

Local

Capa's handler transition going smoothly at BCPD

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

"The transition is going very well," said Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner.

The transition is that of changing the department's new drug dog Capa's handler from Officer Coletton Smith to Sgt. Wayne Chastain.

At the end of February, Smith resigned from his handler duties. He had served as Capa's handler since returning from Florida with the dog last Halloween.

Lohner said the demands of keeping up on the required maintenance training with the dog, on top of the responsibilities of being assigned a full-time patrol shift, and then caring for a police animal 24/7/365 became difficult to manage, and led to the resignation.

Chastain was assigned to the role that same week due to his prior experience as a canine handler—he was one of the handlers for former drug canine, Turbo, who retired last year.

Said Chastain, "I handled Turbo for the first couple years he was with us. I attended a two-week handler's course in Northwest Washington sponsored by

the kennel we bought Turbo from. After that, Turbo and I spent another week in Portland training and from there obtained double certification as a drug detection team. One certification from the Pacific Northwest Police Detection Dog Association, and one from the Oregon Police Canine Association."

In Turbo's 121 deployments, the dog helped seize: 47 ounces of marijuana (just shy of four pounds), 1.3 ounces of methamphetamine, one gram of cocaine, two firearms and one stungun, one ounce of ketamine, 200 pills of Oxycontin, 662 pills of Ecstasy, \$16,651 cash related to drug sales, and over 41 pieces of drug paraphernalia—and 43 persons were arrested for drug crimes as a result of Turbo's searches.

Chastain went on to say, "Capa is a two-year-old puppy that had very little obedience training at his kennel in Florida. My family and I are starting obedience training with a local dog trainer Wednesday March 16, 2016, and this will be ongoing until both our family and Capa are adjusted. Capa and I have been working and training together now for



Sgt. Wayne Chastain with Capa.

Photo Courtesy of the BCPD.

about two weeks while at work, and we are ready to take the certification testing. I will not have to go back to a basic handler's course as the concepts have remained the same from when I worked Turbo. We are scheduled to take the certification test in Mountain Home, Idaho, on March 28th."

There are other big differences between the dogs.

Said Chastain, "Turbo was an aggressive alert dog, meaning he scratched at the source of the odors he was trained to find. Capa is a passive alert dog, meaning he sits and stares at the source of the odor.

"This has been my biggest adjustment because as a passive alert dog, the dog can be more dependent on the handler during the alert—meaning he will alert and then look at me to deliver the toy when the objective is to have the dog continually stare at the odor—because they are trained to think the odor is their toy."

Chastain added, "After working with Capa for the last couple of weeks, I am excited to get us certified and working as a team. He is a great dog and will provide a great service to our community in the years to come."

Johnston sentenced

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Johnston was convicted of propelling blood at Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner by tossing a used tampon at him during the course of an arrest on March 30, 2015 for a restraining order violation.

The tampon hit him in the hand and chest.

Lohner said Tuesday that the restraining order had been intended to prevent her from contacting her juvenile daughter.

The State called Chief Lohner as their only witness in the case.

"I was on the stand twice, but couldn't tell you for sure how long. Maybe an hour at the most," said Lohner.

The defense called Tom Johnston and the defendant Marlene Johnston as witnesses.

At trial, Marlene Johnston claimed that she dropped the tampon and did not throw it in the direction of Lohner.

Johnston was remanded to the Baker County Jail following the verdict and her sentencing was announced Monday.

Said District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff, "She was sentenced pursuant to the Oregon sentencing guidelines—three years, formal probation, 30 days jail, 50 hours community service and complete a psychological evaluation and to follow any recommended treatment from that evaluation, and a \$200 fine."

Shirtcliff added, "We were pleased with the jury's verdict. The Oregon Legislature passed this law to protect law enforcement officers and corrections employees from being subjected to dangerous bodily secretions being intentionally thrown or propelled at them. Being subjected to these types of substances like blood put officers at risk."

Lohner concluded, "This case was not personal to me, but rather it became a matter of principle. In my opinion, the actions perpetrated showed a complete disrespect for law enforcement and the role every police officer is tasked with. If society ever condones such absolute contempt for the police, we will have lost our ability to serve our communities in a safe and productive manner."



Photo courtesy of the Baker County Sheriff's Department

Marlene Johnston.



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Chief Wyn Lohner.

BLOOD DRAW

Participate in blood panel screenings offered by Saint Alphonsus Medical Center—Baker City

Thursday Friday Saturday

March 17 18 19

Join us!

7:00 a.m.—9:30 a.m.

Saint Alphonsus Medical Center—Baker City Powder River Conference Room

Use Administration entrance (old care center entrance) located in the back of the hospital near the ER entrance.

Basic Package: Lipid panel—\$0 (no charge)

Comprehensive Package: Lipid panel, CBC, Comprehensive Metabolic Panel—\$20

TSH: \$10

No Appointment Needed.

IMPORTANT: Please abstain from all food and drink at least 12 hours before your blood screening. Drinking plain water is encouraged.

Your results will be mailed to you.

*Insurance will not be billed. You will receive a receipt and description of the tests.

Individuals are responsible for checking with their insurance carriers for possible reimbursement.

If you have questions, call Laura Huggins at 541-523-8102.

because it's all about *you.*

3325 Pocahontas Road
Baker City, OR 97814
541-523-6461
saintalphonsus.org/bakercity

Saint Alphonsus Medical Center
BAKER CITY

Crash



Photo courtesy of Carl Dedrick.

One driver died Tuesday on I-84 outside Huntington.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

All eastbound traffic had stopped to include a 2015 Kenworth pulling a 2012 Utility semi-trailer, operated by Abraham Garza Tanguma, age 33, from Rio Grande City, Texas, at milepost 348.

At about 11:55 a.m., a 2015 Freightliner pulling a Great Dane semi-trailer, operated by Milton Vaughn, age 62, from Altoona, Kansas, was also driving eastbound, when he approached the stopped traffic and crashed into the rear of Garza Tanguma's vehicle combination at highway driving speeds.

Vaughn's vehicle was transporting hazardous materials (Aluminum Oxide Powder UN3175) and the containers were breached and leaking. Hazmat 14 with the Ontario Fire Department arrived and were assisted by H20 Environmental from Boise, Idaho for cleanup.

Vaughn sustained fatal injuries and was pronounced deceased at the scene. Berezin was life flighted to Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Boise, Idaho and Garza Tanguma was transported by ambulance to Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Ontario.

The Interstate was closed westbound for approximately four hours and eastbound for approximately nine hours.

OSP was assisted by Oregon Department of Transportation, Hazmat 14 with the Ontario Fire Department, H20 Environmental, the Baker County Sheriff's Office, and the Huntington Rural Fire Department.