



Seward County Kennel Club

A CLUB FOR PERSONS INTERESTED IN DOGS AND THE SPORT OF DOGS.

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Information for the newsletter, including brags, needs to be submitted by the first week of the month to be included in the next newsletter. Please email submissions to the editor.

HOW SEARCH-AND-RESCUE DOGS FIND PEOPLE



Search-and-rescue volunteers know that when the phone rings in the middle of the night, it is likely to be a call to action: a request for them and their dogs to pack up their gear and trudge out in any weather to assist in the search for a missing person. Such was the case one Sunday in May, when Larry Bulanda, a search-and-rescue volunteer in southeastern Pennsylvania, heard the distant ringing of the phone in his sleep.

The call was from the Phoenixville, Pa., fire department, saying that several hours earlier a 13-year-old boy was reported missing from his home. As Larry and his wife, Susan, quickly threw on some clothes and alerted their two dogs, Susan glanced at the clock. It was just after 4:00 a.m. They would have to move fast: The weather was unseasonably cool, and a storm was approaching.

After arriving at the boy's suburban home, a quick interview with his parents alerted the authorities and volunteers to the fact that the parents had had a disagreement with the boy and he had run away. The Bulandas' veteran search-and-rescue dog Scout was given a scent article of the boy's and immediately found a track, Scout followed the track down the driveway to a paved road, where he led the search team for about half a mile. At that point, Scout veered off the road and went behind two houses, circled back out to the road and lost the scent.

The search-and-rescue team returned to base — the parents' house. At this point, the

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NEXT MEETING Oct 21, 2021

Seward Civic Center 616 Bradford St, Seward, NE 68434

No Special Program - General Meeting 7:30pm

MEETING MINUTES

SCKC Meeting

September 16, 2021

Meeting called to order by Tabitha Dvorak at 7:45

Members in attendance: Mary Bristol, Tabitha Dvorak, Kathy Jackson, Linda Soukup, Tanya Williams, Cindy Hill and Morgan Ehlers.

Report of the President- Tabitha has contracts signed by judges for 2022 show.

Secretary report—no report

Treasurer's report- Motion made by Tanya to approve treasures report. 2nd by Cindy, motion passed

Legislation- Kathy reported in Oregon and Colorado. Activists want to pass a law stating that assistance with birthing or AI is a federal offense sexually abusing the animals.

Newsletter- everything is going well. Let Cindy know if you have any articles or ideas for the top story.

Performance- Chris reported via txt about obedience class 5 puppies and 9 in basic in our fall session. Including Jax, an Aussie/Cattle dog from Blue River Pet Rescue.

Show- Tabitha has a meeting with Jenny (the manager of the fairgrounds) for next Wednesday (Sept. 22, 2021). Tabitha will find out when the next fair board meeting is and send out a text so people interested can attend. Meeting is to go over some concerns that came up at the 2021 show.

In 2023 show will return to its original weekend the 15th weekend of the year.

Website-No report

Unfinished business- Scholarship committee will have a meeting to discuss the specifics of the scholarship and present at next meeting of progress made.

Memorial- was used to install a dog wash station at the dog park.

Tanya made motion to adjourn meeting, Linda 2nd. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42pm.

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Bulandas' Border Collie, Ness, was taken into the woods around the house, where the police and fire departments reported having heard noises during their earlier search effort. Within 15 minutes, Ness pulled and yanked Larry to the boy, who was hiding in the brush, trying to evade capture. When Larry saw the boy hiding in the brush, the boy tried to run off. Larry had to grab the boy by the shirt collar and escort him back home. The boy sheepishly told everyone that he had been slipping from bush to bush to avoid being found. With a logic that perhaps only a teenager can truly comprehend, the boy decided to stay hidden when he saw all of the commotion – including police officers, fire trucks, and search-and-rescue dogs — and he was certain that he would get into more trouble with his parents than he already was. He may have eluded all the people searching for him, but he could not escape a well-trained dog's nose.

The Cost of Search and Rescue

Not all searches, of course, end so well. The Bulandas have been working canine search and rescue (SAR) for more than 20 years. (Susan is also an author and ethnologist specializing in animal behavior, and Larry is an engineer at Lucent Technologies.)

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Their dogs have looked for everyone from murder victims to casualties of an East Coast tornado. Dogs often succeed where humans cannot – and the statistics of successful finds by SAR dogs are impressive.

Canine search-and-rescue efforts have existed for decades, starting with the military's use of dogs to search for war victims, but it was the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City that cemented in the minds of most Americans, the image of handler and canine doing this type of work together. Although individual volunteers like the Bulandas conduct search and rescue across the country, the federal government also employs SAR dogs and handlers as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). After the Oklahoma City bombing, the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation was created with the objective to increase by 300 the number of teams of certified disaster-search dogs and highly trained handlers.



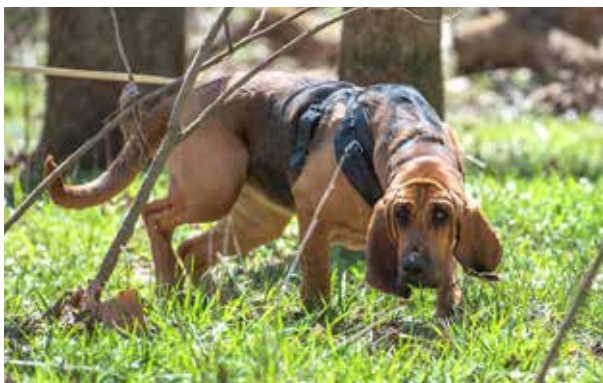
The financial cost to the volunteer handlers can be burdensome, with some estimates putting the average at \$5,000 or more per year. In the face of these significant costs, and because the handlers must first learn to train dogs, it takes most several years to train a search-and-rescue dog, according to the foundation.

SAR work is at times grueling and dangerous for both human and animal. Aside from the physical dangers, the dogs often pick up on the stress of the situation and show signs of depression. In Oklahoma City, for instance, many handlers staged scenes at the end of their shifts where a co-searcher would be “found” by a happy, exuberant SAR dog in order to give the dog a feeling of accomplishment. Human SAR workers often suffer from depression, too. It helps, volunteers say, if both partners work in SAR or if the partner is employed in a similar profession, such as emergency medicine.

Cadaver Dogs vs. Live Search and Rescue

There are two primary disciplines to choose from when training for K-9 SAR: “live” or “dead.” “Live” training involves either tracking/trailing or air-scent dogs. Tracking/trailing dogs, or scent-specific dogs, are trained to follow the unique scent of an individual. Tracking or trailing dogs is done on a long line with the handler following the dog on the track. The other “live” discipline, air scent, or area search, requires that the dog cover large areas quickly, off lead, quite some distance from his handler. An air-scent dog samples the air currents for the scent of any human, follows it in to the source and reports back to the handler. These teams are often called wilderness search teams, because the style is suited to large tracts of unpopulated land.

Dogs who have trained for “dead” work, or human-remains detection (HRD), also called “cadaver dogs,” use primarily air-scent methods to search for the scent of human decomposition, to the exclusion of all others, eventually pinpointing the source and alerting the handler. Usually, a dog and handler will specialize and certify in one discipline or the other—not because the dogs can't do both well, but to avoid confusion in findings in criminal cases that can be exploited by defense attorneys.



What Dogs Make Good Search-and-Rescue Dogs?

SAR dogs search by sniffing the air and can pick up a human's scent from as far away as a half mile – and sometimes farther. Dogs that perform water searches have been known to catch the scent from one and a half miles away. Breeds that excel at SAR include Border Collies, Bloodhounds, German Shepherd Dogs, Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, and, in some cases, Schipperkes, but almost any medium-to-large-sized working or sporting breed, that doesn't suffer from separation anxiety when away from its handler, can be up to the challenge.

For fun, Susan even trained her Havanese puppy in the finer art of SAR, and the dog got gold stars but was too small for such grueling work. A necessary factor, says Susan, is that the dog must be able to work independently. In addition, the dogs must

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be people-motivated rather than game-motivated.

For instance, in Great Britain, some Border Collies must pass a “sheep test” before they can be SAR dogs. The test involves the dog sitting in one place while a herd of sheep is driven around it on all sides. The dog must ignore the sheep. A tall order for a breed with such a strong herding instinct. But passing this test is the only way the handlers can trust the dogs to perform SAR work without being distracted. “Dogs must be able to think on their own,” says Susan. “Because we cannot possibly train a dog for all of the situations that come up, they must be able to generalize and apply the training they have had to a new situation. When the handler is wrong, the dog must let the handler know that is known as ‘intelligent disobedience.’”

A dog that might do well in obedience, agility, and tracking events may not excel at SAR. While there are cases of dogs that win in the ring and are outstanding at SAR, they are rare. “When you take an obedience-trained dog and ask him to do something on his own, he usually will not do anything without handler direction,” says Susan. “SAR dogs have to work with the handler as a team, to not be blindly obedient to the handler,” she continues. “If the dog knows there is scent in one direction and the handler directs the dog to another area, the dog must insist that the handler is wrong and indicate by the trained signal that there is scent here, not there.”

In addition, obedience-trained dogs often perform exercises in controlled conditions, but nothing is controlled for the SAR dog. “There are never prescribed conditions. Actually, conditions change all the time,” says Susan.

Finding Bodies

Such is the case in a search involving a father of four who disappeared with his eldest son in early June when their canoe flipped over on a Pennsylvania creek. The son’s body was found upstream, but it was more than two months until the father’s body was found, 10 miles from the spot of the accident. Bulanda and other volunteers and their dogs had searched different areas of the creek and adjoining river, from the grassy banks to a small dam, to no avail.



Handlers know the dog has a “hit” when their body language changes. This is often followed by a “trained alert,” which could be barking, whining or, in some water searches, biting at the water, says SAR volunteer B. Diane Whetsel. Whetsel co-founded Search Dogs Southwest, a volunteer group that works with fire and police departments, as well as with FEMA. She has found herself working everything from a hurricane (her partner, Dr. Kim Lark’s chocolate Labrador, Hershey, had to go into semi-retirement after hurting his back searching through wreckage left by Hurricane Opal in the Florida panhandle) to assisting the local police force on a homicide case.

SAR workers are remarkably nonchalant when discussing cadaver searches, but point out that they must remain calm and collected under pressure – especially in the face of the many unpleasant aspects of their work. This can be difficult when dealing with a family that is observing the search of a loved one. For instance, Whetsel and her dogs were called into a small Florida town after an autistic young child disappeared from his family’s hotel room during a family reunion. The canal in back of the hotel had been searched by divers, but with poor underwater visibility, the divers came up empty. The dogs, walking up and down the canal, kept getting a hit at a certain point. Every time they did, they barked and had to be rewarded by the handlers — in this case with play — and it was obvious to the family that the dogs detected the boy’s body. “It was upsetting to us and to the family that the dogs knew the child was underwater and most likely dead,” Whetsel says. The body turned up later that afternoon, 5 feet from where the dogs alerted.

SAR volunteers warn prospective searchers that this is not an activity for just any person or dog. According to Susan, the conditions are often horrendous, the hours are usually bad (searches, after all, seem to never happen at convenient times), and searchers are always on call. But the hard work pays off for the volunteers – whether human or dog – as they provide an invaluable gift to families in need.

Seward County Kennel Club

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