

I C F



Institute for Canine Forensics

ICF is a non-profit organization in Northern California
for the advancement of research and education of Forensic Evidence
and Human Remains Detection Dog teams.



A Ray of Sunshine on a Cloudy Day

Sometimes the fates come together in ways that we don't understand. This happened in mid-October during the devastating fires in Northern California, Santa Rosa in particular. Let's digress for just a bit before we begin that story.

The Institute for Canine Forensics has a sister organization, the Canine Specialized Search Team (CSST). CSST specializes in cold cases and works as a resource to the Santa Clara County Office of the Sheriff providing human remains detection to law enforcement in Santa Clara County and, through the State mutual aid system, to other law enforcement agencies all over California. My dog Piper and I are one of the CSST teams. We were requested to work the aftermath of the fires in Santa Rosa, looking for those people reported missing after the fire.

Just before deploying to Santa Rosa, ICF received a call from an archaeologist, Alex DeGeorgey whose relatives had lost their home in the fire. Alex had learned about ICF and our capabilities from Dawn Johnson and Jaime Bach, who we have worked with for years. His relative, Curt Nichols, had lost his mother and father's cremains when their home burned to the ground. Curt was devastated that he had been unable to get his parents' ashes scattered, per their wishes, before the fire. Would the ICF dogs be able to help locate them? Our answer was "yes", but it might be a couple of weeks before we could get up there. Our priority had to be those who had died in the fire.

This is where the fates come in ... as luck would have it, Piper and I were assigned to work with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office in Santa Rosa. We worked throughout one day with two other CSST teams, helping to locate three victims of the fire's devastation. That evening we were demobilized and released.

I was able to contact Curt Nichols and his wife Barbara, and arrange to meet them near their home the next morning. Curt explained that he was hoping that we could locate the cremains in the 8" of ash that remained of their two-story home.

After doing a survey of the area and checking to make sure there were no hazardous materials in the burned-out home, we went to work. The fire department had been able to help Curt tape-off the location of the shed where the cremains had been stored, so we concentrated on that area. Piper soon alerted on the cremains.

No one was quite prepared to collect the ashes, so we had to improvise. I carry a box of Ziplock bags in my truck and Barbara was able to find a burned tuna can that was a remnant of her lunch the day before the fire, a tiny element of humor in a sad day. Curt and I worked together to collect as much of the co-

mingled cremains as possible.

As an added bonus, I was able to help recover a sugar bowl from each of their mothers' china sets, and a cast iron Dutch oven that was a family heirloom ... little treasures of the past, as they move forward in their recovery. We wish them all the best.

As a result of this becoming a human interest story in the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, ICF has requests from four more people in similar situations ... requests we hope to be able to meet in the next few weeks.

While we are pleased to be able to provide this community service at no cost, any donations to our non-profit organization via our website at www.hhrdd.org, would be much appreciated.

Lynne Engelbert



Lynne and Mr. Nichols collect the cremains of his parents after Piper made the find.

On October 29, both Lynne & Piper and Kris & Annie met up with archaeologist Alex DeGeorgey to meet with the 4 additional families who had contacted us. We are happy to report that all 4 sets of cremains have been found. The families were greatly relieved as in the next few days the area will be bulldozed and taken to the land fill.

~Adela~

2017 has been a very busy year for ICF with Amelia project taking many months to put together as well as over 17 other projects. We are a small group by design so we can keep the quality of our work. We have decided to take on a few new dog handler apprentices and a technical support person. It's hardly fair to call them apprentices as they all have many years experience in search and rescue and training dogs. Both Karen and Dana have started speciality dogs and are training with us to learn the techniques we have developed to do historical human remains detection (HHRD) work. By the time they are certified to work as dog handlers for us they will have been on many projects, acting as field coordinator and support.

We are very excited to introduce Dana Timbrook & Sophie, Karen Atkinson & Echo and Larry Atkinson.

~ Adela ~



Dana has several years experience in Search and Rescue both as an air scent live find dog handler and as search manager. Dana will be helping us out as a field coordinator until his puppy Sophia is certified in HHRD.



Karen has many years experience in Search and Rescue as a certified handler as well as an evaluator. She is also a member of CSST (our sister organization with Santa Clara County Sheriff's office). Echo (on left) is her Lab who is her specialty dog training in HHRD and HRD. Amiga (on right) is her certified dog in both air scent and human remains detection.



Larry is our "go-to" guy. You name the problem and he has fixed it or has another solution. We are so excited to have such an experienced technical support person who can work in the field with us. He can take care of everything from maps, GPS, radio communications, getting us in the right place, you name it and Larry has already made it happen..

Carmen Lucas (Kwaaymii Laguna, San diego) is being recognized by California Governor Jerry Brown as an individual who has demonstrated throughout her working life an exemplary commitment to preserving and protecting California's cultural heritage. This award is the only official preservation award presented by the state of California to worthy recipients in recognition of outstanding achievement in the field of historic preservation.

Carmen will be receiving the Outstanding Individual award in a ceremony that will take place on November 2, 2017, at the Clunie Community Hall in historic McKinley

Park, Sacramento, from 1:00 to 4:00pm. The ceremony is open to the public and we encourage you to come and celebrate this achievement.

You can check out past ICF newsletters on our web page.



[Click HERE](#)

(650) 503-HHRD (-4473)

www.HHRDD.org

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

*Copyright © *2017 *Institute for Canine Forensics*, All rights reserved.*

**Our mailing address is:
Institute for Canine Forensics
P.O. Box 620699
Woodside, CA 94062-0699**

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

