



In an obedience demonstration shown in these two photos, Ron Pace has his 9-year-old dog "Jake" jump into his arms. Pace found the dog at the pound and has taken his

training skills and turned them into a booming South Hill business, Canyon Crest Kennels, for home and business security. photos by Kent Kerr

Dog training hobby becomes career

by Suzanne Barton

SOUTH HILL — Nine years ago Ron Pace bought a German shepherd puppy from the pound, named him Jake, and spent his spare time training the dog. Since then, Pace's past time has expanded into a full-blown business.

Pace's office in his home overlooks this business, Canyon Crest Kennels. From there he can watch his dogs in the kennels, 15 at last count, and arrange his training schedule.

Dogs and masters go through their lessons at the kennels in continuous motion. Training a dog is an ongoing process, Pace explains. He instructs dogs and owners from as far away as Oregon in half hour lessons.

The relationship between the dog and owner is extremely important, he said. Pace spent many hours training Jake. The relationship between the two is evident.

The dog is attentive to his master's every move and command. The two showed off Jake's obedience skills, demonstrating a tricky move with Jake weaving in and out of his master's legs with each step.

Jake is so well trained the two won a \$1,000 obedience award after only a year's training.

Jake also has been taught to protect Pace and bared his teeth and began barking when co-worker Kelly Flynn

made threatening advances toward Pace. Jake would not attack Flynn, the trainer explained, unless he gave the command. However, if Flynn should actually hit Pace, Jake would instantly be upon him.

Now the dog lover buys and trains German shepherds in obedience and protection. He sells them to families and businesses and continues the training with the dogs and their new masters.

Finding the right dog and training it is a delicate business, he said. The trainer looks at about 20 dogs a month and buys only one. Pace has refined training to an art, and he is very choosy about the dogs he picks to train and who he sells them to.

"Dogs are like people," he explained, "each with their own disposition." A family security dog has to have a loving disposition as well as being alert and having protection skills, he added.

His dogs sell for \$1,000 each and prospective buyers must also agree to the trainer's requirements.

He insists on seeing the dog and master each day the first week after the dog is sold, with follow-up sessions through the first six months.

There are more stipulations. In order to buy a dog, the person must have a fenced in yard with a locked gate.

This is for the protection of the dog as well as any unsuspecting person, he ex-

plained. However, if someone climbs over a locked gate, Pace nor the owner can be responsible.

"You wouldn't climb into a snake pit, would you?" he said.

The 28-year-old concluded

that in his years of training he has learned much about people as well as dogs.

"I found out it's not the

dogs that need training as much as their owners," he said. "It's much easier to train the dog than the master."

Dog patrols discourage crime

by Suzanne Barton

The security phase of Ron Pace's dog training business, Canyon Crest Kennels on South Hill, is booming.

Pace has always trained his dogs in protection skills and sells many of these dogs to families and businesses, he said, but with the growing crime rate more and more he is using his dogs to deter lawbreakers.

Pace has hired an experienced security person, Kelly Flynn, as a trainer. Flynn patrols two Tacoma apartment complexes with two trained dogs.

Man and dog patrol the apartment grounds through the night and early morning hours and after only one month on duty they have deterred at least one car theft.

The idea of the patrol is to prevent crimes from happening. The complexes have had many burglaries and car thefts and the apartment owners agreed to try the skills of the man and dog team in an attempt to discourage prospective criminals.

"The beauty of the system is that we're not there to catch any criminals," Pace pointed out, "we're just there to deter any crimes before they happen."

The trainer is so pleased with the effectiveness of the new system, he said he is sure the patrol of the two apartment buildings is only the beginning.

Pace has been an instructor for the Washington State Police Canine Association for eight years and his crime fighting campaign is closely linked with the Tacoma Police Department.

The police like the new patrol also, he added, because we're not trying to be the police, we're just discouraging people from committing crimes. Also, the police can't be everywhere at once so we're just an added protection.

Pace has always been very active in the training of the police department's dogs. The dogs need continuous training, he said, and since much of their work is tracking down suspects, Pace plays an active role.

"I play the bad guy," he explained. He covers his arms and legs with protective pads and then hides in the trees on the land adjacent to his kennels. The police dogs then track him down and bite onto a padded arm or leg to hold him until the officers get there.

The whole thing has to be very realistic for it to help in the training of the dogs, he said.

His security training techniques are widely recognized and appreciated and his business moved from Canyon Road to his larger facility on South Hill because of the demand for his training instruction.

Many families and businesses have



Kelly Flynn and security dog "Ace"

bought security dogs from Pace, and because of the crime rate in our society, he said he expects this branch of his business to expand.