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New Jersey Search and Rescue K9 Team members Moosie and owner Chris Kempey at work

Hiker Gets Lost – Twice!

By Jill Arbuckle

Lost twice in the same day – boy, am I ever stupid. The first time, I was close to the edge of the woods, and was quickly found by Moosie, a young black Lab. The second time I was deeper into the woods, and had dropped my pack along the way (hypothermia?). Boomer, a German Shepherd, found the pack, carried it back to show his owner, and then found me, huddled against a tree. Each rescue included a free face-wash. And each was followed by a big tug-toy play session, as a reward.

Moosie and Boomer are K9's, part of New Jersey Search and Rescue (NJSAR). They are air-scent dogs, not tracking dogs as you might think. From downwind, they can air-scent you from up to 1,000 feet away if the wind and other conditions are right. They follow the scent to find you, then go back to their owner and lead him to you. Later, I was invited to observe handler and dog working together, as Jerry, who worked on 9/11, solved a "multiple victim" scenario. Of course AMC hikers never get lost...well, hardly ever...but just in case, you surely want to see that Moosie, Boomer, Jerry, and their friends get the best possible training, don't you?

The New Jersey Search and Rescue K9 Team has full team trainings almost every Sunday, in the West Milford area of northern New Jersey. There are six dogs and five handlers on the team. **The NJ Search and Rescue K9 Team needs fresh volunteers to get "lost" (if a dog rescues Fred all the time, he might start thinking it's only Fred that he's meant to find).** If you'd like to spend a day helping these amazing dogs train, e-mail Lt. Peter Bremy at K9@NJSAR.ORG.

You can read more about NJSAR at www.njsar.org. It's not just K9 Search and Rescue, they do other cool stuff like high-angle rescues (translation: getting you down from that cliff you're stuck on). They work all over the region – in New York and Pennsylvania as well as in New Jersey.