

# The tale of a Turtle-loving Police Officer

by Lakin Mensing, The Barclay School

On Friday afternoon, August 5, 2011, the Barclay School had a turtle police officer expert visit. Cpl. Meeks gave us helpful tips on how to take care of our two turtles, Thunder and Lightning. Cpl. Meeks is from the Columbia College Police.

He was 8 years old when he got his first turtle and it was a box turtle. He brought it home and his mom freaked out. She said the turtle was not allowed in the house because it had diseases. So Cpl. Meeks kept him in the backyard and painted his name on the bottom of its shell.

The dachshund he had at the time would bark at the turtle in the mornings so Cpl. Meeks knew where it was. After two years, the turtle ran away. Three years later, he came back and it was the same turtle because he still had his name painted on the bottom of his shell! Cpl. Meeks said he painted the turtle not knowing that you should not do that!

He rescued a rare black spotted turtle on the endangered list. He found him in the back room of a pet shop with no light on him or anything. He was in horrible condition. So he bought him for \$200 to rescue him.

Greg Brown from Sunset Animal Clinic helped make the turtle better. Cpl. Meeks called him Luther. Luther lived for 20 years!

Cpl. Meeks to this day still owns

turtles. He is starting to grow his own organic food for them so he knows it is fresh and has no chemicals. One of his turtles is really lazy and when he sets her out on the back porch, she crawls back inside. She is also a bit fat!

Cpl. Meeks is going to come back and bring his turtles with him to visit. We learned a lot from Cpl. Meeks that we didn't know. For example, our turtle, Lightning, is a female! Also, his mom was wrong. You can't catch a disease from a turtle unless it is under four months of age or if you directly lick it on the shell! We are looking forward to Cpl. Meeks coming back with his turtles.



Hayes Mensing (left) enjoys a little turtle talk with Thunder and Columbia College Police Cpl. Ken Meeks at the Barclay School. Meeks, a turtle-lover since he was a boy, shared stories with the Barclay students during a visit this month with Thunder and his pal, Lightning.