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# ValuGuide

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## Dog trainer

### Pet saved from pound was start of thriving business

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 on-going 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 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 explained. 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."

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photo by Kent Kerr

Ron Pace of Canyon Crest Kennels demonstrates training with his dog Jake