib 7:30 a.m. — 1 p.m.  
 Main desk 7:30 a.m. — 1 p.m.  
 Barber Shop 8 a.m. — 1 p.m.  
 Bookstore 9 a.m. — 1 p.m.

**Sunday**  
 Building is closed.

## Athletic facilities

The University tennis courts, the Coliseum pool, the hand-ball courts and other recreational areas are open to student use.

Students and faculty are encouraged to utilize the athletic facilities at the University during their stay in Lincoln.

## SUMMER NEBRASKAN

Editor: Jeanell Ackerman  
 Business Manager: Mike Raglin  
 Information for publication may be brought to 319 Nebraska Hall or called in to 472-3044. The SUMMER NEBRASKAN is published eight times during the summer season—five times in the first and three in the second.

## Instructional media is feature

A contrast between Charlie Chaplin's debut in a 1929 silent flick and the newest in nonverbal films shown on a screen that is eight times brighter than the standard screen is one of the features at the first Instructional Communications Trade Fair.

The two-day fair, which will become an annual event of the summer sessions, is scheduled Tuesday, July 29 and Wednesday, July 30, in the Nebraska Union ballroom from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The newest in instructional communications equipment will be displayed by 30 local and national dealers, distributors and manufacturers, including Eastman Kodak, Sony and the Columbia Broadcasting System's educational division.

There will be demonstrations of instructional application of the media. A 43-minute, multi-screen, multimedia presentation, "Concepts of Communications," will be shown at 9 and 10:30 a.m., noon and 2 p.m. in the Centennial Room. The presentation is designed to demonstrate through viewer involvement, the power and effectiveness of audio visual communications.

The Extension Division's instructional media center, headed by Jim Buterbaugh, is sponsoring the fair.

## Flicks on campus

at Sheldon:  
 Tonight, J. M. Synge's "Playboy of the Western World," one of the classic works of the Irish theatre, is being screened. The color film features Siobhan McKenna as Pegeen Mike.

On July 29, the film will be Charles Dickens' "David Copperfield," directed by George Cukor. There are memorable performances by Freddy Bartholomew, Edna Mae Oliver, Roland Young as Uriah Heep and W. C. Fields as Mr. Micawber.

at the Union:  
 The Hollywood Classics series at the Nebraska Union small auditorium will screen the following:  
 On July 24, Laurel and Hardy are featured in "A Chump at Oxford."  
 On July 30, the 1936 film "San Francisco" will be shown. Clark Gable, Jeanette McDonald, Spencer Tracey and Jack Holt are the stars. The film had originally been scheduled for July 10 but it was unable to be shown then.  
 On July 31, chase sequences from American film comedies are combined into one film entitled, "The Great Chase."

CHelsea \$200 ALSO FROM \$00  
WEDDING RING 78  
MAN'S RING 100

**A diamond ring to treasure forever**

Each Keepsake engagement ring is a masterpiece of styling and design, reflecting the full brilliance and beauty of the perfect center diamond.

VENTURA \$200 ALSO \$120 TO \$175  
WEDDING RING 77

**REGISTERED Keepsake DIAMOND RINGS**

432-5126 1332 "O" ST.

Alvin Duskin knits are dunkable. No dry cleaning bills. Duskin knits are fashionable, Duskin knits are in the season's foremost colors.

Sketched at right is just one of the many styles to be found in our store. This one \$28. Sizes 3 to 13.

quentins

1229 R Street 432-3645

# THE LAST TWO WEEKS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
July 20	July 21	July 22	July 23	July 24	July 25	July 26
	The Chekhov List and The House Within	The Threepenny Opera	The Chekhov List and The House Within	Much Ado About Nothing	The Threepenny Opera	Much Ado About Nothing
	July 28	July 29	July 30	July 31	August 1	August 2
	Much Ado About Nothing	The Threepenny Opera	The Chekhov List and The House Within	Much Ado About Nothing	The Chekhov List and The House Within	The Threepenny Opera

HOWELL THEATRE, 12th and "R" STREETS, PHONE 472-2073. BOX OFFICE 12:00-8:30 P.M. (MONDAY THRU SATURDAY). ALL CURTAINS AT 8:00 P.M. NO RESERVED SEATS. ALL TICKETS \$1.55 INCLUDING TAX.