

Founding members: K-9 Stryker, K-9 Thor, K-9 Beau, Eileen M. Nobles, Susan Bulanda, K-9 Roo, Leslie Godchaux, Brian R. Hendrickson, Continental Kennel Club, Inc., K-9 River, K-9 Persha, Jan Thompson, K-9 Cali

NSDA Certification Fees CUT



While other organizations are raising their fees, NSDA is reducing theirs. Members testing fees for the Field Test have been reduced to \$10.00 from \$20.00

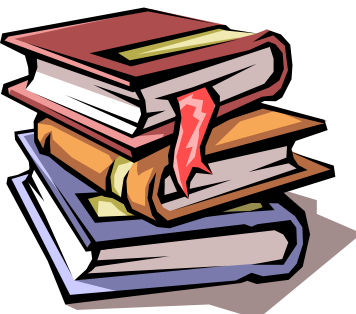
Testing fees will be as follows:

	Written	Field	Total
Members	\$ 5.00	\$10.00	\$15.00
Non-members	\$10.00	\$25.00	\$35.00

**POD CAST March 22, 2009: HRD water Recovery Training with Marcia Koenig
See Article on Page 5 for further information**

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATION

The NSDA Education Committee has been working on the general SAR knowledge certification written test. Study modules will be on the NSDA website in late May and will cover such things as weather, map reading, compass, etc., from which to learn. Modules will also be created specifically for individual criteria. The plan is to test online with a



dated certificate of passing to be printed at that time. This certificate would be presented to the evaluator at the time of the field test.

The following is a list of books used as reference material to create the test:

- *Scent and The Scenting Dog*; Syrotuck, 1972
- *Be Expert with Map & Compass*; Kjellstrom
- *Fire Weather*; United States Department of Agriculture, available online
- *Lost Person Behavior*; Koester, 2008
- *Handbook for Managing Land Search Operations*; ERI Publications and Training
- *The First Aid Companion for Dogs and Cats*; Shojai, 2001

Specialty Area:

- *Avalanche! A Hasty Search*; Burnett

Status of Standards:

Area – completed and on the website

Avalanche – completed and on the website

Disaster – Beta Pending

HRD (land) – teams requested for Beta Testing

HRD (water) – Committee formed & working on standard

Trailing – Study in progress to determine the appropriate working distance from the trail

This information is also posted on the NSDA website under Standards.

NSDA Elections



March 1st was the deadline for membership in the NSDA if seeking a position on the Executive Board. Between April 1st and May 1st, any individual voting member may contact the Nominations Chair to request to be placed on the ballot. More information will be sent out via e-mail to our members.

NSDA Bylaws state that the members will elect one director from each of three regions of the country, as identified by the Board. Each region is identified below. In the 2009 election, Region 1 will not be voting for a member. The Bylaws provided that the original Board terms would be staggered from one to three years. Beginning our third year, Sherry Scruggs and Jan Meyer will be retiring from Regions Two and Three. By next year, NSDA will be able to proceed in electing one member from each Region.

Region 1: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Pacific area.

Region 2: Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin, Canada.

Region 3: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Europe.

Evaluator Fitness

By Norma Snelling

As we proceed with our evaluator application process, there has been some discussion regarding the fitness level required of our evaluators. I would like to share my thoughts.

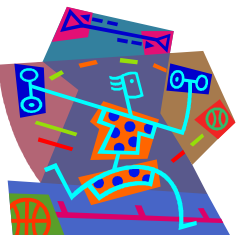
Ten years ago I was air lifted to 11,000 feet into a National Park and told that I would be picked up in three days at the other end of the valley. A few years later, I backed down to searching the low laying mountains at the 3-5,000 foot level. Now, as a senior citizen with an artificial knee, I limit most of my searches to local rural areas and to HRD. With twenty years experience and working my fifth dog, I know enough to bluff my way through a lot of situations but that would not be for the benefit of the lost subject we are working to locate but would only be for my own ego.

My first training officer used to make a point of leaving her evaluators in the dust for the first half hour of the test, even if it almost killed her to do so. It was a mind game to make them think she was unquestionably capable.

When saving lives is on the line, each of us has to determine our own limits and effectiveness when we are called out. I won't even begin to discuss experience levels of training here. I am concerned that those of us who are selected to evaluate and certify handlers to respond to searches are physically qualified to do so.

When we go into the field to evaluate, if we are not able to keep up with the pace of the handler, we jeopardize his/her ability to perform effectively and our ability to judge him/her fairly. Each team establishes their own rhythm of searching and, if we interfere with their methods, we make them less effective and the test becomes less realistic.

I urge those of you who are qualified to apply to be an evaluator. I also urge each of you to seriously consider your own personal limitations and abilities as you choose the test you evaluate. We want to have our certification stand for fielding the very best of teams. Together we can assure that NSDA stands for quality.



LAND HRD BETA TESTING

by Dee Wild

NSDA is ready to accept applications for teams to hold land HRD Beta Tests. The test consists of three components: wilderness including a roadway, building and vehicle.



This standard has been developed by the NSDA to assess handler/K-9 teams for their operational suitability at typical HRD incidents. It is based upon the reality of what handler/K-9 teams are asked to perform on ordinary searches.

The standard is based upon a three-pronged approach. The team must be capable of searching a house/building where the case begins, identifying the vehicle that transported the victim and searching the wooded area where the victim was placed. NSDA prerequisites represent those items that we believe will allow the candidate to conduct the HRD test and searches safely and successfully.

If your team is interested in holding an HRD Beta Test, the application form outlines what is required for a team to hold the test successfully. Complete the application form which can be found at the end of this newsletter and e-mail it to dwild1@bellsouth.net. The application must be submitted by **March 30, 2009**, in order to be considered. As mentioned in last month's newsletter, teams with NSDA members will be given priority.



Once applications are received, testing sites will be determined based upon locations across the country in order to have a wide spectrum of locales. Teams that are selected will be responsible for participating in a conference call to answer any questions regarding the test, for

running the full HRD beta test and for completing a questionnaire.

If you have any questions, contact Dee Wild at dwild1@bellsouth.net.

Book Review

by Monica McFadden

Cadaver Dog Handbook: Forensic Training and Tactics for the Recovery of Human

Remains

CRC Press, 2000. www.crcpress.com

ISBN: 0-8483-1886-6. Hardback

Size: 9.3 x 6.2 x 0.7 inches

232 pages

List Price - \$89.95

Authors: Andrew (Andy) Rebmann, A.S.; Edward David, M.D., J.D.; Marcella H. Sorg, Ph.D., DABFA (with contributions on training principles by Marcia Koenig).

About the authors:

Rebmann is widely renowned as a leader in the field of cadaver and search and rescue dogs. A retired Connecticut State Police (CSP) trooper and K-9 trainer, he developed the CSP training programs for cadaver dogs and SAR K-9s. He has participated in over 1000 cadaver dog searches, is an expert witness concerning scenting dogs, and a consultant for law enforcement agencies. Rebmann and Marcia Koenig head K-9 Specialty Search Associates in Kent, Washington, which provides training programs and consultation concerning cadaver and search and rescue dogs around the country and the world. <http://www.cadaverdog.com/>

David is a Deputy Chief Medical Examiner of Maine, with over 20 years of experience in medico-legal death investigations.

Sorg is a board-certified forensic anthropologist since 1977 and past president of the American

Board of Forensic Anthropology. She has wide practical experience in the recovery and examination of human remains.

Review

Dog training books for me fall into three categories: “scan and shelf”, “read and shelf”, and “devour, highlight, think about, reread, return to for guidance”. Cadaver Dog Handbook is definitely in the “devour” category.

The book offers the dog handler, search manager or forensic investigator practical and detailed information on every aspect of dog searches for human remains. In this very sensitive search situation, the book stresses the importance of being thoroughly professional.



The book begins with the handler/dog training program. Topics covered include:

- The stages of human decomposition and resulting odors produced
- Descriptions and pictures of how scent will pool or become trapped given different terrain, wind or weather conditions.
- A general dog training primer
- A primer on reading the dog’s body language
- The training program which proceeds from imprinting to proficiency evaluation and beyond.
- Suggestions for advanced training, including line-ups, vehicle searches and using distracters (animal remains) to proof the dog
- A wide-ranging FAQ section capturing expert advice on everything from dog selection to plateaus in training.
- A comprehensive practical discussion about how to create and handle training aids.

The training program is the heart of this book and obviously written by people who actually work search dogs. The dog and handler are taken step by step from the dog’s first exposure to cadaver scent (imprinting) through close on-leash block work using positive reinforcement to teach the dog to identify the target scent and consistently recognize it and commit.

The instructors then teach adding the search cue and how to choose and solidify the alert and, if desired, a refind. Stress is placed on the importance of repeating this sequence with a variety of target odors before succumbing to the temptation of moving to larger areas or harder problems.

Off lead work is introduced, again repeating the “identify, recognize, commit, alert” sequence to ensure the team’s reliability.

Instructions are provided on how and when to progress to small area searches and ultimately to large area work with hidden, buried and hanging sources. The importance of incorporating negative searches into the training program is stressed and instructions provided on how to achieve this step. Finally, blind problems are introduced.

Ultimately, the testing phase is covered, along with samples of the K-9 Specialty proficiency test and evaluation form.



In my copy, this section is permanently book marked and well thumbed. Whenever I have an issue in my training, I return to this chapter for a “virtual lecture” by Andy.

The next chapters present the forensic context of human remains work, stressing the professional, ethical and legal issues.

Primers are provided on:

- Record keeping (training logs, search reports, resumes)
- Testifying in court
- The legal principles of handling a professional dog
- Liability
- Search and seizure.

The book then teaches how to plan and conduct searches. Included are basic navigational and grid pattern descriptions, techniques for documenting and mapping alerts and finds, techniques for using other equipment and tools to aid in the search and crime scene protocol and preservation.

The next chapter is an excellent introduction for the non-scientist to the natural processes that occur in outdoor death scenes, including how bodies decompose differently in different environments, how bodies disarticulate, scavenger modification of the human remains and what to expect over time. This is then applied to search strategies to assist the searcher/manager.

The final chapters offer detailed instructions and illustrations for the handler and manager for on-site search guidelines and the planning and execution of land and water searches. The land section covers scenarios such as disarticulated remains, dismemberment, adapting the search

grid to terrain and site characteristics. The water section is a primer on everything from choosing a boat to how a body will decompose in water (and

hence what to look for depending on the time since the person went missing) and illustrations of grid patterns for water searching.

The book's appendixes supply sources for training aids and equipment and samples of training logs, search reports and handler and dog resumes.

A well-organized table of contents facilitates searching the book.

In short, Cadaver Dog Handbook should be on your reading list and in your library if you train, handle or use dogs to search for human remains. The only downside to this book is its price. It is, however, worth every penny in my opinion and you need your own copy if you do any amount of cadaver work.

Monica McFadden is a K-9 handler for Jackson County, Oregon, Search and Rescue. Monica and her partner, Mara (a 4 YO Golden Retriever), are certified as an advanced air scent team and working on cadaver certification. In her "off" time, Monica is a lawyer.

PODCASTs POPULAR.

By Larry Welker

The Network Committee wants everyone to know that they appreciate the membership's participation in the PODCAST episodes. The number of handlers signing into the live program and the larger number of PODCAST downloads after the programs have aired attest to how popular this NSDA benefit has become.

The next PODCAST will cover Water Human Remains Recovery training. Marcia Koenig is welcomed back for this episode that airs on March 22, 2009, at 8:00 p.m. EDT.

The April program is in its final planning phases and will be of particular interest to teams and handlers of HRD trained canines. Pay special attention to the committee's announcement in the April Newsletter.

In May the attention will focus on the training of Search and Rescue K-9 crews and the training program that teams need to keep the K-9 crews effective.

Outlines for these training programs are provided, in Microsoft Word format, to all NSDA members. So if you're not a member of



NSDA yet and, you'd like to receive a copy of these outlines, take action now.

Finally, in June, the concluding PODCAST in this series will use a panel format to discuss 'What you do when your team arrives at the Search Site'.

The best part of the PODCAST programming is that you don't need to participate directly in the live program. The general public can listen or download NSDA Episodes by merely going to <http://www.talkshoe.com/tc/21763>. The PODCASTs remain available for download indefinitely.

And a reminder, the NSDA PODCAST can be updated automatically via an RSS on iTunes.com. Go to iTunes.com or Goggle and enter 'NSDA PODCAST' as the search term. Additional ways to listen and to download all of the NSDA PODCAST episodes will be offered.

Perspective

By Pat Totillo

The Executive Board Meeting was called to order on February 19, 2009.

Present were:

Region 1: Norma Snelling

Region 1: Dee Wild, Jan Meyer, Sue Wolff

Region 3: Sherry Scruggs, Jacob Weaver

Absent: Region 1: Cris Goodhue, Terry Crooks, Cameron Daggett.

Also present: members T. C. Crippen and Rebecca Fawley

The Education Committee, represented by T. C. Crippen and Rebecca Fawley gave an update on the status of the written test. The ultimate goal of the Committee is to have the written test

online. This sounds like a simple task but, given the vast amount of general knowledge that is required to be successful in the field, it presents a unique challenge. Having previously served on the Education Committee, I can attest to the enormous amount of time and commitment that this Committee has expended on developing the test. The Education Committee is faced with a very difficult task.

The Education Committee is developing study modules which will cover the knowledge that will be necessary to pass the written test. Once the modules are completed and online, members will have the opportunity to complete the modules prior to taking the written test. Unfortunately, all the modules will not be completed until summer.

It was agreed that the Education Committee will forward the general knowledge questions to the Executive Board for approval. Until the study modules are completed, a list of reference books will be posted in the newsletter. This will give handlers the opportunity to study on their own and take the test without waiting for the study modules to be finalized.

The Education Committee's first project, *Selecting the Canine Partner*, is at the printer. One hundred copies have been ordered. Dog Wise is interested in putting the book on their website.

A suggestion was made to give evaluators a free one year membership after they have administered a required number of tests in a twelve month period. This will be discussed at the in-person board meeting to be held in March.

While other organizations are increasing their fees for certification, the Executive Board felt that NSDA should be doing the opposite. NSDA is an organization created to help canine handlers. These troubled economic times have put a strain on everyone, especially volunteers. The Executive

Board agreed to reduce the field certification fees



for NSDA members to \$10. If this is not an incentive to become a member, I don't know what is!

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

STANDARDS NEED STANDARDIZING

NSDA is seeking committee members to review, NOT to write, the Alliance's standards and its forms. The paperwork needs to be checked for uniformity and standardization in both appearance and content.

Volunteers please contact Norma Snelling at snelling@olypen.com

National Service Dog Eye Exam Day

The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists is hosting its second AVCO National Service Dog Exam Day May 4-8, 2009. In 2008 the event provided free eye exam screening to over 1,500 Service Dogs. Please pass the word on to qualified candidates to help them meet their goal of examining 5,000 dogs in 2009.



Veterinary ophthalmologists across the U.S. and Canada will participate in the program. Dogs that qualify include handicapped assistance dogs, detection dogs, police dogs, search and rescue dogs and therapy dogs that Delta society certified. Dogs must be active working dogs that are certified by a formal training program or organization or currently enrolled in a formal training program. Those that were examined in the 2008 event are welcome to participate again in 2009. Registration for the event will commence on April 1, 2009. For further information, visit www.acvoeyexam.org

FLORIDA CELEBRATES K-9 VETERANS DAY

Governor Christ of Florida declared March 13 as K-9 Veterans Day. Last year Mayor Peyton made Jacksonville the first city to declare a K-9 Veterans Day and hopefully Florida will have its Congress people lead the way for national recognition of all the dogs, of all our wars.



Dogs have served with honor throughout the history of our Country and have served at many jobs in all of our wars. However, there was never an official K-9 Corps until March 13, 1942. Hence the effort to create March 13 as K-9 Veterans Day.

And because of the current war on terror, such dogs as Customs Dogs, Search and Rescue Dogs, Border Patrol Dogs, Police Dogs, Secret Service Dogs, and many more will be included in the recognition. This then will be a memorial to their service annually, as they too served, bled, and died.

Doing this honors the dogs for their selfless service, while avoiding any objections one may have if dogs were truly included in the human Veterans Day.

To start a K-9s Veterans Day, contact the launcher of this effort, Joseph J. White at www.k9veteransday.org

NORTHERN IL MEMBERS

NSDA is seeking personnel for a fund raiser on July 11th at Woodstock, IL (Rockford area). If you can man a booth or put on a demo, please contact Norma Snelling at snelling@olypen.com

US Live Animal Shipping Policy Changes



A new directive regarding transporting live animals into/through the United States has been put into effect by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Effective February 1, 2009, the directive requires that all animals, including dogs, coming into the United States booked as manifest cargo must be tendered at their [foreign] origin airport by a "Regulated Agent" or "IATA-Approved Agent".

Parties not affected include:

- a. People (breeders, owners, etc.) shipping their pets as cargo within the US.
- b. People traveling with their pets as excess luggage or in-cabin within the US.
- c. People traveling with their pets as excess luggage or in-cabin into the US.

Affected parties include:

- a. People shipping pets as cargo overseas and/or across the U.S. border.
- b. Individuals living overseas who want to send their pets back to the U.S. as cargo.

These affected parties must now use the services of a registered/licensed shipping/cargo/freight agent or broker. Such agents are easy-to-find, as there are usually a number of them near major airports.

As always, individuals flying with a dog into the U.S. should check with their airline to confirm its policies on live animals as excess baggage. **

For more information, please contact AKC's Government Relations Department at (919) 816-3720, or e-mail doglaw@akc.org.

Source: Government Relations Department, American Kennel Club; Monday, February 23, 2009

*** Pat Totillo of K-9 Search & Rescue of Orange City, Inc, has researched and compiled a list of airlines and their requirements for SAR K-9's flying in cabin. This information is now posted on the NSDA website under News.*

Hernandez Award 2008 Update

Susan Hobson, one of the two 2008 winners of the Hernandez award, reports that she has picked out a dog breeder, Top Dog Retrievers in Red Bluff, California. The litter should be ready in about eleven weeks. She says, "I am starting to really look forward to a new dog in the house. Here comes the trial of puppy hood."



Susan is a member of California Rescue Dog Association (CARDA) and the local team in Tehama County.

TRAINING

Abbreviated information of upcoming schools and conferences will be listed in each newsletter. If you know of one and/or are sponsoring one, please let us know at newsletter@n-sda.org so it can be included.

March 30-31, Search and Rescue 2009, Tyson's Corner, VA: speakers from diverse regions of the world talking about search missions, management and coordination issues. For more information, see <http://www.shephard.co.uk/events/39/search-and-rescue-2009/>

TRAINING continued

April 17-19, Canine Search and Rescue Workshop in Texarkana, Arkansas presented by Four States Search and Rescue, Inc. The deadline to register is April 2. For more info, go to www.fourstatessar.com

April 24 – 26, Susan Bulanda will be speaking at the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants conference about Scent Work in Dogs. The conference will be held in Houston, TX. Susan is scheduled to speak Saturday morning. For more information go to www.iaabc.org

April 24-26, Virginia Search and Rescue Council annual conference includes technical rescue, K-9 and equine sessions. For more information, see <http://www.asrc.net/asrc/Uploads/training/2009%20Conference%20Flyer.pdf>

May 15-17, WASAR: hands-on training for all disciplines i.e. K-9, water, equine, tracking, etc. For more information, see <http://www.wasar2009.com/>

July 16-19, Colorado, Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado. For more information, see <http://www.cosarma.org/>

September 11-13, California SAREX, Yosemite National Park. For more information, see www.sarex2009.com

October 9-11, SAR City, California, billed as the largest SAR school on the West Coast: training and information sharing for rescue, fire, medical and law enforcement. For more information, see <http://www.bcconline.com/sarcity/index.htm>

October 10, Ohio Special Response Team inaugural conference in Mansfield Ohio. For more information, contact info@dbs-sar.com

TRAINING continued

October 15, Northwest SARCon, Clackamas County, Oregon: For information, see <http://www.clackamas.us/sheriff/sarcon/>

Canada SARSCENE Is Postponed Until 2010 in order to revamp, improve content and offer more targeted educational tracks. Suggestions are welcome by email at sarscene@nss.gc.ca Updates on future conferences can be found at <http://www.sarscene.ca>

The test of good instructors...is how proficient their students are long after the training is over.

Charles E. Humes, Jr.

Co-founder of CSAR dies

Carolyn M. Knapp, 52, of Palmyra, Missouri, passed away Wednesday, March 11, 2009 at the University Hospital and Clinics in Columbia, Missouri. Carolyn was born August 28, 1956 in Iowa City, Iowa to David and Doris White Knapp.

She was co-founder and treasurer of Canine Search and Rescue, Inc. (CSAR), and was a member of Citizens Emergency Response Team (C E R T) and S A R C O M Search and Rescue of Missouri. She had been a search and rescue instructor and handler for 30 years, had taught overseas, and was last years recipient of CSAR's Bill Tolhurst Award for her outstanding contributions to K-9 Search and Rescue.

Funeral services were held on Saturday March 14, 2009, in Palmyra, Missouri.

YAPBack

By Mary Jane Boyd

Opinions expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of the National Search Dog Alliance. Questions for this column can be sent to trainingquestions@n-sda.org

This is in response to the Yip Yap article by Dana Kirsch Ray, published in the February 2009, edition the NSDA newsletter. Perhaps I am alone in this, but no, I did not get it.

In writing this article, I contacted Dana to make sure I was not totally off the mark in my response. She replied that what she submitted for that article was a "discussion" - a series of emails and that what the editor chose to publish was a reformatted article. In addition, she was ambivalent on the subject of temperament testing and screening.

My apologies in advance if I have misinterpreted the previous article in any way, but I feel that some of the statements set forth as facts must be clarified and corrected. Since the point of the article was unclear to me, I have made some assumptions in my response. I will try to be clear and will differentiate between my opinions, assumptions and facts.

In any case, I think the topics of temperament testing and screening are worth a closer look. Personally, I believe that screening tools can be a useful part of a successful canine program. Before continuing, I will offer some definitions for the purposes of this article. According to The Partnership for Animal Welfare:

“Temperament is the general attitude a dog displays towards people and other animals; it is the combined inherited and acquired physical and mental traits that influence the dog's behavior. Temperament testing evaluates an individual dog's temperament through a series of

tests that measure traits including stability, confidence, shyness, friendliness, aggressiveness, protectiveness, prey instincts, play drive, and self-defense instincts, and ability to distinguish between threatening and non-threatening situations.”



According to Wikipedia, screening, in general, is the investigation of a great number of something (for instance, people) looking for those with a particular problem or feature. My definition of screening, in this context, is a tool or test to identify canine candidates most likely to succeed in search and rescue work.

Specifically, the proposed screening tools of the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS/FEMA) Canine Sub-Group are, according to their memorandum, to provide guidance, as well as policy and procedure, as to the screening of potential FEMA National US&R (Urban Search and Rescue) Response System canine candidates to increase the probability of FEMA National US&R Response System Canine Search Team certification. At this time there is no formal FEMA canine screening process. It is merely proposed. The proposed screening criteria may be accessed at:

<http://www.disasterdog.org/forms/screening/08-01%20Attachment%20A%20-%20Criteria.doc>

Although I did not see where they are given credit, the FEMA screening tool appears to have its roots in the Brownell-Marsolais Scale: A Proposal for the Quantitative Evaluation of SAR/Disaster K9 Candidates authored by David A. Brownell and Mark Marsolais.

Based on these definitions given above, I would conclude that for our purposes, temperament assessment is a component of screening, but screening is not necessarily temperament testing.

Since the previous article mentioned these organizations (American Kennel Club [AKC],

American Temperament Testing Society [ATTS] and Delta) in the discussion of canine temperament testing, I thought it might be useful and informative to provide some information on each. According to the AKC Canine Good Citizen web site, the AKC CGC program was established in 1989. "The Canine Good Citizen Program is a two-part program that stresses responsible pet ownership for owners and basic good manners for dogs." <http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/index.cfm>. In my opinion, the AKC evaluation is a basic obedience test and not a temperament test.

According to its web site, the American Temperament Test Society (ATTS) was established in 1977 to:

- Provide for a uniform national program of temperament testing of purebred and spayed/neutered mixed-breed dogs.
- Conduct seminars to disseminate information to dog owners, dog breeders and evaluators (testers) concerning dog psychology, motivation, reaction and other aspects of temperament testing.
- Recognize and award certificates to dogs that pass the requirements of the temperament evaluation.
- Work for the betterment of all breeds of dogs.
- Select, train, prepare and register temperament evaluators.

To obtain more information about ATTS, visit: <http://www.atts.org/about.html>.



The Delta Pet Partners program was established in 1990 to ensure that "both ends of the leash," people as well as animals, were well-prepared to participate in animal-assisted activity and animal-assisted therapy programs.

Pet Partners is the only national registry that requires volunteer training and screening of animal-handler teams. To obtain more information see:

<https://www.deltasociety.org/Page.aspx?pid=259>
Although there are components of temperament testing in this evaluation/testing, I do not believe this is a temperament test nor is it applicable to the evaluation of canines for search work.

I did not read or examine the web sites of these three organizations in their entirety, but in my cursory examination, I did not find prominent mention of the German Shepherd Dog. Additionally, I did a Google search for the "history of canine temperament testing" which produced 286,000 results; of the first ten results, only one mentioned the German Shepherd Dog. Based on these limited search efforts and the results, I must question the validity of the statement that "Most generic temperament testing was designed for the German Shepherd dog and is not 100 percent applicable to other breeds."



Not that the previous article said otherwise, but I would hope that a sound temperament and good manners would be behaviors that any search dog handler would endeavor to instill in his or her canine partner, wilderness, FEMA, GSD or other wise. We as canine handlers have a responsibility to the public to provide the best canine resources available. I would think that we would embrace and eagerly pursue any tool or tools that might assist us in fulfilling this obligation. Personally, if I am going to spend one to two years of my life certifying a dog and the subsequent six to ten years working that dog then I will do anything (legal and humane) I can to increase my probability of success. I would rather cut a good dog in error than waste my time and that of my teammates on a dog that is not suitable for search work. It should not matter what hat we wear, we owe the missing person the best we can muster.

The previous Yip Yap article states "To train your dog in disaster, you must join a FEMA task

force and train to their standards using the approved training techniques.” I am unaware and could not find any official prohibitions against anyone training their dog for disaster work. Nor could I find any official policy on how one must train a disaster canine. There are best practices, but they are not laws, regulations or rules. Some of these best practices may be found at www.disasterdogs.org.

In addition to the twenty-eight (28) FEMA Task



Forces, there are at least twenty state task forces (SUSAR) as well as a handful of local canine teams that specialize in disaster work. The SUSAR Alliance can be

accessed at www.susar.org. Organizations, other than FEMA, offer disaster canine certifications. Off the top of my head, organizations, other than FEMA, that offer disaster canine certifications are SUSAR and NASAR. In addition, ARDA offers a Mass Fatality Canine Search Evaluation. The previous article also states that “FEMA has created rules and regulations on use of food reward, when, where, how much, how often, etc”. It may be preferred that food not be used in training, but I could find no official prohibition against its use in training. The only prohibition against the use of food that I could find was in the Canine Search Specialist Certification document where use of a food reward is prohibited during the rubble search.

I am curious about the statement that there are a “thousand candidates every year”. Consider this, if each FEMA and SUSAR task force rosters twelve dogs and there are 44 task forces that is 528 dogs – for the entire country. Only two FEMA task forces have twelve certified canines and some of the SUSAR task forces are still building their canine teams. The December 2008 roster on the Disaster Dog web site shows 209 FEMA canines so I will go out on a limb here and guess there are not a thousand disaster canines in the entire United States.

In my opinion, this is unfortunate, because what happens in a disaster? Local search teams are often the first responders to an incident. Although many of these teams are well-trained professionals, there are many that respond for a job that they are not qualified for or equipped to handle. As local resources, if we plan to respond to disaster type events in our community, we should do the training to be properly prepared.

I am also perplexed by this line of thought: “We aren't looking for a pass/fail so much as the ability to quantify various drives. What makes the test so interesting is that the evaluator is able to measure the level of each drive and the dog's relative nerve strength.” In my opinion, you are looking for a pass/fail – why else would you bother to do the screening? That is the purpose of the screening tool: to select those candidates with a high probability of success and to weed out candidates that have a low probability of success. Screening is not to help you in your training. It is to decide if you should be training that dog at all.

The primary weakness in canine screening is the ability of the evaluator to remain fair and impartial in their assessment. The dog does not lie.

Unfortunately, not all dogs are created equally. I am sure somewhere someone can produce a pug that can search, but can the pug withstand a harsh search environment? No, so, why bother? Entertainment value aside, they simply cannot do the job. The traits that make a good SAR dog are prevalent in certain breeds. However, if another dog has the appropriate drive, physical ability, health, confidence and desire to work – great! No matter how we select our canine partners, what breed or for what purpose, we owe it to our subjects to do our best.





Date Received: _____
Date Accepted: _____
Date Rejected: _____
_____ Signature of NSDA

Land HRD Beta Testing Application

This completed form must be emailed to Dee Wild at dwild1@bellsouth.net no later than **March 30, 2009**. Any applications received after that date will not be considered.

Date: _____

Team Name: _____

Team Location (City and State): _____

Team Representative: _____

Email Address of Representative: _____

Cell phone of Representative: _____ Home phone: _____

Names of NSDA Members on the team and their NSDA Membership Number (**Note: Teams with NSDA members will be given priority**):

Name	NSDA Membership Number
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

A. Date you anticipate being able to schedule the beta test.

B. What is the number of handlers/canines that you plan to beta test?

C. Of those going through the beta test, how many are HRD Advanced¹: ____ How many are HRD Intermediate²: _____

D. Do you have members that have tested canines before and have set-up testing sites?
Yes ____ No ____

E. What type of building do you have access to? (house, school, office building, other (explain))

For the beta test, the team must have access to the following:

Wilderness – Two one-acre sites per four (4) K-9s tested. Sites should be light to medium tree/vegetation coverage.

Roadway – will need 2/10ths of a mile along a gravel road or paved road that is lightly traveled by the general public with grass, light tree/vegetation coverage alongside the road 20 yards in depth. (i.e., military base, back roads of a park, roads throughout a large office complex, etc.)

Building – the building must have several rooms inside that will add up to 1,000 to 1,500 square feet. It must not be a single room. If the building is large enough, it can be subdivided in order to run numerous K-9s through this section of the test. The building can be a house, school, office building, etc. A certified HRD K-9 must work the building to make sure there are no residual odors.

Vehicles – 3-5 vehicles set-up that have not had source materials in them. It is best to use cars and/or light trucks. Do not use emergency vehicles such as ambulances, fire engines, police units, 18-wheelers, etc as there is a high probability that body fluids could be in them from an accident. A certified HRD K-9 must work the vehicles to make sure there are no residual odors.

Sources:

- a. Wet and/or dry bone at no less than five (5) inches and no more than fifteen (15) inches in length
- b. Wet and/or dry blood
- c. Tissue no less than a pound and a half (i.e., whole placenta) and no more than two pounds.

If your team is selected, do you agree to follow the exact layout of each section of the test, complete requested information on each canine that is tested, and complete the questionnaire regarding the test? If you agree, please sign below agreeing to this requirement.

Signature of Team Representative

Date

Printed Name of Team Representative

¹ Advanced equals those canines that tested through an organization and are field operative.

² Intermediate equals those canines that are ready to be tested.