



Work Hard, Play Even Harder



## Picking a Puppy (Part 3: Where 'o Where?)

In the last months, I've told you all about my list of important attributes for a working dog. Armed with that, next was to find a breeder and litter who could deliver it. In addition to the dog itself, I was looking for a breeder who:

- Was reputable and cared about their dogs (i.e. not a puppy mill.)
- "Got" what I was looking for (my attribute list) and could help / advise me on selecting a litter / puppy.
- Had good potential dogs available soon and I could be the 1st to choose from the litter.
- Raised the puppies in their home (vs. a kennel.)

- Emphasized lots of enrichment and careful environmental exposure, including various: noises, people, dogs, places, objects, etc. (e.g. follows Puppy Culture or Avidog protocols.)
- Located as close as possible to my home, or at least close to an easy travel route / major airport.
- Had references from recent clients, hopefully with dogs from the same potential parent(s), and best case who work their dogs (detection, hunting etc.)



I knew I wanted a Labrador from British field trial lines. We are lucky enough to have some great ones on the team. I put their breeder on the list and set off to find others. I searched the web. I got leads from other detection / search handlers I know, as well as contacts I've made at conferences and trainings. I read over the

breeders web pages and looked at their dogs / pedigrees.

Once I had some good contenders I made a list of questions to ask potential breeders. But questions like: "Are your puppies smart and confident?", "Do you care for your puppies well?" and "Are your dogs focused or distracted nincompoops?" were not going to work! After a bit, I came up with questions like: "Describe the best and worst characteristics of the dam." "Why did you choose the sire and what do you hope to get out of breeding?" "At what age do you prefer to send the puppies home and what do you do with them before that time?"

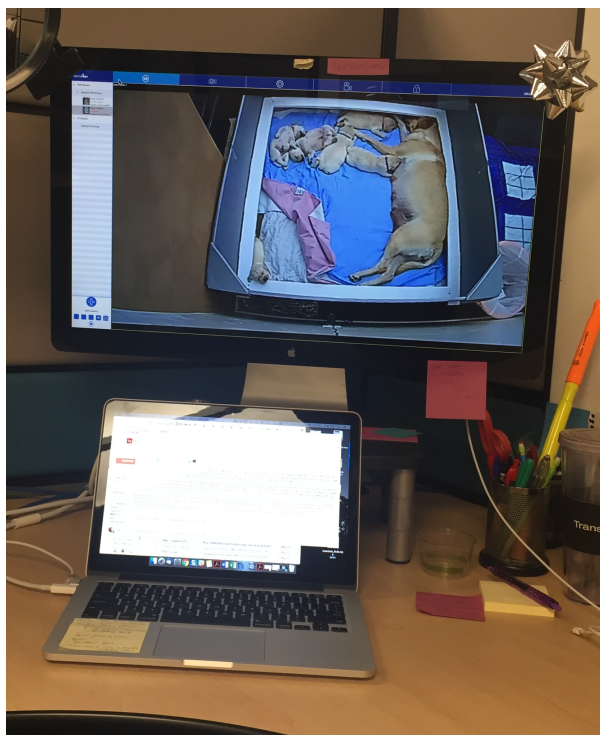
After talking with the breeders and their references, I found some I liked, a couple I was pretty excited about. But some breedings did not take. One possible puppy died. Another litter was completely spoken for. I was getting anxious; would I ever get a puppy? And then, thru serendipity I connected with Darnell and her *Desert Dawgs Kennel*. (I met a woman at a training in Colorado, who had a friend with a litter. I found that friend on a facebook and recalled seeing her name in a fb group. I searched that group for "British" and found Darnell.)

I looked at Darnell's breeding pair. Her sire is my last dog's 1/2 brother. Her dam is the 1/2 sister of Echo (who you've seen in previous newsletters.) Darnell is a professional dog trainer and she follows "Puppy Culture" rearing and socialization protocols. And, as a bonus, she is only one state away and only 30 minutes from an international airport. WOW, this was pretty much everything I had hoped for; I was *superexcited!* I quickly sent in an inquiry and

started my research. (I looked up health certifications and titles / working certifications for 12 generations back from the breeding pair. I calculated the coefficient of inbreeding (COI), as well as sent the info to a friend who is a dog geneticist and another who is a veterinary orthopedist. No red flags.) I found Darnell's puppy application and filled it out. It was *pageslong*, but the good news was that means she cares about where her puppies are placed. And it seemed only fair, as I had a long list of question for her, as well. We connected on the phone and 2 hours later I hung up pretty sure that I had found the right breeder / litter.



She *got* what I was looking for in a puppy. And talking about her sire and dam, we both thought the puppies could provide what I wanted in a dog. We quickly found compromises on things (e.g. she normally matched her puppies to their new owners, but she'd let me test the puppies and be part of the decision.) She contacted my references. I contacted hers and talked to them about their dogs and Darnell. I was convinced.



I signed a contract and sent a deposit. Darnell sent me the log-in to the Puppy Cam, where I could watch the puppies 24x7. (Pictured is my desk - working on the laptop with the PuppyCam above on the big monitor.) I watched them grow, open their eyes and ears, start eating solid food, and discover each other and their world. Darnell sent me videos of them experiencing new things outside the view of the camera. I saw various people come and meet / socialize with the puppies. I saw new things appear in their area

every day (from a giant stuffed alligator to a tiny toy piano.) They were all yellow labs, but with unique colored collars so I could tell one from the other.

I was a bit in love with every one of them. So, now, how to choose one? In next month's issue, I'll share my puppy test with you all, and what happened...



Bodi and Lynne

## Canine Agility Training

While most of our work is done in areas where it is easy for our dogs to move around, there are times when special circumstances require extensive training for our dogs to learn to work safely.

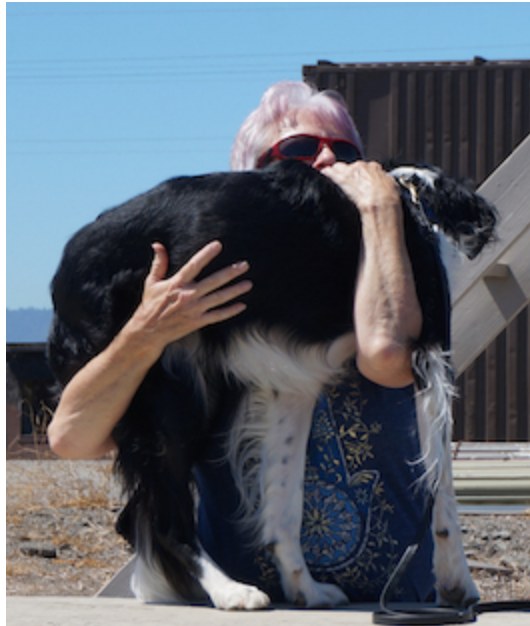
A case in point are the cremains recovery projects we have worked since the Fall of 2017 where our dogs have been asked to work in burned-out homes. Literally an entire dwelling burned to no more than 8" of ash, with all of the major appliances, furnaces, hot water heaters, etc. reduced to nothing more than twisted bits of metal spread among the collapsed walls and foundations. Soft, fluffy ash billows up with each step and you cannot see what you are walking on, much less what dangers might lie beneath. Elevation changes, small and large, are completely hidden. Yet our dogs enter and work these areas with confidence, rarely getting injured. And then, usually minor injuries.



This confidence doesn't come naturally, it comes after hours of teaching our

dogs to work on wobbly, moving, uncomfortable objects. We teach them to climb up and down ladders, cross see-saws slowly and in a controlled manner. Going through dark tunnels, walking across chain link fencing and other obstacles. This isn't something that comes naturally, it has to be taught.

Because of unknown dangers, we cannot allow our dogs to leap off of, or over, an obstacle and into debris. We teach them not to jump, but to move slowly and lower their center of gravity until an object stops moving before they proceed. We also teach them to stop, turn and down on moving obstacles.



This is a process that begins as soon as we get our new dog, be it a puppy or a young adult, building trust in the dog that its handler will be there to guide them through the initial process. It's fun to watch a cautious dog move across a moving plank a couple of times, then "tell" the handler, "I've got it, I can do this all by myself now".

It doesn't take long for them to catch on. And it's a lesson that will make their work safer for their entire careers.

*Lynne Engelbert*

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## **Carr Fire in Redding California**

September 28th - 30th Lynne Engelbert, Adela Morris along with Alex DeGeorgey from ALTA Archaeological Consultants and Michael Newland from ESA Environmental Science Associates joined forces once again to help locate the previously cremated remains of loved ones that were left in homes as people evacuated from the fire.

Our goal is to incorporate a cremains search process as part of a standard federal response after large scale disasters like the Santa Rosa and Carr fires. It is very important to bring awareness to home owners and families that there is a way to help locate cremains after a fire so the ashes of loved ones are not sent to a toxic waste dump.

*~Adela~*

**Record Searchlight**  
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

### **Searching and finding human cremains in ashes of the Carr Fire**

A cremains search team found AI on Saturday morning.

Bonnie Martin had asked the searchers — comprised of border collies Piper, Jasper and Jett and their handlers plus a pair of archaeologists — to find the

rest of her husband's previously cremated remains and those of Al's ex-wife at the burned-down home in Keswick.

"I'm so happy for his sons and daughter," Martin said. "Your dogs were awesome," she told Lynne Engelbert and Adela Morris from the Institute for Canine Forensics.

To read more click on the link below.

<https://www.redding.com/story/news/2018/09/29/finding-human-cremains-ashes-carr-fire/1471832002/>

Jett on left looking for cremains, Piper on right pinpointing the location of cremains.



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We are happy to talk with you about your project and  
how our dogs might help locate human remains or burials.

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