

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](#)



[www.washingtonsart.org](http://www.washingtonsart.org)

Helping Animals & Their Owners in Disasters

## From the President

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## Heartfelt Goodbyes and a Warm Welcome

In a large animal rescue, much of the more expensive equipment needs to be replaced for safety reasons.

It's only possible because of you.

[Donate](#)

## General Meetings

**June 10, 2015**

Location TBD

The next General Membership Meeting will be held from **7 pm - 9 pm**. The first hour is spent on WASART business and the final hour is a mini-training



*Carla, seen here at an outreach event, is leaving WASART after many years of dedicated service. We look forward to seeing her [future art](#) and other endeavors.*

session on a subject of interest to members. And, of course, some social time, too. All General Membership Meetings are open to the public and everyone is invited to attend.

### Upcoming training

**April 25, 2015**

[Field Response Training](#)

42829 244th Ave SE  
Enumclaw, WA 98022

**May 30, 2015**

[Transport Training](#)

Enumclaw Expo Center  
45224 284th Ave SE  
Enumclaw, WA 98022

**June 27, 2015**

[Technical Animal Rescue \(Awareness\)](#)

Cumberland Fire Station  
35420 Veazie-Cumberland Road  
Enumclaw, WA 98022

### Upcoming events

WASART will have a booth at:

[West Pierce Fire & Rescue Disaster Prep. Day](#)

Lakewood YMCA  
9715 Lakewood Drive SW  
Lakewood, WA 98499

**April 25** from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

[WA State Search & Rescue Conference, 2015](#)



*Ritz, left, poses with member Heidi at Petpalooza. Ritz has been the smiling face of WASART at outreach events since nearly the beginning of WASART. We wish her a happy retirement and safe travels to the East Coast.*

This is a month of transition for WASART – some good, some not so good. Zoe Clelland has served as our Vice President for two years, having been appointed to fill an unfinished term, and then being elected in her own right last year. She has been a dynamo in the job, bringing unprecedented energy and enthusiasm to her position. Among her many, many achievements are an outstanding job of creating our first two annual reports, for 2013 and our soon-to-be-published 2014 report. Unfortunately for us, a new job has brought heavy demands on her time, and has forced her to step down from the Vice Presidency. We will sorely miss her humor and energy, and look forward to her returning to a leadership role sometime in the future – the sooner, the better!

Fortunately for us, though, we have found an excellent replacement to step in and fill Zoe's unfinished term. The Board of Directors has appointed Larry Fosnick Davis as our new Vice President. Larry has hit the ground running, and is doing a great job in the new role. He has already demonstrated great commitment and initiative, and it's clear that the Vice Presidency is still in excellent hands.

I wish Zoe's resignation were the only loss we have to contend with this month, but we're also losing long-

**May 15-17, 2015**

Girl Scout Camp River Ranch  
Carnation, WA

Auburn's **Petpalooza 2015**,  
Saturday, **May 16** from 10:00  
AM – 5:00 PM

For more info:

<http://www.auburnwa.gov/events>

[The Humane Society's 25th  
Annual Dog-A-Thon](#)

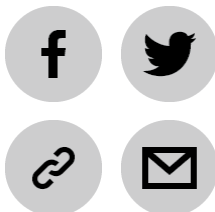
Fort Steilacoom Park,  
Lakewood, WA

Saturday, July 25 from 9:00  
AM – 5:00 PM

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.



time members Carla Dimitriou and Ritz Duchesne, as well. Carla is leaving to devote more time to her art and attend to family matters. She has been a real workhorse for us, serving as our newsletter editor, custodian first of our second rescue trailer and more recently our new rescue box van, and taking on the drudgery of cleaning our rope rescue equipment after each deployment and Technical Rescue Team practice session. In addition to all that work, she has been in the field on many of our deployments. She has always served quietly, with not enough recognition, an oversight that needs to be corrected.

Ritz is leaving us to move back East. She was one of our earliest members, and has been a tireless WASART supporter and promoter. She served for years as our Outreach Committee Chair, doing an outstanding job in attending countless community events on our behalf. She has been instrumental in bringing in many, many contributions to help fund our activities.

We are truly going to miss these great members and stalwarts. It won't be the same without them. I'll miss them, and I won't be alone.

Bill Daugaard  
President

Guest Column by Nathan Ray

## Coping With Cruelty and Trauma

*WASART members are frequently asked to partner with larger agencies such as the [ASPCA](#) (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) for the purpose of assisting with large-scale responses, such as puppy mill and dog fighting seizures. Some of our members are currently helping the ASPCA care for cruelty victims at a temporary shelter established for animals seized from various cruelty cases, which*

*makes the following contribution from our friend and colleague, Nathan Ray, all the more timely.*

*Nathan has generously contributed some words of wisdom that could be helpful to all volunteers who are willing to confront cruelty in order to rescue animals. Nathan Ray is a Certified Traumatologist from the [Green Cross Academy of Traumatology](#) and Nathan often makes his expertise available to support WASART volunteers returning from these emotionally and physically demanding deployments.*



*Members debrief after a cold and wet deployment. A debrief, where everyone reviews the deployment and discusses both the negatives and the positives, are an important step in dealing with trauma.*

I'd like to start by asking you to read three short scenarios. Before continuing to the rest of the discussion, please take a few minutes to think about each scenario and ask three questions: Would I use the word "cruel" when describing it to others? Would I respond to the scenario differently if it involved cruelty? Finally, how would each situation affect my thoughts and feelings in the weeks and months after I responded?

Scenario 1:

After a severe winter storm sweeps through the area, you are deployed as part of a WASART shelter team to help care for animals that were injured in the storm and cannot return to their homes at this time. You spend several days working with animals who suffer from hypothermia, broken bones, and open wounds.

#### Scenario 2:

A family is camping in the woods; their three-year old watched an older sibling throwing objects off a cliff and imitated this behavior by pushing their six month old puppy off the same cliff. You are deployed as part of a WASART technical rescue team to bring the dog up from forty feet down where it landed. You spend the better part of an evening traversing the cliff and retrieving the dog, then work late into the night tending to the puppy's hypothermia, broken bones, and open wounds.

#### Scenario 3:

You are deployed as part of a WASART team to help care for fifty dogs rescued from a puppy mill. You spend a week working with dogs that have not been cared for properly and are suffering from hypothermia, broken bones, and open wounds.

Spend a few minutes thinking over the questions posed in the first paragraph about each scenario. Did you feel different emotions while reading each of them? Can you name some of those emotions and thoughts? The resulting injuries were all the same; do you know why your reactions were different in each situation? If you are like many people, you probably got more upset with each one. In the first, the injuries were simply an unfortunate result of bad weather. In the second, you may have been upset because the parents didn't keep better track of the toddler, but probably forgave the child because it didn't know better. In the final, you may have felt anger toward the adult running the puppy mill, or even a desire for revenge.

Did you realize we could use the term "cruel" when describing each of our three scenarios? The Oxford Dictionary defines cruel as "causing pain or suffering", but it offers an alternate definition of "willingly causing pain or suffering or feeling no concern about it." We speak of cruel winters or a cruel Mother Nature without attaching the negative emotions that we associate when talking about animal cruelty. We

forgive accidental or unknowing cruelty while becoming very upset about other situations in which a human deliberately causes pain or suffering when they should know better.

So how do we deal with the negative emotions and trauma that often result when we respond to a situation that involves deliberate cruelty?

Our reaction to an event, not the event itself, is what causes trauma. In all of our scenarios, the injuries were very similar. How we viewed the causes of those injuries changed how we reacted to each situation and how we might think of it afterward. Recognizing this can be the first step toward better results in our own lives – less anger, fewer bad dreams or sleepless nights, less bitterness, and a continued willingness and ability to help. Focusing on the positives: what we accomplished, how we helped, that the animal(s) are now in a better place, rather than the negatives: how it happened or the animals we weren't able to successfully help, is very powerful. Focusing on the positive encourages even more positive thoughts and emotions, renewing our energy and allowing us to continue to help.

There is another factor to consider, though: the length of time we are exposed to dealing with a traumatic event. A night spent rescuing that puppy will not have the same effect as a week working at the shelter. A 50-pound pack still weighs 50 pounds after hiking for an hour, but feels quite a bit heavier because of the time spent carrying it. Fortunately, we can take care of ourselves. Make sure you and your team mates take regular breaks, allowing you to set down the load for a few minutes before picking it back up. As a team, spend a few minutes discussing what happened at the end of each shift. Highlight the positives, recognize areas where you can improve, and wrap up by identifying specific self-care activities each team member promises to do before the next shift. Continue this after your deployment formally and informally – a short phone call or email focused on positive results can make a big difference, a group

meeting several weeks after getting back allows everyone to process events and share what is helping them. Spend happy time with friends, family, and your own animals when you get home – this goes a long way toward restoring energy!

Cruelty is part of the world we live in, but we don't have to let it traumatize or destroy us. Take care of yourself, take care of your team mates, and continue to make the world a better place!

Nathan Ray

Certified Traumatologist

[Green Cross Academy of Traumatology](#)

If you have any thoughts or questions, please feel free to contact me at [NWRaysOfHope@gmail.com](mailto:NWRaysOfHope@gmail.com).

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## Recognizing Hoarding



*Photo courtesy of the ASPCA.*

Callouts for assistance from national animal groups as described above are generally in response to large scale animal cruelty cases where the perpetrators have used practices of abuse for the purpose of making money. This includes breeding dogs to fight, or as in puppy mills, breeding dogs to sell. However there is another category of animal abuser who now makes up one quarter of all new hoarding cases, the animal rescuer turned hoarder.

Hoarders suffer from a complex mental illness that allows for the hoarder to disassociate from the squalor they create. Animal hoarders tend to see themselves as animal rescuers. Initially they might well be rescuers but at some point in time the illness manifests and the rescuer crosses the line from rescuer to hoarder. This disturbing ability to disassociate from the harm they inflict is the hallmark of the animal hoarder. Also disturbing is that an animal hoarder can form a network of similarly ill “rescuers” who enable and support the cruelty. Many times these are family members or friends of the hoarder. In many large hoarding cases the hoarder(s) will masquerade as a rescue organization. For this reason, it is vitally important that a person or rescue group do some background work to determine the legitimacy of the rescue entity before surrendering care of an animal.

**Here are some red flags to look for:**

- \*The “rescue group” has no 501(3)(c)
- \*The “rescue group” has no Board of Directors but instead is assisted by family members and friends.
- \*Animals are housed in the same living quarters as the humans.
- \*The rescue group does not provide veterinary care.
- \*The rescue has no adoption program.
- \*The rescue group has no spay and neuter program.
- \*The rescue group follows a “no kill “ policy even in cases of terminally ill and suffering animals.
- \*The facility is obviously over populated with animals not receiving care.

Here are some links that provide more detailed information regarding animal hoarding:

<http://www.aspca.org/fight-cruelty/animal-hoarding>  
<http://www.animalhoarding.com/>

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**Guest Column by Linda McCoy**

**So You Think You Want a Pit Bull?**





*WASART volunteers are diverse in terms of their relationship with animals. Some of our members and supporters are actively engaged in their own rescue work. One such long time member is Linda McCoy who through her organization, [Ribsey's Refugees](#), specializes in working with the dogs we know as "Pit Bulls." Here is Linda pictured with Misty, a hoarding survivor, before finding Misty's forever home.*

I am a Pit Bull breed advocate. I've always been a dog lover and for the past 12 years I have owned and operated a "free range boarding facility" for large breed dogs. I've worked with nearly all large breed dogs, from mutts to pure breeds, and in this capacity have come to learn that a dog's behavior is primarily a product of environment and upbringing. I have seen a variety of problems in every breed and type of dog.

"Pit Bulls" are not one specific breed. Rather, dogs that are referred to as Pit Bulls are generally American Staffordshire Terriers, American Pit Bull Terriers, and Staffordshire Bull Terriers.

My experience with pit bulls was somewhat limited until I volunteered as an animal rescuer following Hurricane Katrina. During my deployment, 90% of the dogs I handled were pits and pit mixes. Many of these dogs appeared to be street dogs and, without exception, the males were unneutered. Too many of these dogs bore the physical evidence, of what I now

know to be signs of dog fighting. This includes crudely chopped ears and multiple scars and lacerations. Shortly after Katrina I was made aware of a “pit bull rescue operation” that appeared to be overwhelmed with 57 dogs. In reality, this situation became my first one on one experience with an animal hoarder. It took me 3 years to gain the hoarder’s trust. Eventually the hoarder gave me full access to her property whereupon I was finally able to provide medical services and good homes to all but 2 dogs who were subsequently euthanized. Given the situation and the level of neglect these dogs had suffered I was amazed to find that all the dogs were good tempered and sweet natured.

These were the defining moments leading me to become an advocate for this misunderstood breed. I’m now the founder and director of Ribsey’s Refugees a 501(c)(3). Ribsey’s works strictly with reputable shelters that provide us with dogs that would not be adoptable through the shelter. These are dogs who, often, are traumatized and in need of basic rehabilitation. Rehab, in our program, means providing a daily routine, basic training, socialization, and loving care. As a responsible breed advocate, I fully realize that not all dogs are adoptable. Though painfully difficult there are times when euthanasia is necessary.

When a potential adopter inquires about one of my dogs, we go through a thorough process that includes a five page application, several interviews, home and reference checks, and a trial period. All of our dogs get a wellness exam, and sometimes need minor and sometimes major medical attention. We put all of our dogs through a behavioral evaluation and assessment program and then, depending on the results, we determine whether or not they are ready for adoption.

The first thing I tell a potential adopter is that they have to understand the breed they have chosen. Pit Bulls are not “dog park dogs.” Any rescue dog comes with baggage but pit bull rescues come laden with

stigma and controversy. The ideal adopter understands this.

Pit Bulls are often associated with criminal gangs and dog fighting but millions of pits live peacefully among children and other pets. In spite of their bad rap, Pits test out to be among the most stable breeds by the American Temperament Test Society of the United States ([www.ats.org](http://www.ats.org)).

There are many reasons to adopt a Pit Bull. Pits shed very little which is great because they love to sleep on your sofa or in your bed. Pit Bulls are fond of toys and tennis balls and do well in an apartment. They are easy to train because they love to please you. Pit Bulls are wonderful in so many ways – they are athletic, they are mellow, they are sweet, they are excitable, they are happy, they have the best smiles, and they are by far the most loving and loyal breed of dog I have ever known but, sadly, the stigma and mythology surrounding the Pit Bull makes them the most likely breed to be euthanized in a shelter.

What I see constantly demonstrated through my work with these dogs is how easily these dogs defy an undeserved stigma and become loving pets.

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## All Dressed Up...



A big thanks to the folks at [Industry Graphics](#) in

Auburn, WA, our box van is now wearing full make up and ready to roll. While they were at it, they also worked on our truck. Industry Graphics generously donated a large portion of the vinyl graphics and we are very grateful to them for it.



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Field Response

**UPCOMING TRAINING**



## **FIELD RESPONSE** **April 25, 2015 • 8-5**

Hands-on learning with small & large animals  
Trailer loading & animal assessment  
Rope rigging for rescue awareness  
And more!

**LOCATION**

Triple C Pleasure Horses  
42829 244th Avenue Southeast  
Enumclaw, WA 98022



**REGISTER**

<http://bit.ly/WASART2015>

\$65 members (\$32.50 recertifying)

\$95\* general public

\*if joining within 90 days of this class,

\$30 of this fee goes toward annual dues

washingtonsart.org • WASART is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization focused on animal-related disaster response needs in the State of Washington.

### **Sat Apr 25, 2015**

Field Response training is geared towards animal rescue and evacuation in emergency situations. The next Field Response training date is September 20, 2015.

The training consists of online classes and on-site training. Registrants must complete the online segments and the on-site training to be credentialed in Field Response. Links to the online segments will be provided after we receive registration and payment for the in-classroom training; there will not be an additional cost for the online instruction. The on-site training contains extensive animal handling.

To register online, complete this form:

<http://bit.ly/WASART2015>

If you prefer to download, print, and send via email or mail, click the following link and follow instructions on the form: <http://bit.ly/Download-n-Print-RegistrationForm>

For more information, contact  
[registrar@washingtonsart.org](mailto:registrar@washingtonsart.org).

[Register online](#) for Core. Questions about the training program? Check out the [training curriculum](#) or contact the [registrar](#). Core is currently offered twice annually, and the next training date is August 30, 2015.

**When:** April 25, 2015

**Class:** 8-5, with sign-in at 7:30 AM

**Where:** 42829 244th Ave SE  
Enumclaw, WA 98022

**Tuition:** \$65.00 for members; 32.50 for recertifying WASART members, \$95.00 for non-members

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