

Dog Talk:

August 2001 - Volume 4, Number 2

MEET THE READERS:

Mary Flood and Jake, UTTF-1

In June, Jake and I passed our Type II FEMA test in Fairfax, VA so we are now a certified team. It has taken a lot of time for us to get to this level and this article has been a great opportunity to look back over our five years together and help me remember how far we have both come.

Jake is a 6-year-old black lab that I got from the PetSmart adoption program in March of 1996. I took him home for approval for a week because he was injured and I was not sure whether he would be able to make it in a family that likes an active outdoor life. After a day, I realized we were facing a huge vet bill and months of rehab to fix a badly injured leg. But by then my husband Paul had fallen in love with Jake and told me, "This dog stays here." Not a lot of negotiation there, and I was the one who had brought him home after promising that I would no longer bring dogs home. So Jake had his surgery and we started the recuperation process.

Jake would do well and then about every 4 weeks, he would look dull and the next morning he had a 104 fever. The third time, I thought we might lose the leg to infection. I learned that half hour walks were not light exercise and I also realized that there was no way to keep him quiet enough because he was playing all day with my SAR dog, Lottie, who was just a couple of months older than Jake. (At the time, he had a major phobia about kennels - the sight of one got him drooling and one minute in a kennel was a time of thrashing and terror so a kennel was not an option.) So every day for about four weeks, he went to the vet for R&R. It took about eight months to get him healed and strong.

In early 1997, I lost Lottie and started working with Jake while I decided what to do next. I thought I would get another German Shepherd puppy eventually. But Jake proved to be very good at wilderness search work so I decided to work with him and see if he could do the job physically. He loved it and his leg got stronger and stronger. His ability to learn got better and better and he was also able to overcome the fears of his early life.

In just a couple of years, he had morphed from a homely, injured, timid dog to a good-looking lab with a great play drive and desire to work and learn. Not to mention a strong personality that knows what he wants and gets it. (The best example of this is his dedication to the project of teaching Paul to call him up on to our bed. Jake found it challenging since he was faced with Paul's long-standing belief that NO DOG should be on a bed. However, once Jake set himself to the task, it took him only six months to shape the behavior of the human from outrage to a reliable invitation when given Jake's signal.)

We began FEMA training and Jake loved it. It took us some time to get everything done because I took on another demanding volunteer job and then found that my financial planning business was growing fast as well. So for 1½ years he was stuck with a handler trying to keep too many things going at once. But he was patient with how work interfered with our time together. Finally this past year, we were able to take the time needed to get us to the level needed to pass the Type II test.

Last year, I finally hired a bunch of new people to help me out and then early this year moved from my home office to a space big enough to handle the growing company. I thought it meant that I would have a ton of free time but ... the business is still growing fast! But Jake is enjoying the office, where people sneak food to him and he is the center of attention.

When we are not traveling the country visiting dumps and rubble sites, we enjoy camping, hiking and going to Lake Powell together. Sometimes the dogs let Paul and I take trips that do not include them - last year we went to Alaska and went hiking, ice climbing, kayaking and just generally enjoyed being in a place where it was cold and wet while Utah was hot. Jake asked me to mention that he has enjoyed the times he was our only dog but that he has also enjoyed the company of various dogs that have stayed with us - some for just a week or two, some for longer. Now he has two yellow labs that hold down the fort while he is at the office - Maggie and Ginger and two cats - Bonnie and Clyde that seem to think they are dogs as well.

[Return to top of page](#)

TEST INFORMATION

INDIANA TEST UPDATE

Type I testing Fri-Sun, April 20-22, 2001
Hanson Harding Street Quarry
21 teams tested/10 teams passed (2 on Fri, 3 on Sat and 5 on Sun)

Type II testing Sat-Sun, April 21-22, 2001
"Salt Mine"
16 teams tested/10 teams passed (5 Sat and 5 Sun)

UPCOMING TESTS

September 8 and 15th, 2001 Tacoma, WA - Type II both days Contact Bruce Speer for further information at hunterK9@msn.com.

****TENTATIVE**** December 8-9, 2001 Dallas, TX - Type II test
Contact Susann Brown at susan.brown@home.com

November 17 - 18, 2001 (CATF-5 - Orange County)
Applications due by October 16, 2001 (with \$25.00 application fee)

For information on California tests, contact: Lynne Engelbert
FAX (650) 604-7051 or (650) 604-0994
Work - (650) 604-3112
Home - (408) 257-1784

The National Certification List of FEMA Certified Disaster Canine Search Teams is provided by Lynne Engelbert. (Lynne's e-mail: lengelbert@mail.arc.nasa.gov)

[Return to top of page](#)

KUDOS TO.....

DOGTALK is pleased to announce that the following Canine Search Teams have recently gained certification as FEMA US&R Type I or Type II Canine Search Specialists:

Indianapolis, IN Results - April 20-22, 2001

Type I Re-Certified: Pat Hawn & "Cody" (MDTF-1), Amy Rising & "Louie" (NETF-1), Elaine Sawtell & "Ditto" (NETF-1)

Type I Certified: Blake Wallis & "Scout" (INTF-1), Pete Davis & "Appollo" (NYTF-1), Sonja Heritage & "Drako" (VATF-1), Chris Holleyman & "Sheridan" (VATF-2), Connie Millard & "Dutch" (MOTF-1), Bob Sessions & "Sky" (MDTF-1), Mitzi Webber & "Oscar" (FLTF-1)

Type II Re-Certified: Bob Sessions & "Sky" (MDTF-1)

Type II Certified: Janalee Gallagher & "Lily" (INTF-1), Lin Poulin & "Zoe" (INTF-1), Kim Cooper & "Piper" (Canada), Deborah Goodman & "One Soc" (NETF-1), Pam Kinnamon & "Boone" (INTF-1), Julie Protze-Noyes & "Hoke" (INTF-1), Steve Smaldon & "Hansen" (NYTF-1), Hilda Wood & "Walden" (FLTF-1) and Tony Zintsmaster & "Kaiser" (INTF-1).

Miami, FL Results - May 4-6, 2001

Type II Certified: Tom Shannon & "Everest" (AZ/TXTF-1), Roger Piccard & "Jessie" (FLTF-2), Mark Bogush & "Marley" (FLTF-2), Elena Lopez de Mesa & "Tea" (FLTF-1), Billy D. Kidd & "Tenshi" (FLTF-1),

San Jose, CA Results - May 19-20, 2001

Type I Re-Certified: John Gilkey & "Bear" (PATF-1)

Type I Certified: John Dean & "Reo" (TXTF-1) and Marc Valentine & "Val" (CA-OES)

Type II Certified: Fernando Pelaez & "Rosa" (CA-OES), Daniel Solis & "Sandi" (CA-OES), Cheryl Christie and "Dude" (AZTF-1), Kelly Gordon & "Buddy" (CA-OES) PAGE 3

Fairfax, VA Results - June 1-3, 2001

Type II Certified: Jeaneen McKinney & "Ronin" (UTTf-1), Penny Sullivan & "Quest" (NJTF-1), Ann Wichmann & "Torie" (COTF-1), Heidi Yamaguchi and "Ondo" (VATF-1), Mary Flood & "Jake" (UTTf-1)

San Jose, CA Results - August 18-19, 2001

Type II Certified: Laurie Clemmo & "Blitz" (NJTF-1), Sergio Morariu & "Tammy" (CA-OES), Steve Pendergrass & "Marc" (CA-OES), Peter Sellas & "Madison" (CA-OES), John Strickland & "Brie" (CA-OES) and Ron von Allworden & "Jessie" (CA-OES)

[Return to top of page](#)

Upcoming Canine Search Specialist Training (CSST)

Your task force leader should have recently received an email with information pertaining to the CSST in September. Type II certified dog handlers that have not attended a FEMA canine school should contact their TFL or STM for information about attending this important course. Keep in mind that only one position is available per task force.

National Urban Search and Rescue Response System TRAINING ANNOUNCEMENT

CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST TRAINING COURSE

SEPTEMBER 9 - 15, 2001
CAMP MURRAY OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

OVERVIEW

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently seeking members of FEMA National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Task Forces to participate in a Canine Search Specialist training course. One canine search team (handler and dog) from each of the 28 FEMA National US&R Task Forces will be selected to attend this course. Successful completion of the course fulfills one of the training requirements to be qualified as a Canine Search Specialist.

For more information, contact your TFL.

[Return to top of page](#)

Rotational Schedule

Are your bags packed????

"First Out" (after the 3 closest teams..) on the US&R rotational schedule are:

August - INTF-1, MDTF-1 and CATF
September - MOTF-1, FLTF-2 and CATF
October - TXTF-1, OHTF-1 and CATF
November - UTTF-1, NYTF-1 and CATF
December - AZTF-1, FLTF-1 and CATF

The Pennsylvania Urban Search and Rescue Task Force is currently accepting applications for the position of K-9 Search Specialist. In addition to an application packet, persons wishing to be considered for these open positions MUST live within a reasonable driving distance of Harrisburg, PA and MUST participate in a K-9 Team evaluation on Saturday Sept. 8th, 2001.

The evaluation for which applicants will be tested is the FEMA TYPE II CANINE EVALUATION. The evaluation will be administered through Task Force personnel with FEMA qualified evaluators.

Application packets can be obtained through the Task Force Office at the following address:

Pennsylvania Urban Search and Rescue Task Force
c/o FEMA
PO Box 3321
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3321

Attn.: Program Manager
Or via the Internet at: mpeterson@state.pa.us

From the Editor:

Many apologies for the tardiness of this issue. I initially had a little trouble obtaining final information on upcoming tests, and then my computer crashed and I lost DOGTALK. If by chance anybody still has the last two issues saved as an attachment (#14 and #15), I'd appreciate if you could email them back to me as they have disappeared off the disk.

Many congratulations to all the search teams that have passed their certification since the last issue. As we all know, certification isn't an easy process. A teammate once said to me, "I haven't experienced as much failure in my life as I have with this. I'm just not use to failure". In reality, the only failure is not trying again. (And that teammate has a Type I dog now)

So, for those of you who didn't quite pass - keep your chin up. (and your dog's too..) Ask for help from your teammates, and even other people's teammates. Train hard. Be consistent with your dog. And have fun.

Rumors keep flying about a Type I test in Indy next April. (I think my teammates actually started the rumor..) We do need Type I tests, but I haven't quite psyched myself up to go through that hell again yet. (send all bribes to my attention at P.O. Box....)

Happy training!! I'll keep you posted on the test situation.... Anne

[Return to top of page](#)

FEMA K9 Sub-Committee Report

Ah, the dog days of summer--too bad my dog doesn't appreciate them as much as I do.

In the recent months the subcommittee has focused on the qualifications for the K9 Instructor List and the CSST Manual revision. Both needed to be ready in time for the September course in Seattle, WA. As most of you know, the Training Committee is making an effort to standardize all of the FEMA courses to ensure that all students are receiving consistent information. The initial Instructor List is complete, but the Training Committee will continue to take applications and review them as they meet. Three of the Subcommittee members met in Omaha, NE to revise the course manual. Hopefully you will appreciate our attempts to make the course more coherent and more relevant to our mission. We returned home after 3 days in the midst of an intense mid-west heat wave. I was treated to a 4th day due to a delayed flight and my first tornado!

Have you heard about NASAR developing its own K9 Disaster Standards for local response? Unfortunately, the prevailing attitude in the non-FEMA community is that the FEMA standards are purposefully exclusionary, eliminating the areas without Task Forces and the independent handler. We feel that it is in the best interest of the SAR community as a whole to attempt to adhere to a "National" Standard as opposed to a "FEMA" Standard for K9 disaster teams. We need to offset the negative feelings towards FEMA by expanding our system to include the rest of the SAR world. In the recent past, we have opened our tests to include teams from other countries as well as the independent handler.

New Evaluators:

Hilda Wood (FL) Type II

Darren Brobosky (CA) Type II

Steve Swaney (CA) Type I Shadow

Debra Tosch (CA) Type I Shadow

Clicker Re-visited:

Since our decision to allow the clicker in evaluations when verbal communication is allowed, it has been observed that the clicker is being used (mis-used!) as a prop to target the dog. The argument could be made that if one handler can use a clicker, another should be able to use a tennis ball. Physical props are not permitted. Thus, we hereby reverse our previous decision and ban the use of the clicker during evaluations.

Teresa MacPherson

Secretary, K9 Subcommittee

7-28-01

Please forward any news, scheduled events, letters to the editor, or other info you want disseminated via DOG TALK, the underground canine newsletter to Anne Trout amccurdy@clarian.com or via fax (317) 929-7549.