

# HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response

## President's Message

April 4, 2008

Dear HOPE AACR Members,

### Annual Meeting

We are preparing once again to gather at our Annual Meeting coming up June 21-22. As you know, we are meeting in the beautiful Pacific Northwest Region, in Portland, Oregon. If you've never been to this part of the country, here's a good reason! Our Annual Meetings are wonderful times to meet and get to know fellow crisis response members from other regions. Also, it's a time to be encouraged and remember why we volunteer in this noble endeavor. The board of directors meeting is Saturday, June 21. You are invited to attend the board meeting, or you can enjoy the sights. The membership meeting will be held Sunday, June 22. Please make plans to attend if you possibly can. Your HOPE canine partner is invited! For more information email [Richard & Marcy Lowy](mailto:Richard & Marcy Lowy).

### 2008 Board of Directors Election

We are just a few days away (April 6) from closing nominations for our board of directors election. We still need at least two members to volunteer and nominate themselves, or nominate a fellow member (with their permission) to run for the board. The Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain regions should have two directors each, but only have one now. I am especially asking members in PNW and RMR to consider running.

Serving on the board of directors is a great way to help shape the future of HOPE AACR, help fellow members, and ultimately help people we serve. Our meetings are held three times per year by telephone on Sundays at 9 am Pacific Time, and once per year at the annual meeting. Travel costs to the annual meeting must be paid by each director. (Consult with your tax advisor about deducting costs related to travel.) We do conduct board business by email to, so you must be willing to check and respond to email frequently. Please consider tossing your hat into the ring. Send all nominations to the election committee at: [2008election@hopeaacr.org](mailto:2008election@hopeaacr.org)

The election this year will be conducted online via our website. I will send out an email once the ballot is setup and ready for voting. This method will save time and money for the organization. The election begin on or about April 8 and will end May 1. You can vote anytime between these dates, but please vote as soon as possible after the ballot announcement is sent. The results will be announced by May 5, 2008.

### Board Meeting

Speaking of the board of directors, we held our quarterly board meeting (by phone) this past Sunday. The minutes of the meeting will be posted on the Member's Only web page under Board Mtg Minutes, once they are approved, which should be in about a week. Past meeting minutes can be found there at the same place.

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## Committees

We still have need for members to serve on committees. We have a need for committee members on the Service & Operations committee and Public Relations committee. In fact, we need a Public Relations chair person too. If you are interested in learning more about our standing committees, please take a look at the Committee Web Pages, accessed from the Member's Only page. You can contact me directly if you have any questions about serving on a committee. [president@hopeaacr.org](mailto:president@hopeaacr.org)

## Uniforms and Identification

Our uniforms are one way we demonstrate professionalism. It sounds cliché, but first appearances do matter! Acceptance by first responders and relief agencies takes time and effort. If we arrive on scene and do not look or act professional, our reputation will be tarnished, and very difficult to recover. Building a solid reputation takes years, yet can be harmed in a moment.

The board of directors decided in 2005 to standardize our uniform shirt color as green (motion 200509-01). The board decided that green shirts and black or beige pants would be the basic uniform (motion 200512-01). (The decision to have teams wear black or beige pants at a callout or event is up to the Regional Director) When the board decided to standardize on green shirts, purple shirts were prevalent, and many members had just purchased new purple shirts. So, the board decided to allow the continued use of purple shirts until teams needed to consider replacing them. This was more than two years ago, so the time has come when you should start to budget replacing your purple shirts with green shirts with the embroidered logo. I would also highly recommend you purchase a HOPE jacket. We do work in cold weather and arriving on scene with a "civilian" jacket is like arriving out of uniform, and does not give us a professional look. Please note that placing a patch that says, "HOPE Crisis Response Working Dog" on a green shirt is not acceptable and should not be done in lieu of having a uniform shirt.

Another uniform element that should be noted is shoes. Please keep in mind that shoes should be selected that protect your feet adequately in many environments. I wear boots for callouts that require working in dirt or other rough environments. But, I also have shoes that are more comfortable when attending meetings or when working in "civilized" environments. In all cases my shoes and boots are black. Wearing black shoes with black pants makes sense. Black works when wearing beige pants too. Remember that your RD has the prerogative to ask teams to wear either black or beige colored pants. Sandals, open toed shoes, or other loose footwear is not appropriate.

When training with HOPE or when working a callout, drill, or other event, you MAY NOT wear any other organizations ID cards, dog tags, etc. This is due to liability crossover confusion. Wearing a therapy dog organizations ID card along with your HOPE ID is not necessary or allowed. When you are on HOPE business, you should be easily identified with HOPE AACR. This applies to your dogs too. They must wear their HOPE vest and ID only. They may not wear any other identifying tags, vests, or bandanas. I also recommend that you select an appropriate collar and leash when working or training with HOPE. Pink collars with flowers is pretty, BUT it isn't necessarily appropriate. Choosing a solid color like green, black, or leather seem like logical choices. Please be sensitive to this when selecting equipment to use. Remember to carry with you a copy of your certification letter and our insurance declaration

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page. The insurance page can be downloaded and printed off the website under Members Only. You should have your 2008 certification letters now. If you don't, please contact your RD.

### **Thank you!**

As always, I want to extend my deepest thanks to each and everyone of you for volunteering with HOPE AACR. I know that each of you have many responsibilities and commitments. I, and the Board of Directors, appreciate all you do to help people through your dogs. Please know that I am directly available if you ever have any suggestions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,

*Dave Valentine*

President, HOPE AACR