

# Trained dogs make enjoyable pets

by SHERYL SPRINGER  
Staff writer

DAMASCUS — Raising a dog is akin to bringing up children.

Some dogs, instead of bringing joy to their owners, are a worry. But even inexperienced and first-time owners can train their dogs to a high standard of intelligence and obedience, believes Mardee Rover, a Damascus dog owner whose last name is often linked to jokes of the canine kind.

Rover loads up her dog, Sumeka, a 1½-year old female German shepherd, to attend weekly obedience classes at Elizares' Kennels on Southeast Highway 212. There she has found a professional trainer in David Elizares, a 63-year-old live wire of a man whose specialty is training dogs of various breeds and temperaments, including dogs with severe behavior problems. Not only does he teach individual owners to train their own dogs, he trains dogs for police work, guard work and film work as well. With 45 years of experience, Elizares has raised and bred dogs for show and has passed along his knowledge to former students who today are professional dog handlers themselves.

Sumeka is the third dog Rover has taken to Elizares.

"I hardly knew the front end from the back end when I first took my dog to classes," she says. "I felt fresh off the farm, but it wasn't long before I realized he knew what he was talking about. He has taught me to train my own dogs to be enjoyable pets and not to be nuisances to other dogs or other people."

Rover believes training a dog requires almost as much time and understanding as teaching a 6-year-old the three Rs.

"Puppies, like children, are born with no bad habits," she claims. "If neglected, that cute puppy can grow up to be obnoxious and turn into a regular juvenile delinquent."

Some dog owners soon tire of a puppy who has grown to be a full-grown pooch and move him to a lonesome life in the back yard. "They put the food pan out in the morning and never see the dog again until night," Rover says. "If they took time to properly train the dog, it wouldn't be a problem or burden to the family."

Outside Elizares' king-sized storage shed turned training arena, rottweilers, Norwegian elkhounds,

schnauzers, and dobermans line up with their masters like shy school children anticipating their first day of school. Rover and her dog, Sumeka, are among them.

The rottweiler, more interested in unabashed freedom than in another day's lesson, rares back on his leash in a fury as his female owner struggles to gain control. She tightens her grip on the dog's chokechain and admits, "We go through this same thing every week." Soon the dog gives up his struggle and slinks to class behind the others.

Tails wag and tongues hang out in breath-filled pants as owners and dogs line up in tight, military-style fashion. Owners maneuver their dogs to a designated mark where each dog, on command, will perform obedience routines on cue. "All right, lead your dogs," Elizares shouts like a drill sergeant putting his troops through their paces.

Some breeds are easier to train because of their inbred disposition, while others are more difficult for the same reason, Elizares says. Dogs can be "deprogrammed" from bad behavior. He tells of city-raised laborator retrievers who are turned loose out on the farm and instinctively kill chickens, or the pitbull terrier who has been trained to fight and kill. "Labs are natural bird dogs and pitbulls are natural fighters. It's in their blood," he says. "That doesn't mean the behavior can't be controlled."

As with Rover and her dog Sumeka, Elizares hopes to send each dog owner away from training with "a lot more knowledge on how to handle and train their dog," he says. When the use of choke chains and dog leashes can be abandoned, "You have a trained dog."

Rover hopes to "proof train" or "distraction train" Sumeka so the presence and actions of other dogs and people, other than Rover herself, will not provoke the dog to deviate from the learned behavior. To accomplish this, she takes Sumeka to crowded parks or other public places where the dog is trained to be aware of but ignore skateboarders, bicyclists, pedestrians and children at play.

"A well-trained dog gives me security to go anywhere in public, and a feeling of confidence to know I'm in full control," Rover says. "My dogs look to me as 'Alpha Dog' I'm the leader of the pack."



Classmate Shari Rhodes, left, helps Mardee Rhodes practice with her dog Sumeka.

## Post open on budget committee

The Boring School District Budget Committee needs another member.

The school district budget committee has an opening for a district resident interested in assisting the school district board and other committee members in developing the district's budget.

The new member, who will be appointed by the board, would be expected to serve a three-year term.

Candidates must be able to attend meetings. The committee's work generally begins in early December and continues for as long as necessary.

Letters of application should be sent to Superintendent Mike McDonough at 12240 S.E. School Ave., Boring, Ore. 97009.

For information, call McDonough at 663-5909.

## Bolstad gets Clackamas ESD position

Barbara Bolstad has been appointed director of special education for the Clackamas Education Service District.

As special education director, Bolstad will be responsible for administering the ESD's special education services, including instruction for mentally retarded students and testing of students who may have learning problems or disabilities.

Bolstad replaces David Fox, who decided not to return to his position after a leave of absence during the 1986-87 school year.

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