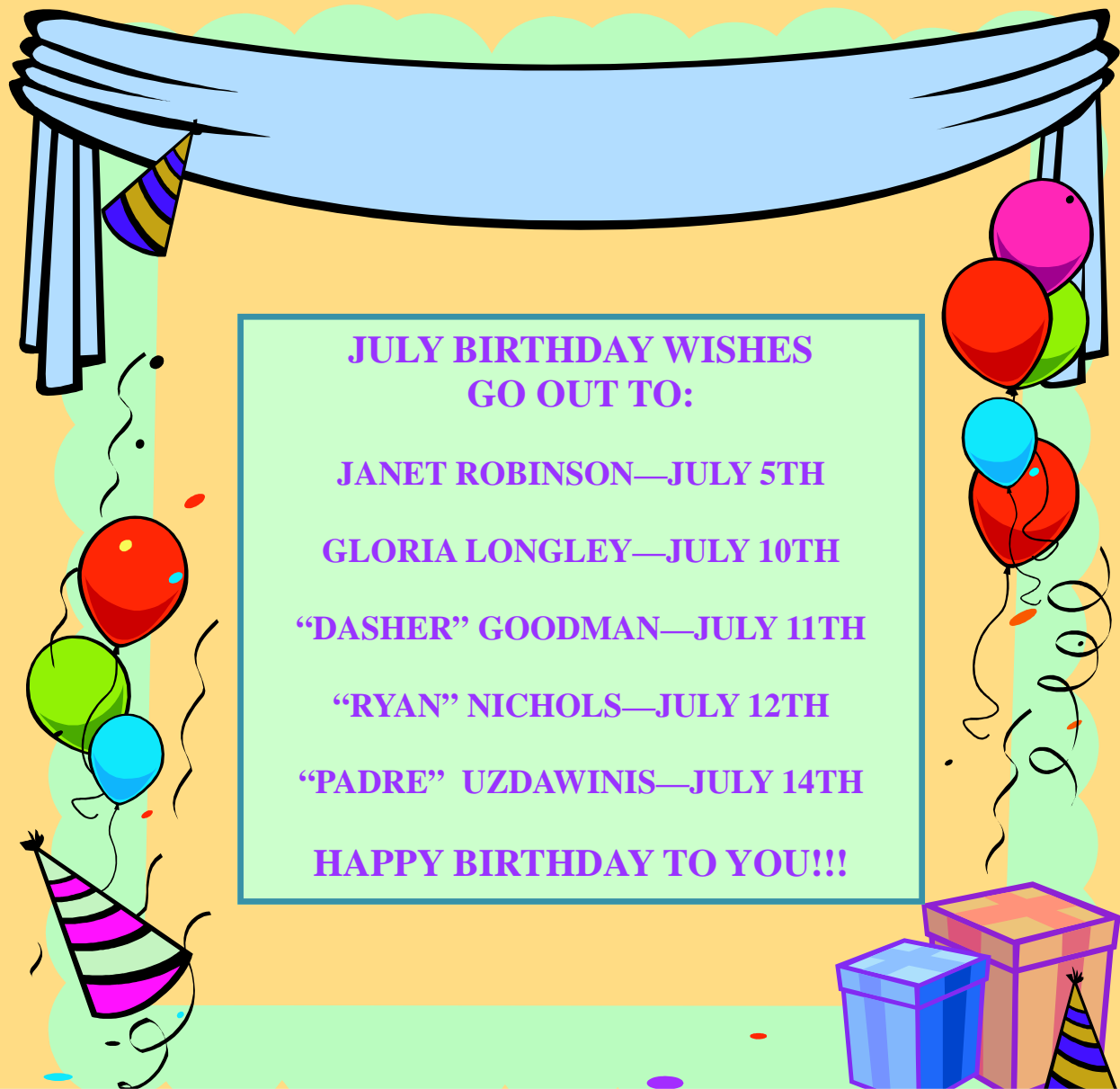


# RGVGRC Newsletter

July 2011



**HOPE EVERYONE HAD A GREAT 4TH OF JULY!!**



**JULY BIRTHDAY WISHES  
GO OUT TO:**

**JANET ROBINSON—JULY 5TH**

**GLORIA LONGLEY—JULY 10TH**

**“DASHER” GOODMAN—JULY 11TH**

**“RYAN” NICHOLS—JULY 12TH**

**“PADRE” UZDAWINIS—JULY 14TH**

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!!!**

**NEXT MEETING**

**SUNDAY—JULY 24, 2011**

**1:30 P.M. AT HOFFMAN PARK**

**PLEASE PLAN ON ATTENDING OUR NEXT MEETING...WE'VE GOT A WONDERFUL PRESENTATION BY AIRE DELLER, SHE IS A SERVICE DOG TRAINER. SHE HOPES TO BRING A GOLDEN TO DEMO WITH; IF NOT SHE WILL BRING TWO OTHER DOGS. PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO BE AT THIS MEETING. SEE YOU THERE...**

**Please do not bring your dog to this meeting...it might be distracting to the demonstration. Bring a folding chair...**

On March 11, a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck northern Japan. Almost immediately, USAID placed the search-and-rescue teams of men, women, and dogs that make up California Task Force 2, based in the Los Angeles area, on alert for deployment to the disaster area. The six dog-handler teams attached to CA-TF2 were all trained by the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation (SDF). The dogs, all rescued from shelters throughout the US, but primarily from California, are an integral part of the teams. All the dog-handler teams have received certification from FEMA as Canine Search and Rescue teams.

Baxter, a young Golden Retriever with extremely high play-drive, and ultra-high energy level, had been rescued from the streets from Northern California in late 2005 by Mike and Jody Jones, of Homeward Bound Rescue and Sanctuary. Earlier that year, Homeward Bound had received a letter from me through SDF that introduced the group to shelters and briefly explain the kind of dogs SDF seeks from cooperating shelters.

In February 2006, eight SDF volunteer brought Baxter to the attention of SDF, and after testing, he was accepted into the training program. SDF's lead trainer, Pluis Davern (who is also a Golden breeder and a confirmation and field trial judge), quickly realize Baxter's potential. She asked me if I would sponsor the dog's training, and I agreed right away.

After about eight months of training, Baxter was ready to move on to the next step: placement with the firefighter.

Handlers are brought to the training facility for orientation and then are each assigned a dog, based on the trainer's evaluation of the temperaments of both dog and firefighter. When the group of new handlers was introduced to the dogs, Baxter made his own choice, running straight over to Gary Durian of the L. A. County Fire Dept. and a new search and rescue team was born.



Gary and Baxter began training together and quickly became a team. Gary's training – group leader, Marc Valentine, remarked, "Baxter is phenomenal. He's steady and dependable on rubble, and dynamic when searching."

A year later, Gary and Baxter had received FEMA certification and were ready to be deployed. Their first deployment was in 2008, to search for survivors in the wake of hurricanes Gustav and Ike. They were also deployed to local disasters such as mudslides, building collapses and vehicle accidents in the Los Angeles area.

In January 2010, the team was part of CA-TF2's deployment following the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Gary and Baxter were deployed to Port-au-Prince, where they search for 16 days, combing the wreckage for survivors under the acres of concrete and debris. Together with the six other teams, Gary and Baxter help find 12 survivors who were brought to safety.

Baxter and Gary traveled to New York in November of last year, where the pair again prove their skills and past there FEMA recertification testing.

On March 12, Gary and Baxter were part of the 72-man group from California Task Force 2 airlifted to Japan, along with Virginia Task Force 2, to comb the rubble for survivors in what had once been cities, towns, and villages. The six Canine Search Dog Teams trained by SDF again went to work shortly after arriving. They worked until March 20 searching devastated areas to make certain that no survivors went undiscovered. The teams returned home safely on March 21.

The National Search Dog Foundation currently has more than 100 trained teams provided at no cost to fire departments throughout the country. For more information about the work of this non-profit foundation that receives no taxpayer funding, visit [searchdogfoundation.org](http://searchdogfoundation.org).

As always, your comments are invited.  
Jeff Pepper, Salinas, California  
[jg.pepper@hotmail.com](mailto:jg.pepper@hotmail.com)