

Washington State Animal Response Team

"Helping Animals and their Owners in Disasters"



WASART NEWS

From the President

January, 2013

WASART conducted a very successful Annual Orientation program for prospective new members on January 12. This was our first attempt at holding two simultaneous sessions, one in Milton in south King County, another in the north, overflowing our meeting room in Lake Forest Park. Holding two sessions at once was a challenge, but the Training Committee brought it off smartly and it appears to have paid off. Between the two locations, 33 interested new folks showed up, nearly half of whom joined WASART on the spot, with several others planning to sign up on-line. We're delighted to have these new members, with their wide range of backgrounds, experience and interests, and are looking forward to seeing them in our upcoming 2013 training classes that commence with Core on March 2-3, 2013 in Redmond, WA.

'Get Organized' Month



Mission Statement

To help animals and their owners through disaster preparedness, education, and emergency response.

Our Orientation presentation had a slight shift in emphasis this year. Previous programs have been heavily weighted toward telling stories about past deployments, on the theory that people would be most interested in tales of rope rescue and slogging through muddy pastures. But that neglected information about the other activities that are essential to making an all-volunteer organization run: the committee work without which we couldn't field rescue, sheltering and transport teams. The Training, Hospitality, Technology/Communications, Equipment & Inventory, Membership, Outreach, Merchandise, Public Relations, and last, but by no means least, Fundraising Committees are key to our success. All of these can use more help, and the need is acute for the Training, Outreach, and Equipment & Inventory Committees. So this year we talked more about these nuts-and-bolts activities, and hope to see a bunch of new committee members as a result.

Welcome aboard, all you new folks. We're eager to work with you! And to also work with any other new folk who want to still join us in time for our first training opportunity in March, 2013. There's room for you all!

Bill Daugaard
President

Charitable Donations for Animal Rescue Volunteers

Many of you volunteer to help raise funds or perform other tasks on behalf of animal-rescue groups and other charitable organizations. When the annual reckoning with the Internal Revenue Service rolls around, the reward for your willingness to help out can take the form of write-offs for unreimbursed expenses incurred while you do volunteer work for rescue groups. To qualify as charitable deductions, the expenses in question must further the groups' missions, such as foster care for stray animals.



As an animal-rescue volunteer, you need to be mindful of tricky rules for donations, whether they take the form of gifts of cash or property or volunteer expenses.

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What follows is a summary of the many possibilities.

Only Out-of-Pocket Outlays Count

The law allows volunteers to claim itemized deductions on Schedule A of Form 1040 only for what you spend to cover unreimbursed expenses—for instance, telephone calls, postage stamps and stationery, as well as other materials (say, to prepare posters or other forms of advertising for fund-raising campaigns).

What kinds of expenses can rescue workers write off at tax time? Some examples of qualifying outlays that are frequently overlooked: animal feed, medicines, cat litter, litter boxes, pet dishes, cleaning supplies, garbage bags, paper towels, laundry detergent and dish detergent; animal bedding, animal toys, fees paid to veterinarians and trainers, and food for volunteers building temporary shelters for pets evacuated from flood zones in hurricanes.

Uniforms

Some organizations require volunteers to wear uniforms. Because these uniforms aren't adaptable to ordinary wear, deductions are allowed for their cost and cleaning.

Travel

An often missed outlay begins the moment that you leave your home. Your allowable deductions include travel expenses to and from animal shelters, veterinarians, committee meetings, fundraising events, and so on. If you travel to and from your volunteer work by planes, trains, buses, or taxis, just make sure to keep track of your fares and claim them as travel expenses.

If you use your own auto, you have two options for handling the expenses: The first option is to deduct the actual cost of gas and oil. Unlike write-offs for business driving, you can't claim depreciation because that isn't an actual cash payment. Nor can you claim insurance and repairs unless you use the car only for charitable driving or the repairs are directly attributable to that use.

The second option is to make the paperwork simpler by claiming a standard mileage rate. The standard rate is 14 cents a mile for tax year 2011, unchanged since 1997, as set by law.

Whether you use the mileage allowance or drive a gas guzzler and claim actual costs, remember to deduct parking fees and bridge or highway tolls, as well. It's a good idea, in case an IRS examiner questions your charitable travel, to be able to support your deductions with a glove compartment diary in which you record why and how far you went, as well as what you spend on parking. You don't have to use the same car each time and can use more than one car at the same time. If you rent an auto and drive it only for charitable travel, include the entire rental charge with your other charitable expenses.

Overnight Expenses

When volunteer work requires that you be away from home overnight, your deductions also include lodgings and meals as long as they're "reasonable," as opposed to "lavish or extravagant." Note that these meals are 100 percent deductible, unlike business meals, which are only 50 percent deductible.

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To back up your deductions in the event of an IRS audit, save a copy of the convention program and check off the sessions that you attend as a delegate. Sign an attendance book for any sessions that provide one. Keep a diary of your convention related expenses, along with hotel and restaurant bills.

IRS Paperwork

Strict rules apply when a volunteer incurs an unreimbursed expense of \$250 or more, such as an airline ticket. No deduction for the outlay is permitted unless you obtain and keep for your records a written statement from the charity. The statement needs to describe the type of services you performed for the charity and whether you received any benefits in return. The charity needn't list the expenses you pay as a volunteer.

Help from the IRS

For more information, take a look at [IRS Publication 526, Charitable Contributions](#), or telephone 800-TAX-FORM.

Excerpted from article written by Julian Block, attorney, for Pet News and Views.

And now . . . the rest of the story!

In June, 2010, WASART received a call from then-King County Animal Control requesting assistance in finding a hidden but vocal dog who was injured or in distress in Kent, WA. Eight WASART members, five of whom were on WASART's Technical Rescue Team, deployed to the site and eventually found a cold and frightened little dog hiding in the undergrowth on the hillside with its leash entangled in the brush. It was not tagged or micro chipped. Its owner never reclaimed him and one of the WASART team members, **Carla Dimitriou**, eventually fostered the dog until a permanent home could be found for him. She tentatively named him 'Nugget'. The more complete story is detailed in the WASART NEWS of June, 2010 and posted on our website.



And this is . . . the rest of the story.



I never had a dog growing up. My husband and I agreed that when I was done with school, I could get my first dog. We searched through [petfinder.com](#) to adopt a dog in need of a loving home. We were actually rejected for adopting several dogs because we live in an apartment and not a house with a yard. I was heart broken with every rejection. We saw the add for this adorable pup named Nugget. I told my husband this was the last application, and I was done. I couldn't take another rejection. Carla called us back right away to meet with her and Nugget.

We met with Carla and Nugget and we all just knew. Nugget sat in my lap and seemed fairly at ease (considering all he'd been through!).

We left with Nugget that day and he was instantly part of the family. We changed his name to Murphy. He is basically our child! He loves going to the off-leash park and run as fast as he can. He loves going to play at his "Grand-paw's" house with their 3 corgis. He loves to give kisses. We always say, "He can't hold his licker!" He also loves to take long lazy naps.

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We couldn't imagine life without him now. Thank you to everyone who helped with his rescue and adoption.

Submitted by Alicia Bates

Local Fire Departments' Generosity

The WASART #2 Supplies and Equipment trailer has been moved to a more northerly location allowing for quicker access to the I-90 corridor and points north. The search for a location that was secure and readily accessible has ended with the help of our friend, Detective Ed Christian, King County Search & Rescue Coordinator. He suggested Eastside Fire and Rescue might be able to accommodate the trailer and referred us to Chief of Maintenance, Kelly Refvem. Over the years Eastside Fire & Rescue has been very willing to let us use their meeting room for Orientation, trainings and meetings and it is great to be able to partner with them in this new way. We appreciate their support!



Through the generosity of Chief Clow of the Enumclaw Fire Department, the WASART #1 Supplies and Equipment trailer is parked in the Cumberland Fire Station so that deployments south of Enumclaw can receive a quicker and more efficient response. We continue to appreciate the support of Chief Clow and his fire department.

December Deployments

It doesn't rain but it pours—literally. It was cold and raining when WASART received a call for assistance just past midnight on **December 27th** from the Olympia Fire Department. A cow was stuck in the mud and they couldn't get it out. **Greta Cook, Bill Daugaard, Michaela Eaves** and **Rory Kelleher** responded and arrived in Olympia in time to see the cow self-rescue. The deployment concluded at 4:00 a.m. and everyone returned home., the last member walking in the door at 6:00 a.m.



Horse with head protector & blankets

No less than 12 hours later at 4:00 p.m., another call was received for a horse which had collapsed in its pasture in Enumclaw and couldn't get to its feet. Responders were **Greta Cook, Bill Daugaard, Ken Cottle, Carla Dimitriou, Ken Hasbargen, Rory Kelleher, Patty Vanassa** and **Marie Schimke**. The deployment concluded at 9:00 p.m.

That's just how it goes sometimes.

WASART's General Membership Meetings are currently held on the **2nd Wednesday of each quarter** at **7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.** The **March 13, 2013** and the **September 11, 2013** meetings will be held in Shoreline, Tacoma or elsewhere when locations are finalized. The **June 12, 2013** and **December 11, 2013** meetings will be held at the **Key Bank, 1212 Cole Street, Enumclaw, WA 98022**. All these meetings are open to the public and everyone is invited to attend.