

THE HISTORY OF NORTH TEXAS BASSET HOUND RESCUE



or THE TALE OF THE WAGGING TAIL

By Harriet Richman

.....September 1984

.....Argyle, Texas

“Is this Harriet Richman?”

“Yes”

“Well, this is Fern Jensen and your daughter-in-law said you might be able to provide foster care for a rescue basset until I can find her a home---?”

So began North Texas Basset Hound Rescue (of course the name came much later). My daughter-in-law was an animal control officer for the city of Lewisville—Fern Jensen lived in what is now Flower Mound. Fern had started a one-woman purebred dog rescue and the Lewisville shelter was her main source of supply. Initially I only housed the dogs but soon, “Harriet, there is a basset at the Denton shelter, could you pick it up—will need shots, etc.” Before long Fern was only one of my callers and rescue started in earnest. I kept very simple records, (name, address and phone number), did not charge for the dogs, but I did give them shots and always made follow up calls. Laurie Craddock, a teacher in Krum, Texas, lived on our property and helped me in those early days. She placed several of the dogs and helped to care for them as well as donating money.

“Harriet’s Hounds” went along for about a year with just Laurie and I. During that time I was showing some of my own dogs and I became involved and then joined a breed club –Basset Hound Club of Greater Fort Worth. The American Kennel Club (AKC) had started to recognize the importance of pure breed rescue and began publicizing their importance—soon rescue was “the thing”—I told the club that if they would support a rescue, I would run it and foster the dogs. As the club itself had very little money at that time, rescue was funded out of the member’s pockets. We enlisted the help of two veterinarians. My vet, Dr. Gregg Wied and one of our member’s vets Dr. Jones—both vets’ practice in Hurst—Dr. Jones is now retired. We could run a tab up to \$1000.00 at either vet—We drew up some guide lines- (mainly that all dogs would have shots and be spayed or neutered) and started North Texas Basset Rescue. Our rescue efforts were confined to Denton and Tarrant County only. Money was a huge factor. After several trials and error items, we decided T-shirts sales would be the best way to raise some money. Marge Cook became our chief fundraiser. We all chipped in \$100 so we could buy the first supply of shirts and Marge went to work. She carted shirts to dog

shows, training classes, everywhere—we were not rich but we were able to keep our heads above water.

However, there were many times we would have gone under had it not been for: Kathryn and Bob Beard who many times paid our entire tab at Dr. Jones (their vet). Club member Larry Bartolli, frequently handed me \$50.00 for rescue. Our then club president Kerry Batchelder adding money and support— he and his wife Betsy did pick up and fostering. My boss, Della Garret often inquiring, “how’s our vet bill?” “Here is \$100.00 to keep us in the black”.

Debbie Boydston, Kathryn Beard, Marge Cook and I became the main rescue group within the Basset Hound Club of Fort Worth—everyone helped with everything—pick up, delivery, fostering and fund raising. I was the main foster home sometimes having as many as 8-10 hounds at one time—that was in addition to my own assortment of dogs.

In those days no one had a personal computer so there were many, many hours spent on the phone. The dogs were spayed and neutered, shots (which we usually gave ourselves) always bathed and parasite free but we were not yet dealing with heartworm treatment.

As always it was difficult to find foster homes. I have a friend, Linda Kane, who owned Hilltop Kennel in Southlake. Linda and Tom would ALWAYS take our overflow and never charged us a penny. One old fellow, Gus, lived at the kennel for a year before finding a wonderful home with one of the kennel customers.

Our national organization –Basset Hound Club of America- sponsored an affiliate rescue group known as BH Cares. Libby Salida of Colorado rescue founded this group. The national group sold calendars and other items. The proceeds of the sales were divided among the various rescue groups—Michigan, Georgia, South Carolina were among the early members of BH Cares. Although the national group had many problems and is now no longer in existence, the money we received from them in the beginning was a great help. We also were able to meet once a year at our national specialty show and exchange ideas. Our guidelines that we use today grew out of this national group. At this time we were also doing heartworm treatments so we decided we had to charge a fee to adopt a dog. We started at \$25.00 and are now up to \$150.00 .

In 1998 we had several major changes—Melissa Finchell of Michigan Rescue called me very excited and told me “at last, Harriet we have a way to make money”. Michigan had just had their first WADDLE. In the same time frame I sold a show puppy to Sharon and Richard Nance. Sharon became very active in rescue and ran the entire rescue for several years. We broke away from the breed club and became our own organization. Richard Nance became treasurer, and enabled us to get our 501-C3 status as a non-profit organization—we incorporated and appointed a Board of Directors—Sharon, Marge Cook and myself. —I was the president, Sharon was director of operations and Marge was in charge of fund raising. The acquisition of the 501 c3 was a huge help for our finances.

We held our first Basset Hound Shuffle in conjunction with the Medlin Days Parade at the Trophy Club in 1997. Richard and Sharon parked their motor home at the end of the parade route and we served hot dogs etc. out of the motor home for our free lunch.

We made several thousand dollars that day and we have never looked back. Shortly thereafter, we added two new board members, Patricia De Barros as director of adoptions and Linda Nelson. Linda works in the food industry and every year without any questions she and her staff provides a fantastic free lunch for all our Shuffle participants. Lucia Bryant worked for Xerox and printed our newsletter and Shuffle flyer.

After trying another year with a parade, this time the Roanoke Frontier Days Parade, we decided to give up parades and hold our Shuffle in a park. In 1999, after much searching Sharon found the Chisholm Park in Hurst. The covered pavilions provide a place for food, the store, signing in etc. That year, we also added games to our Shuffle day including longest ears, biggest feet, weenie toss, and many more. Kathryn Johnson was our game organizer and brought a new dimension to the Shuffle.

Patricia and Sharon are no longer part of rescue as other commitments and jobs have taken their time. However, they put the rescue “up a notch” and were extremely instrumental in the growth of the organization.

When Patricia resigned in 1999 as Director of Adoptions/Foster, her position was filled by Chris Pike who has somehow fielded 3 children, college and a job for several years and has successfully found homes for literally hundreds of bassets. Sam Cox, who joined the Board of Directors the same year, is the board member who pioneered our first attempts at being almost totally on line, and computerized our record-keeping. This brings me to another “helper” that has become indispensable to our rescue---the computer. We have a web site and all rescue information including the available dogs and their bios are posted on the web site, as are all the forms we use for adoptions, foster homes, etc.

Every year we are amazed that through rain, cold, wind and mud, basset owners and basset lovers continue to come out and support our rescue efforts. We usually have 150 to 250 hounds and make enough money to run our organization for the following year.

As with any organization there are volunteers who come and go, but all have contributed to the organization. There are a few more volunteers who cannot be omitted: George Logue who did all kinds of jobs such as pick-up, fostering etc. Dave Ferman picked up many a hound and helped with the Shuffle. Terri Burgess did fostering for many years. Kathryn Beard, although she now lives in Gilmer, Texas, helped with the dogs in the Longview/Tyler area. Bill Richman took over as treasurer when Richard Nance resigned. With the help of Roger Pike, the accounting became computerized which simplified the bookkeeping. In 2003 the rescue turned over into the capable hands of Liane Ashdown as President and Director of Operations. Liane resigned in August of 2005, and Sam Cox took over as President/Director of Operations.

Through the years our organization has been fortunate to find committed volunteers to help this organization move forward, always becoming better and improving operations. I feel confident that North Texas Basset Hound Rescue will be in operation until there are no longer Bassets in need.

Signed,

Harriet Richman

Founder, North Texas Basset Hound Rescue

Harriet Richman is a quality breeder of champion bassets, owning some of the top point bassets in the country. She is now retired from Rescue, and lives with her husband, Bill in Springtown, TX.....along with 3 Bassets and Whippet. One basset, Miss Vicki is 16 and can still remember when "mom" kept bringing in those rescue dogs!