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Welcome to this issue of the Washington State Animal Response Team's monthly newsletter! Find out what the President has to say, what deployments we've been on, where the next meetings will be, and where we'll be with upcoming events. [View this email in your browser](#)



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Helping Animals & Their Owners in Disasters

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General Meetings

March 12

Key Bank Community Meeting Room
1212 Cole Street,
Enumclaw, WA

June 11

Shoreline Fire Department,
#61
17525 Aurora Avenue North
Shoreline, WA 98133

The next General Membership Meeting will be held in Enumclaw, WA from **7 p.m. - 9 p.m.** The first hour is spent on WASART business and the final hour is a mini-training session on a subject of interest to members. And, of course, some social time, too. All General Membership Meetings are open to the

From the President

To Leash is to Love



Many of our calls begin with this view: a cliff, silence, and no dog in sight.

I'm going to write this month about a subject that probably won't go down well with everyone that reads it. But it's an important issue to me personally, and an important issue for the welfare of our canine friends and companions.

I want to plead with everyone that reads this to not take their dogs on hikes off-leash on backcountry trails. We have seen far too often the very bad results that come from well-intentioned owners hoping to let their pets have some fun and freedom, only to have the dogs end up in very serious trouble, and in grave danger. From the Pacific Crest Trail, to Mud Mountain Dam, to Chuckanut Ridge, to the top of Mount Si, we've seen too many incidents where a fun outing for dog and owner turned into a tragedy or near tragedy – usually for the dog, but occasionally for the owner,

public and everyone is invited to attend.

Training Opportunities
(Open to the public)

[March 1-2 - Core Training](#)
Woodinville, WA

[April 26-27 - Field Response](#)
Wilkeson, WA

[June 7 - Transport](#)
Enumclaw, WA

[June 28 - Technical Large Animal Rescue \(TLAR\) \(Awareness\)](#)
Enumclaw, WA

[July 12-13 - Animal Sheltering](#)
Enumclaw, WA

Visit our booth at these upcoming events

[May 17 - Petpalooza](#)
Auburn Parks - Game Farm Park

May 17 - Evergreen Health & Wellness Fair
Evergreen Hospital - Kirkland, WA

July 19 - Tacoma/Pierce County Dog-A-Thon
Ft. Steilacoom Park - Lakewood, WA

August 2 - Woofstock
Tacoma, WA - Univ. of Puget Sound

as well.

It's not that I *want* to be a curmudgeon about this, but I think we need to ask ourselves why we go hiking on backcountry trails in the first place, with or without our dogs. Most likely it's to see the beautiful scenery and hopefully to see some wildlife as a bonus. If we don't bring the dogs, we have an excellent chance of success. If we bring them, the scenery will still be beautiful, but about all we'll see of the wildlife will be their tails as they disappear into the woods. If the dogs are off leash, we won't even see that, and if the wild animal happens to be predatory, we may not see the dog again, either.

Assuming the wildlife doesn't get our pals, we then have to reckon with their enthusiasm as they have a great time running up a trail that runs right along the edge of a steep cliff (true in every one of those trails I mentioned above, and many others), where the cliff edge is hidden in underbrush and invisible to the dog until he or she slips on the edge and goes over the cliff, to a likely very bad result.

So I plead: if you want to get your dog some exercise and let him or her run off leash, please take him or her to a dog park (I know, there are issues with them, too, but they don't have cliffs), and not to a backcountry trail.

I write this dour column because I really would like to see us not have to be called out again for one of these difficult and sometimes tragic events – not for our sake, but for that of the dogs and their owners.

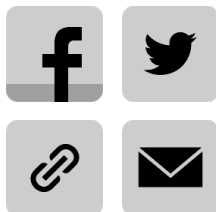
Bill Dugaard
President

Bag of Sand "Rescued" in Monthly Training

Did you know we're often available to talk to your group about WASART or disaster prep?

Mission Statement

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



Practicing with a heavy bag of sand during the Technical Rescue Team's training helps real life calls go as efficiently and quickly as possible.

Spring is on the way and soon we'll begin to see more people and their pets enjoying outdoor recreational activities. Warmer weather means a higher incidence for deployments related to companion animals in the PNW's rugged terrain. In preparation for this likelihood, our February WASART Technical Rope Training was held in a reclaimed quarry named Lord Hill Park in Snohomish, WA. Comprised of steep rocky and muddy slopes, the park is an ideal site in which to troubleshoot for our scenario, a simulation of one of our common calls, a dog fallen over a cliff. Saturday's subject was "Sandy", a 70lb sandbag placed at the bottom of a 100 foot vertical face.

Twelve members of the TRT arrived and climbed the steep trail to the top of the face, rigging safety lines as they went. The team evaluated the situation, split up to build the rigging systems, and lowered an attendant over the cliff. While the attendant harnessed the "subject" for lifting, the teams above reconfigured the rigging systems for raising, then both attendant and subject were pulled back up together, quickly and smoothly.

However, the "rescue" would not be complete until the subject was brought back down the approach trail to the waiting vehicles. The path was too slippery and unstable to just walk down, especially considering the steadily increasing rain, so the haul systems from the cliff face were dismantled and reassembled at the top of the trail to assist the six litter attendants with their descent. "Sandy" reached the vehicles in excellent

condition and high spirits. We thank her for her help in preparing the TRT for their next mission, whatever it may be.

Loss & Passion – Addressing the Realities and the Rewards of Rescue Work



In this article, Dr. Jennifer James, Urban Cultural Anthropologist, discusses the impact emergency work has on the people involved in the work. Photo by [clevergrrl](#), Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0) (No changes made.)

Taking care of animals in trouble, helping some, losing others, has given me a passion in my life that is unmatched. There is no love that rewards more consistently than the love of animals. But loving, caring, helping, means bearing witness to the pain inflicted on animals in our world.

My friends, and sometimes potential volunteers, say how can you do that, while I think how can you not? They refer to being in a room or field too close to pain, too close to the chaos of an animal in distress. I could take care of live puppies they joke but not hurt or dead puppies. They are saying they cannot set boundaries between what they take home with them and what they leave at work. That logic applied to all of life would make it hard to care for anything or

anyone unless it is sanitized. Most of us would do anything to help a child so why not any animal?

Yes, life is hard and it would be great if we could avoid all the mean parts and live in a Disneyfied world. But, if we shield ourselves from too much of life, because it enables us to pretend that we live on a happy planet, we are endorsing the old idea that ignorance is bliss. We can pretend our meat isn't butchered, that strays aren't euthanized, that pets don't get old, that we won't die. Then we really don't have to do anything to make things better because we are unaware there are any problems. American culture has a peculiar resistance to the idea of pain and mortality in any form and it leads us to live half lives, hiding the uncomfortable. Quick! Run to the store to replace the dead goldfish so our child won't know things die.

Embracing all of life, and therefore the hard things too, gives children a sense of truth and mastery and it expands their ability to feel passion and compassion in any form. The same is true for those adults who work with life and death. It opens up your heart and mind because you are making a difference in the real world instead of playing it safe in a small world. Doctors, nurses, emergency crews, aid workers know the high costs of the ignorance that prevents us from taking better care of living things but they persist in trying to make things right. They gain satisfaction from putting things back together.

So few of us now grow up on a farm that we may only be familiar with pets or zoos. On a farm you learn quickly that you cannot make pets of any animal if you are not prepared to accept they may get sick, die, be sold or taken away. These early lessons in love and loss prepared me for life. Despite all my years at universities I still think I learned my most important lessons on the farm. Be responsible, the animals depend on you even if you are tired, be aware of what is happening, notice the signals of illness or neglect, treat animals with kindness and discipline to prevent them from harming themselves and rescue

them when something goes wrong no matter what because they are in your care.

The reward has been a life connected deeply to the stuff of life, experiences that still teach me daily about my own character through how I treat living things. I find I do not fear mortality, I accept the good and the bad and do what I can to change what I can, to leave, even in the smallest way, my land in a better place. Caring for animals has given me a passionate life, I have never really left the farm and I never will. I carry the sounds, smells and obligations of that life in my head and it makes all the difference.

Working with animals in distress is a huge statement about who you are, what you are capable of and what is your true character. It is also a chance to make a difference through multiple acts of kindness, to live an honorable life by caring, to save lives and in doing so live a greater life yourself.

Jennifer James, PhD

Learn the Basics in Core and Be Trained to Help Save a Life



Many of the skills learned in Core can be used in everyday crisis situations.

In 1970, a devastating California wildfire burned over 500,00 acres, 700 structures, killed 16 people and untold numbers of wild animals. Over 13 days, the

loss and cost of the fire was estimated to be \$18 million dollars a day. Though numerous agencies responded and cooperated to the best of their abilities, their efforts were thwarted by poor communication and a lack of interagency coordination. The disaster exposed the lack of a unified and national incident management system by which all agencies, be they federal, state, tribal, or local could operate. Thus, the concept of the Incident Command System was born and exists today under the aegis of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

On many WASART deployments, particularly those involving technical rescue efforts or animal seizures, we are asked to work together with other agencies. These agencies could include firefighters, law enforcement, emergency medical teams, as well as other animal rescue groups. In the event of a large - scale disaster, WASART volunteers would be working with first responders on the federal level.

All of the above agencies, and WASART, use the Incident Command System (ICS). For this reason, the first component in WASART's new member training curriculum is a series of classes intended to school first responders in this highly efficient method of management and communication. These four classes, FEMA IS-100, FEMA IS 200, FEMA IS -700, FEMA IS -800, can be completed online and at your leisure but are mandatory for the reason stated above. For health and safety reasons, First Aid/CPR classes are mandatory as is a current Tetanus vaccination and a credential in Blood Borne Pathogens information.

Core Training is the first "in-house" component in WASART's training curriculum and is taught by qualified senior WASART members. It is designed to give students the basic skills and knowledge to deploy with us in a non-animal handling support capacity, and is a mandatory requirement to be able to deploy in other fields. During the two-day class, students will be instructed in WASART's operational

policies and structure, as well as Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Stress Management, Basic Fire Safety, Biosecurity Awareness, and Base Camp Support. Students will have hands-on training with a fire extinguisher and be given the opportunity to practice putting out a live fire. Core Training is open to both members and non-members. Pre-registration is required.

Core Training will be held from 9am to 5pm on Saturday and Sunday, March 1 & 2, at the Woodinville Fire Station #31 17718 Woodinville-Snohomish Road Woodinville, WA 98072.

For more information and registration:

<http://www.washingtonsart.org/calendar.html>. (Click on March 1.)

WASART NEWS is a publication of the Washington State Animal Response Team (WASART) published on or about the 15th of each month. WASART is an all volunteer, 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Mail us at: WASART, P.O. Box 21, Enumclaw, WA 98022.

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