

TOP HONORS

Animals inducted into Hall of Fame

By Brent Hallenbeck
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STOWE — Her name is Rae. Those who know her say she's gentle, calm, thoughtful, beautiful and a joy to work with.

She loves people. She's always happy to greet them. People who know Rae say they love her, too.

Not bad for a cow nicknamed "Stinky."

Rae and nine other animals were inducted Thursday into the brand-new Vermont Animal Hall of Fame, created by the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association to honor exceptional animals and their bonds with people. The animals earned medals and the owners received plaques during the ceremony at the Stowe-flake Mountain Resort and Spa.

The inductees include a rogue black-Lab mix named Cheyenne honored for forming a bond with the Colchester family she adopted; a calico cat named Smokey that alerted an Underhill family to a carbon-monoxide leak at home; and a 37-year-old pony named Dynamite enjoying retirement in Manchester Center after a lifetime of providing

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Photos by ALISON REDLICH, Free Press



ABOVE: Nick Lane, 15, of South Hero, from left, watches with Lt. Gov. Douglas Racine and Julie Lane as Alex Lane, 12, helps Ranger, a 2½-year-old border collie, accept his award for heroism Thursday during induction ceremonies at the Vermont Animal Hall of Fame in Stowe.

LEFT: Cheyenne, 7½, a black Labrador mix from Colchester, displays a medal awarded for outstanding companionship.

FAME: Animals recognized for their talents

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rides for children and filling in for donkeys in Nativity scenes.

Rae, who lives and works at Thompson Farms in Colchester, could not attend. She is known as the top milk-producing Guernsey in Vermont and one of the top producers in the country. She is a lover of country music who was once named "Listener of the Week" by WOKO-FM. Karen Magnant, the herdsman on the farm, said all she has to do

is turn on the radio in the milking parlor to lure Rae to work.

Jasmine, a scrawny, jet-black Tibetan terrier owned by Jim Davison of Barre, was honored for heroism. Davison was sleeping in his second-floor bedroom Dec. 27 when he awoke to Jasmine's barking and biting his ear and head. Fire was ravaging his home.

A dazed Davison crawled out a window onto the snow-covered first-floor roof. Jasmine — who weighs 12

pounds, half of which looks to be ears and tail — was tugging with his teeth on Davison's underwear, trying to pull him away from the burning bedroom.

Davison, who suffered smoke inhalation, knows where he'd be without Jasmine. "I would be dead, there's no doubt in my mind," Davison said.

As he spoke, Jasmine raised his Hall of Fame leg and piddled on a chair leg.

Davison scooped the dog up and escorted him out of the conference room to continue the conversation outside.

"He deserves anything and everything I can ever do," Davison said as Jasmine stood on the lawn to finish what he started inside.

The Animal of the Year award went to a now-deceased German shepherd from Essex Junction named Blitzten. The trained seizure-alert dog pulled the plug from a water-filled bathtub while

her owner was having a seizure in the tub.

While members of the association read details of Blitzten's amazing accomplishment, Cheyenne appeared to be soaking the whole day in.

She was on her back on the conference-room carpet as her owner, Lynn Mazza, scratched her belly. Cheyenne's medal dangled from her neck. Her teeth were showing. She appeared to be smiling, as if thinking life is very, very good.

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