



2017 SCA Conference, Barbara training Jett, with Jasper in the background.

Society for California Archaeology (SCA) 2018 annual meeting

Thursday, March 8th – Sunday, March 11th, 2018

Crowne Plaza Hotel – Mission Valley

2270 Hotel Circle N, San Diego, CA 92108

Once again we will be attending the Society for California Archaeology (SCA) 2018 annual meeting. Please come visit us and our dogs in the book room.

This year we have a new display showing photos of the Finding Amelia project and the Northern California Wildfires, we are also involved in three talks.

DeGeorgey, Alexander L. (Alta Archaeological Consulting)
Engelbert, Lynne and Piper (Institute for Canine Forensics)

Finding Solace: Recovering human cremains from the ashes

On October 9, 2017, a firestorm swept through northern California. Eventually reaching over 180,000-acres, the wildfire destroyed more than 8,400 buildings and killed 42 people. Thousands of families lost their homes and all their possessions. In many instances, the cremated remains of previously deceased family members were stored in urns within the home. A canine forensic team and volunteer crew of archaeologists banded together in an attempt to recover cremains lost during the firestorm. This paper tells the story of our recovery effort and describes how archaeology can be used to help those affected by natural disaster. (presentation discusses or contains images of human remains)

Forum 2: New Directions in Indian Country Archaeology:

Going to the Dogs: Using “Archaeology Dogs” to Sniff Out the Ancestors

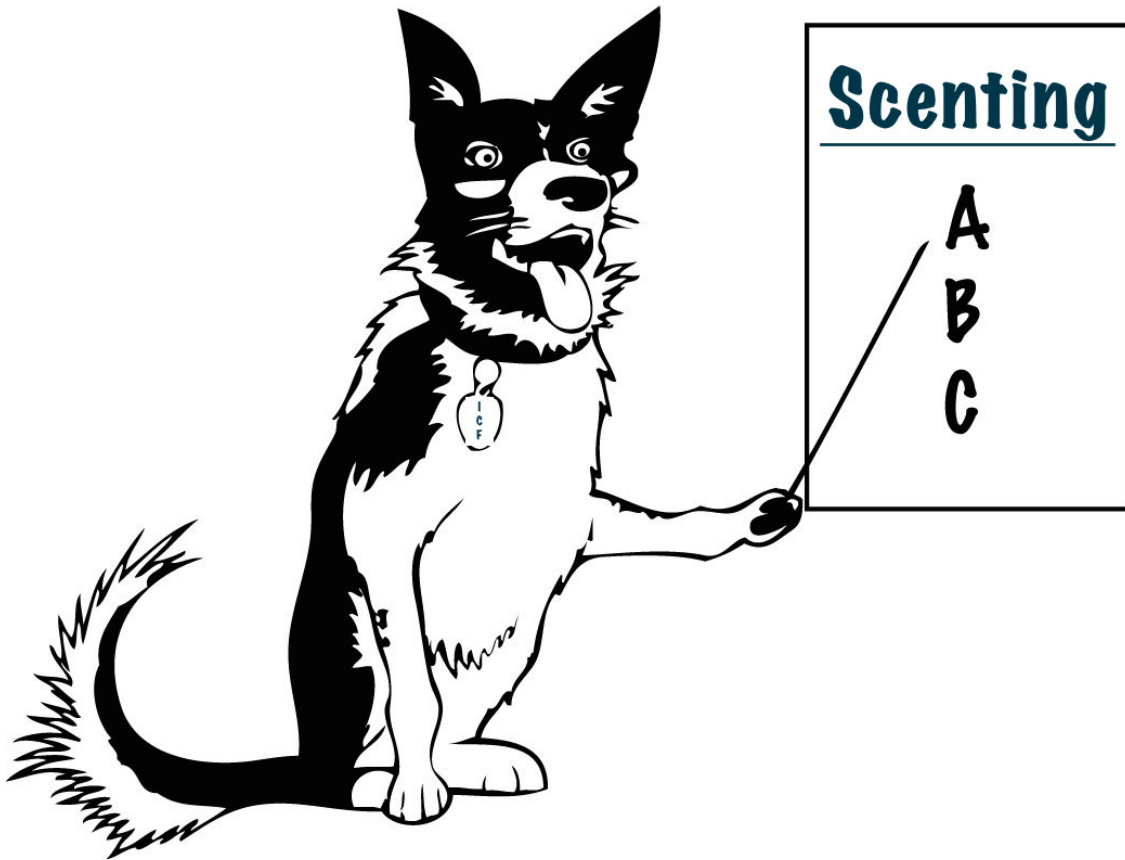
Abstract: Tribes are often faced with the difficult prospect of potentially disturbing the resting places of their ancestors as they attempt to protect them from harm. During the tribal consultation process, archaeological techniques that are used to determine the locations and boundaries of sensitive areas can paradoxically unearth the same ancestral remains that tribes are trying to avoid in the first place. Using cadaver dogs that are trained to sniff out human remains, archaeologists and tribes can pinpoint areas where tribal ancestors have been laid to rest without having to engage in large-scale, destructive excavations. More and more tribes are recommending the use of these “archaeology dogs” as an alternative to destructive testing programs and as a more sensitive method for identifying the locations of ancestral remains.

Grebenkemper, John (Institute for Canine Forensics)

Forensic Canine Search For a Donner Cannibalism Camp

Starved Camp was occupied by members of the Donner Party in March 1847 for ten days. Three of them died in a massive snowstorm. The historic diaries imply that Starved Camp is along the route of the 1846 wagon road near Donner Summit. Recent research has located where this road passed over Donner Summit. Dogs from the Institute for Canine Forensics detected scent from scattered human remains along this route slightly west of the summit. Descriptions of the landscape in the historic diaries suggest that the dog alerts are at the location of Starved Camp.

Historic Human Remains Detection



What does it take to become a certified Historic Human Remains Detection dog.

In the February 2018 newsletter we talked about training a new puppy to recognize our target scent. Along with teaching the dog to find scent we have to socialize our dogs, teach agility and obedience. Teach. Train. Proof. The dog has a long list of accomplishments it must perfect to get it signed off before it can take the final test.

Most people are familiar with the term Search and Rescue (SAR) dogs or cadaver dogs. Over the years, detection dogs have become more specialized in the work they do. It is no longer a "one dog does everything" type of detection dog. Just like so many things in our lives, specialization is the way of the world.

When ICF decided to develop their own certification program, we looked at certifications for search dogs from across the country as well as the FEMA disaster dog standards. It was very clear from the beginning that the work the historical human remains detection (HHRD) dogs were doing was very different from what SAR and cadaver dogs do, so a different testing standard needed to be developed.

With the help of one of our mentors, forensic anthropologist Dr. Lorna Pierce, we looked at what the important pieces for HHRD dogs might be. We developed our own standard for the work we were doing. We needed a clear, attainable standard to train for. Some of the key points in our certification are

- Social, obedient, able to work with other dogs and people in the field
- Non-destructive, passive alert
- Primary target odor bones and teeth
- Training in historical cemeteries
- Fine-grid searching, looking for single teeth
- Maintaining at least a 75% efficacy on blind training problems (efficacy = how many sources were placed vs how many were found)
- Documenting all training sessions and projects
- Training off negative odors (i.e., animal remains, food, etc.)
- Participating in group training
- Tracking nose-time and training-time

Our current certification is a continuous re-certification process for handlers who have passed their initial certification test. Each handler's progress is reviewed twice during the year to ensure they are on target to complete the re-certification process. The continuous certification requires the same requirements as the first certification as well as many other training requirements.

We are frequently asked "how long does it take to train a historical human remains detection dog", our answer is we never stop training it.

~Adela~



Our required training includes historic cemeteries. Piper is trained to alert as close as possible to the burial and normally lays on top of it. When she can't do that, she gets creative.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter along to someone who might be interested.

You can read our past ICF newsletters on our web page.

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(650) 503-4473

www.ICFK9.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.

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