

The Vermont Police K-9 Association

Welcome to the first submission from the Vermont Police K-9 Association (VPCA). Our goal is to distribute information regarding the Association and what our individual members are doing.

Training:

In October 2002 the VT Criminal Justice Training Council (VCJTC) teamed up with the VPCA to host Deputy Sheriff TERRY FLECK for the first of hopefully many visits. Terry Fleck, EdD, is a Deputy Sheriff II / Canine Handler for the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office in South Lake Tahoe, California. Terry has been in law enforcement for 26 years and has been a police dog handler and trainer for 21 years. Terry is currently working his third canine partner, a police service dog cross-trained for narcotics, evidence recovery and tracking.

Terry is an expert in the field of canine legalities. Author of the *Canine Legal Update and Opinions*, the *Canine Legal Update and Opinions for Supervisors and Administrators*, the *Tracking Canine Legal Update and Opinions* and the *Narcotic and Contraband Canine Legal Update and Opinions*, Terry tracks and updates the canine industry on current case law and legal trends.

His classes focus on canine legalities, the prevention of litigation and canine tactics. Terry also studies canine tactics and develops techniques to keep canine handlers safe, utilizing their dogs to maximum tactical advantage. This is an entertaining and much needed class for anyone working in the field.

The K-9 program graduated a Patrol School on November 21, 2003. In the school were 6 teams from VSP, Bennington County Sheriffs Department



Sgt. Genova and K-9 Corey (Ret.).

and Quebec Provincial Police. The Patrol school teaches the new K-9 team basic obedience, tracking skills, apprehension work, building search techniques, tac-



Sgt. Robert Ryan, Barre City PD, and K-9 Jackson.

tical skills, and how to run forever. For those who don't know, this is an extremely demanding course that goes for 16 weeks. During the course, handlers run most of the trails in and around the Pittsford area. Sgt. Genova also takes the opportunity to further motivate the class by encouraging "games" such as PT volleyball, PT basketball, and just plain old PT. Future classes are on hold presently due to Sgt. Genova's transfer.

Canine Team Losses:

The K-9 program has also lost several K-9 teams due to retirement, transfer, and promotions. The recently retired teams are as follows:

Sgt. Thomas Hango
and K-9 Chubbs, VSP

Warden Robert Lutz and K-9 Flipper,
VT Fish and Wildlife

Sgt. Kirk Cooper
and K-9 Ridge, VSP

Det. Sgt. Bob Cushing
and K-9 Storm, VSP

Sgt. Gary Genova
and K-9 Corey, VSP

Some Good Work:

Trooper Eric and K-9 Luca have been busy. Following a car stop in October, 2002 they seized \$219,000 cash and 3 ounces of hash. Then in the fall of 2003 they conducted a motor vehicle stop in St. Johnsbury. Tpr. Albright employed his keen interdiction skills and his K9's keen sense of smell. Together they located more than \$750,000 ►

Some of Our Sponsors:

Vetri-Science Laboratories of Essex, VT has again donated a year's supply of their Glyco-Flex III and Canine Plus Vitamins for all the members of the VT Police Canine Program. This donation is estimated at \$52,000.



www.vetriscience.com

**Guy's Farm & Yard,
Essex Vermont**



Modern Woodman of America, Wells, VT

**Gero Brothers Movers, Inc.,
Colchester, VT**



Sgt. Todd Protzman and K-9 Max.

Program Meeting in 2001, the VPCA did not exist. It became increasingly clear that there was a need for assistance with funding equipment and training demands. To fill this need, the VPCA became a reality at the Annual Vermont Police Canine Program Meeting in 2001. It was already well known that the citizens of Vermont recognized and supported the work of the Police Canine Teams; however, there was no medium through which they could directly contribute to them.

VSP Cpl Edward Hunter spearheaded the construction of the Association. Board members were appointed by Cpl Hunter and the board quickly set out to establish the foundation for such an association. A great deal of research was done and the VPCA was soon named and started to take form. VSP Sgt Gary Genova and then-Senior Trooper Matthew Raymond were instrumental in formulating the by-laws. The now familiar logo was designed, and the by-laws were penned.

Next, the VPCA embarked on a mission to generate funds for use toward supporting the Association's Canine Teams. Then-Sgt Rick Cloud (Windsor County Sheriff's Dept.) got the ball rolling by establishing contact with a marketing group based in Maine. The Board met with a representative of the group and plans were made to start the first VPCA fund-raising initiative. We experienced a lot of growing pains with this endeavor, but the final result was a bank account containing an amount

in drug money secreted in the gas tank of the minivan.

In April, 2003 **Officer Radford and K-9 Stoney** (Burlington PD) alerted on a safe during a search warrant in Winooski. Inside they found \$70,000 in cash and 4 ounces of cocaine. Stoney's other noteworthy recent finds: 143 lbs. of marijuana being seized in 2001, \$20,000 in cash confiscated and 2 kilos of cocaine seized this year on another search warrant.

Trooper (now Sergeant) Protzman and K-9 Max were called in September 2003 to track a missing 78 yr old Russian woman lost in the woods in Groton, VT. They did a 3-mile track, 6 hrs old and found her. Park Ranger Peter Berger said

he heard K-9 Max barking at one point, and then he knew he was getting close to the woman. Ranger Berger actually found her first and got to her about 3 minutes before they did, but K-9 Max completed the track and made the find.

**A Letter from VPCA
President, Sgt. Todd
Protzman:**

This appeared earlier in the VPCA Newsletter.

Welcome to the first edition of the Vermont Police Canine Association Newsletter! It boggles my mind to think of how far we've come in just two short years. Prior to the Annual Vermont Police Canine

It boggles my mind to think of how far we've come in just two short years. Prior to the Annual Vermont Police Canine Program Meeting in 2001, the VPCA did not exist.

THE INFORMER

The VPCA is a non-profit corporation, granted tax-exempt status under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Tax Code. Donations are accepted, and can be directed towards a specific cause or K-9 team.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President: Sgt. Todd Protzman, VSP

Treasurer: Cpl. Edward Hunter, VSP

Vice President: Sgt. Robert Ryan, Barre City PD

Secretary: Ptl. David Dewey, Colchester PD

Also check out our website: www.vtpca.com

lights; sold VPCA merchandise; contracted Dr. Steve MacKenzie to teach a weekend seminar on decoy work; sponsored the Annual Canine Picnic/Camp over; contributed to programs to help at-risk children stay off drugs; provided awards for Handler of the Year; instituted tenure pins to recognize sustained commitment. In addition, individual members have taken the initiative to raise funds to purchase in-car cages and some have purchased vendor dogs.

As president, I am encouraged by the dedication and professionalism of our members, the growth that our Association has experienced, and the overwhelming support by the public. If you have any suggestion on how to make our Association better, please contact me through the website. Thank you for your hard work and generous support!



Deputy Terry Fleck, El Dorado County SO.

Other News:

In January, 2004 we all learned that Sgt. Gary Genova, our head K-9 trainer, was transferred out of the K-9 unit and back to patrol. He left us in early February and became the new patrol commander for the VSP Williston Barracks. Furthermore, K-9 Corey, the state's only true bomb detection dog, was retired.

In a letter sent out by Colonel Thomas Powlovich, he stated that because of, "the make-up of the canine program changing over the years and the ever increasing demands being placed upon the Vermont State Police, I am reassigning ➤

in excess of our stated goal of \$10,000.

In addition to the aforementioned fundraising campaign, donations of ballistic vests for the dogs started to pour in. The Crossroads Kennel Club of Lyndonville, VT donated five vests, and there were many other clubs and individuals that joined in that effort. Soon, all of our Patrol-certified K-9s were equipped with ballistic vests.

Then-Patrolman Jason Stoddard (St. Albans PD) spoke with officials at Vetri-Science Laboratories of Essex Junction, VT, and they were very generous to us. To date, they have donated approximately \$100,000 worth of the premium Glyco-Flex Plus and Canine Plus Nutrient Supplements.

We have been continually blessed by the generosity of strong VPCA supporters such as PETsMART, Gero Brothers Movers, Guys Farm and Yard, Modern Woodman of America, Wal-Mart and

numerous others. This year Wal-Mart of West Lebanon, NH and Wal-Mart Foundation donated \$1000 to the VPCA as part of their Safe Neighborhood Grant.

We have had to do a lot of creative problem-solving regarding communications with our members. We established an internal cell structure to facilitate maximum participation and coordination among members and the Board. With the help of Patrolman Chris LaRocque (Vergennes PD) and Sgt Gary Genova, the development of our website (www.vtpca.com) has allowed us to communicate and convey information much more effectively and efficiently with members as well as the public. To give you an idea of how far-reaching our website has become, I have personally communicated with fellow police canine handlers from countries around the globe, such as Canada, Poland, England and France.

We are proud to have a 100% participation rate by our Vermont-certified police canine teams. We also are proud to have as members teams from some of Vermont's neighboring law enforcement agencies such as Massachusetts Environmental Police and Quebec Provincial Police. In addition, we have a team from the US Forestry Service.

Some of the things that the VPCA has done: sponsored the Iron-Dog competition; become a non-profit tax-exempt 501 c (3) organization; bought four kennels for use at the Police Academy; issued each member Stinger rechargeable flashlights, chest harnesses, Yak Trax creepers, Streamline Propolymer LED flash-



Trooper Eric Albright and a recent find.

THE INFORMER

Sgt. Gary Genova, Head Canine Trainer, to a Patrol Commander position at our Williston Station. The Vermont State Police is also stepping down as head of the Vermont Police Canine Program. These changes are effective February 8, 2004. I clearly understand this change will have an initial impact on the entire canine program in Vermont, but I think it is time for change. In the end, this change will benefit the program overall. As a department, I do not intend to abandon the program."

This left the VT Police K-9 Program with an uncertain future regarding trainers and the administrative duties that have accompanied the position. Ron Morrell, the Executive Director of the VT Police Academy, in April secured a full time K-9 trainer for the Academy. It will be posted soon, hopefully filled by the time the Informer goes to print, and we can all get back on track.

Awards:

Kim Kinville, of the US Forestry Department, and K-9 Nascha recently received the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for the Eastern Region, which includes most of the east coast. In December 2003 Kim and Nascha flew to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to receive the award which is given annually to recognize, among other qualities: superior performance and outstanding leadership qualities.

Trooper George Rodriguez of the Middlebury Barracks has been in Iraq for several months. His K-9, Blade, has been reassigned to Middlebury Police Department Officer George Merckle. But Rodriguez continues to work as a tracking team, even without his dog. His unit, the 108th Infantry, was on duty and (from his email): "We dismounted outside a farm and swept through it. Apparently when we dismounted a guard watching the KBR EPW that's been missing since April 9th took off. While we were sweeping through the area he ran out of a hut yelling I'm an American and we secured him. We raided the house and took two detainees. I guess we were in the right place at the right time." Awesome work. □