

Animal Control News

Jan/Feb/Mar

2008

A Word from the President

We should all be mindful of safety as we perform our daily duties. Sometimes, however, we become too relaxed in our environment or think “it can’t happen to me.” Danger lurks around every corner as we investigate calls in unfamiliar environments.

I was reminded recently just how dangerous our profession can be. One of my officers was attacked by a Great Dane while investigating a routine stray dog call. The Dane was not even a subject of her investigation, however, the owner was. She was seriously injured and remains off work as of this writing.

Perhaps “personal protection”, and not “safety”, is what I am really talking about here. Are we properly prepared mentally, physically and with the proper tools to react in an instant to protect our own tail? Are you?

Dog bites in this business are hard to avoid. Do you approach every situation, every dog, as if you may be bitten? You should. Often, we are intruding on their territory. That was the case here. Look for warning signs that an attack may be eminent. Look for a means of escape as you approach a situation.

I’m no model for fitness, but we should all be doing something to maintain the dexterity, strength and stamina that is required to perform our daily duties. I know, practice what you preach. Believe me, I am now.

Are you properly supplied with tools and training for those tools? Anything you typically carry can be used as a tool to ward off an attack – clipboard, pole snare, bite stick. Don’t get out of your truck empty handed.

You may operate as the only ACO in your jurisdiction. Take back-up in the form of other law enforcement personnel whenever you can. In this case, there was no apparent need for back-up as it was a routine stray dog call. The dogs in question were restrained in the residence when my officer arrived. Obviously, there was nothing routine about the outcome.

How you react when you are attacked can make the difference in the outcome. It is up to you to be prepared to minimize your injuries. Work smart to remain safe.

Greg Largent, Sangamon County Animal Control

Member Profile – Macoupin County

Buzie Bertagnolli started in animal control about five years ago when she was asked to oversee current employees. After several instances where she couldn’t locate people to take calls, she began taking them herself. Eventually, she met Stacy Ballard of the Dept. of Agriculture who helped her develop a plan to improve animal control in Macoupin County.

After one of the employees left, Buzie became even more involved – cleaning cages, handling more calls, and feeding and watering the animals even while continuing her responsibilities in the office. The second employee left, and Buzie had responsibility for everything. Although a replacement was hired to help, he quit after 13 months stating “the work is too hard”.

The destruction of friendly, healthy animals disturbed Buzie, and she began looking for alternatives. Stacy Ballard helped her find classes and other organizations that could provide information, advice, and assistance. Buzie attended one of the first meetings of CACI in 2005, and there she found a group of people facing the same issues, problems, and situations.

“They helped me tremendously,” she said

Exposure to all these people spurred Buzie to make some changes. She helped revise the County’s outdated animal control ordinance. She founded a volunteer group to raise funds to build a sorely-needed shelter. She began to investigate humane care cases and rescue animals. Last year, she hired a kennel attendant but continues to do most of the work herself.

“We have basically gone from just stray animal pick up and euthanasia to a program that handles all aspects of an animal control program.. It isn’t perfect but we have come along way. I learn something new everyday and I love my job”, said Buzie.

Buzie serves as an example for all of us on how we can improve our jobs, improve our service to the community, improve the care for the animals, and do it within a limited budget and support. Good work, Buzie!

Board Meeting Update

The CACI Board of Directors held the first quarter meeting of 2008 on February 8 in Wheaton. The Board took the following actions:

- Approved the Treasurer's Report.
- Approved the Training Committee Report. The committee expects to offer 2-4 training opportunities around the state this year.
- Approved the Legislative Committee Report. The committee discussed a shell bill offered by Rep. Tryon that may be used for animal control act revisions.
- Approved the Governmental Affairs Committee report. An amendment to the EPA to allow incineration of all shelter animals is under consideration.
- Approved the Public Relations Committee report. Minutes and newsletters will be added to the website. CACI will request NACA add the website to theirs. Newsletters will contain member profiles.
- Old Business: The template for a state-wide animal bite report is still under revision. An approved copy will be posted to the website as soon as it's available.
- New Business: The Board will look into regulations governing wolves and wolf-hybrids and which Dept. governs them.

The next meeting will be the annual meeting May 9, 2008, in Peoria. At this meeting, the membership will elect new directors – five seats remain open.

If you're interested in board membership, please contact any board member. Guests are welcome at CACI board meetings. If you'd like to attend, contact the secretary, Buzie Bertagnolli, for information.



Board of Directors

Please contact any board member with a question, concern, suggestion, or comment.

cacillinois@gmail.com

Officers:

President: Greg Largent, Sangamon County Animal Control, 217-535-3065, gregl@co.sangamon.il.us

Vice-Pres: Kerri Vinkler, Dupage County Animal Control, 630-407-2808, Kerry.Vinkler@dupageco.org

Secretary: Buzie Bertagnolli, Macoupin County Animal Control, 217-854-4204, buzieb@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Gary Longanecker, Winnebago County Animal Control, 815-877-3073,

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Directors:

- Stephanie Joos, Champaign County Animal Control, 217-384-3798, sjoos@co.champaign.il.us.
- Julie Boudreau, Kankakee County Animal Control, 815-937-2949, jboudreau@k3county.net
- Len Hackl, Lake County Animal Control, 847-949-9876 x 103, lhackl@co.lake.il.us
- Peggy Gibson, McLean County Animal Control, 309-888-5060, peggy.gibson@mecleancountyil.gov
- Richard Glessner, Rock Island County Animal Control, 309-737-0297, glessner@co.rock-island.il.us
- Lauren Malmberg, Peoria Animal Welfare Shelter, 309-494-8911, Lmalmberg@ci.peoria.il.us
- Shane Boyer, Vermilion County Animal Regulation, 217-431-2660, shane.boyer@us.army.mil

Mission Statement

County Animal Controls of Illinois represents animal control agencies throughout the State of Illinois. CACI pledges to influence companion animal legislation in order to assure public health and safety for all citizens, develop and implement professional training standards for animal control personnel, and provide educational information.

County Animal Controls of Illinois

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