



Springer Tales

Mid-Atlantic English Springer Spaniel Rescue

President's Corner by Monica LaPolt

Roughly a month ago, I sent an email to everyone that I could think of who had ever loved a dog. You probably received a copy of the email. In it, I asked people to contact Governor Warner of Virginia and ask him to veto SB 260, a bill designed to bring rescue organizations under the oversight of the State Veterinarian. I am sorry to say that we lost. Not surprisingly, there is a great deal of misinformation flying around the rescue community about SB 260. I want to use this forum to reassure people and to try to communicate the facts surrounding the bill, as I know them. Most of my information is based upon review of the actual law and a lengthy conversation with the individual at the State Veterinarian's office who will be administering the program.

- The law does not go into effect until July 1. No one was suddenly in violation of a law about which they knew nothing.
- Foster homes do not have to individually register with the state. The umbrella rescue organization, in this case, MAESSR can and will register – including paying the registration fee.
- Foster homes will have to be “inspected” twice a year. MAESSR volunteers can inspect each other's homes. We will have a simple checklist, which will be sent to MAESSR.
- MAESSR will complete the checklist for the state and submit it.
- MAESSR will have to keep records for 5 years on every dog placed. Not a problem, we keep records on all of our dogs anyway.
- We will have to have a telephone number listed in every county.
- Yes, technically, the State Veterinarian can come in and inspect your home. However, they will not have the resources and will inspect only upon receipt of complaints.
- Because MAESSR is incorporated in another state, we should be able to register under a different provision. If so, we will be able to avoid all of the above hassle!

Is there anything good that can come out of this? Yes.

- For the first time, shelters will need to list all rescues operating in their area.
- Registered rescue organizations will not be limited to rescuing dogs in their county and surrounding counties. They will be able to pull dogs from shelters across the state.
- No more will rescues have to surreptitiously adopt dogs from uncooperative shelters in order to rescue them.
- Many Virginia shelters would rather kill a dog instead of giving it to a rescue. Now, rescues have a mandate that will permit them to claim state recognition and hopefully shelters will be more receptive to our efforts.

We learned something with this effort. MAESSR can mobilize a large number of people. In this case, unfortunately, it was too late. Had we been able to canvass Virginia state legislators before passage, this bill might never have made it out of the State Assembly. Or, if it did, it might have been more rescue friendly.

As MAESSR continues to grow, we want to continue monitoring “dog” legislation, whether it is directly related to rescues, addressing the problems of puppy mills or animal cruelty. While non-profits cannot be politically active, we can issue position papers and discuss issues of interest and inform our constituency. We will continue to do this in whatever capacity is allowed to us under our pending 501(c)3 status.

Duty beckons in the form of a sweet little foster dog, barking to get me to throw a ball for her. Until next time!

WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS!

Diane Fuerst
Philadelphia, PA

Jayne Huston
Ligonier, PA

Mary Jane Isenberg
Lock Haven, PA

Patricia Jaeger
Little Silver, NJ

Vicki Phillips
Galloway, NJ

Sandra Rutan
Reston, VA

Brian Simpson
Emporium, PA

Maria & Ed Slowik
Perkasie, PA

Shawn Soldon
Milford, DE

Volunteers are critical to MAESSR's success. We are always looking for individuals who can foster dogs, interview applicants, assist with public events, transport dogs, web site work or any other talent you wish to share!

Please see our website for additional volunteer information or contact Linda Foster, our Volunteer Coordinator, email: RescueESS@yahoo.com