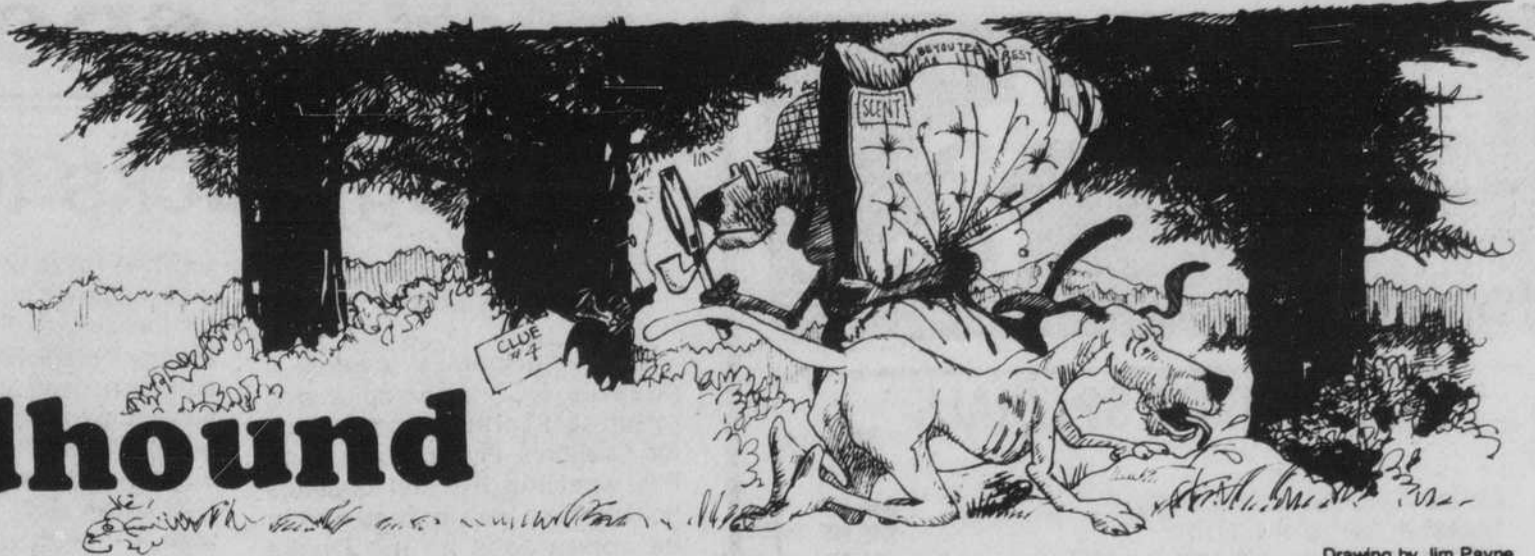


Davy Crockett: A scent-sniffing crook-catching

Bloodhound



Drawing by Jim Payne

By JULIE MORTON
Of the Emerald

Davy Crockett is six years old, weighs about 147 pounds and gets in on a lot of action. He recently came to Lane County join the search for Rex Larsen, a suspect in the Springfield cab driver homicide.

Davy is one of Oregon's best detectives. He's a registered bloodhound search dog.

The Oregon Sheriffs Association owns Davy and his kennelmate Rebecca Boone. They are Oregon's only search dogs. And since Rebecca is not yet fully trained, Davy does most of the work, according to the dogs' handler, Sergeant Mike Cook of the Coos County Sheriff Department.

"Rebecca will work well with Davy but he won't work with her," Cook says.

Although they live in Coos County, Cook takes Davy to assist in search efforts all over the state and occasionally Northern California.

"We usually search for lost or injured people — also for escapees, but that isn't a priority," Cook says.

A prerequisite for search is a scent article. The problem Cook often encounters is finding an article that only the missing person has touched.

"It's especially hard with little kids because their parents touch so much of their stuff," Cook says. As a result he often uses the child's bedding.

Once Davy has the scent article he needs a place to begin searching, a place where he can catch the scent.

"As the body builds new cells, it sluffs off the old ones. The bacteria that works on the dead cells creates the scent that my dogs go on," Cook says.

"I've seen him lick a rock with his tongue to bring the scent out," he says.

Davy finds what he's looking for about 50 percent of the time. Extreme temperatures are hard on the bacteria and pavement is a notorious killer. But the strength of human scent is often surprising.

Davy has successfully tracked a week-old scent on a hot summer's day, according to Cook. Another search he remembers involved looking for a little boy who was lost in the Bend area.

"He lived by a canal and his trail led to it and then down it for about for about four miles. At that time I told them I thought he must have fallen in about four miles back. A search plane found his body," Cook says.

Search dogs have located people buried under land slides, snow and

water.

If a scent is fresh, Davy will run, according to Cook. And contrary to the typical television bloodhound, Davy does not bark wildly while on a trail; he is silent.

Cook's and Davy's most recent call was the search for Rex Larsen. They tracked him up a bank and into the brush, where they found a lot of evidence, according to Cook. The scent then took them to the highway where their part in the search temporarily ended.

A few days after Larsen was spotted on a back porch of a house. Cook and Davy were called back and they tracked Larsen down a railroad track for about nine miles.

"He had gone ahead and given himself up. I don't know if he knew about us or not," Cook says.

If Davy had found Larsen, he would have protected him, according to Cook. "If he finds it, he figures it belongs to him."

Davy began his training by playing hide-and-seek with children. "You have the children hide and the pups will naturally follow," Cook says.

Once the pup has that down, the children are told to go farther and a scent

article is introduced. "If he finds the right one, you praise him," Cook says. The training intensifies with time and adults take over and purposely lay a track for the dog. "Three days later, you have the dog follow it," Cook says.

A dog wants to please his master, according to Cook. Although Davy gets plenty of affection when he does it right, there is something he likes better.

"Bloodhounds are loving animals but they like food more than anything else," Cook says.

The number of calls for Davy's help varies. Cook estimates they go out about six to ten times a year.

"The biggest factor that's helped our program is having the Coast Guard Air Station close to us," Cook says. The Coast Guard will fly them just about anywhere, as quickly as they need to get there, according to Cook.

Davy originally cost about \$350. Cook says he isn't sure what Davy would sell for now. Sergeant Dave Robinson, also of the Coos County Sheriff Department says a fully trained police attack dog goes for about \$1,800.

Is a search dog worth as much? "This is an animal that saves lives," Cook says.

Cancer researcher elaborates on rat use

By KATHLEEN MONJE
Of the Emerald

Ever wondered why feeding rats the equivalent of 800 bottles of diet drink a day proves that saccharin causes cancer in humans?

Richard Bates, physician and associate director for carcinogenesis research at the National Cancer Institute recently told the FDA "Consumer" why animals are used for testing substances which might be harmful to people.

Ethics and practical impossibilities make it much simpler to test food additives in animal subjects, Bates said.

"Testing any chemical in humans involves some risk," he said, and any benefit from additive use is seldom significant enough to justify those risks.

From a practical aspect, the controls possible with animal experimentation ensure sounder results than tests with humans could, according to Bates.

The animals' air, water, food and bedding can be kept uniform and sterile, so researchers can be sure the experiment's results

are connected with the substance being tested.

"Obviously, you can't subject humans to this kind of control," Bates said. "It is simply impossible to conduct highly controlled experiments for 20 years or more on human volunteers."

Tests with rats and other animals accurately reflect human responses, Bates said, because we share basic biological mechanisms. "Insects get cancer, fish get cancer...and cancers in laboratory animals are essentially the same as cancers in human beings."

Even bacteria have genetic mechanisms so similar to humans that they are being used in a new test for chemicals, according to Bates.

"If a chemical causes the bacteria to mutate, there appears to be a strong possibility that the chemical may be cancer-causing."

The enormous doses of suspected additives given to test animals is necessary, Bates said.

"You see, if we assume that low doses of a chemical might cause cancer in one out of every 100,000

humans or animals, then a test to detect this one cancer could take as many as 100,000 animals."

Noting that this would be impractical, Bates said the solution is to use smaller number of animals and increase the dose of the chemical being tested.

He said the method works because the rat has a shorter life span — about two years — and the little rodents metabolize and excrete substances much faster than man.

Though Bates acknowledges there is no way of exactly predicting how many humans will contract cancer from a given product on the basis of animal tests, he said scientific estimates are accurate.

He also pointed out that only healthy, well-fed animals are used in experiments, in a protected environment.

"Most humans, on the other hand, do not live in sheltered environments...our population includes the ill and the weak — people who would be comparatively more susceptible to cancer than

test animals."

Bates said there isn't a relationship between dosage of a chemical and its ability to cause cancer.

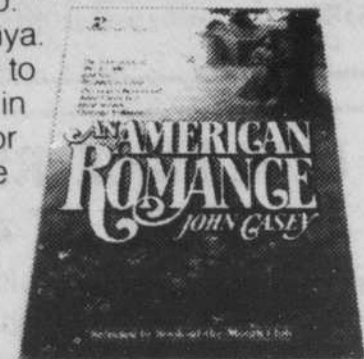
If people are exposed to a small

er dose of a cancer-causing agent, fewer will get cancer. "The rub is we can't guarantee that even if we keep lowering the dose no one will get cancer," he said.

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