

The Chief's Bark

Spring is trying really hard to burst forth in the Northwest. You hearty Dog's in the Midwest, Mideast and Northeast start looking for those pretty little flowers called crocus' then you should begin to see the forsythia blooming. Eventually you will see the snow disappear and low and behold there is really grass under it. For the Northwest it's time to tune up the mower and do a little yard work, maybe locate some of those bones buried last fall. What a winter so many of you have experienced and it still keeps coming. Someday soon you too will see spring.

Due to the snow storms in the Mideast and after having two flights cancelled with weather conditions looking right for getting stranded I decided to cancel my travel plans for Mid-winter. A very hearty thank you to Sr. Vice Chief Devil Dog PDD Mike English for stepping up and doing a great job of filling in for me at Mid-winter. I also need to thank all kennel staff members who braved the bad weather and contributed to a successful, enjoyable conference and growl. **Fair warning!!!!** I have photos taken at the growl; there will be fines assessed at the Supreme Growl for some infractions I have noted in those photos.

I have three areas of concern that just will not go away.

- RETENTION
- PASSPORT FUNDS
- INSTALLATION REPORTS

Retention: The Kennel Dog Robber reported in his Mid-winter report that **20 %** of the membership has not paid 2010 dues. Dog Robbers and Pound Keepers, what are you doing to rectify this problem? Why have so many made the decision to let their membership in the Order drop? Are you making your growls fun? Are you calling to see if delinquent members need a ride to growls? Has your pound considered paying dues for those members who may be having financial problems? We must stop the annual loss off members.

Passport Funds: There are many pounds and even some packs that have not submitted passports funds as of 1 February. You Dogs know the drill; four growls, send bones to kennel, all bones go to the KDR. Why are so many not participating? Stamping of passports is **never** to be used as a pound or pack fund raiser. Cost of a stamp is one (1) big bone per growl and only one (1) big bone, unless the Chief or a Past Chief is attending and is stamping with their personal stamp. All funds go to the kennel for use in the annual children's donation.

Installation Reports: 69 packs or pounds last submitted a report in 2009, 19 in 2008 and 23 last submitted prior to 2008. Reports were due in mid-November at the latest.

I will be working with the Hon. KDR in an attempt to weed out inactive pounds and packs. We will be looking at membership numbers, installation reports, passport submission and other factors that may indicate inactivity. The buried bones and reports are weakening the Order; now is the time to bring your pound up to date.

As our country sends more service members into harms way, keep all veteran's in your thoughts and prayers. Find a warm spot by the fire and wait out the last few weeks of winter.

Have you paid your 2010 dues?

Phil Ruhmshottel
53rd Chief Devil Dog