

Dog Handler Yves Bécharard and Sonny

By Yves Bécharard, Search Coordinator, and Sylva Marchesseault, Chief, Administration and Material Management

Dog handler Yves Bécharard took 10 weeks of in-depth training at Canada Customs with his dog, Sonny. They have been working together since December 2001, starting at Drummond Institution. Since then Sonny and his master have made over 15 seizures for a total of more than \$84,000 worth of drugs.

Mr. Bécharard has also been the vice-president of the Association des maîtres-chiens policiers du Québec (AMCPQ) since June 2003. In December 2003 the AMCPQ decided to participate in a fund-raising campaign for the Mira Foundation. For dog handlers there is no better cause than the Mira Foundation.

Mr. Bécharard accepted responsibility for organizing, planning and coordinating the fund-raising campaign on behalf of the AMCPQ, with some of his colleagues from the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), including Guy-Paul Poulin, Donnacona Institution, Yves Savage, Montée Saint-François Institution and Patrick Généreux, Cowansville Institution.

The AMCPQ includes ten law enforcement agencies, mainly in Quebec, with a few members in Ontario and the Maritimes. Other member organizations are the RCMP, the Sûreté du Québec, the Montreal, Laval and Blainville Police Forces, the City of Québec, the Société de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and, of course, Canada Customs.

Each of the AMCPQ organizations had a representative on Mr. Bécharard's team. This meant that nearly 50 dog handlers were selling calendars for the Mira Foundation at the official campaign launch that took place in Drummondville at the Service d'Intervention d'Urgence du Centre du Québec offices. Local and provincial media and the Mira Foundation's heads also attended. France Poisson, Warden of Drummond Institution, gave the opening speech to launch the campaign.

The AMCPQ set a reasonable goal: enough money to buy a Mira dog – around \$20,000.

The 11 dog handlers from CSC, Quebec Region, collected \$6,500 and all the dog handler members of the AMCPQ collected another \$24,052. Mission accomplished!

Will the AMCPQ recidivate next year? That decision will be made at the general assembly during the next annual AMCPQ seminar, organized this year by the CSC dog handlers from Atlantic Region. ■