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Presidents Update:

WOW! Can't believe it's this time of year already and what a year it has been. With earthquakes, tornados, large snow events, a maritime disaster and as I write this a once in a life time flood event in Nelson, 2012 is shaping up to be a great year!!

On the Christmas wish list this year is an ipad and cell phone for the boys 7 and 10 (yeah right!!) and peace and quiet for my wife. West Coast here we come!

I would like to take this time to thank everybody for their amazing efforts and support through what has been a very trying year. I wish you and your families a very relaxing Christmas and happy New Year.

See you all in 2012.



Tim Drennan
NZ USAR Search Dog Association
President



Vet Corner

A regular column by
Jenny Waters, USAR Vet Evaluator

T'is the season to be careful (la di la di la, di la di da.....)

Christmas means many things to many people, but to most of us it's a time to unwind, indulge ourselves a bit, and toast the long, hot days of summer.

But there are hidden perils, especially for our canine friends. Of course, they are impeccably trained, and their humans know all the dangers, but it won't do any harm to run through the checklist.

The Christmas Tree

If you have a big tree, make sure it's well anchored and can't fall over if a boisterous dog/child/drunken reveller knocks into it.

Think about the decorations. Glass baubles can be mistaken for toys and chomped on. Foil-wrapped chocolates are not only toxic (you all know about the dangers of chocolate, right?), but the foil can cause problems on its way through. As can tinsel. Electric lights are getting safer with LEDs rather

than glass bulbs, but chewing through the cord can cause electrocution (I've seen this happen).



Christmas Food

I know you don't feed your dogs at the table, but.. Bones, especially turkey and chicken, can cause significant injury to the gastro-intestinal tract. So can skewers and toothpicks. Barbeques are a great source of these!

Scavenging fatty food, or being fed lots of leftovers, is a common cause of pancreatitis, which in some cases

can be fatal. In its milder forms it causes vomiting and bellyache.

Alcohol poisoning in dogs is surprisingly common. It's often the result of Fido cleaning up the glasses left on the floor, so ask your guests to use the tables!

Heat stroke

This is, unfortunately, a common problem in the New Zealand summer, and is often fatal. It usually happens when a dog is confined in a small space without ventilation (the temperature in a car parked in the sun can exceed 50°C, even with the windows open). But it can also result from stress and exertion in high temperatures, particularly if water is not available. Signs include heavy panting, excessive salivation and vomiting, and may progress to collapse and coma.

If you suspect heatstroke, get your dog into the shade, or preferably a cool environment (run the air-conditioning in your flash new ute). Wet the coat by sponging or spraying – don't douse your dog with the hose or bucket, as this could cause shock. Use an electric fan or improvise with a flat object like a car mat, to keep the air circulating over the wet coat. All respectable dog handlers have a rectal thermometer in their kit – once the dog's temperature approaches normal (*which is?**) ease off on the cooling and start drying your dog, to avoid hypothermia.

Then go see your vet.

Blue-Green Algae

This seems to be an increasing problem, and has claimed a significant number of dogs. The Hutt River in Wellington seems very prominent reports, but that may be because it's very accessible and popular with dog owners. Nelson, Otago, Waikato and Wairarapa rivers also feature in reports, but this is a nationwide problem.

The algae form mats in rivers, especially in hot weather and when the water levels are low. The mats are actually dark brown or black, and contain toxins that can be fatal to dogs (and can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and skin irritations in humans).

The course of the poisoning is very rapid seizures and death within hours of ingestion.

Many councils now have warning signs posted on rivers, and updates on their websites. Be alert.

** What's normal for your dog? Investigate!*

Jenny Waters – NZ USAR Vet Assessor



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Training Tips

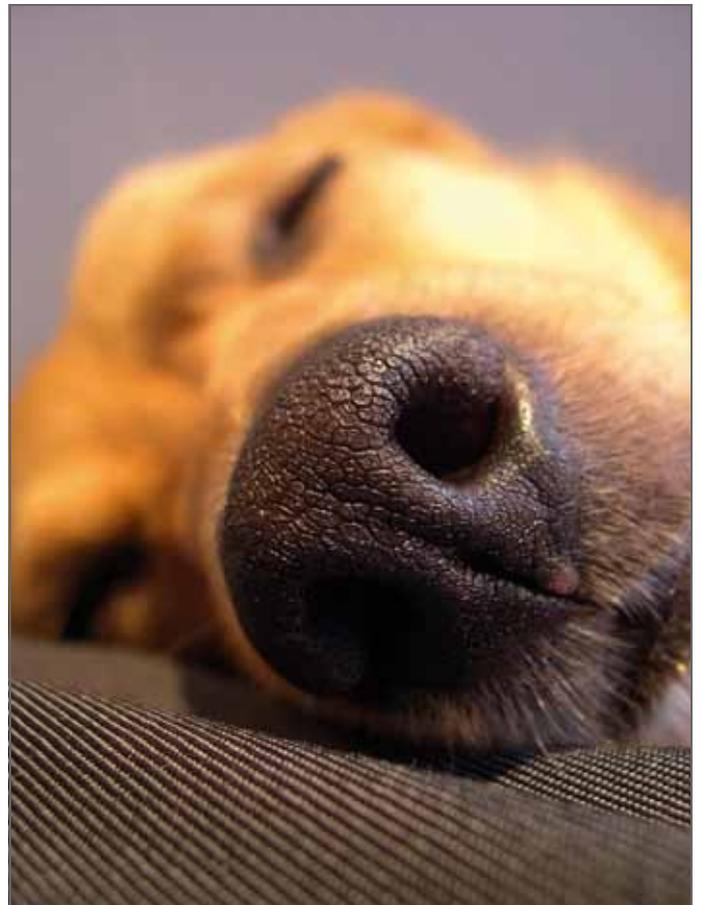
SEASONS GREETINGS

We are almost at the end of another year. And what a very interesting year it has been. What with three earthquakes not to mention trying to fit in our normal training it has been one hell of a busy time.

I would like to thank all our handlers, helpers and dogs of course for the great job they have done throughout the year. I am so very proud of you all. The way you conducted yourselves at the deployment was an absolute credit to you and the SDA. All our hard work had been paid back tenfold, and the dogs were a credit to you all.

If it has proved one thing it is that the National Training program is working, and although we have not got a lot of dogs and handlers at the moment what we have got is quality and they could be deployed anywhere in the world.

Let's hope for a quieter year so that we can get back into training and hopefully get a few new dogs and handlers throughout the country which will be our top priority.



Don't forget to give your dogs some down time for a few weeks and have some fun with them, they have worked hard in the last year and will really appreciate it and will be itching to get going again mid January.

You will still need to keep them fit but no formal training as such. Remember when you do start back training go back to your basics and ease them back into it'.

Remember!!!!!!!!!!!!

- Bark boxes and Run a ways you need to use as many different subjects as possible (they get used to the same ones).
- DECOYS
- FOOD – you may have to search in a bakery?
- HOT scents – you will more than likely have a lot of this in the real thing.
- EMPTY piles or buildings – these are really important as the biggest percentage of places you will have to search will have no one in them and you will have to have the confidence in yourself and your dog to call it.

I could go on and on with suggestions on decoys as there are so many. Think outside the square and make them the norm and not just something you do occasionally, we will talk more about this when we resume training.

In the mean time have a Good Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year.

Brenda Woolley – National Trainer



Operational Assessments

November 2011

The assessment process is routinely held twice a year, one usually around April/May and one in October. As the Rugby World cup was played in NZ this year, the assessment was later than usual and held on the last weekend of November. This held a few concerns, mainly about the weather, possibly becoming exceptionally hot, but interestingly, the May assessment was in fact the hotter of the two assessments.

The usual two days were condensed into one, due to two of the re-cert southern dogs partially tearing their crucilites (within weeks of each other) and being confined to complete rest for a few months. Another two handlers who were aiming for assessment decided to continue with their training to be ready for May, 2012. Another difference for us was: for the first time since national assessments commenced, our police evaluator Paul George was not with us, due to his retirement from the Police force and starting up a business in Hamilton. Jenny, our vet assessor, who has also worked with us from day one, was there (but for the first time ever, her plane was delayed and was three hours late).



Linda Pike with Buk



Kirsti with Tommi, our two Police Assessors Chris Best and John Edmonds and Civilian Assessor Brenda Woolley

For our police evaluators, it was great to have Chris Best available again, and Paul's replacement for the future, John Edmonds. The civilian assessor for this assessment was our National Trainer, Brenda Woolley. We are indeed fortunate as handlers, to receive the knowledge, expertise and experience that are given from all of these assessors. We had the company of Julie Cowan from SARDA, Australia, who came over to observe the assessment. Julie has been over a few times now in previous years, at assessments and training weekends to observe and share knowledge of both countries training/assessment processes. The advanced assessment this time had a combination of High Point and Perimeter (3), Full Access (0) and Limited (3). It is always interesting to get that zero pile, and the reality is, that it must be trained for and executed just as confidently as a pile that does have subjects. Brenda, Tim and Ben did great work on the hide building. They were extremely well built and well hidden. Tala and Buk successfully completed their re-certification of advanced status.

The last pile (3 subjects) was also used for the operational assessment. Unfortunately, the two teams did not make compliancy on this day. With our national training program taking us up to a progress check 6, and hence deemed ready for the assessment process, it can still be a reality check for all (old and new), of the complexity involved to achieve a consistent reliable outcome in all searches undertaken. At times, hard decisions need to be thought through and decided, and many handlers go through this at some stage of their career in search dog handling; sometimes early on, and sometimes much later in their dogs training...but all in the end think of the bigger picture and what is needed for the reality of actual deployment and those that are committed to obtaining the highest possible quality of search, will become the exceptional future dog handlers of NZ.

“If you dare to fail, you are bound to succeed” – Sri Chinmoy

Thanks to all the people involved in the organizing and running of the assessment and many thanks to the subjects who come out for the day and hide for our dogs to find.

Linda Pike



Graham Joseph and Tala

Library Books

Linda Pike

Following the devastating Christchurch earthquake on 22nd February 2011, in which unfortunately there was loss of life, a family of one of the victims, asked if they could donate some money to the NZ USAR Search Dog Association.

The SDA committee decided it would be a good idea to purchase some books to which dog handlers that are part of the national training programme, could have available to them as reference to training, behaviour and maintenance of their dogs.

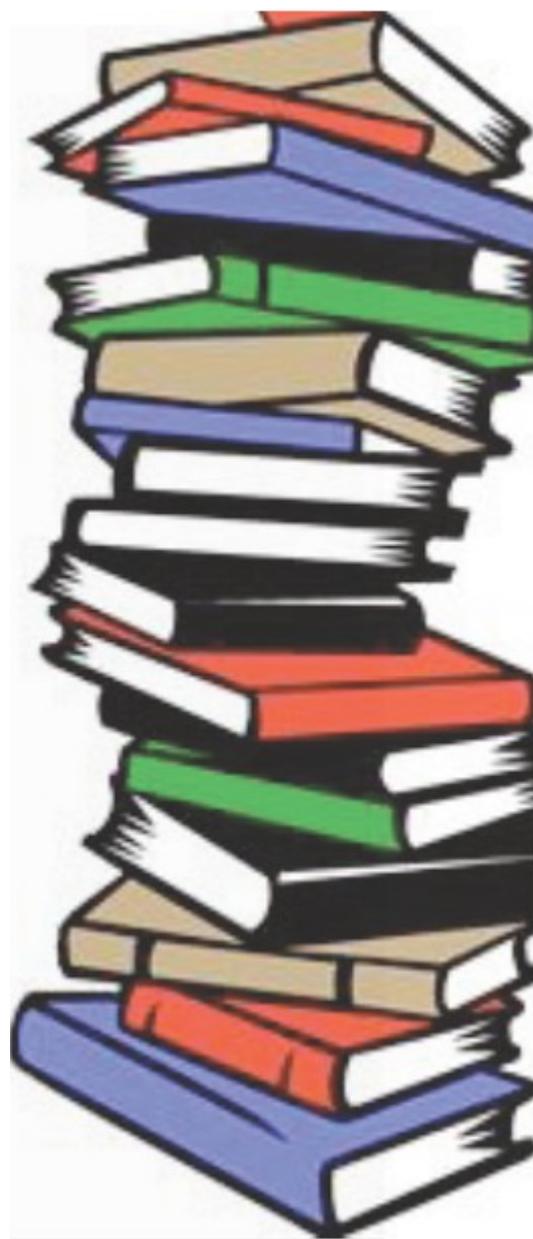
At present we have a total of 12 books that are available for handlers to borrow and read. They are all shown in detail in the library section of the SDA website and can be ordered through this site, (thanks to Janelle Mackie for setting this up). Once you have ordered a book, you will receive a reply from the librarian, as to if the book is presently in the library, and, if not, the time frame you may expect to receive it. Usually handlers can keep a book for a few months, but if anyone is waiting for it, you may get a reminder.

The Northern and Central groups have been very active in using this service. Most change-over's or swaps are done at the regional training/assessment weekends, and the National Trainer has been great in adding more weight to her bags when travelling around the groups. We will try to get all the books together at the National Training weekend next March, so everyone can get a good look at them, and take home any they haven't yet read.

For the next newsletter, we will start some book reviews from handlers that may like to write on what they liked or disliked about a certain book. Happy reading and remember we have one children's book also available on disaster search dogs.

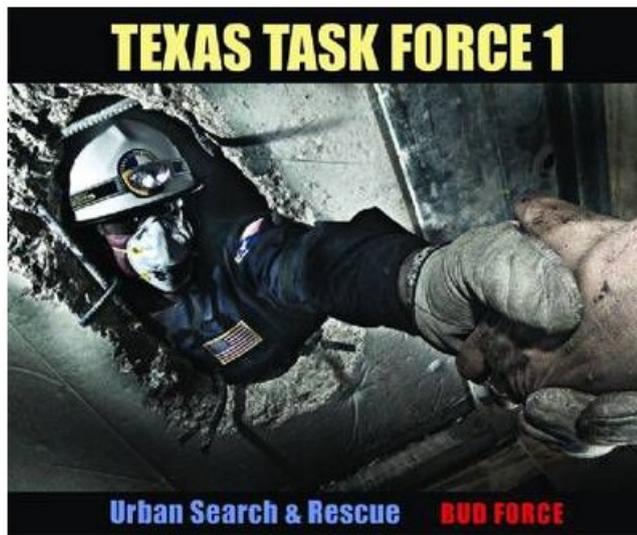
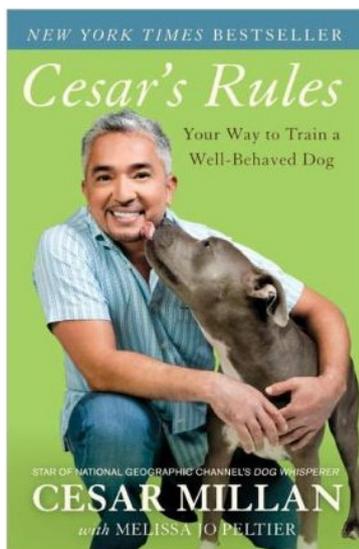
"If we value the pursuit of knowledge, we must be free to follow wherever that search may lead us. The free mind is no barking dog to be tethered on a 10ft chain."

Adlai Stevenson, II



New books...

Cesar Millan's new book *Cesar's Rules* and *Texas Task Force 1* will be available to borrow in the new year. There a number of very good reviews on both these books so will be very interested to have a look for myself.



In The Media

5 November 2011

Urban search and rescue dog teams that worked through debris and rubble looking for survivors after the Christchurch earthquakes were recognised for their efforts today.

New Zealand German Shepherd Dog Advisory Council spokesman Bruce Mayhew said the New Zealand Fire Service Urban Search and Rescue Dog Teams had done "wonderful work".

"Over 80 searches were completed throughout the first few days by the dog teams with a number of positive indications during these searches."

The council presented the teams with "limited edition" awards at the A&P showground's at the South Island German Shepherd Dog Club's championship show.

The award was organised by Australian couple, Annette and Peter Batchelor, from Australia.

Source: Stuff.co.nz



USAR dogs were presented with an award to recognise their work in the earthquakes. Craig Cuthbertson, right, and Lewis, Tim Drennan with Boo, and Brenda Woolley with Easy, Keeper and Boss were the three handlers and six dogs to accept the award at the South Island German Shepherd Dog club premises during their championship show from Bruce Mayhew of the German Shepherd Dog Advisory Council.



"Sands of Gallipoli" minted coins and Victoria cross awarded to the NZ USAR Search dogs that were deployed to the Christchurch earthquake in February 2011.

Upcoming Events:

Date	Event	Venue
21 - 22 January	Regional Training Weekend	Central
5 February	Skills Maintenance Assessment	Northern
2 - 4 March	National Training Weekend	Palmerston North



www.usardogs.org.nz