

Reporters visit greyhounds at Canidrome

Lesley Wells

The Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM) arranged for the media to visit the 550 left-behind greyhounds at the now defunct Macau (Yat Yuen) Canidrome yesterday and talk to Anima board member Tinna Tang, widely known as Zoe.

When the media representatives arrived at the Canidrome in Fai Chi Kei the greyhounds were being walked by the volunteers that have signed up to help Anima take care of the canines that were abandoned by the racetrack operator when it finally closed its doors at midnight last Friday.

After the dog-racing concession had expired, IACM asked Anima and other animal rescue centres in Macau, including the Macau Association for Stray Dogs and Animal Welfare (MASDAW) to help look after the dogs.

Of the 553 that were left behind it was found that at least 44 were ill or injured and that there are 59 puppies of around a year old. From the greyhounds that this reporter has seen they have skin problems and awful teeth. Tang said that although there had been a vet at the Canidrome until its closure, the dogs were never treated. "If they broke or fractured a bone they were left to heal by themselves so you can see that many of them [the greyhounds] are limping," she said.

The ill or injured canines have been moved to an outside kennel so that they can be treated.

The kennels that the dogs are living in are nothing more than concrete cells, with views of other cells containing other dogs. Yesterday the dogs that were in their cells were lying down panting in the heat as there are no fans or air conditioners to cool them down and no beds for them to sleep on. Which explains why they



A greyhound in her bare cell at the (Macau Yat Yuen) Canidrome in Fai Chi Kei yesterday.

have sores and bald patches on their flanks.

Tang said that there are 400 volunteers who between them are turning up twice a day every day to walk the greyhounds or clean out their kennels and feed them.

Initially it was not known what would happen to the greyhounds after August 1, when the seven-working day deadline expired that IACM had given the operator to re-home the dogs or pay a hefty fine, but it was announced on Wednesday night that a joint press conference will be held by Anima and Macau (Yat Yuen) Canidrome Co. Ltd. this afternoon to tell everyone the fate of the greyhounds.

Despite the press asking numerous questions, Tang said that she could not answer many of them as all would be revealed at the press conference today, "but it is great news," she said with a huge grin.

She did say that the old Canidrome staff would be helping to look after the dogs and that the greyhounds would be staying at the Canidrome for a few months before being moved to a new shelter in Taipa. But she wouldn't say where or elaborate on anything further.

The *Macau Post Daily* asked Tang why greyhounds were still wearing muzzles as they appeared to be so loving and friendly, "because they haven't been desexed, so they will fight," she replied, adding that there are about 300 males among the dogs in residence.

Tang said that Anima would ensure that all the dogs are desexed before they are adopted and any ailments they have will be treated so that the animals have a clean bill of health.

The *Macau Post Daily* asked what would happen about the 650 adoption forms that Anima had handed to the Canidrome last



Tinna Tang, widely known as Zoe, poses with female greyhound Alihill at the kennels in the Canidrome yesterday.

Photos: Lesley Wells

month. Tang said, "Now there are fewer than the 650 dogs here, we shall have to have another adoption programme as perhaps not all the original adopters still want a dog as they applied so long ago. So, we shall contact them all and see if they still want a greyhound and for those that do we can begin the process.

Anima will do all the paper work, get them desexed, vaccinated, appraise the adopters, guarantee all the dogs are treated and provide everything. We hope all the greyhounds can be saved"

The *Macau Post Daily* also asked if, as reported previously, two European airlines were willing to fly the dogs for free, Tang said wait until tomorrow [today] to find out!

Tang said that Anima estimated it would take about a year for all the greyhounds to be settled in their new homes. ■

So much red tape, so little time to process greyhound adoptions

Lesley Wells

Kathleen Trainor, a Hong Kong business-woman who has adopted four greyhounds from the Macau (Yat Yuen) Canidrome Co. Ltd. has told *The Macau Post Daily* that there are still too many hoops to jump through to get the animals over to Hong Kong by the August 31 deadline. This is despite Hong Kong's Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) agreeing to issue a special permit to import the dogs into Hong Kong.

The *Macau Post Daily* met Trainor in Taipa last Sunday to discuss the frustration she is feeling and the wonderful help she had received from various people in government in Macau and Hong Kong to cut through the "extremely confusing" red tape and "contradictory information" being given out.

Trainor adopted her four greyhounds directly from the Canidrome. Cognac, a female, who is in a foster home in Taipa she is keeping for herself. Winston, a male, she has adopted for a friend. Trending World, a female, and Rich, an alpha-male who was running up until the very last race at the Canidrome on 30 June, she is still looking for homes for.

The *Macau Post Daily* met Trainor in Happy Paws, a pet groomer and hotel in Taipa, where she is keeping Winston, Trending World and Rich while she goes through the very difficult adoption process. There are also another five greyhounds at Happy Paws, some with new homes in Macau and the rest waiting to go to Hong Kong.

Trainor said that Leong Hou Sam, the owner of Happy Paws, had been brilliant: "He has helped get the vaccination cards for the dogs from IACM (Civic and Municipal



Kathleen Trainor poses with Winston at Happy Paws in Taipa on Sunday.

Photo: Lesley Wells

Affairs Bureau), looked after the dogs and done a lot of running around for us."

Trainor wants anyone who wishes to adopt a dog and take it to or through Hong Kong to be aware of the tight schedule that there is to operate under.

"AFCD has given until 31 of August to submit the adoption documents, which makes the 6 of August the last day that any prospective adopter can begin the process," Trainor said.

"Before anyone can apply, they have to get a blood test done at IACM's lab, the blood then has to be sent to AFCD approved labs around the world. So, the last day for sending the blood to the UK, for instance, is 10 of August as it takes two weeks for the results to arrive back.

"The last day for getting the first Parvo cocktail is 9 of August and the last date for the second is 24 of August. Hopefully the blood test results should be back by 27 of August and then I suggest you get the application form submitted to AFCD on 28th as the final day is the 31st, Trainor stressed.

The Parvo cocktail is for the usual conditions and transmissible canine illnesses Canine Parvovirus, Canine Distemper, Canine Parainfluenza Virus, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, Kennel Cough and Leptospirosis.

Luckily, Trainor discovered that all the dogs had been given rabies jabs at the Canidrome in January this year so with the help of "the wonderful Dr Lau at IACM" was able to get the dogs rabies certificates.

"The problem with the adoption process

at the moment is that it is fluid and keeps changing day by day, so I am willing to provide anyone with the information they need to get through the whole process a little easier," Trainor said.

Trainor also said that any prospective adopter can email kirstzoo@hotmail.com to get all the information required on what has to be done to get a greyhound into Hong Kong before the August 31 deadline.

Trainor gave some advice to prospective adopters of the greyhounds from the Canidrome: "Understand your limits, because even though these are adult dogs they are institutionalised and will need a lot of attention initially. They have great personalities that will gradually come through the more relaxed they become and are fascinated by everything."

In fact, while *The Macau Post Daily* was at Happy Paws a couple of the dogs kept going up and staring at themselves in mirrors and glass.

Trainor said that originally, she had adopters for Rich and Trending world but as the costs began to mount up the prospective adopters pulled out. Trainor said, "With the cost of the boarding in Macau, [during the quarantine period] food, desexing, vet fees for other health issues, transportation, application fees, courier costs for the blood to be sent overseas it comes to about 30,000 patacas per dog. So please think very carefully before agreeing to adopt."

Trainor said if anyone wants to adopt before the deadline, "please contact Anima as they have eight or nine dogs ready for adoption." ■