

Dog Talk

The official *unofficial* newsletter for FEMA dog handlers

December 2002 - Volume 5, Number 5

"You Were A Gift of Life"

Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
With no thought of the dog filling their head.
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Knew he was cold, but didn't care about that.
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Figuring the dog was free of his chain and into the trash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the luster of midday to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But Santa Claus - with eyes full of tears.
He unchained the dog, once so lively and quick,
Last years Christmas present, now painfully thin and sick.
More rapid than eagles he called the dog's name.
And the dog ran to him, despite all his pain;
"Now, DASHER! Now, DANCER! Now, PRANCER and VIXEN!
On, COMET! On CUPID! On, DONNER and BLITZEN!
To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall!
Let's find this dog a home where he'll be loved by all"
I knew in an instant there would be no gifts this year,
For Santa Claus had made one thing quite clear,
The gift of a dog is not just for the season,
We had gotten the pup for all the wrong reasons.
In our haste to think of getting the kids a gift
There was one important thing that we missed.
A dog should be family, and cared for the same
You don't give a gift, then put it on a chain.
And I heard him exclaim as he rode out of sight,
"You weren't given a gift! You were given a life!"

-Author Unknown

From The Editor

Maybe you could tell that I am not in the happiest of holiday spirits since I didn't put a festive fun poem (see poem page 1) in this holiday issue of DOGTALK. Oh sure, my Christmas shopping is 95% done and I've already mailed my Christmas cards....but my heart is just not in it this year. I had to put my 11 1/2 year old Rottweiler Morgan to sleep the day before Thanksgiving due to cancer. This is almost the identical thing that happened with Mercedes a few years ago. (Translation: incurable cancer with lousy treatment outcomes). With Mercedes I felt that she got gypped out of half of her life - Type I dog dies of

cancer at age 5. But now, I can take no solace in the fact that Morgan lived a great long life. I am totally devastated and miss her terribly. It is hard to know that there will never be another dog like her.

I found out today that Matt Claussen lost his dog Cayman last week due to cancer as well.

Matt- I realize the hole in your heart and the sick feeling in your stomach makes it tough to even think about your boy without feeling crushed. My thoughts are with you.

And Chris Holleyman - Sheridan has cancer too?? Please remember we are all thinking of you during this most difficult time. Let me know if I can do anything to help. That is a great dog.

I am sure there are many of you that lost dogs this year. Maybe they were SAR dogs, maybe they weren't. Some we heard about (Zeus - Officer Bob Schnelle, Anna - Sarah Atlas and

Krueger - Gary Hay) and many we didn't. Many of you are going through tough times with treatments (Ann Wichmann and Jenner). It is comforting to know that we are here for each other, and we understand the intense commitment we all have for our dogs.

To those that lost dogs this year - please remember the great times that you shared with those loyal companions and be thankful for the memorable times you spent together.

To repeat a quote by Will Rogers:

"If there are no dogs in Heaven, then I want to go where they went"

Wishing everyone a joyous and peaceful holiday season. May your dogs get lots of pig ears and liver treats from Santa.

Anne Trout

Other News:

Search Team Competition

There will be a search team competition in May in Memphis. We are limiting this first pilot competition to 6 search teams, and I am thinking that it will probably be the 6 task forces that are already WMD qualified, as the other 22 are going to have a fairly heavy workload in 2003 as they acquire the equipment and training to meet WMD requirements. The competition is designed to exercise the fully deployed search team working as a unit. The search team managers, the canine search specialists and the tech search specialists will all be evaluated as a unit. Additionally they will be evaluated on how well they follow the Field Operations Guide in conducting their operations.

Robert Milner
STM, TNTF-1

UPCOMING TESTS

TNTF-1 plans to conduct a Canine Type II evaluation on Dec 14 - 15 2002.

The evaluators will be: Elaine Sawtell, NE TF-1
John Dean, AZ TF-1
Ed Apple, TN TF-1

Two openings remain!!! We have a new concrete recycling plant in Memphis and because of it have the use of a rubble pile of approximately 2 to 3 acres and 50 to 75 feet high.

Contact Robert Milner at rmilner@logfac.com

California will be hosting Type II and Type I Evaluations January 18 - 19 in the San Diego area. Teams wishing to apply must have their Applications for Evaluation submitted no later than close of business December 9.

Applications can be FAX'ed to Lynne Engelbert at 650-604-0994. There is a \$25 testing fee. Checks can be made out to the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation (NDSDF) and memo'd to the CSSWG Account.

2003 California Test Schedule:

January 18-19 San Diego Area (SoCal) Apps. Due no later than 12/9/02

March 20-21 San Francisco Bay Area (NoCal) Apps. Due no later than 2/17/03

June 21-22 Los Angeles County Area (SoCal) Apps. Due no later than 5/12/03

September 20-21 Orange County Area (SoCal) Apps. Due no later than 8/11/03

December 6-7 San Francisco Bay Area (NoCal) Apps. Due no later than 12/10/03

Applications, with a \$25 testing fee attached can be sent to: Lynne Engelbert, 19327 Northampton Dr., Saratoga, CA 95070-3330. Checks should be made out to: National Disaster Search Dog Foundation or NDSDF with CSSWG Account indicated on the "memo" line.

CA and re-certifying (CA & out-of-state) teams have priority with out-of-state testing teams welcome to fill remaining slots, if available. For information on California tests, contact:

Lynne Engelbert

FAX (650) 604-7051 or (650) 604-0994
Work - (650) 604-3112
Home - (408) 257-1784

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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](mailto:lengelbert@mail.arc.nasa.gov)) It is available on this web page. To view it click here.

## **KUDOS TO.....**

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

### **Tacoma, WA Results - September 2002**

Type II Certified: Rick Lee & Ana (CA OES) and Janet Linker & Ricky (WATF-1)

### **Beverly, MA Results - September 2002**

Type II Certified: James McHenry & Jas (PATF-1), Mark Emert & Bodie (MOTF-1) and Hilda Wood & Ranger (FLTF-1)

### **Miami, FL Results -October 2002**

Type II Certified: Cathy Racow and Layla (FLTF-2) and Scott Racow & Heidi (FLTF-1)

### **Ontario, CA Results - November 2002**

Type I Certified: Roland Cook & Bautz (CA OES), Mark Dawson & Elvis (MATF-1), Lynne Engelbert & Lucy (CA OES), Rick Lee & Ana (CA OES), Sheila McKee & Guinness (CA OES), Howard Orr & Duke (CA OES), Seth Peacock & Pupdog and Lee Prentiss & Tara (MATF-1)

Type II Certified: Pat Grant & Topper (CA OES), David Graves & Coby (CA OES) and Russell Tao & Harry (CA OES)

### **Fairfax, VA Results - November 2002**

Type II Certified: Denise Grimm & Chorley (NJTF-1), Jennifer Little & Ulysses (VATF-1), Bobby Rolando & Argus (NJ-TF1), David Sanabria & Storm (NYTF-1), Sam Balsam & Jake (MDTF-1), Joe Caputo & Bravo (NYTF-1) and John Gilkey & Bailey (PATF-1)

## **New Evaluators**

A round of barks (focused & repetitive) for the new evaluators!

New Type II Evaluators - Reeny Shannon (handler, TXTF-1), Mark Dawson (handler, MATF-1), Monica Barger (handler, NETF-1), Cathy Schiltz (handler, MOTF-1).

New Type I Evaluators and II Lead Evaluators - LaFond Davis (handler, WATF-1) and Randy Gross (handler, CA OES)

Call them. They can't wait.

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**UPCOMING SEMINAR:**

see web site [calendar](#)

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**ROTATIONAL SCHEDULE**

see next issue

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**FEMA K9 SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT**

In October, I assured everyone planning their trip to Emmitsburg, MD for our face-to-face meeting that it was far away from the sniper activities. The guys were caught about 10 miles away on our fourth day. A tad unsettling...

We met with the Search Subcommittee and FEMA and actually completed our agenda. It works out quite well having a meeting of the doggie-minds and the not-so-doggie minds. It lends a perspective of the larger picture. Actually, everyone is very canine-friendly and their help and input was greatly appreciated.

We are putting together a proposal to submit to FEMA for an evaluator conference. There are now more than 70 evaluators and the need to convene to insure the uniform administration of tests is more important than ever. To be addressed are such concepts as aggression, losing interest on the rubble, long down set up, counting seconds in direction & control, and much, much more!

The subcommittee also requested a four day Advanced Training Course incorporating not only complex rubble and building searches, but GPS training, tech search, ICS/FEMA system, mapping, deployment lessons, K9 decontamination, etc. Fun stuff!

A hot topic has been the "Pretest"--at this meeting we came to a consensus that the pretest is an assessment, as opposed to a test. It is an in-house evaluation designed to give the sponsoring agency enough information about the team so as to make an informed decision as to whether or not the team is ready to test.

FEMA K9 Sub-Committee Report

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A Type I question--

Can a handler re-access the pile to draw his map?

Answer: A handler may manage his time as he wishes, but must adhere to the access criteria of each pile.

Teresa MacPherson,
Secretary
Canine Sub-Group