

# Dad, can we have a puppy?

Let me start this column by saying that I am so proud of our Bloomfield Jr./Sr. High School students - and you should be, too.

On Monday morning, police officers from the Southern Indiana Canine Drug Task Force converged on the school and did a thorough sweep.

Every locker was sniffed - every car was checked out by the four-legged police officers.

As you noticed in the front-page story this week, the search of the school and grounds turned up no drugs.

Parents - be proud. Administrators - be proud. Kids - be proud.

Now, I'm not saying that there are no kids at Bloomfield High School doing drugs. I'm not that stupid or crazy.

What I am saying is that if they are, they are not doing them at the school.

Now comes the part of the column where I really get to what I was meaning to talk about.

I'm a dog kind of guy (even though we have three neurotic cats). But in being a dog guy, I absolutely had to look at those beautiful animals and talk with their handlers at the school Monday morning.

Linton's dog was there. Jasonville's dog was there. Worthington's dog was there. So were dogs from Oakland City, Bedford, Bicknell and the Washington County Sheriff's office.

Mighty fine specimens, if I might say so.

But, then I looked around and was reminded of the fact that neither Bloomfield nor the Greene County Sheriff's Department has their own drug dog.

Now, I realize there are lots of arguments on why we don't need our own drug dog.

Those include the fact that we can call Linton P.D. or Worthington when we need one.

Another argument against Bloomfield having its own dog includes the cost of care and feeding, overtime costs for the officer involved - and the fact that,

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technically, whomever is the dog's handler will be storing town property at his private residence.

Plus, there's the fact that one of the squad cars would have to be specially outfitted for the dog.

OK, let's knock out the easy answers first.

The cost of training the dog and its handler is \$1,100 - and a

week's time. Dr. Borders, a local veterinarian said he would donate vet visits. According to Bloomfield cops, the good doc even is willing to donate some food for the furry guy.

Outfitting the car is not a big deal, either. At most, a high-quality crate for the back seat is around \$500.

As for storing the pup off town property, that answer is probably the easiest of all. A number of town employees drive town-owned trucks home every night and park them in their driveways or garages.

What is the difference between taking a dog home or driving a \$25,000 truck home? They are both technically town property.

Finally, and here is the real kicker - Bloomfield is able to get a fully-trained, experienced dog (worth upwards of \$5,000) for ... NOTHING.

That's right, a drug dog is available now and we can get him for zip, zilch, nada, nothing.

So, regardless of what the arguments on the other side might be, I say it's time for Bloomfield to have its own canine unit.

I encourage folks to contact their respective town council person - Janet Basye, Eric Harrah or Gary Swinney - and tell them the same.

If just the fear of a random drug search can keep our schools in line, it just might put the fear of God in some of the meth-heads running around our community.

*(R. Michael Johnson is Editor and Publisher of the Bloomfield Free Press. His award-winning column, Off the Record, appears every Wednesday in the Free Press.)*