

## **EMS Squad breathes new life into fundraising**

By NICOLE ORNE, Reformer Staff

*Friday, June 13*

HALIFAX -- The newly licensed Halifax EMS Squad has found that the Internet can provide fundraising resources that let them break out of the car wash/bake sale mold.

The group announced a short story contest online, advertising in the United Kingdom and Australia and a number of short story posting sites.

"We wanted to make sure we were not doing a fundraiser that stepped on other people's toes," acting Chief Christina Moore said. "I really wanted to try something while simultaneously trying to respect other people that have been doing this a lot longer than we have, so I had to go find a pasture that wasn't already grazed."

Entries must relate to EMS. A \$35 submission fee will be split half way between the squad and the prize money, which will have a guaranteed minimum of \$1,000 for first place.

Submissions are due Sept. 1 and can be submitted on the Web site. They will be judged by members of the squad and notable Vermont writers, including Chris Bohjalian, author of "Midwife."

To her knowledge, Moore says this idea has never been used to raise money for an organization. So far, she says she has gotten strong feedback.

"I wrote to every blogger I could find in the EMS world. Folks announced their support on their blog, they announced the contest on their blog. It's listed as No. 1 on a Google search for 'short story' and 'EMS'," she said. "The nerve-wracking part is whether or not it will do what I'd like it to do. Will it be survivable? Will it be an accepted process we can use for years to come?"

While the contest may seem like more work than a car wash, Moore doesn't see it that way. "The work on our part is we get to spend the summer and part of the fall reading short stories and I love to read. I think it'll be fun."

Not only does the contest help raise funds for the fledging group, Moore hopes it will also promote awareness about emergency medical services.

"EMS is a new public service in the grand scheme of things," Moore said. "The idea of having people with kits running around in fancy vehicles was invented by Napoleon but really didn't become a thing in the civilized world until the 1960s and 1970s."

This late start in comparison to fire service and law enforcement is difficult, she said. "EMS is often ignored. I think that a lot of people wish to observe and explore that. They're striving to find an identity."

"I hope, in a little, small way, that our little EMS contest helps it," she added.

The group was officially licensed as of June 3. They must now get all of the members trained and raise funds.

Moore anticipates the first year costs, which include all the equipment necessary, will come to about \$15,000.

The group already raised over \$5,000 through a support letter sent out recently. The success of this letter did not surprise her.

"I think there's a lot of pent up desire for this squad," Moore said. "We had very strong support from the Selectboard, from community leaders. At Town Meeting, the voters passed a nonbinding resolution in support. People knew our first year costs were going to be fairly high."

They are also waiting for nonprofit status to begin applying for grants. For more information, go to [www.HalifaxEMS.org](http://www.HalifaxEMS.org).

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