



Catching Up

4-legged cop has a nose for criminals

By SANDRA DAVIS
TODAY's writer

You've heard of a reporter with a nose for news. Here's a detective with a nose for criminals. In fact, he can smell them two miles away.

This hero is a four-legged version of Sherlock Holmes, named Harrass II. Referred to as "super-dog" by some, Harrass is a 9-year-old German-bred German shepherd whose sniffing ability has led to the convictions of murderers, rapists, thieves and narcotics dealers nationwide. The 100-pound shepherd also has used his nose to locate missing persons in the desert as well as in the snow.

Harrass has been involved in hundreds of cases in the United States, including more than 45 cases in Brevard County.

His extraordinary tracking ability surpasses that of most tracking dogs. He has successfully found clues to murder cases more than eight years old. While most experts "refute any dog's ability to separate and recognize human scents beyond 48 hours," John Preston, Harrass' owner, says his dog has "never been proved wrong."

PRESTON, A RETIRED Pennsylvania State Patrol officer from Philadelphia, purchased Harrass in Germany almost eight years ago for \$10,000. Preston began training dogs in 1974 when he realized they were invaluable in tracking missing persons. Since then, Harrass has saved at least four children and senior citizens lost and near death in frigid weather or sizzling heat, said Preston.

Harrass II is named for a previous tracking dog which was killed in an accident some years ago. Both dogs were German-bred.

According to Lt. Jim Bolick of the Brevard County Sheriff's Department, Harrass is used strictly as an investigative aid. The dog only indicates the presence of the suspect's scent at the murder scene. He cannot say if the suspect committed the crime.

Preston usually arrives in a city less than 24 hours before he and Harrass begin their tracking. He is briefed on the type of crime, but never the exact location of the crime. He is given a scent article from a suspect and taken to a location near the actual crime site.

Sheriff Jake Miller, after seeing the dog in action, said he has no doubts about Harrass. The sheriff recounts one case in which the dog was taken to a site two miles from where a crime had occurred. Neither Preston nor the dog had ever seen the area. Once picking up the trail, the dog "went straight to the site," Miller said.

IN ORDER TO preserve the credibility of Harrass' "testimony," Bolick said, Preston insists that neither details of the crime nor information about the suspect be disclosed before tracking begins. Also, Harrass never tracks more than one suspect per day. This prevents accusations such as "the dog was confused" or "had too many scents up his nose."

Each tracking is videotaped for jury replay. Brevard County officials say they are very impressed with Harrass II. "He has been almost 100 percent successful in tracking suspects for us," said Miller. "When I first learned about the dog, I was skeptical, but after seeing him work, I am convinced."

Among the cases in which Brevard officials contracted Harrass was the recent trial of Juan Ramos. Ramos was indicted in the murder of Sus Cobbs, who was raped and stabbed in her home in April 1982. Harrass entered the case seven days later and detected Ramos' scent on a knife that was used in Cobbs' slaying.



Mosquito control airplane swoops through

District takes out of mosquitoes

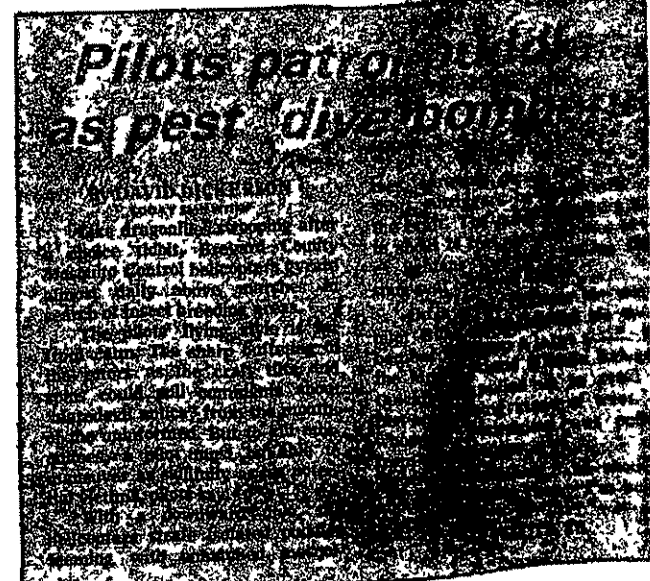
By DAVID DICKERSON
TODAY's writer

Thirty-one years ago, mosquitoes in Brevard were so numerous that cattle suffocated from inhaling the insects. People took short summer evening walks, wearing long sleeves, despite the heat, to ward off insect bites.

Then, in 1952, the Brevard County Mosquito Control District was established.

But after years of flooding lowland in Brevard to control the insects, recent environmental concerns have officials experimenting with newer methods to

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Pilots patrol as pest dive bombers

By DAVID DICKERSON
TODAY's writer
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IN SOME CASES, the evidence provided by Harrass represented the only "solid" evidence. Such was the case against Wilton Allen Dedge, whose scent presence was the only "real" evidence linking him to the rape of a 17-year-old girl.

Even with Harrass' unblemished record, he has been scrutinized constantly by dog experts and defense attorneys trying to discredit the super-sleuth's nose.

Recently, the dog's sniffing ability was questioned when a Cleveland inmate, who was convicted on the dog's identification of a scent from a bed sheet, was released after serving two years of a 25-year prison sentence for armed mail robbery. Someone else confessed to the crime.

Even in Brevard, Harrass' tracking and identification methods have not received all cheers. The dog connected Eugene Wiley with the death of Khalid Amosa, an Arabian student attending Brevard Community College, two years after the crime was committed, picking up his trail in a marshy area on Merritt Island.

Testifying in the Wiley case, dog trainer Glen Johnson, upon watching the tape, said he was not impressed with Harrass. He felt the animal was "not tracking or trailing a scent," the test was not conducted scientifically, and he wondered if Preston had some preknowledge about the test. Johnson said he observed a rather "lethargic performance" by the dog.

Although a mistrial was declared when Harrass implicated Wiley in January 1982, Wiley confessed to the crime in August.

MILLER IS SO impressed with Harrass that he intends to purchase a tracking dog for the county. While he said he would prefer one of Harrass' offspring or a dog that Preston has trained, he would settle for one less prestigious. He noted there are many good tracking dogs, but "Harrass II is exceptional."

The sheriff hopes to have a tracking dog by 1985. Estimating a price tag between \$3,000 and \$6,000, he intends to use monies procured from the next big drug bust in this area to purchase the dog.

"They don't know it yet, but the next big dooper that comes through here is going to buy my dog," Miller said.

Just like the postman, rain, shine, sleet, or hail, the four-legged Sherlock Holmes will continue to save the lost, rescue the perishing, and solve the crimes that stump the humans.

Is there someone or something you'd like to read about again, to catch up on? Send suggestions to Catching Up. TODAY, Metro Desk, P. O. Box 1330, Cocoa, Fla. 32923.

BY DAVID HICKSON
 The dragonflies swooping in a chaotic habit, Brevard County Sheriff's Office helicopter pilots search for bones in a swampy area. The pilots, flying with the from calm. The sharp rotation of the rotors as the craft tilts and spins sends out powerful vibrations that are felt by the pilots. But he said that a pilot must be able to maneuver as skillfully as the pilot. With a downward dive, the helicopter's shafts rotated suddenly, sending the pilot's head...

Slime-filled holes hold more 7,000-year-old bones

By **ROBERT W. DELANEY**
 TODAY'S STAR WRITER

Digging into an acre of land near Titusville to discover more about how people lived and died there more than 7,000 years ago will be a costly, dirty and dangerous task in the opinion of Bud Knoderer, curator at the Brevard Museum.

But Glen Doran, a Florida State University anthropologist, considers it a "phenomenal opportunity" and well worth the time, money and effort.

Knoderer thinks there is a possibility that bones obtained from the site may already have told everything that is of archaeological importance.

"There may not be anything left in there. We won't know until they get in there, and that will be an awful dirty job and very dangerous — involving pumping out the whole area," said Knoderer.

He said the danger stems from the slimy black muck in three water holes over roughly one acre of land where Windover Farms stopped construction last year. Work was halted after a bulldozer unearthed some bones that have since been authenticated as being 7,000 years old.

"It's not quicksand, but it is very similar to quicksand and nobody knows how much of that slimy stuff is in there. To find out, it will be necessary to get big hydraulic pumps in there and pump out the whole area," Knoderer said.

While conceding that the bones of 18 bodies already recovered from the site may tell all of significance that can be learned, Knoderer is not eager to see the excavation effort abandoned.

"It may be that the shovel broke up any remaining skeletons into little pieces, but for all we



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know there ma there," he said.

The recoveries have been tested and Florida State University anthropology department old, plus or minus

FSU's Doran visited the site, said there probably hundred or more at the site.

He said that have been similar South Florida, been a really w cavation at a site