



**Tom Flynn with Soloman, the Labrador/golden retriever cross trained by Canine Companions for Independence, which also trained Derek. That's Derek (inset) at an ICCFA convention with an "I love my cemeterian" bear from Nomis.**

**Derek has this "I'm a golden retriever and you're not" attitude, but Soloman is just a real sweetie. — Tom Flynn**

## Look for a new dog in the Expo Hall

The ICCFA Convention just isn't the same without a dog to pet, and this year Derek Flynn's younger brother, Soloman, will be doing the honors.

Tom Flynn of Hillcrest Memorial Park, Hermitage, Pennsylvania, and Pet Service Advisors, will be with Soloman, who's a Labrador/golden retriever cross. Soloman and Derek, a golden retriever, aren't actually brothers. They were both provided to Flynn by Canine Companions for Independence.

In 2007, CCI had expanded its program of providing free dogs to the disabled to include veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Flynn said. Since Derek was reaching his senior years, Flynn wrote to the new CEO to see about getting another grief therapy dog. He included a link to Hillcrest's website [waronterror.org](http://waronterror.org) (Hillcrest is famous for its Avenue of Flags and its War on Terror Memorial) and a 50-year-old photo of himself in paratrooper training.

A month later, in September 2010, he and Derek traveled to Arlington, Virginia, to a program at the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, where he got to meet the CEO in person.

"Derek's always the gentleman, always well groomed and well behaved." That in-




person meeting did it, Flynn said.

By February 2011, Flynn was at the organization's training facility in Columbus, Ohio, going to class with Soloman, who at the end of two weeks was ready to go home and meet Derek.

Do the two dogs get along? "Absolutely," Flynn said.

"Derek, who just turned 13, is acting like a young dog again. They start the morning running around the house, playing tug-of-war. People had told me that if you get a younger dog in there with an older dog, this happens, the juices start flowing again. Derek is fit as a fiddle and doing great."

In fact, the only reason Derek is retired is because CCI won't let you have two working dogs, so Derek had to make way for Soloman. "I picked the Fourth of July to retire Derek," Flynn said. "I thought that was a good day for him to hang up his little blue jacket. He still goes around town, makes various appearances, but Soloman is the one who makes all the road trips now."

And that includes coming to Las Vegas for the ICCFA Convention & Expo, which Derek attended for many years, beginning in 2001. You shouldn't have any trouble spotting Soloman—he'll be sporting his official ICCFA 2012 Convention nametag. 

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