

HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response

President's Message

June 30, 2008

Dear HOPE Members,

I hope everyone is having a good summer. We kicked off summer at the HOPE Annual Board Meeting and Membership Meeting held last weekend in Portland, Oregon. I would like to thank everyone in the PNW region for hosting this years annual meeting! A special thanks goes to Richard and Marcy Lowy, and to Jenny Collins who helped in so many ways. In addition, we want to thank Lynda Nielsen, of Dove Lewis Animal Hospital for helping to arrange the use of the Dove Lewis board room. And, to the wonderful people from Shriners Hospital for helping with our membership meeting in so many ways! I know I probably missed someone who helped make this past weekend very special for our teams. Bravo to the PNW region for putting on an awesome Annual Meeting event.

The following is a summary of our meetings:

Recap of Board Meeting held Saturday, June 21, 2008

The board meeting was held at the Dove Lewis Emergency Animal Hospital in Portland. This is a state of the art veterinary hospital the we toured during our lunch break. The use of this facility was donated to us. We used their board room for the meeting. This included an excellent conference call telephone system which allowed us to reach directors who could not attend in person.

We opened the meeting by reading the HOPE mission statement, which is a wonderful tradition that helps focus us on the reason we meet. Although the board meets to discuss matters primarily associated with operating a national non-profit corporation, we do this so the organization can meet our mission, which is to provide comfort and encouragement to people in need following a traumatic event. The work of the board is vital in creating *and* sustaining a group that is ready when a crisis strikes. Sometimes the work of the board seems difficult and indirect to accomplishing our mission, its still work that needs to be done. The efforts of the board, and those that assist us, help to make sure our direct efforts to comfort people is delivered in a safe, professional, and effective manner.

Board Officers Elected

As you are aware, we completed a directors election this past May. Amy Rideout, Eric Rynar, Bill Hatherley, and Richard Lowy were elected. During their last term, Amy and Eric served as vice-president and secretary, respectively. Officer positions on the board are voted on by directors. I am pleased to announce that Amy and Eric were unanimously elected to remain in their positions for another term.

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Regional and Committee Reports

Each Regional Director gave a summary report for activities in their regions. In addition, all standing committee chairs gave summary reports for their activities during this past quarter. Each of these reports will be posted in the next few days on the HOPE web site under Members Only.

Please note that we could still use committed members to join committees. It seems that 10% are doing 90% of the work in the organization. This is a common phenomena in volunteer organizations. More hands will help ease the burden some face when working to improve the organization. If you might be interested in helping, please email me or your RD. Thank you!!

New Southeast Region Formation

I am very pleased to announce the board of directors decided to form a new region that will begin July 27, 2008 following the upcoming workshop to be held in Atlanta. The new region is named as the Southeast Region, and will be referred to as SER. Deborah Hatherley was appointed to be the first Regional Director for SER. Congratulations Deborah! The new region will cover the following states: North & South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and the eastern half of Tennessee.

Eastern US Region Realignment

As a result of the new region formation, the Eastern Region has been realigned to include: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Delaware, Washington, D.C. and the eastern half of Kentucky.

National Fundraising Committee

As we continue to grow, our need for funds grows. Taryn Hefler, PSW member and member of the board of directors, chairs the national fundraising committee. This committee is working hard to find ways to raise funds to help offset costs associated with training, travel, equipment, and marketing, to name a few. Taryn and the committee are doing a great job in organizing our fundraising efforts!

One way each of us can help raise needed funds is to use the link found on the HOPE home page. <http://nonprofitshoppingmall.com/shop/index/>

This link will take you to the Non-Profit Shopping Mall, where you can make online purchases from many stores you probably already shop at. Each store will donate a percentage of your purchase back to HOPE. Let your family and friends know about this to help increase the number of people using this service.

Public Relations & Marketing

Probably our biggest challenge we face is finding ways to be utilized. The public relations committee's job is to develop materials that will help members to reach out in your local communities. One way we do this is by maintaining an informative web site. Another way we do this is by providing an up to date brochure. We have a newly revised brochure that is going through final revisions now. Once approved by the board, the brochure will be printed and made available to each region. We've added a place on the brochure for regions to put their contact information on it.

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Remember that each of you is a representative of HOPE. It's up to you to reach out in your local communities to leaders that may see the benefit of using HOPE teams. To do this, you must build relationships with decision makers. There are so many uses for AACR teams. Reach out to school counselors, local Red Cross disaster response mental health staff, CERT leaders, local police, sheriff's, and fire officials. These kinds of organizations will not call us when things go wrong UNLESS they know you! Visit these people on a regular basis. Get to know people in your community that might consider calling upon HOPE AACR to help.

Screenings and Workshops Outside Established Regions

Because of the web site we receive numerous requests for information on how to join HOPE as a certified member. Right now we point people to the nearest region. Looking at the map will reveal that the central states of the country are not covered. People in these regions must travel great distances to get trained, and once trained, are "lone rangers" without the support from other local HOPE teams. This makes it very difficult to grow.

The board considered what it might take to send a group of HOPE teams to an area to screen and put on a workshop. At this point, we are not in a position financially to offer workshops outside of regions. Also, we don't think this is a good idea considering how little our existing teams are being used now. This all goes back to the issue of marketing our services in local communities. This is a job for all HOPE members and is not just the responsibility of HOPE leadership. Please consider how you might help to put our teams to work.

Uniform Shirts

In September 2005, the board of directors decided our uniform shirts should be green. Since that time several versions of green shirts have been made available. In 2005 the board was willing to allow the continued use of purple shirts until they were worn out. Nearly three years have passed since these decisions were made. Some members are still using purple shirts. We are asking that members who have purple shirts retire them and purchase green shirts. The board decided that all members must have at least one green shirt, and that it should be a long or short sleeve polo shirt, with the HOPE logo embroidered on the front.

Shirts with the "HOPE working dog" patch are no longer acceptable. If you have a green shirt already, but it's *not* a polo (collared) *with* the embroidered logo on the front, please plan on purchasing one of these. The reason we are specifying the green polo with embroidered logo is, in some cases shirts without collars or shirts with the K9 Crisis Response Team silkscreen on the back *MAY NOT* be appropriate to wear on some call-outs. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact me.

I would also recommend you consider purchasing a HOPE jacket at some point. Wearing non-HOPE jackets on drills or callouts may not be appropriate due to the design or color.

Backpacks and Other bags

Many of our members carry a backpack made by NIKE. These backpacks are no longer available and a suitable replacement has been very difficult to find. I am pleased to announce the board approved the use of the following items you can purchase from many retailers. Note that these items are options for you:

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Kyjen Outward Hound Day Hike Fanny Pack

This is a nicely sized fanny pack that is easy to carry. Consider using this when carrying your full pack may not be necessary. This is an optional piece of gear that can be purchased online from almost any retailer. **ONLY GREEN OR BLACK IS AUTHORIZED!** This item is available online for less than \$20. It comes with two water bottles and a collapsible bowl.

Kyjen Outward Hound Weekender Travel Bag

This is a nice bag that can be used instead of a backpack or it can be used to supplement the backpack you carry now. This bag is available online for less than \$20. **ONLY GREEN OR BLACK IS AUTHORIZED!**

Kyjen Outward Hound Wide Mouth Bag

This is a nice bag that can be used instead of a backpack or to supplement your backpack. This bag is available online for under \$30. **ONLY GREEN OR BLACK IS AUTHORIZED!**

NEW Backpacks

We are working on purchasing backpacks with our logo embroidered on it. The manufacturer is Port Authority. Attached is a pdf file specification sheet that gives particulars about this backpack. These backpacks will be made with green material rather than red as shown in the pdf document.

Maintaining Your Membership

It was noted during the board meeting that more than half of our members are not current with human first aid and CPR, and some have not taken Pet First Aid. These requirements are for your safety and the safety of your dog. Please talk with your regional director to find out what's required.

The membership renewal process was setup this past January so you can renew online. Renewing online makes it much easier for us to update our records and to receive membership dues. Less than half our members choose to renew online. **PLEASE** consider renewing online this year. We will make an announcement in November about renewing your membership.

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Annual Membership Meeting Summary

The annual membership meeting is always a great time to get to meet teams from other regions. This year was no exception. In addition to having a chance to meet several of the PNW teams, we had 3 terrific guest speakers:

1. Sonni Gilbert, D.V.M. gave a talk titled, “A practical approach to the well-being of working dogs” Dr. Gilbert gave us some very practical information about taking care of our dogs and how stress affects them. In addition she spoke about Zoonotic diseases.
2. On Saturday, those attending the board of directors meeting had an opportunity to tour the Dove Lewis Animal Hospital. They have a wonderful program at the hospital to help people cope with losing a pet. On Sunday we had an opportunity to hear Enid Traisman, founder and director of the Dove Lewis Pet Loss Support Group, speak to us about “Coping with Loss & Grief”. She helped us understand what a person goes through as they anticipate the loss of a pet, what happens when the time comes to say good-bye, and how to deal with the loss and grief that follows. Some of our teams have recently faced this reality. We too will some day face this difficult time. This talk was a “gift” I am grateful for hearing.
3. Captain Tim Dietz, of the Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue, author of “Scenes of Compassion: A Responders’ Guide for Dealing with Emergency Scene Emotional Crisis” spoke to us about how to work with emergency responders, and what our role is as a volunteer organization. Capt. Dietz shared with us his many years of experience and helped us all to understand the world of emergency responders and how we much approach working with first response agencies.
4. After lunch I had the opportunity to share with the group a brand new presentation titled, “Aggression and Crisis Response Dogs”. This discussion takes a look at the issue of canine aggression in general, and then deals with the issue as it relates to our dogs. Practical training concepts were presented to help prevent aggression in our own dogs. This article will be posted on the HOPE web site after I go through a final edit. I will let you know when its available.

Summary

Overall we had a very successful board meeting and an uplifting members meeting. Next years meeting is scheduled for June 27 & 28, 2009 and will be held in the EUS region. I hope many more of you make plans to attend next years meeting. Many thanks go to everyone that made the effort to attend this years meetings..

Sincerely,

Dave Valentine

President, HOPE AACR