

## "Hearing" Dogs: New Ears For The Deaf

Dogs have long been used as the eyes of the blind. Now, dogs can also become the ears of the deaf. The "hearing" dog, like the "seeing eye" dog, can open up a whole new world for people with impaired hearing.

The hearing dog is a concept only about five years old. Training of dogs to respond to sound was started in St. Paul, Minn., in 1975 by a volunteer group. The project was transferred in 1976 to the American Humane Association in Colorado.

Since that time, training of hearing dogs has been picked up by scattered groups and individuals across the United States. With an estimated 15 million people in this country who have hearing impairment, the need for hearing dogs is very great.

Veteran trainers include Edward Ladwig, of Coloma, Mich., who himself has impaired hearing. In 1978, when he went to Andrews University to have his hearing checked, he learned about the idea of trained dogs for the deaf. Since he had given obedience training to dogs for 25 years, this seemed a natural project for him to undertake.

Ladwig has trained several hearing dogs, but it has been difficult working alone. He would like backing to open a hearing dog school, but he finds the government grant program to be "unreasonable."

"They at first wanted a school to train 50 dogs a year, and then they raised the number to 200 per year," he told FARM SHOW. "But one man can only train 4 or 5 dogs in 4 or 5 months and it really takes two people to do the training."

Ladwig now does custom training of dogs in the homes of people who have impaired hearing. The dogs learn to recognize the cry of a baby, smoke alarm, alarm clock, doorbell or telephone, and, in turn, to alert the person by licking the face, or using some other signal that doesn't depend on the hearing sense. The dog is taught the various alarms by use of a tape recorder.

"Custom training in an owner's home has the advantage of working with the dog in familiar surroundings, but I am limited in the number I can train and the distance I can go," Ladwig says.

"Most of the training schools teach the dogs in the school and then take them out for a few days of adjustment in the homes of their new owners."

Ladwig points out that you don't need fancy dogs for this use. An intelligent "mutt" from a dog pound or shelter can become a good hearing dog. He emphasizes that the most important part of the training is to treat the dogs with kindness because a dog is a sensitive animal.

"As with people, not all dogs graduate from school. But no dog will be a loss just because he doesn't learn one signal. For example, a dog that can't respond to a baby crying will be

put into the home of an older deaf person who does not have this need," he explains.

In most schools, dogs are trained like "seeing eye" dogs. The dogs are brought to the school and, when they are trained, they are taken out to an owner and given a few days to adjust to their new environment.

Most hearing dogs are placed in a home at no cost to the recipient. The cost may be covered by a government-sponsored program, or a local service organization, such as the Kiwanis or Lions, picks up the tab. One hearing school puts a price of \$1,000 on each trained dog, but they stipulate that no person who needs a dog will be turned down.

For more information on Hearing Dogs, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Edward F. Ladwig, 6940 48th Avenue, Coloma, Mich. 49038 (ph 616 468-6154).

Here are addresses of other "hearing dog" schools:

American Humane Assn., 5351 South Roslyn St., Englewood, Col. 80111 (ph 303 759-8871).

Hearing Dog, 5901 E. 89th St.,



**Margo Klug, who cannot hear, gets a kiss from her hearing dog, Otto, as a signal that her two children need attention. Otto was trained by Ed Ladwig, Coloma, Mich.**

Henderson, Col. 80640 (ph 303 287-3277).

Mr. Roy Kabat, Pres., Animal Actors of Hollywood, Box 104, Thousand Oaks, Cal. 94060 (ph 805 495-2122).

Donald MacMunn, New England Education Center, Bryant Hill Farm, 76 Bryant Road, Jefferson, Mass. 01255 (ph 617 829-9745).

### RUMBAUGH BARN ALLEY

## Look: A Bowling Alley In A Barn

Harold Rumbaugh, Colo., Iowa, converted an old livestock barn on his farm into a one-lane bowling alley for his own recreation and that of his family and friends.

The nearest commercial bowling alley is 15 miles from Rumbaugh's home. "A person who likes to bowl can spend \$25 a day just on bowling," says Harold of his \$7,000 investment. "Rumbaugh Barn Alley", as he calls it, has a regulation lane 80 ft. long and 8 ft. wide. To accommodate the bowling lane, Harold and his two sons added a 40 ft. extension to the old barn that was about 45 ft. long. They insulated the building, put in a furnace and then installed the bowling alley.

While bowling, Harold sets the temperature at 60-65° degrees in winter. He turns the thermostat to 45° at night, and the temperature never drops below 50°F.

Between last October and the first of April, the normal heating season in this part of Iowa, the furnace used only 250 gals. of LP gas. At 46¢ per gal., heating the building cost \$115. That, plus \$18 per month for electricity, represents total operating cost of the unit the first winter.

To help pay for utilities, each bowler drops a dime or so per game into a jar. Harold obtained the lane, along with five others, from a bowling alley in nearby Collins that went out of business. He said he may in-



**Harold Rumbaugh has bowled a 289 game on his "Barn Alley".**

stall another lane sometime. But, as of now, the other four lanes are for sale.

Harold, who erects Conrad steel bins for a living, moved the lanes from Collins, about 3 miles away, to his farm home with a flatbed trailer. He hired a truck with a boom to hoist the 24-ft. sections of the lane into the second story of the old barn. The boom truck also installed the automatic pin setter, which weighs more than a ton.

Initially, Harold considered installing the bowling alley in the basement of the Rumbaugh home. "But my wife didn't want that because of the noise," he told FARM SHOW.

He and his two sons worked about three months during the summer of 1979 to build the alley. He notes that a lane should be 100 ft. long. His is 80 ft. "Our approach is 12 ft. You really need 15 ft.," he points out.

The most games he has bowled is 28 in one day. "This took about 4 hrs.," says Harold, who estimates that the alley is used about 18-20 hrs. each week.

Harold says he consistently gets higher scores in his home lane now than at commercial lanes. He's 61 and enjoys bowling every day. His highest "at home" bowling score is 289, which is also the highest anyone has scored. He once scored a perfect 300 at the Collins lane when it was operating and has two plaques to prove it.

Harold and his wife have two sons, two daughters, one daughter-in-law and two sons-in-law who all like to bowl. Only one 8-year-old grandson of six grandchildren is old enough now to bowl. "But the other grandchildren soon will be bowling," he said. "Thus, this family bowling alley will pay for itself over time."