

Cooking burgers for canines

Burger with a cop event fundraises for K-9 unit

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

A couple of dozen community members came out to support Cannon Beach Police Department's K-9 unit program with third annual "Burger with a Cop" event Wednesday, Sept. 6.

People ate burgers prepared by the police officers outside of Cannon Beach Vacation Rentals and enjoyed a drug-bust skills demonstration from the K-9 unit, Gunner.

"The event is pretty similar in nature to National Night Out. It's an opportunity for our citizens to talk to us," Cannon Beach Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn said. "But it's also an opportunity to showcase our K-9 unit. People want to come see the dog, because they support the fact we even have the program."

Cannon Beach's one K-9 unit, a 75-pound brown lab, is fully supported by donations. The program can cost approximately \$25,000, which covers the cost of the dog, training, veterinary care, food, housing, a police canine kit, handler uniform and patrol car modifications for the canine. Keeping up-to-date with all the training necessary to stay in shape for drug searches in itself is a huge commitment, Schermerhorn said.

But this year, the department wants to fundraise around \$30,000 to purchase a new K-9 police vehicle, which requires some specialized features. The current car is one of the oldest in the department's fleet with almost 140,000 miles logged on, and more wear and tear tacked on from running the vehicle at all times to keep the temperature regulated for the canine,



Corporal Joseph Bowman plays with Gunner, Cannon Beach Police Department's K-9 unit, at the third annual Burger with a Cop event.



BRENNA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

The Burger with a Cop event raised money for funding a new K-9 officer vehicle.

Schermerhorn said.

"There are drugs in every town, even small ones like Cannon Beach," Schermerhorn said. "And we want to keep drugs from coming through by any means necessary."

This is Corporal Joe Bowman's first year with Gunner, who took over as the K-9 unit officer after the former officer

Josh Gregory transferred to Seaside Police Department.

The training is rigorous, and when the two go out on mutual aid calls for drug searches the job requires precision and discipline. But becoming a team with Gunner wasn't all hard work, Bowman said.

"The first two weeks you focus on bonding. Food is

the way to his heart," he said. "He's beneficial, because in the winter when it's slow? I'll always have a friend. I've spent a lot of night talk to elk at 2 a.m."

Because Cannon Beach only has one K-9 unit, Bowman said it can be difficult to balance regular patrol duties and K-9 officer responsibilities.

"Sometimes when I'm on normal patrol and we get a mutual aid call for Gunner, I can't because I'll be the only one on duty and can't leave."

But despite the extra responsibilities, his unexpected leap into a life with Gunner has been positive.

"We spend a lot of time training to watch for his alerts — different breathing, ears changing," he said. "But he reads me way better than I read him. He's the one teaching me."

Schermerhorn said he hopes to have more fundraising events throughout the year and to work with local dealerships when purchasing the new vehicle.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

One of the elk killed after a collision with an aircraft at Nehalem Bay State Park.

Pilot hits elk during landing in Nehalem

Cannon Beach Gazette

A pilot landing his single-engine plane Saturday, Sept. 10, at the Nehalem Bay State Park airstrip hit and killed two elk.

Oregon State Police said the pilot was Todd William Rudberg, 49, from Shoreline, Washington. Valerie Anne Villacin, 43, of Seattle, was a passenger.

The plane was totaled in the crash, according to state police, but Rudberg and Villacin were not injured.

State police said Rudberg had landed his 2003 Van's Aircraft RV8 at about 5:15 p.m. and was slowing down when an elk ran in front of the plane. The pilot, according to state police, tried to speed up and fly over the elk, but struck the animal with the propeller and right side landing gear. Another elk was hit by the left wing of the plane before the aircraft spun around and stopped.

The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating the crash.

Body of hiker who fell in Oswald West recovered

EO Media Group

The body of Joseph Lescene, who fell to his death off a cliff in Oswald West State Park Sept. 10, was recovered Tuesday at Short Sands Beach.

Oregon State Police received a report Tuesday morning of a deceased man washed up on the beach. The state police and Nehalem Bay Fire & Rescue responded and located the body, which was positively identified as Lescene. The Tillamook County Medical Examiner assisted with the investigation.

Lescene, 51, of British Columbia, was hiking with his wife near Devil's Cauldron when he reportedly lost his footing and fell 800 feet to the water below. No foul play is suspected.

Nehalem Bay Fire & Rescue recovered the backpack he was wearing in the water below the cliff. The Coast Guard searched with lifeboats and a helicopter but was unable to find his body.

A GoFundMe account was set up by family friend Nancy Sheppard at <http://tinyurl.com/4JoesFamily> to help his wife, Sarah, and two daughters, Ofelia and Sofia.

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