

SAR Dog News

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Number 3

Committees Forming

Membership

Many have asked about joining the National Search Dog Alliance. Since our first newsletter on March 31st, we have completed our By-laws, our Certificate of Formation (incorporation), our draft Mission Statement and started the process for our 501.c.3. Procedural guidelines are being developed for choosing committee members. We have an official mailing address and EIN tax number and can now open an account. Our Treasurer has developed our initial budget. As we progress, we will publish our income and expenses for membership review.

Before we accept your membership, we want to outline the services our organization can offer. Starting in June we will have a lower, introductory membership fee for those who join "on the ground floor" and offer to help us start up. When we have our Policies & Procedures, Standards and Evaluation criteria formed, we will offer regular memberships.

MEMBERSHIP as defined in our legal papers and what it means to us

Many organizations are listed as "membership organizations" in their By-laws and Articles of Incorporation for legal reasons. For us, it has an additional meaning. It symbolizes our responsibility to keep open, two way communications between

our members and the Board. NSDA is an organization of the members. As we progress we welcome your involvement, review of action items and your comments and suggestions.

Proposed Dues Structure

Many have asked to become members but we have been reluctant to accept money. We wanted to be able to explain how we are organized and what members would receive for their dues. Each newsletter will keep you informed of this process. How the organization develops will depend on your input and after we have your input we can better chart a path for next year.

Membership dues will cover the cost of insurance, postage and other costs needed for operation. No one associated with NSDA receives any pay or compensation. Research, education, testing and other areas will need to find money for their activities. We intend that the charge for testing and education to be set at a level to cover the actual costs of travel and program development.

We propose the following dues structure:

Individuals who become members prior to testing and certification availability: **\$25.00** for the first year.

Thereafter, dues will be \$60.00 per year or **\$40.00** per year for individuals who belong to another qualifying search organization. The dues reduction

is aimed at encouraging members to also belong to other SAR organizations like NASAR or local SAR organizations.

We will offer a Life Membership for \$500.00.

We shall also have a Founding Members membership for \$1,000. This provides a vehicle for those individuals who have the financial ability to help us. Their names will be listed on our stationary. Five hundred dollars will go for life membership and the remaining \$500 will go into a special account according to the wishes of the donor for either education or research.

We have received nearly five hundred responses and we hope with an initial offering of \$25.00 dues to have almost everyone join us. It will then be up to you to help us become the best and most influential SAR Dog group. Yes our goals are high, but if you don't try to be the best, you never will be.

Jennifer Massey and Scott Robbins Join Board

In a previous newsletter some members expressed concern that we were not well represented in the eastern part of our country. We heard you and would like to announce the addition of Jennifer Massey from the state of Virginia. Jennifer is President of American Rescue Dog Assn.

Scott Robbins of Oregon has also joined the Board of Directors. Both Jennifer and

Scott will be featured in the next newsletter.

By-Laws

We have chosen to file By-laws that are bare-bones in nature, meeting our legal requirements. This allows us to put the meat of our organization into the Policies and Procedures, which are much more easily amended. There will be an annual meeting of the membership and the By-laws may be changed by the membership at a regular or Special meeting, as defined. Anyone can review the entire document by contacting our Secretary, Sherry Scruggs.

Mission Statement

Also attached is a draft of our Mission Statement. We need to stress, this is just a draft. Your input is important on all of our draft documents. Comments can be sent in the next 7 days to Sherry Scruggs at k-9tracer@cox.net. We need to complete the Mission Statement in a timely manner in order to complete the paperwork necessary for filing our 501.c.3.

Seeking Consensus

We need to develop a consensus on issues such as standards and testing requirements. We understand it is impossible to have total agreement on important issues. However, if we use the most knowledgeable individuals available, and within that group find common ground, then individuals who might disagree with the end result can still say "they had good experts who listened and the results are a fair compromise that I can support". We will seek your input on all standards and testing requirements prior to any Board action.

Survey

Attached you will find a one page survey form. We need to assess your interests and the location of our subscribers. This way we can plan our 2008 conference. Where would you

like to see your Board spend their initial efforts? Please respond to Dee Wild at dwild1@bellsouth.net. This is your opportunity to help us determine Board priorities.

Committees Forming

The following committees are being formed:

- 1) Education Committee
- 2) Management Advisory
- 3) Fund Raising
- 4) Public Relations
- 5) Policy and Procedures
- 6) Law enforcement
- 7) 2008 Conference
- 8) Air Scent
- 9) Tracking/Trailing
- 10) Land Cadaver
- 11) Water
- 12) Avalanche
- 13) Disaster Responder & Disaster HRD

Individuals who have proven experience in the field in question are welcomed to apply. A board member will be on a committee as a liaison to the Board but will not be the chairperson. We want the chairperson to be well qualified in the field. Please e-mail Norma Snelling at snelling@olypen.com with a short bio and committee preference if you are interested in serving

The Education Committee will be charged with developing entry level training programs and films that can be put on CD for our members. They can discuss the advisability of writing a canine training text book and course.

The Management Advisory Committee may have individuals with little or no dog searching experience. To avoid bureaucracy and have accountability, we want an oversight committee with limited power. The advisory committee will report to the President. They will not have authority over issues related to standards or testing. Their job will be to focus on the growth of the

organization and fiscal accountability. Two members from this committee will serve with the Treasurer as an audit committee. They will give the members and major financial contributors an "audited" statement showing the source of funds and the use of those funds. The statement will not be done by CPAs but rather by business individuals.

The Fund Raising Committee will apply for grants as well as conduct other fund raising activities.

The Public Relations Committee will guide us in our appearance to the public and to our members: local, state, and federal. They may develop informational brochures, a logo and patch, and arrange for promotional contacts. Our web page would eventually fall under this committee.

The Policies and Procedures Committee members will be individuals who are experienced with major organizations. They will have helped to develop P & Ps for a prior team or organization so that they are familiar with the strengths and pitfalls of such a document.

The Law Enforcement Committee

This will include law enforcement and dog handlers. Developing a code of conduct is important so that our members understand their duty to law enforcement, the victim and their fellow team members. The committee can research the problems facing law enforcement vs volunteers in the field.

2008 Conference Committee Choose a location, date, accommodations, classroom and field areas for education and testing and determine the needs of our members.

Newsletter

We are happy to announce that our mailing list is approaching 500 canine handlers in four countries. If you know of someone that would like to receive the newsletter, or if you

would like back issues, please e-mail Norma. Likewise, if for any reason you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please let her know.

Marcia Koenig Joins Advisory Board

Marcia has been involved in volunteer search dog work since 1972. She was a founding member of ARDA, The American Rescue Dog Assoc. and their Texas unit. She is a founding member of Northwest Disaster Search Dogs and King County Search Dogs and a member of Region 10 DMORT task force. She is a past chair of the NASAR Search Dog Committee.

Her SAR dog experience ranges from disaster (Wichita Falls, TX tornado, KAL air crash in Guam) to wilderness, snow, water and cadaver. She has also trained all of her search dogs in trailing. Marcia has had law enforcement experience as a Mt. Rainier National Park ranger.

As a former high school and adult education instructor, her interests are in teaching and writing. She has taught at NASAR and numerous training schools, seminars and workshops. She is the author of many articles and has produced a video tape.

“Why I Joined the NSDA” by Mary Jane Boyd

I decided to become a part of NSDA because I felt there was a need for an organization by and for SAR dog handlers. Although

I believe that dog handlers and their canine partners are tools in search operations and we are just a small part of the overall search team, I believe that there is a void in the selection, training, education and certification of canine teams that currently fails to meet real needs. As a part of the NSDA Board of Directors, I hope to help facilitate in the development of the programs to meet these real world needs.

A year from now I hope we are all as excited and energized by NSDA as we are today! The tasks that will be undertaken by the NSDA will not be easily accomplished, but if we all work toward a goal of being the best we can be then we will all be successful.

If anyone should have any questions or comments for me, please feel free to contact me at mjb5778@sbcglobal.net. Thank you for your support.

Research

NSDA is committed to developing a research program using both our members and non-members to help expand the current knowledge available to dog handlers on all aspects of dog searching. We will deal more with this program in our next issue.

In Memory

We would like to recognize the passing of Morning Glory, aka Glory. Glory was born December 1, 1994 and died on April 6, 2007. Jane Servais and Glory were operational with Mid-Atlantic D.O.G.S. from March 1996 until April 2006.

They were certified as an Air Scent Search Dog team in wilderness-lost person; cadaver, land & water; and evidence. They also served at the Pentagon for 12 days in the Evidence Recovery Unit.

If you have a story or special memory, Jane would love to hear from you at JanServais@aol.com. A celebration of Glory’s life will be held on May 20th, location TBA.

Your Forum

We want this to be your newsletter. Do you have an announcement (non-commercial) of general interest? Do you have suggestions for research topics? What about up coming seminars? Conferences? Etc.?

Questions and Answers

At this point in time we do not have someone designated to answer general SAR questions but if you have a question you would like to submit, you may include your email address and request the opinion of our readers. We have a vast amount of experience among our subscribers and I am sure many would be willing to share their experience. In the future we hope to have a forum for Q and A on our web page.

Attachments

Please respond to Sherry Scruggs within 7 days with comments on the draft Mission Statement and return the survey at your earliest convenience to Dee Wild.

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Your Voice

CONTEST

We are searching for a name for this section of the newsletter. Read below the intention of the Section and send us your idea for a name. Prize: ½ off of our membership fee if used in the month of June 2007.

This Column

The column called Your Voice (previously, Dog Whispers) is devoted to your opinions and interesting things that you may have heard that you would like to pass along. This would include what other organizations might be doing, some new tidbit about dog behavior or some training tip. Items carried under Your Voice are the view point of the contributor and may or may not reflect the opinion of NSDA. All items submitted must be signed and you need to be willing to have your name associated with your submittal. NSDA reserves the right to edit and to refuse to publish comments. Since this is a new section, we have one item this month which will be anonymous because the rules had not been established for this section.

Subscriber concerned about the Non Dog Handler Being Isolated

One subscriber expressed concern that NSDA might have a problem if it appears that we favor separation from the other valuable members of the search and rescue community. We believe this is a good point and if our actions end up making us appear as elitists then this concern could be a serious problem.

NSDA believes individuals should belong to multiple associations so that they receive a good understanding of other disciplines within SAR. Further, we have seen dog handlers who don't want to carry their own weight at searches because "they have a dog to care for". We know this attitude is not appreciated and can cause problems when done inappropriately.

The arguments in favor of a dog only association we feel are persuasive. Dog handlers need a

reliable source of information, widely accepted standards and access to individuals with extensive dog training and search experience. The fact that we have received so much interest is an indication of a need that has not been satisfied by any other organization. We need to make sure that those not involved in dog searching fully understand that we at NSDA believe that dogs are but one asset in the SAR community and that canines are a tool and not necessarily superior to other disciplines.

- Dee Wild: dwild1@bellsouth.net
- Lisa Higgins: dlhiggy@bellsouth.net
- Sherry Scruggs: k-9tracer@cox.net
- Norma Snelling: snelling@olypen.com
- Terry Crooks: tcrooks@frontiernet.net
- Jennifer Massey: Jennifer.A.Massey@frb.gov
- Scott Robbins: sredbirds@bendbroadband.com
- Mary Jane Boyd: mjb5778@sbcglobal.net

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