

# SPOTLIGHT ON RESCUE



by: Carol Allen, Chair  
National Rescue Committee  
315/469-7926  
E-mail: carosal@twcny.rr.com

## Copper Shines in Washington State

Abandoned, "Copper" walked along a lonely road in Pierce County, Washington, until a Good Samaritan took him in. She intended to keep Copper and began much-neglected veterinary appointments until her other dog made it clear that Copper was not welcomed. Copper was taken to a shelter that called Evergreen Golden Retriever Rescue. He was assumed to be two-to-three years old and in good health except for a raspy bark.

Coincidentally, Deputy Mel Miller, of the King County Sheriff's Department had within the week contacted the Evergreen Golden Retriever Club. Deputy Miller was requesting assistance in locating a dog for training to replace "Tex," a Narcotics Detection Dog, that had recently died of cancer. When the call was shared with Evergreen Golden Retriever Rescue, Nancy Kiesler, President of Evergreen Golden Retriever Rescue, quickly arranged a meeting between Deputy Miller and Copper. The introduction went so well that Deputy Miller expressed his desire to adopt Copper even if detection work should not be in Copper's future.

After a visit with a veterinarian who the EGRR uses regularly, it was determined that the raspy bark was due to Laryngeal Paralysis. A neurologist confirmed the diagnosis and recommended that Copper not be worked in the manner that Deputy Miller had hoped. However, EGRR's veterinarian did not concur with that recommendation and when asked by Deputy Miller about how to give Copper the best quality of life, answered, "Put him to work and we'll work together to mitigate the issue of the Laryngeal Paralysis".

Training began in

June 2005, and the formal course was completed four months later. Copper excelled in training despite some surfacing of "baggage" such as a fear of cameras and of bearded men. He immediately began to make a name for himself in the King County Sheriff's Department and also in working with and for Federal agencies such as the DEA, ATF, FBI and U.S. Postal inspectors.

He also worked with the Seattle Police Department, Washington State Patrol and several smaller police departments. Copper became a frequent visitor at several of the region's schools and was the most requested canine for the local Narcotics Task Force groups.

Gratefully, surgery has not been needed for Copper's Laryngeal Paralysis, nor did he ever need to take sick leave. Deputy Miller does limit some of Copper's activities such as running, but makes up for it with regular hikes to keep conditioning high. Copper is kept cool on hot summer days that are a rarity in the Pacific Northwest.

Copper and Deputy Miller worked together as a team and that relationship is enhanced by 24/7 togetherness. Copper was responsible for more arrests than any dog in his department's history: over 650 arrests and seizures of over 3,500 pounds of narcotics. His nose led to the seizure of narcotics, associated cash and property valued at 13.5 million dollars.

Copper retired in March 2011 as the most successful canine ever to work for his Department. Deputy Miller, also now retired, volunteers and fosters for Evergreen Golden Retriever Rescue, and four rescued Golden Retrievers live in the Miller home. Instead of searching for contraband, Copper spends



*Copper awaits an assignment.*



*Partners in crime detection, Deputy Miller and Copper.*

## Spotlight on Rescue, continued



*When a job is finished, there is always the paperwork.*

his days showing other Golden Retrievers the ropes and in locating tennis balls.

Copper's achievements have been recognized in many ways. In 2007, he was presented with the GRACE Award at the GRCA National Specialty in Snohomish, Washington. In 2011, he was an Honorable Mention for the AKC ACE Award. We are pleased to tell his story here and thank Evergreen Golden Retriever Rescue, Deputy Miller and Copper for their contributions to law enforcement and to our understanding of the value of helping a dog "become all that he can be."



*Drug searches are my work. Tennis balls are my game.*