

North Florida



Search & Rescue, Inc.

A Section 501 (c)(3) Corporation

NEWSLETTER

Vol. I No. 1, June 30, 2004

NORTH FLORIDA SEARCH & RESCUE, INC. BEGINS TRAINING

In January, 2004, North Florida Search & Rescue, Inc. (NFSAR) began its training schedule to reach a goal of becoming the second FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) certified canine search and rescue organization in the state.

Organized by Silke Schroder, a professional trainer who also owns the Pet Camp training and boarding facility in St. Augustine, and Peggy Tennyson, an officer with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Department, NFSAR's mission is to provide canine support to existing law enforcement, fire and rescue and private businesses in times of need.

Approximately 15 teams of dogs and their handlers began with basic obedience training with the ultimate goal of receiving the AKC Canine Good Citizen certificate. At the end of March, all who took the test passed and received their certificates.

In April, the teams began agility training. Ms. Schroder and Mrs. Tennyson stressed while this is fun for the dogs and their handlers, the skills learned navigating jumps, A-frames and dog walks are necessary for conditioning and building self confidence in both team members. Moving across rubble piles, uneven surfaces

and jumping through windows of buildings may be required in the event the unit is called up.

While going through the obedience and agility training, the teams also take part in Saturday search training. Places such as Moses Creek Nature Preserve and St. Augustine High School have served as wilderness and urban search sites. The handlers and dogs find "victims" and practice giving a "bark alert" to signal the location of the victim.



The organization hopes to be ready for deployment by late 2004 or early 2005.

NFSAR TEAMS ATTEND CADAVER TRAINING

On June 18, 2004, four canine/handler teams from NFSAR attended a training session in the Dunedin/Palm Harbor area to begin the certification process making these teams eligible for cadaver searches.

While the primary purpose of the organization is the location and rescue of live victims, few law enforcement and fire and rescue agencies have resources with skills necessary to locate human remains. Both human handlers and their canine partners must be trained not only in the detection of human remains, but also in incident command procedures. Building a rapport with the agencies is critical and takes time.

Shown counter-clockwise from bottom right in the photo below, Peggy Tennyson and K-9 Sar, Kim Dyson and K-9 Molly, Al Dodds and K-9 Tess, and Anyce Fox and K-9 Mosby learned techniques used in the location of human remains. These techniques could greatly assist law enforcement agencies as well as fire and rescue services. The dogs and their handlers practiced land and water detection methods. More training is needed before the teams are ready for deployment. The teams hope to be certified at the basic level within the next 30 to 60 days.



WHERE TO SEE US

Look in this space each quarter to find events where you can see and visit with the handlers and their K9 partners.

K9 AND HANDLER TEAM OF THE QUARTER



Pearl, a Bloodhound, is shown in the picture above as she begins her search and rescue training. Pearl is being asked to bark to signify that she has found her handler, Ally Walter, hiding in the box.

Pearl is a 15 month old, 95 lbs. black and tan, female Bloodhound. Ally decided to get another dog because her 12 year old Scotty/Dachshund mix could no longer keep up on her long daily walks.

Ally had always thought that Bloodhounds were cute so she began to do her research. After telling her husband that they were wonderful family pets and very people orientated but hiding the facts that they can be extremely stubborn and are able to fling their drool up to 20 feet, the entire family was ready to welcome Pearl. She was one of 11 puppies.

When most people think of bloodhounds they think of the dog from the Beverly Hillbillies always sleeping on the front porch. What a misconception! Pearl is very active, smart, sweet, vocal, mischievous, and extremely loving. Pearl makes sure that she is the center of attention. She loves people and other dogs. And yes, she can fling her drool up to 20 feet.

This past fall a teacher friend of Ally's told her about an article in the *St. Augustine Record* about the formation of a search and rescue

team. Knowing that Bloodhounds are scent hounds and are often used for this type of work, Ally contacted Silke Schroder and decided to give it a go.

“We have been training since this past January and I’m not sure who gets more excited about going to our training sessions, Pearl or me” says Ally. “When she sees me getting our Search and Rescue bag ready to go she knows it’s time to work. To her this is her favorite game. Through our Search and Rescue team Pearl and I have made great new human and dog friends who are very dedicated to our team. Even though we are still in the early stages of our training, I often think about how exciting it will be when we get that first call to search for a missing person. We will be ready!”