



**Non-invasive Remote Sensing of Human Remains  
Specializing in Historic and Pre-contact Burials**

**Congratulations to Kris Black on being this year's recipient of the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office's Outstanding Community Service Award.**



Some of our handlers also work their dogs with law enforcement or Search and Rescue. For many years Kris has served as a dog handler, liaison and coordinator for the dog teams in Santa Clara County. She brings many years of experience from working Search and Rescue and Law enforcement cold cases to ICF. She is truly an amazing asset to both ICF and her county.

I first met Kris more than twenty years ago. She brought her young dog, Osara, to have me evaluate her to see if I thought she would be a good candidate for specializing in human remains detection. One glance at her young dog, and I told her I would never forgive her if she did not specialize and join my team. Needless to say, she is still working with ICF and is still my friend.

~Adela~

## How Scent Travels, Sometimes it's a Surprise

I have to tell a story.

First, I want to talk about how important it is to train dogs to handle many different and unusual search areas. Having a dog with a confident and stable temperament and then adding a solid training foundation makes a well-balanced dog. A well-balanced dog will adjust to new and unusual conditions because they have done similar things in training. The pictures below are from a real project. Our goal was to search rooms, storage areas, classrooms, known collections as well as some outside areas that historically were suspected to have unmarked burials. Our goal was to locate unknown burials outside and human remains and funerary items associated with burials that might have been overlooked inside.

We divided the four handlers into two working groups (A and B) each group had two dog and handler teams. The two groups had different areas to cover. Group "A" was getting alerts on vent pipes in a lawn area that led to a long-time unused underground storage area. This was not part of the planned areas to search. While this was going on, Group "B" was having alerts in a planted garden area. Everyone took a break to reconvene and update our plans based on what had found.

We all decided to work the underground storage area that had now been opened up. Who would not want to explore a dark spider web-filled unknown underground cavern? It took time to find someone who had the key to open it, even the groundskeepers did not have much knowledge of this storage area. Steep stairs went down into the underground bunker, where it was dark and spooky. We only found one working light bulb that was at the entrance that provided some light, but we had flashlights that we could use to add some light to the immediate area where we worked.

As handlers, we were fascinated that our dogs had found this underground storage area by getting scent at the not-obvious vents in the lawn. I volunteered to observe each dog work. My job was to ensure safety, take notes and pictures, and observe each dog's behavior. The dogs worked it one at a time so it was blind to each team. The dogs were doing a really good job of working in the dark, scary storage area. As dog handlers, we get very focused on our dog's work and how fascinating it is to be able to do this kind of work. I observed each dog get scent in the same areas. It was hard to observe the dogs, take notes and pictures as it was so dark, the only light was the small spotlight from our flashlight and a very dim bulb in one area.

Ronda was the last to work with her dog, Badger. She started her search using her flashlight and then quickly went over to a wall and turned on a switch, and lights flooded the area. Well, my only excuse is we were so focused on our dogs working and how well they did in the dark that we did not observe the other light switch.

What did we find? We found out that bulbs and dormant plants had been stored each year in this area as well as garden tools. The bulbs they stored each year came from the exact garden that group B had alerts in. Soil had been brought in with the bulbs and plants, and it now accumulated on the floor. This soil has human remains scent.

Lessons learned:

- Do a better safety search first before bringing the dogs in (maybe look for another light switch).
- Our previous foundation training worked very well, as each dog had no trouble working in the dark, spooky underground area.

~Adela~



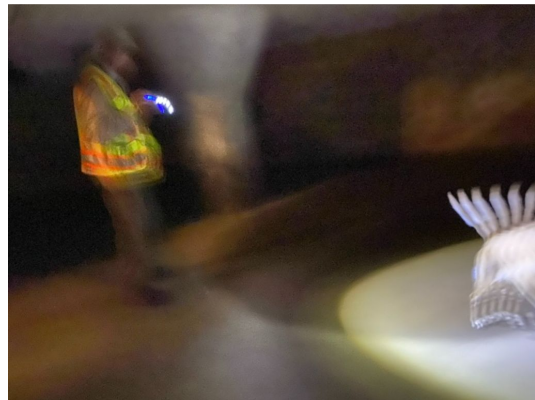
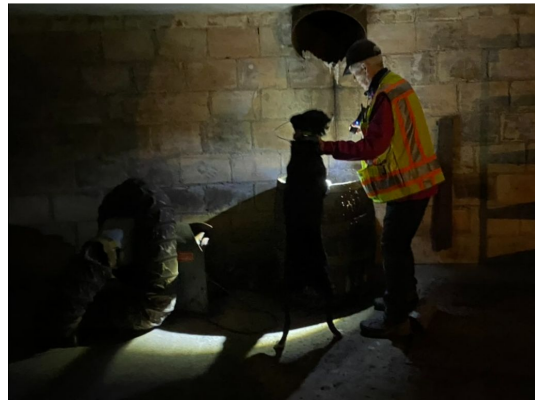
*Clío and Joseph head down the stairs.*



*Zia alerts at the outside vent in the lawn.*



*Jazz and Lynne work in the dark with only a flashlight.*



*Clío and Joseph, think about trying to take pictures of a fast-moving Labrador, most of the pictures look like the one on the right.*



*Badger and Ronda before she turned on the lights, what a party pooper ;-)*



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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. Call, email, or check us out on Facebook or our website. (You can find past newsletters there, too.)

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

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