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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](#)



www.washingtonsart.org

Helping Animals & Their Owners in Disasters

From The President

Season's Greetings

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This month, we had an update from Lager, seen [here](#), and his family. Check out the story below for the details.

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](#)

Happy December all,

Washington is well on its way to another wet and cold winter. Thankfully, we're as prepared as we can be for what may come.

Our 10th anniversary is coming up, and we've got some great things in the works -- stay tuned!

[General Meetings](#)

March 8, 2017

[Milton Public Library](#)

900 Meridian Avenue East
Milton, WA 98354

In whatever way you celebrate this season, may you be surrounded by those you love and may you create many happy memories. If you're looking for gifts, WASART has several great items for the animal lovers in your life.

(entrance at rear of library)

June 14, 2017

[King County Office of
Emergency Management](#)
3511 NE 2nd Street
Renton, WA 98056

September 13, 2017

[Shoreline Fire Department](#)
Station 61
17525 Aurora Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98133

December 13, 2017

[King County Office of
Emergency Management](#)
3511 NE 2nd Street
Renton, WA 98056

The General Meetings are held from **7 p.m. - 9 p.m.** The first hour is spent on WASART business and the final hour is a mini-training or discussion session on a subject of interest to members. And, of course, some social time, too. All General Meetings are open to the public and everyone is invited to attend.

Upcoming training

Register at
<http://bit.ly/WASART2017>

Open House

January 7, 2017

10:00 - noon
Search & Rescue Facility
Taylors Landing
5506 Old Machias Road
Snohomish, WA 98290

Fundamentals

February 4, 2017

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Location TBD

Animal Handling & Assessment

March 25, 2017

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Location TBD

Emergency Animal

Sending you all my best for a very happy and safe month and thanking you all for your continued support of WASART and the animal communities we serve!

Shawndra Michell
President

Rescue Update: Lager



Lager, a Leonberger adopted from the Humane Society, needed our assistance last year. We got a chance to visit with him during the membership meeting. Read more about Lager's rescue on [our Facebook album](#) or the [newsletter from June 2015](#).

We received a call for a dog in a ravine on Memorial Day of 2015. Lager had spent his life playing in the ravine (as evidenced by ancient squeaky toys responders found near where he lay) but thirteen-year-old Lager's age and health had caught up with him.

After Lager's rescue, he was taken immediately to the emergency veterinarian clinic. Lager already had diabetes and had spent the night without his medication. At the clinic, vets discovered Lager was in the early stages of lymphoma. The early detection and chemotherapy meant Lager had a better

Sheltering

April 22, 2017

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location TBD

May 13, 2017

Transport

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Location TBD

Open House (repeat)

August 27, 2017

10:00 - noon

Location TBD

Fundamentals (repeat)

September 17, 2017

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location TBD

Animal Handling & Assessment (repeat)

October 1, 2017

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location TBD

Annual Exercise

October 14, 2017

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Enumclaw Expo Center

45224 284th Ave SE

Enumclaw, WA 98022

chance at survival.

Lager and his family were guests at our December 14 General Membership Meeting in Shoreline, WA. Lager's family had donated after his rescue and we named a Cascade rescue litter after him. We'd invited them to the dedication and we toasted to his continued health with sparkling apple cider.

Today, Lager is in remission and we were all very excited to visit with him at the meeting. As a bonus, many of the members attending the meeting were on the team who rescued him.



Lager and family pose in front of the the litter named after our favorite Memorial Day rescue.

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.

Drones in Search and Rescue





Drones, an often-suggested tool for dangerous situations, offer great potential but also bring up important issues in regards to usage during Search and Rescue missions. Photo by Nicolas Halftermeyer, licensed under the Creative Commons 3.0

We were fortunate to have Garth Bruce of Seattle Mountain Rescue give a presentation on drones at the WASART General Membership Meeting that was held December 14.

While the use of drones in Search and Rescue (SAR) operations has great potential, there are some issues that will need to be addressed. The first being local, state, and federal laws, which can be complex and contradictory. These laws are meant to both insure public safety and protect privacy. In addition, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulates use of airspace and the rules for drones are not yet well defined. Lastly, public reaction to the use of drones must be taken into account, although Mr. Bruce related that public perception of SAR operations is generally favorable.

Drones have a number of capabilities that will be valuable to SAR and WASART. The machines are equipped with cameras, ranging from simple ones to complex units with night vision. This provides a mobile viewpoint, with live video on a responder's tablet or laptop. Often the drones are capable of traveling "as the crow flies" to get to a location faster than people on foot. They can also hover at cliffside to locate and observe a victim — human or animal, limiting responders' exposure to dangerous situations. More advanced drones, of the type that SAR would use, also have the capability to determine their location and can even automatically fly search patterns.

It seems clear that, once the legalities and operational procedures are hammered out, these technological wonders will be a great tool for

responders.

Further reading on the technical aspects: [Supporting Search and Rescue Operations with UAVs](#).

Charitable Deductions for Animal Rescue Volunteers



WASART members at a technical rescue training.

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. To qualify, the expenses in question must further the groups' missions, such as foster care for stray animals.

Remember that if you are a WASART volunteer and you respond to a deployment that has been issued an Incident/DEM number by the State Emergency Management Department, you can put in a claim with the State EMD for lodging, meals, ferry and fuel expenses through the process and specialized forms discussed during the Legalities segment of your Fundamentals training. Washington State Search & Rescue volunteers follow the same

process and use the same forms. More information and the forms are available from your Team Lead.

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

Forget About Deducting Your Time

While deductions are allowed for gifts of property, the IRS doesn't consider your services to qualify as "property." Nor does the law allow you to claim anything for the use of your home or office to conduct meetings: that, too, isn't a contribution of "property."

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 2016, 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.

An example: You can deduct these expenses when you attend an organization's convention as a duly appointed delegate. But you can't deduct for such personal expenses as sightseeing or movie tickets. Nor are you allowed to deduct travel or other expenses incurred by your spouse or children.

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.

Audits

Rescue workers might avoid the bother of audits by including brief explanations with their returns. Their statements should explain how deduction amounts were arrived at.

They shouldn't over-explain, cautions the IRS. It wants them to be concise and attach some supporting evidence, but not every receipt. They

should attach copies, not originals, because the documents may become separated from their returns. Hold off on submitting originals until the agency actually asks for proof of deductions. The IRS doesn't allow electronic filing of Form 1040s with attachments. Submit paper 1040s.

Help from the IRS

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

Article adapted from writing by [Julian Block](#), attorney and author, [Pet News and Views](#).

Year End Tax Deductions or Monthly Recurring Donations Can Help Save Lives



The end of 2016 is quickly approaching. It's not too late to maximize your tax breaks by donating to WASART, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. In general, a tax deduction is worth more now than later, and accountants highly recommend charitable

donations as a way to make the most of the income-tax system.

After reviewing your taxes with a professional, please let WASART figure substantially in your giving. We have capital equipment needs and on-going funding requirements. Your donations are continuously needed, carefully spent, and add significant value to our human and animal communities.

WASART prides itself on the fact that 98.5% of the donations it receives on a credit or debit card and 100% of cash and in-kind donations go directly to our programs and supporting items such as rescue supplies and equipment, training for WASART members and the general public, advanced training for WASART's Technical Rescue Team members, and general operating expenses such insurance, license fees for WASART's truck, corral panel trailer, supplies and equipment trailers, deployment software expenses, etc.

For your ease, allow us to help you set up a monthly donation program that will adapt itself pursuant to your wishes and requirements for the next 12 months. Your cash-flow is evened out, and at the end of the tax year, you will have set aside what you require for optimum tax planning. For more information on how to financially help WASART meet its goals of assisting the communities we serve, please contact info@washingtonsart.org or just hit the 'Donate' button at our website www.washingtonsart.org for an immediate donation.

New Experiences for Ropes with Experience



[Retired ropes are now leashes](#) made by WASART volunteers.

When it comes to dog leashes, WASART has created something any four-legged friend would be proud to wear. Handcrafted by fellow WASART members, these leashes were made from retired rescue ropes used by our technical rescue team. Once a lifeline between our team and an animal in distress, they can now be the lifeline between you and your pet. Each leash has a high quality bolt snap on one end with a sturdy handle on the other, reinforced with stitching and paracord whipping. With two sizes and four colors to choose from, there are plenty of options for everyone.

During a season where we count our blessings, we can't help but think back on the many reunions between animal and owner, animals like Tucker, that may have found themselves on the other end of

these ropes, and recognize that none of it would be possible without you. Thank you.

Tucker's owner sent us this update: "Thank you so much for your help is rescuing our 16 year old Australian Cattle Dog mix, Tucker, from the ravine behind our home last year. He's doing amazingly well for a 16 year old and we now have a fence in place so that he can continue to roam around the back yard without worrying about his balance/eyesight and hearing issues."

Supplies are very limited. Check them out: [here](#).

Handcrafted Holiday Cards and Ornaments



Handmade ornaments are [available for the holidays!](#)

WASART is bringing its custom-designed holiday cards and ornaments back on line, just in time to get your orders in for the season. The matte velvet

finish on the card lends a professional touch while the design evokes a handmade quality. The ornaments are beautiful in their simplicity and would lend character to any tree. [Now available online while supplies last.](#)

2017 Training Dates



Open House – January 7th, August 27th (no registration needed)

Fundamentals – February 4th, September 17th (repeat)

Animal Handling & Assessment – March 25th, October 1st (repeat)

Sheltering – April 22nd

Transport – May 13th

Annual Exercise – October 21st (tentative)

Technical Rescue – Monthly, contact the [Technical Rescue Chair](#) for info

Register for 2017

You can register for 2017's trainings at <http://bit.ly/WASART2017>. Questions? Check with [Training Director](#).

P.S. We have exemptions for veterinarians and search and rescue members. Check with the [Training Director](#) for details.

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) nonprofit organization. Mail us at: WASART, P.O. Box 21, Enumclaw, WA 98022.

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