

# Meet The Staff



**Mart & Cindy Ratliff** - Mart & Cindy will be Camp Directors for the Texas Mini-Camp. They have been involved in DSA for over 10 years, been Troop Leaders of Troop 119, Lone Star Paws Squad, for 8 years and hosted the Texas Mini-Camp for all of its 6 year history. Mart has been a summer camp instructor and served on the DSA Board of Directors. Cindy is an Area Trainer for PetSmart and was the DSA Recognition Program Director for national DSA for 4 ½ years. She has attended ClickerExpo and Brenda Aloff seminars. Mart & Cindy enjoyed doing therapy dog work with their dogs at the Ronald McDonald House in Fort Worth for the last 6 years. Mart will be leading Backpacking, Water Classes, Dog Scout Class/Leadership Training, and helping with Shaping classes and Fun & Games. He will also be the camp Auctioneer! Cindy will be leading Drill Team, Arfs & Crafts, Fun & Games, helping with Water Classes and be responsible for all the administrative functions of running mini-camp. (pictured: Mart & Cindy with Alex)



**Chris Bahr** has been active in Dog Scouts of America since attending camp in Michigan in 2006. Upon returning home to St. Louis, Missouri, she learned that the closest Dog Scout Troop was 100 miles away. Chris decided to start her own troop and became the co-leader of Troop 149 in the St. Louis metro area since 2006. Chris has attended camp in Michigan for 3 years, Texas mini camp 1 year and Missouri mini camp 1 year. Chris owns two mixed breed dogs, Foxy and CJ. CJ competes in Rally and has earned her Mixed Breed Rally Novice title. Chris is active in the Greater St. Louis Training Club and the Mixed Breed Club of Missouri. Chris will be leading Geocaching and helping with the administrative functions of running mini-camp. (pictured: Chris & Foxy)



**Becky Paxson** - Becky is an Area Trainer for PetsMart in Burleson, Texas and a DSA Scoutmaster for Troop 119. This will be Becky's 7<sup>th</sup> year at mini-camp. Becky has been a member of Troop 119 since 2004 and currently heads up the Troop 119/Meals on Wheels event. She is a Vice President with Rottweiler rescue (Southern States Rescued Rottweilers) of which she has been involved with for the last 9 years and volunteers with a local shelter group, FAAS (Friends of Arlington Animal Shelter). Becky will be instructing All Dog Band this year and will be in charge of check-ins. (pictured: Becky & Songaa)



**Victoria Severns** – Victoria has been training her dogs in agility for the past 13 years and has been an instructor at Pawsitive Agility Working School since 1999. During that time her three Border Collies competed in AKC, NADAC and UDSAA trials earning numerous titles in the various classes. Victoria is also a certified TTtouch practitioner who works with companion animals and their people in private consultations, group classes and workshops in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. Through the years Victoria and her canine companions have participated in a variety of other activities including obedience, herding, flyball (Purina Incredible Dog Challenge and ESPN Great Outdoor Games), and therapy dog work visiting nursing homes. This summer Victoria joined the judging staff of the second Extreme Mutt Makeover in which shelter dogs are paired with trainers for 7 weeks to learn basic obedience and improve their prospects for adoption. Victoria joined DSA troop 119 in 2005 to provide mental stimulation and social interaction for her Border Collie, Maude, who was retiring from agility. However, since Maude does not always play well with others, her more gregarious housemate, Moss, soon joined her as a Dog Scout. The next generation Dog Scout joined the family this year in the bundle of energy and mischief, a Border Collie puppy named Keenan. Victoria will be returning for her fourth mini-camp teaching Obstacle Course/Agility with Nancy Strack. (pictured: Victoria & Moss)



**Nancy Strack** - Nancy currently teaches a Clicker Obedience class geared for the agility enthusiasts for Pawsitive Agility Working School. Prior to teaching Clicker Obedience, she was an agility instructor for PAWS and competed in agility for 7 years which included venues such as USDAA, NADAC and UKC. Nancy and her dog, Sadie, also competed at the USDAA World Championships and NADAC Nationals. Nancy's current dog, Daisy, is a certified therapy dog through TDI and is currently involved in the PAWS Reading Program with the Irving Library. Daisy loves listening to the children read her books. Nancy is also a member of Troop 119 and a DSA Scoutmaster. This will be the fifth mini-camp for Nancy and fourth mini-camp for Daisy. Nancy will be instructing Obstacle Course/Agility with Victoria Severns. (pictured: Nancy & Daisy)



**Bob & Karen Deeds** - Bob and Karen first met in 1998 when Karen was asked to work with Bob's volunteer SAR team and teach them the art and science of 'clicker training'. Bob is a K9 Search Specialist with Texas Task Force One Urban Search & Rescue team with his live-find partner, Gracie, and is also training his Belgian Malinois, Remington, for Human Remains detection and Schutzhund competition. Bob still volunteers as a consultant for a local SAR team although he no longer actively deploys as a volunteer due to family and business obligations. Karen has been involved in the Assistance dog industry for almost 15 years and is currently a Texas Field Representative for Paws With A Cause. Karen established Canine Connection in 1994 and Bob and Karen merged their businesses combining their knowledge and expertise. The importance of understanding canine behavior and how to manage and modify it has helped Karen to become an expert in behavioral problems, including fear, anxiety and aggression. Bob excels in problem solving skills which contribute to the success of their training by helping clients build a strong relationship with their dog. They provide group, private and board & train programs. Bob and Karen have worked with a colleague in the Austin area to train narcotics, arson, termite and peanut detection dogs. This year Karen will receive the APDT Community Educator of the Year award at the annual conference in Atlanta.

Both Bob and Karen competed last year in the first annual Extreme Mutt Makeover. Due to their belief in the events mission, saving shelter dogs and building a positive relationship through training, this year they became part of the "Pro-Team" staff instead of competing. The event was even bigger and better this year and is sure to grow again next year. Jeremy will join them again this year and will be accompanied by his dog, Yoda. Bob will be instructing Search & Rescue and Karen will be instructing Naked Dog Obedience and Manners. (pictured: Bob & Karen Deeds, Gracie & Rock)



**Lonnie Olson** has been training dogs since she was 11 years old, and spent 30 years teaching people to train their dogs in her private business. In 1996, Lonnie founded Dog Scouts of America. Now she gives her instruction away for free, via the Dog Scouts web site, to people wanting to raise their dogs the right way, or troubled pet owners struggling with dog behavior problems. Lonnie has trained and competed with her dogs in obedience, agility, flyball, frisbee, herding, sledding, weight pull, conformation, working trials (hunting dogs), water rescue, dock diving, and musical canine freestyle. She has also enjoyed (non-competitively) skijoring, backpacking, tracking, detection scent work, carting, lure coursing, and scent hurdle racing with her dogs. She is a member and past President of the National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors and an Honorary Life Member of that organization. Lonnie is the author of Flyball Racing: The Dog Sport for Everyone, a training handbook for flyball enthusiasts, and has co-authored The NADOI 'Good Puppy' Handbook, which won a Maxwell award from the Dog Writer's Association of America, for Best Educational Booklet. She also writes articles for several dog magazines, and was instrumental in creating "Forward," a magazine for professional dog obedience instructors. As director of Dog Scouts of America, Lonnie stresses the importance of the human/dog relationship, and uses methods that maintain a positive relationship. She will be teaching the Carting and Messenger Dog badges.



**Mandy Hall** - After attending four Texas mini-camps with her great dane, Simon, Mandy will be on staff as our camp photographer for the fourth year. Mandy has been doing photography since 2003. She has received awards in photo contests from Parade Magazine, Ritz Camera, the State Fair of Texas, the Heard Natural Science Museum, the Dallas Zoo, American Humane Association, & Merial. Her work has been featured in a calendar and published in two books: "Unleashed" by Lisa Wogan, and "Dog Heroes: Dog Scouts of America" by Shelley Bueche and Chris Puls. Mandy is also a full-time veterinary technician at Cornerstone Animal Clinic in Dallas, TX. (pictured: Mandy & Simon)



**Joanne Weber** - Joanne has been with DSA camps since the beginning in 1996 and is an integral part of the planning and execution of each of the Michigan camps. She serves on the DSA Advisory Board and served on the Board of Directors from 1999-2010. Joanne works behind the scenes all year long on various projects for Dog Scouts of America. Over the past 14 years, she has designed the original artwork for camp t-shirts and merit badges, as well as many of the other designs needed by Dog Scouts. Her innovative ideas have helped mold the camp into the wonderful experience it is today. Since 1996, Joanne directed all of the photographic needs for camps, in addition to taking private photo shoots for campers.

Joanne left her job as a bank Training Director and Human Resources Administrator to be a freelance artist and photographer, which she studied and majored in at Western Michigan University. She has illustrated children's books, designed for a mail order catalog company, and completed countless private commissions. She also used her artistic skills to help publish the DSA newsletter, design DSA brochures, and many other DSA projects.

In addition to photography and graphic design, Joanne has returned to her first love—working with clay and the kiln-fired arts. Her handcrafted clay and fused glass pendants and memorials are kiln fired several times at temperatures up to 2000 degrees. Proceeds from the sale of her jewelry are donated to two wonderful non-profit organizations which she avidly supports: Dog Scouts of America ([www.dogscouts.org](http://www.dogscouts.org)) and Paws With A Cause ([www.pawswithacause.org](http://www.pawswithacause.org)). Both of these organizations have worked miracles in Joanne's life!

Joanne's new Paws With A Cause assistance dog and Dog Scout, Mitchell, joins her at every camp. He follows in the paw prints of her first assistance dog, and well known DSA Honor Scout, Willie. Joanne's interpersonal skills remain one of her most valuable attributes, and she has helped many a camper overcome the initial shock of camp life by extending her warm smile and understanding shoulder in a time of need. At the Texas Mini-Camp, Joanne will be helping with Shaping and Travel Safety, doing private photo shoots and taking orders for custom jewelry.