



The Retriever

Labrador Education and Rescue Network's Newsletter

Volume 6, Number 1, March 2005

L.E.A.R.N.'s mission is to assist in the rescue of unwanted Labrador Retrievers by placing them in homes through fostering, adoption and referral. In addition, we strive to provide public education regarding Labrador Retrievers and to promote responsible ownership and the humane treatment of all dogs.

On, Blitzen! By Kathy Butcher

In November Robin, another LEARN volunteer, called to ask if I wanted to evaluate a dog at the Humane Animal Welfare Society (HAWS) with her. We both love to evaluate dogs and consider it critical for LEARN. If a dog isn't evaluated, LEARN doesn't know what's being put into a foster home. Two perspectives on a dog often helps.

The evaluation entails how the dog reacts in a number of scenarios: (1) initial greeting, (2) behavior with toys/treats, (3) petting around sensitive areas, and (4) touched when eating and food sharing. We also make sure the dog gets along with other dogs, physically resembles a lab, and has a lab temperament.

This trip we met Blitzen—a four year-old purebred yellow male. He'd been at HAWS a month earlier, was



Blitzen begins the quest for a happy, healthy life

Come to LEARN's biggest fundraiser!

**The 5th Annual Luncheon & Silent Auction—
April 10th--See inside for details!**

adopted and subsequently returned. Extremely sweet, happy, and gentle, Blitzen passed the temperament test with flying colors.

The one hitch and why he was returned: urinary incontinence. Incontinence in a male dog is rare; if it's not simple to treat like bladder stones, it may not be curable. If Blitzen's problem couldn't be cured, he probably would not be adoptable. HAWS lacked the resources to try to fix the problem, so LEARN was called as Blitzen's last chance.

Robin and I concluded Blitzen deserved the chance LEARN could give him. We hoped somehow his problem would be easy to correct. The original owners never mentioned the incontinence; had they noticed?

The next problem: who'd foster an incontinent dog? Blitzen had already started to steal my heart, so I convinced my husband Eric that we should foster Blitzen. We already had a foster dog, so other LEARN volunteers, Curt and Danielle, agreed to take our current foster so we could help Blitzen.

Once home we began to notice . . . Blitzen's original owners stated he was four years-old, but his movements and teeth suggested he was closer to seven or eight. They supposedly found him as a stray. Whether from walking stretches as a stray, or being left outside for long periods, Blitzen had worn permanent scars on his back paw pads from cement. Like many other dogs at the time, Blitzen was treated for heartworms with a Proheart shot before it was taken off the market for terrible side effects. The little we learned from Blitzen showed he'd lived a hard life. The way Blitzen looked at

us—happy for any and all attention we gave—said he was now much better off than previously.

We then tried to treat Blitzen for his incontinence. We started with one medicine—didn't work. We tried another—didn't work. We kept him off medicine for a short time to see what difference we'd find. Neither medicine had been very effective; he didn't leak much more off than on medicine and we'd tried PPA or DES, considered very effective for controlling incontinence. X-raying Blitzen for signs of stones in his bladder only showed that his bladder was right where it should be.

Our vets were nearly out of options. But Blitzen worked his magic on everyone he met, so they donated a shot of testosterone to LEARN to see if that would work. Unfortunately, no success. We'd exhausted all that a normal vet's office could do.

My vet referred Blitzen to UW Madison's Veterinary Teaching Hospital. We'd fostered Blitzen for almost two months; we all hoped the Vet School could help. We got lucky: a cancellation and Blitzen was in the hospital's waiting room, making new friends already. Here Blitzen first met Jane, the student involved with his initial exam. They decided to keep him to test for an ectopic ureter, which could likely be fixed surgically. An ectopic ureter means that the ureter goes into the urethra instead of the bladder so urine dribbles out constantly. If Blitzen had this condition, it would be a condition he had since birth, so his original owners probably knew. If not, other medicines might help control the incontinence; since we'd already been down that road, I hoped for the ectopic ureter.

Blitzen stayed in Madison for the tests. Later that evening we were very happy to hear that Blitzen did, in fact, have an ectopic ureter and it was correctable by surgery. With luck, he'd have surgery that week. Another LEARN volunteer let Blitzen stay at her house in Madison until his surgery.

The Vet School succeeded in repositioning the ureter. There was a slight chance that some incontinence would remain, but that should be controllable with medication. We were thrilled!!

If Blitzen couldn't be cured, we knew he'd stay with us forever. We'd fallen in love with him and could deal with his incontinence. He got along great with our labs, and learned to behave with our cats. A great foster dog and perfect gentleman. Blitzen had suddenly become adoptable. We knew we'd have to decide, but didn't realize how quickly that decision would come.

Jane, Blitzen's vet student, called the day after his surgery and asked if we planned to adopt him. If not, she wanted to adopt him herself. We thought about it; we knew Blitzen was one in a million but decided that he deserved to be adopted by another person who realized his greatness. Jane knows everything about Blitzen's condition and will deal with it—incontinent or not. When Jane asked about "the greatest dog in the world," I knew she understood who Blitzen is.

First a hard, outdoor life. Next, surrendered, then re-surrendered. Then to LEARN. Through the help of many volunteers and the Board who wouldn't give up, Blitzen has now begun to live a happy, healthy life.

Lab Lover Challenge Sets High Bar

BIG thanks to all who contributed to the outstanding response we had during the Lab Lover Challenge! This December, to honor a beloved uncle and his dog Little Bear, an anonymous donor offered LEARN a fundraising challenge: \$500 was donated to LEARN anonymously, and if LEARN could raise another \$500, the donor would donate an additional \$500 for a \$1,000 anonymous gift.

The challenge was conducted through LEARN's website and donors contributed either through PayPal or emailed LEARN and then mailed a check.

Thanks to our many supporters, the challenge of \$500 was met quickly. \$2,530.50 was raised, for a total of

\$3,530.50. This challenge was very timely given the medical needs of great labs like Blitzen.

Alvin Robison of New Jersey, passed on in February, 2004, after a long, demanding, and generous life. He served in Pearl Harbor during World War II, and two weeks before returning home, his best friend Little Bear died. Al spent the bulk of his life caring for others. He devotedly nursed his first wife through terminal cancer and his second wife through her long struggle with Multiple Sclerosis. His shyness and modesty kept many from appreciating the scope and scale of his devotion. He spoke often of Little Bear and regularly asked about a LEARN alum he knew via photos and stories. We hope he knows that many dogs will benefit because of him.

L.E.A.R.N.'s 5th Annual Luncheon & Silent Auction

You're Invited!

Sunday April 10th—Reply Today!

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, April 10th! Join us for our Annual Luncheon and Silent Auction. The luncheon and auction are key fundraisers for L.E.A.R.N. and those who attend always have a fun, memorable time. We'll celebrate our 5th year and 600+ Adoption Anniversary—with, of course, a Lab Theme. As well as a delicious meal, we'll have an ongoing silent auction with many items to bid on before, during, and after lunch.

All proceeds help Labs in need, such as Blitzen and many others in like situations. The more people who come share the fun, the more L.E.A.R.N. can help Labs. L.E.A.R.N. is pleased to hold the luncheon and silent auction once again at *The Country Squire* in Grayslake, Illinois, so it's sure to be delicious!

And, just like last year, please bring a picture of your pet with your name on the back so you can join in on our "dog" prize! We look forward to seeing you there!

Date: Sunday, April 10th

Time: 12:00 P.M. Cash Bar. 1:00 P.M. Lunch

\$30.00 per person

Place: *The Country Squire*, Routes 120 & 45, Grayslake, Illinois

(847) 223-1021

Note: You'll find us through the banquet room doors at the west end of *The Country Squire*.

(please cut and return this portion)

Menu:

Entrée – Choice of one:

____ *Roast Sirloin of Beef* ____ *Broiled Lake Superior Whitefish* ____ *Chicken Kiev with Orange Sauce*

Entrée served with Garlic Whipped Potatoes and California Blend Vegetables, Soup & Salad

Cheesecake with Strawberry Topping

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Number Attending _____ @ \$30.00 per person

I will be unable to attend, but can help with my donation of \$ _____

Please return with your check or money order on or before April 3, 2005, payable to:

L.E.A.R.N., P.O. Box 164, Island Lake, Illinois 60042

Please reply early! Questions? Please call Lois at 847-949-7021 or email tollhouse@sbcglobal.net

HOW YOU CAN HELP US!!

Purchase L.E.A.R.N. Merchandise – We offer a variety of items on our website or at events we attend.

Become a Volunteer – We need volunteers to help with many things including: FOSTERING, FUNdraising, transporting dogs or supplies, conducting Home Visits for potential adopters, working with local shelters, representing L.E.A.R.N. at promotional events, doing temperament evaluations . . . and the list goes on. Check out our website for a more detailed list of opportunities or to complete a volunteer application.

Become a Foster Home – Foster Homes are the backbone of L.E.A.R.N. The more foster homes we have, the more Labs we can save. You can select the dogs you foster if you prefer a certain age range, gender, even color. We really, really need your help!



A comfortable trip to safety! Volunteer to transport!

Transporting – Every week we transport dogs and/or supplies to a foster home, to a vet, out of a shelter in the nick of time, etc. Sometimes the transport is during the week; sometimes it's on weekends. The schedule varies, as does the territory, which covers northern IL and most parts of WI. We don't always have much notice. So, we need a pool of volunteers in many different areas on which to call. If you have a couple hours you could spare occasionally, please consider volunteering to help transport.

Donations – Our "Wish List" includes numerous items like leashes, collars, food, prepaid phone cards, prepaid gas cards, crates, etc. Monetary donations are always needed and very welcome since all of our foster dogs

are updated on their vaccines and have a healthy pet exam by the foster home's Vet prior to adoption. Most of our expenses are for foster dogs' Veterinary. We even accept donations on-line thru **Paypal**. Please check our website for more information.

Sponsor a Lab - If you can't adopt and would still like to contribute, please consider sponsoring one of our available labs in foster care or possibly one of our special needs labs. Your donation will go directly to assist the lab you specify on your sponsorship form.

iGive.com – iGive.com is an online charity "Mall" that enables you to direct up to 26% of your online purchases at over 400 well-known merchants to support L.E.A.R.N.

Pick n Save "We Care" Program – L.E.A.R.N. is registered with Pick n Save's "We Care" program. Our program identification number is **441975**. Please sign up to allow a portion of your purchase proceeds to benefit L.E.A.R.N.

Affiliate Programs – We currently have affiliate programs with *Just Labs Magazine*, *The Pointing Dog Journal* and *The Retriever Journal*. If you subscribe to any of these magazines or renew your current subscription using our affiliate number **A235**, L.E.A.R.N. will receive a small commission. We also have affiliate programs with Pawsitive Notes, All Pets Considered.com, Labhead, Petco.com and Versatile Printing. Please consider purchases from these organizations through our website link to benefit L.E.A.R.N.

Canidae Food Program – New!!!!

We are currently collecting Canidae food UPC codes and matching cash register receipts. Canidae Corporation has agreed to provide L.E.A.R.N. with free vouchers to purchase Canidae food for our foster dogs. Please send us the UPC codes and corresponding cash register receipts from the Canidae you purchase to –

L.E.A.R.N., P.O. Box 164, Island Lake, IL 60042

Or

L.E.A.R.N., P.O. Box 292, Cross Plains, WI 53528

Big, Wet Labby Kisses for your help!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

REYCORE

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Critical Reminder to Adoptors! Please update your address and phone with L.E.A.R.N.

This way, should your dog become missing, our network of volunteers across IL and WI and other organizations we work with can help return your dog to you. A L.E.A.R.N. tag stays with all alums for life and that tag number, combined with current adopter info, has enabled a number of labs to be reunited safely with their families.

Congrats to Labbies who found their new families!

2nd part of October

<i>Sparky</i>	Keith & Annette Sroga
<i>Baby</i>	Carol Dinsmore
<i>Naomi</i>	Tammy Rasey
<i>Daisy</i>	Brian & Lynn Butcher
<i>Harley</i>	Sarah & Mark Harrison
<i>Sparky</i>	Scott & Heather Theel
<i>Emmerson</i>	Dale & Mike Sturm
<i>Mocha</i>	Shelly & Scott Grade
<i>Madison</i>	Pam & Wes Odegaard
<i>Mallory</i>	Ryan & Ellen Wolf
<i>Clyde</i>	Kevin McKowski & Lisa Slattery

November

<i>Max</i>	Richard & Barbara Sorensen
<i>Sadie</i>	Tina & Paul Waszak
<i>Reggie</i>	Gwen & David Freiberg
<i>Toby</i>	Dawn & Eric Lokken
<i>Riley</i>	Bill & Marylou Taylor
<i>Packer</i>	Jason and Katherine Cunningham

December

<i>Codi</i>	Donna Spangler & Jim Champagne
<i>Brett</i>	Jerry and Ann Macey
<i>Bailey</i>	Kathy & Jon Eliason

<i>Sadie</i>	Jean & Jeff Clausen
<i>Gunner</i>	Amy & Mike Ergish
<i>Humphrey</i>	Chris & Wendy Hewitt
<i>Shamus</i>	Yolanda & Randy Hestekin
<i>Heidi</i>	Kellie & Peter Miesbauer
<i>Winnie</i>	Joann & William Jurgens
<i>Charmer</i>	Kathy Farra Lethers & Bobbie Lethers
<i>Oreo</i>	Jennifer & Matt Rosenblum
<i>Lady</i>	Darlene Boettin & Jim Fenning
<i>Sammy</i>	Marcia Lockwood & daughter

January

<i>Callie</i>	Nicole & Jeffrey Towle
<i>Ally</i>	Linda & Bruce Jahnke
<i>Jade</i>	Tracy Disch
<i>Tessa</i>	The Larson Family
<i>Moonie</i>	Kasey & Bill Sparkman
<i>Pepper</i>	Jim & Mary Slupikowski
<i>Dakota</i>	Tim & Jackie James
<i>Coco</i>	Linda & Chuck Roberts
<i>Louis</i>	Tami & Eric Noack
<i>Coco</i>	The Rittenhouse's
<i>Blitzen</i>	Jane & Marty Mohr
<i>Bear</i>	Michelle Schmidt & Kurt Bubolz

Goodbye Remi—A Final Tribute

I don't know what it was about her face. But when I saw her picture in the LEARN newsletter it just spoke to me. I needed that dog to be a part of my life.

And Remi was an integral part of my being for 1½ years—such a very, very short time. She became ill. But she rallied and had more good months.

And then she didn't rally. Everything that worked before—I call them miracles—didn't.

And now she's gone and my heart is broken.



I see her everywhere but she's not really there.

She enriched and touched my life in a way I cannot explain.

Now, when I look up in the heavens and see a very, very bright twinkling star, I'll know that's Remi watching over me.

God speed, Remi.

After appearing in the May, 2003, issue of The Retriever, Remi was adopted by Mitzi Heytow.

Remi, 10 years-old at the time of adoption, had spent her days chained in the garage because her family decided they didn't have time for her. She creatively buried a bone in her foster mom's house plant and loved being vacuumed more than playing tug-of-war. Mitzi saw this very photo of Remi and decided that this dog would never live chained in anyone's garage again. Remi more than lucked out with Mitzi and received more good attention and loving care than most dogs experience in an entire lifetime.

Codi's Happy Ending

Ever wonder what happens to dogs our newsletter features? As the very proud parents of one so many of you helped, we wanted to catch you up on Codi.

Codi entered our lives almost two years ago. The UW Vet School contacted L.E.A.R.N. and about 10 other good Samaritans that had heard of his fate, they had a dog there that was partially paralyzed after surgery and wondered if we could help. His owners paid for a very expensive spinal surgery after he spontaneously ruptured 2 discs, but with his current medical condition of being partially paralyzed, they were not going to be able to take him home and care for him. Therefore, if they couldn't find someplace for him to recuperate he would be euthanized.

To make a long story short, from the minute he shined those big brown eyes up at me, I knew there was no way I could leave him behind. Since that time he has melted his way into our family. He started out as a foster dog, but has since been officially adopted by our family. Codi is truly a part of our family.

He continues to have physical challenges but they certainly do not keep him down. He can walk with a 'stager' but he needs help going up steps. This past year we have planned and are building a new home; of course

it is fully "Codi accessible". He and his brother and sister have helped in any way possible. He has brought such joy to our

lives and is a true inspiration to everyone he meets. We recently had the opportunity to visit a very good friend who was at a hospice center. Deb loved Codi and was also inspired by his courage and his ability to brighten anyone's day. He definitely accomplished that. To think this dog would have been dead if it wasn't for LEARN taking him in and agreeing to pay for all the very expensive rehab we went through. Our family is truly blessed with Codi and I have a suspicion he also feels blessed to be with our family.

Jim, Donna, Norton, Trixie, and Codi



Enormous Thanks!

The following people generously donated money, supplies, time, or services to help our rescued Labs. Without your help, these Labs wouldn't be alive today and enriching the lives of many humans. A very special thanks to those who helped make the Lab Lover Challenge such a huge success. Thanks to all!!

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Peter Alonzo
Anonymous donors (5)
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Ticks, fleas, and mosquitoes are back—Please protect your dog now!

When? Before the insect season begins. Now!

How? *For tick and flea control*, topical products—each with their own active ingredients—exist that require monthly application. Some prefer garlic as a natural preventative, but do your research if you go this route as enough is good but too much is toxic. A Lyme disease (carried by ticks, see below) vaccine is out but has mixed results—ask your vet for more info. *For Heartworm prevention*, your vet can provide you with a tablet, taken once a month. They also protect your dog from intestinal parasites such as roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms. Even if your dog takes a preventative all year round, please have your dog tested annually to make sure he's heartworm-free. At the same time, your vet can do a Lyme disease test—a wise idea in WI/IL as canine cases are way up recently.

What should I know about flea and tick products? Vets consider the topical products safer and more effective than flea/tick collars, but ask your vet what's best for your dog. Beware that some products are more toxic than others and hence may pose long-term health risks that have not yet been quantified. Topical products kill and repel ticks and fleas and also kill their eggs before they hatch. Breaking the flea/ tick life cycle saves your dog from irritating flea bites. These products also kill most ticks on dogs within several days of application.

Why are ticks dangerous to my dog?

Ticks carry serious diseases (canine Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and more). Most kinds of ticks now carry Lyme disease—in the Midwest, this includes the Deer, American Dog, Lone Star, and Black-legged ticks. **Lyme disease symptoms can be hard to recognize as they mirror “older dog” signs—arthritis, joint stiffness, lameness, less energy, etc.**

What is Heartworm Disease? . . . serious and potentially fatal for dogs.

Much damage happens before outward signs can be observed, so prevention is key! A large round worm that lives in the heart and neighboring blood vessels causes the disease. Without a preventative, numerous worms (up to 14” long) can infect your dog and clog the heart and the major blood vessels leading to the heart. This causes malfunction of lungs, liver, kidneys, and other more.

How does Heartworm disease spread?

Heartworm disease can be spread from dog to dog by more than 70 species of mosquito. It takes six months in a dog to have heartworm larvae grow, move to the heart, mate, and begin the cycle once again.

Our Labs Need Your Help!

Many dogs desperately need our help, including expensive medical care and that drains on our finances. All donations are tax-deductible. All dogs thank you!

I want to support the efforts of L.E.A.R.N. as they rescue homeless Labrador Retrievers and Lab mixes and place them in permanent adoptive homes.

Name: _____ Address _____

Please find my check for: ☐ \$10.00 ☐ \$25.00 ☐ \$50.00 ☐ Other Amount \$ _____

Please mail to **LEARN, PO Box 164, Island Lake, IL 60042** or donate at www.labadoption.org via **PayPal**.

How do I stop my dog from demand barking or “talking back”?

From L.E.A.R.N.'s website under Behavioral Topics. Find this helpful? See what The Dog Den's Owner and Behavioral Consultant Giene Wicker has to say on 18 additional behavioral and training topics at www.labadoption.org.

In some ways dogs can act very much like children. The child that whines and pitches a fit in the candy aisle of the grocery store often gets the candy that he wants, just so he'll stop making a racket and embarrassing his parent. The dog that barks and acts obnoxious when you stop throwing the tennis ball often gets the ball thrown again, just so he'll stop being such a pest. In both cases, being bad gets the desired result, so it is something that will be tried again and again, usually with great success.

In dogs, this is called demand barking or nuisance barking and it is simply rude, pushy behavior. The dog may bark when he thinks it's time to eat, if he wants you to throw his toy, if you're not petting him, if he wants to come in the house, get out of his crate, or any other time when the dog isn't getting his way. It is not at all acceptable behavior and taking a zero tolerance stand will make it go away.

The key to getting your dog to stop demand barking is to completely ignore him (provided the dog is in a safe situation). No matter what he does, don't give in. Unfortunately all creatures going through what's called an extinction burst. That means that your dog will try just a little harder, doing what always worked in other situations, before giving up. It's like a human with a remote control. You aim it at the TV and nothing happens. Instead of just getting up to change the channel right away, you point the remote more definitely and press the button several more times, each time more determined than before. Finally you give up and try something else to change the channel. The next time you may try the remote again, go through the same routine but remember what happened so it doesn't go on as long. Basically when you ignore your dog, he will start to bark and get more and more obnoxious, but then he'll just give up. The key is that you ***don't give in before the dog does.***

At first this will take awhile. You'll have to out-stubborn your dog, which can be a challenge if you're dealing with a lab. Just remember if you give in when he's at his worst, that's the point he'll start at the next time you work with him.

I tend to get very dramatic when I encounter a demand barker. I turn my back on the dog, cross my arms, and turn my head away and up. In dog language this signals that you are unwilling to interact with the dog. I may also say, "I don't play with RUDE dogs!!" This is more for my benefit from the dogs since it makes me feel better. As soon as the dog stops barking, even if it's just to catch a breath, I give him what he wants. You want your dog to learn that barking gets him nothing, but being quiet just might get him what his little heart desires.

If you find your dog is barking when you end play, you can work on teaching your dog "last one" or "all done". Decide when you're done playing and just before the last toss say your command and stick with it. If you told your dog that this was the last one, then do NOT throw the ball again. Completely ignore any attempt from your dog to get you to play again. You'll want to teach this after you've had repeated success at getting your dog to stop barking, since the reward for his silence in that case is to throw the ball again.





Hot Topics and Tips

Hot? Summer is coming and you may be **planning a trip** with your canine companion. Be sure never to leave your friend in the car even for a few minutes in the shade. Even with windows cracked, temps can elevate in minutes and lead to heat exhaustion or worse.

Do you have a **doggie first aid kit**? They're easy to find at most pet supply stores. Bring it on long walks, in the car, and on overnight trips. Look for a kit that includes a first aid manual. Check with your local Red Cross for booklets and possible canine first aid courses.

Ever disturbed by seeing a **dog chained outside** in terrible conditions? There's a website—www.dogsdeservebetter.com—that tells you how

to deal with the situation constructively and within the confines of the law. Dogs Deserve Better is “a national nonprofit organization dedicated to freeing the chained dog, and bringing our 'best friend' into the home and family.”

Ever wonder how **your dog's brain** perceives the visual world? Best seller *Animals in Translation* by Temple Grandin treats how brains of autistic humans (author is autistic) can help decipher the world that animals see. A fascinating and engaging read for any animal lover. Temple Grandin has designed the cattle chutes for over half of North America's slaughterhouses so that cattle end their lives without experiencing stress or fear beforehand.



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LEARN & Lab Events!

<u>When?</u>	<u>What?</u>	<u>Where?</u>
❖ Friday-Sunday, March 18th-20th	❖ Chicago Family Pet Expo. Visit www.petchicago.com for more information. Fri 2 – 7pm; Sat 9am – 7pm; Sun 10am – 6pm	❖ Arlington Park Racetrack, Arlington Heights, IL
❖ Sunday, April 3 rd ; 1 – 4pm	❖ Madison Area LEARN Reunion for all adopted alums who live in the Madison area. Postcard invitations should be arriving soon!	❖ Dog Den, Fitchburg, WI
❖ Sunday, April 10th	❖ L.E.A.R.N. 5th Annual Luncheon and Silent Auction. Please see page 3 for complete details. Make your reservation by April 3 rd !	❖ Grayslake, IL
❖ Saturday-Sunday, April 2 nd – 3 rd ; 11am – 4pm	❖ National Pet Adoption Days	❖ Petco, 6305 East State Street, Rockford, IL