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**English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association, Inc.**

Member of The American Kennel Club / Parent Club of the Breed

**Regular Membership and Board of Governors’  Meeting**

**Membership Meeting Notes**

Attendees: Board of Governors and ESSFTA Members

**Membership Meeting Notes**

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
   1. **BOG & Officers on Site**: Bob Beauchamp, Cristy Joy, Mike Nolan, Elaine O’Keefe, Josh Riddle, Rick Shively
   2. **BOG & Officers Participating via Zoom**: Kim Bullard, Sue Burgess, Lori DiLorenzo, Cathy Flanders, Mark Gebert, Carol Hathaway, Sue Ellen Healy, Pam Holt, Dean Koehler, Ted Lagala, Cindy Lestor, Judy Manley, Kathy Nestor
   3. **Members Participating on Site:** Paula Fluckinger, Morgan Haglin, Shane Kozal
   4. **Members Participating via Zoom:** Manuel Aya, Brian Bilotta, Holly Bogess, Kate Bremser, Marilyn Burke, Randy Capsel, Mel Carranza, Christi Cooper, Gretta Dalrymple, Jacquie Dean, Ashley Dornak, John Dunn, Mark Haglin, Morgan Haglin, Eric Hammer, Jean Hilbig, Steve Hoostal, Dawn Horrock, Carol Jansen, Debbie Kennedy, Jennie Kerwin, Mary Lackey, Donna Larson, Karen Laster, Richard Lee, Cindy McElligot, Patti Meiser, Patty Mortara, Kathy Pierce, Peggy Presnell, Clemcia Saavedra, Cassandra Sammons, Janice Schommer, Nancy Stephens, Liz Westring, Travis White
2. **Report of the President by Cristy K Joy**

Some of the items we have completed this year are the following:

1. By-Law modifications are in the hands of the AKC and should be updated soon.
2. Updated Field Trial Apprentice Judge Program Requirements. Note: In this process our teammate, ESSFT.com, received 118 responses to the survey. We made decisions based on real data. You are being heard!
3. Updated the Field Trial Judging Exam.
4. English Springer Spaniels allowed to participate in a Retriever Hunt Test.
5. The ESSFTA BOG meetings have been quarterly.
6. Approval of the payment of the Awards hardware given at ESSFTA AKC Events.
7. Teamed with ESSFT.com to communicate to our Membership.
8. The Nominating Committee Slate is complete after receiving many great resumes.
9. The AKC has approved the ESSFTA to address comments of the Membership and put to ballot the added language of docked ‘or undocked’ tail; ‘both are to be given equal consideration.’ Please watch for the information from the AKC.
10. **Reports of the Officers**
11. **Membership Secretary Report – Judy Manley**
    1. New Membership numbers: October – 9  November -1
    2. We finish the 2022 year with 836 members.  In 2021 there were 756 members (+80)
    3. Renewals will be mailed out in December.  A reminder that renewals are due by February 1st.
    4. We need to investigate other payment methods such as Venmo.  Update: not available at this time.
12. **Treasurers Report – Kathy Nestor**
    1. Report Attached for 2021
    2. Financials are done and the tax returns are filed.
    3. We have saved money because a lot of our meetings have been done by Zoom.
    4. Mike Nolan - NAC New York was not managed properly but will be addressed for future events.
13. **Field Vice President Report – Mike Nolan**
    1. We are retiring the existing trophies to the bird dog Hall of Fame.. We will secure National Quality Judges.  The Event will honor past winners and Hall of Fame Members.  The Event will commemorate a New Trophy heading to the next 100 years.
    2. The ESSFTA Parent Club Field Trial Grounds have been significantly improved. They will continue to be improved as we work toward our objective of having a first-class event in the Elmira NY area. We will try to make this a minor national event. Our goal is to get 100 dogs signed up for the Event. Please consider this in planning for your trial schedule for 2024.
    3. The Importance of “Brace”: I will use this space from time to time to discuss issues which are brought to me in the field. The failure of Judges to manage “Brace” causes issues. If one side gets too far ahead, when possible, please wait for your bracemate to catch up. Listen to your Marshals and get to the line on time. Failure to do so, eliminates safe shooting and causes unnecessary issues in the field. Brace is part of the game and needs to be maintained. I know we get busy with our own dogs that we are judging but we need to pay attention here. This really is a problem when the courses we are running are not straight but turn. The marshals will continue to get the dogs and handlers to the line so the Judge can keep the flow of the brace.
    4. Gunning: It may be me, but it seems that the emphasis on gunning and safety including the gunning seminars recently put on by Morgan and his group has made all the gunning better. I think it is because it is a point of emphasis. It is a critical part of our game, and we need to support the efforts involved by our Gunners. They work hard at it and I have noticed significant focus on doing a great job. Thank them for what they bring to the table.
    5. HUNT TESTS: The importance of hunt tests cannot be overstated. Many of us were introduced to Field Trials through a training group involved in Hunt Tests. The dogs are judged against a standard and do not compete against each other. It is a great benchmark to see where your training is with your dog. Have your club host an annual Hunt Test. Those of you on the bench side can go to HuntSecretary.com and find hunt tests as well. We would love to have you with your ESS clubs come to Field Club’s training sessions to take advantage of your dog’s innate ability to find game.
    6. Update on Field Trial Judges List – Bob Beauchamp
       1. We have reached out to approximately 250 judges.  We have reached 186 of them.  Looking at how to deal with those we have not been able to contact.
14. **Bench/Performance Vice President Report – Bev Sigl Felten**
15. The ESSFTA successfully held a membership and Board of Governors meeting on Wednesday Aug 31, 2022, at Purina Farms during our national specialty. Cristy Joy, presided in person, a first where a Field side-based president attended that I know of, in many years. Several governors participated via zoom. I believe President Joy exhibited her dog in one of the Performance Events.
16. Members were asked to communicate with AKC Vice President Mari-Beth O’Neil regarding interest to open up our breed standard to allow undocked tails.
17. An agenda item has been added to this meeting to discuss a limitation placed on the judge’s contract for our National Specialty to not have any relationship with exhibitors of dogs for breeding, showing, or co-ownership for at least a year.
18. **Reports of Committees and Task Forces**

**1. AKC Delegate – Sue Burgess**

* + 1. BOG’s -If you have any items that you would like Sue to present at the December AKC Delegate meeting please let her know by December 10.
    2. The number of clubs nationwide are continuing to flourish. Statistics represent 5 years of data, 2017-2021.  Current total number of clubs is 4,992.  645 Member Clubs, Licensed clubs 4,166, 95 Sanctioned A and 86 Sanctioned B.
    3. The reasons for clubs leaving are aging out, lack of membership and/or new members, and the loss of convenient, suitable and available sites in the area, or general loss of interest in the Sport by club members over time.  *As we look to the future of our sport, all clubs including ESSFTA need to include in their strategic plans actions to address these issues.  In upcoming club meetings an agenda item to solicit input (action items) from the membership is recommended.*
    4. AKC has recommended for some time now that clubs appoint a Junior Coordinator.  We need to have Junior Coordinators so that AKC can reach your club and your club members with all of the important information about Juniors.
    5. The Club Development Department has been initiating a number of programs to help clubs communicate with new owners of their breed.  One program is the ***Pupdate.***
    6. As a new owner registers their dog,” they’re going to get specific emails talking about the life of that dog, from when they get it, to a certain age, it’s going to help them with training, it’s going to help them with various aspects of the breed. What we do, and what the Pupdate people have decided to do, was we put a Parent Club promotion in there. What we’re trying to do is what we send these people, it’s great information, but it’s very general, and a lot of people want to know more information. They want to get into the weeds about their dog, what exactly is this dog, what is the history? We send them to the Parent Club website as the experts. If you want to know everything about your breed, go to the Parent Club. We’ve worked with parent clubs to make their websites friendlier, "make them more welcoming”, and then we’ve started putting this out in Pupdate.  Over 50 Parent Clubs have signed up for this program.”
    7. Amendments voted on at the meetings.
       1. ADOPTED: Chapter 11, Section 6, of the Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility which reformats the section for easier comprehension. It inserts verbiage to allow transfer between the divisions of the Bred-by-Exhibitor Class (puppy/adult) if offered, adds verbiage to specify transfer between the divisions of the Twelve-to-Eighteen Month Class and permits age divisions of the Veterans Class. It also inserts language to recognize that transfer between Puppy and Twelve-toEighteen Month Classes may involve divisions of either and adds language for clarity as to when a transfer between classes must be completed at multi-day events.
       2. ADOPTED Article IV, Section 1, of the Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club, which adds “Multi-Breed Clubs” back to the list of club types eligible for membership. A prior amendment from the floor to the original amendment removed multi-breed clubs and substituted All-Breed and Group Clubs. This change may have unintentionally excluded a category of clubs permitted to become members for many years, the multi-breed Retriever Field Trial Clubs.
       3. ADOPTED Article VI, New Section 2, of the Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club, to which the addition of this Section to Article VI makes clear that proxy voting is prohibited. The remaining sections of Article VI will be renumbered to 3-12.
       4. NOT ADOPTED Article VII, Section 1, of the Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club, removes term limits for AKC Board members.
       5. ADOPTED Chapter 9, Section 3, of the Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Superintendents and Show Secretaries, deletes Chapter 9, Section 3 and inserts into the associated proposed amendment to Chapter 8. It has the effect of relocating content pertaining to the arranging of the Show Veterinarian from Chapter 9 which is specific to Superintendents and Show Secretaries into the more appropriate Chapter 8. Sections 4-12 of Chapter 9 will be renumbered.
       6. NOT ADOPTED Chapter 10, Section 2, of the Rules Applying to Dog Shows – (Duties and Responsibilities of) Show Veterinarians, deletes verbiage related to duty of the club which is proposed to be inserted into Chapter 8 in a corresponding recommendation. It replaces “On call” veterinarian with Show Veterinarian clarifying that whether in-attendance or on-call, the Show Veterinarian must be available to treat dogs during show hours.
       7. ADOPTED Chapter 16, Section 2, of the Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Championships, removes “or height” from two places in the current rule, brings into line with the current execution of shows. It amends the rule to provide the opportunity for class dogs placing 2nd, 3rd or 4th in the group to be awarded Championship points. It adds language to define how any Championship points to be awarded would be calculated whereas a class dog placing 2nd, 3rd, or 4th in the group competition would receive the greatest number of Championship points earned in the breeds from the same group excluding any breed which received a higher placement in the group at the same event.
       8. ADOPTED Chapter 9, Section 2, of the Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Superintendents and Show Secretaries, which inserts the allowance for the AKC to approve individuals to serve as an on-site show secretary for more than the show or shows of only one Group or All-Breed Club and any Group or All-Breed show held on the same day and site in a calendar year. Approval would be limited to events where the individual is serving only as the “on-site” show secretary. The AKC would establish the criteria under which one may be considered.
       9. ADOPTED Chapter 14, Section 2 and New Section 2A, of the Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Pointing Breeds – Regular Stakes That May Be Offered, refines how Derby Stake placements qualify a dog to enter a Limited stake by allowing additional placements depending on the size of the Open Derby Stake. It provides for qualifying placements depending on the size of the Open Derby Stake.
    8. Covid modifications to AKC rules adopted as permanent procedures.
       1. Chapter 9, Section 2, of the Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Superintendents and Show Secretaries, which inserts the allowance for the AKC to approve individuals to serve as an on-site show secretary for more than the show or shows of only one Group or All-Breed Club and any Group or All-Breed show held on the same day and site in a calendar year. Approval would be limited to events where the individual is serving only as the “on-site” show secretary. The AKC would establish the criteria under which one may be considered.
    9. “In January of 2019, a rule change went into effect that awards a maximum of one championship point to Best of Winners when no points are awarded to Winners in either sex if the combined number of regular class exhibitors for both sexes meets the minimum required for one point for the sex or division.”
    10. “Now, Specialty Clubs can travel up to 300 miles out of their territory to join another Specialty Club in the same breed. Formerly, the limit was 200 miles. Specialty Clubs may now hold up to four designated Specialties in addition to independent or concurrent Specialties. Recall that a designated Specialty is one in which a Specialty Club considers the regular breed judging at an All-Breed or Group show as its Specialty show.”
    11. “A new provision also allows clubs and clusters to add a third conformation event on a single day, as long as one of the three events is a Specialty show. Modification of the earlier policy now means that there can be three opportunities for Championship points in a single day.”
    12. “A permanent policy now allows individuals who are judging NOHS groups or NOHS Best in Show only, to exhibit in regular competition on the day they judge.”
    13. In Companion and Performance Events, certain COVID-times modifications have been permanently adapted to ease the need for volunteers. These include using cones in Obedience, permitting exhibitors to carry leashes in Agility, a friendly greeting instead of a handshake for Canine Good Citizen, and a designated container for Retriever Hunting Tests. Each of these measures reduces a club’s dependence on stewards.”
    14. “A number of date and mileage restrictions in our Companion Events sports that were lifted during the pandemic will continue indefinitely. These changes will make it easier to show and title when judges are in short supply. Clubs offering Companion Events will now have the option to keep entries open up to seven days prior to their trials in order to gain more entries. “

1. **Foundation Report – Liz Pike**
   * 1. Our activities at the National Specialty were extremely successful and we are grateful for the support of the Parent Club and the National Specialty Committee.  Dr. Keiko Miyadera and her assistant joined us for four days during which they examined over 100 new dogs and conducted over 30+ repeat exams on previously assessed dogs.  The ability to re-examine dogs, especially those who are genetically affected, is vital to better understanding the progression of the disease. Work continues to identify the “why” behind why some affected dogs have impaired vision while others may seem to be relatively unaffected by the disease.  The Foundation Board is in discussions with Dr. Miyadera regarding a potential phase two, a longitudinal study, to continue to examine and track affected dogs.  The continued support of owners, breeders and the Parent Club, both financial and in making dogs available, will be a key to further learning about this disease.
     2. As reported at the National Specialty Parent Club meeting, we provided a letter of support for a grant proposal to AKC CHF from Dr. Steve Friedenberg at the University of Minnesota to study IMHA in four Spaniel breeds. IMHA was highlighted as an area of concern in our 2017 Health Survey;  if you are aware of dogs that suffered and recovered from IMHA and would be willing to provide blood samples, please reach out to me and I will provide information on how you can help with this study.
     3. Finally, I want to encourage owners to submit test results to OFA – not just hip x-ray and CERF results-  but test results for all testing relevant to our breed.  A good example is PRA testing – OFA has only 403 test results (contrast that with over 19,000 hip results!) –which is of great interest to owners and breeders.  Please help us build greater transparency to enable breeders to make informed decisions.
     4. The membership watched a video of the collaborative support between the OFA and University of Missouri DNA repository.  The video has been posted on the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association Facebook page.
2. **Awards Committee Report – Kathy Patregnani**
   * 1. The medallions/head piece/gaited awards are currently being made.  They should be done and ready to ship by the end of April.
3. **Nominating Committee Report – Sue Ellen Healy**
   * 1. The Nominating Committee has a slate of nominations that will be published on December 1.
     2. If someone would like to run in opposition of one of the nominations, they would need to follow the By-Laws.  This information will be sent to the membership with the Nominating Committee’s slate of nominations.
4. **Social Media/Website Committee Report – Cristy Joy**
   * 1. ESSFTA Facebook page. Cathy Flanders joined Randy Capsel and Amy Rodgers as an administrator on the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association Facebook page.  Please encourage members to follow.
     2. AKC Flier. The AKC Flier has been completed and pending one picture change, will be in print by the end of this week.
     3. Spotlight. Continue to send articles

**E. Report of Unfinished Business**

1. **Update on the ESS Breed Standard language change – “*General Appearance: The English Springer Spaniel is a medium sized sporting dog with a compact body and a docked or undocked tail; both are to be given equal consideration.”* – Cristy Joy**

a. To date, the Committee submitted a proposed breed standard language revision to the American Kennel Club (AKC), which conducted an initial review and worked with the committee to ensure all formatting and specific language within the breed standard is appropriately addressed. The final proposed revision was subsequently published in the AKC Gazette allowing for a 60-day public comment period. The AKC has been in ongoing communication with the Committee regarding any public comments which are opposed to the proposed revision. The 60-day public comment period concluded at the end of October and the AKC staff prepared a memo for the November AKC Board meeting at which they granted approval to the ESSFTA to ballot the ESSFTA membership.

b. Next Steps - Since AKC granted the ESSFTA approval to ballot the membership, this will be done in accordance with the ESSFTA Constitution and Bylaws.

c. However, there are several steps before the ballots can be sent to the membership, they are:

* ESSFTA is required to submit a sample ballot and letter to AKC for review, therefore the Committee is in the process of developing the letter and ballot for AKC review.
* Once approval to proceed is given by AKC, a letter and ballot will be provided to the membership with a deadline for the membership to return the ballots to the ESSFTA.
* Currently, we anticipate sending out the ballot to membership in January 2023.
* The ESSFTA is required to submit the ballot results, the ballot with cover letter, and the proposed revised standard to the AKC.
* If the ballot results are sufficient to support the revision to the standard, the AKC will schedule the revision for inclusion on the AKC Board agenda for approval. The approved standard will be published on the Secretary’s Page and the club will receive written notification of the final approval.
* If the proposed revision does not receive enough votes to support approval of the revision, the ESSFTA will notify the AKC staff of the tabulated results.
  + 1. The Proposed language change to add “undocked tail “to the English Springer Spaniel Breed Standard as published in the AKC Gazette:

Note: when this committee was created, we were asked to make minimal changes and to be clear about the docked and undocked tail. Some edits were done due to discussions with AKC.

* ***Blue text indicates the changes; added text and strikethrough is the deleted text*.**
* ***General Appearance:*** The English Springer Spaniel is a medium sized sporting dog with a compact body and a docked or undocked tail; both are to be given equal consideration.
* **Neck, Topline, Body:** The croup slopes gently to the set of the tail, and tail-set follows the natural line of the croup. The tail is carried horizontally or slightly elevated and displays a characteristic lively, merry action, particularly when the dog is on game. A clamped tail (indicating timidity or undependable temperament) is to be faulted, as is a tail carried at a right angle to the backline in Terrier fashion. An undocked tail may have a slight upward curve but never curled over the back.
* ***Coat***: The Springer has an outer coat and an undercoat. On the body, the outer coat is of medium length, flat or wavy, and is easily distinguishable from the undercoat, which is short, soft, and dense. The quantity of undercoat is affected by climate and season. When in combination, outer coat and undercoat serve to make the dog substantially waterproof, weatherproof, and thorn proof. On ears, chest, legs, and belly the Springer is nicely furnished with a fringe of feathering of moderate length and heaviness. On the head, front of the forelegs, and below the hock joints on the front of the hind legs, the hair is short and fine. The coat has the clean, glossy, "live" appearance indicative of good health. It is legitimate to trim about the head, ears, neck, and feet, to remove dead undercoat, and to thin and shorten excess feathering as required to enhance a smart, functional appearance. The tail may be trimmed or ~~well~~ fringed ~~with~~ and may have wavy feathering. Above all, the appearance should be natural. Over-trimming, especially the body coat, or any chopped, barbered, or artificial effect is to be penalized in the show ring, as is excessive feathering that destroys the clean outline desirable in a sporting dog. Correct quality and condition of coat is to take precedence over quantity of coat.

1. **Considerations:** The undocked (natural) tail dogs are also good examples of the breed and should be allowed to compete equally in conformation. This change will provide clarification within the ESS breed standard and will assist conformation judges in understanding how to judge an undocked tail vs. a docked tail because the current standard states this breed “…**has a docked tail**.” An increasing number of English Springer Spaniels are shown with tails and imported with natural tails by both field and bench owners. In addition, some U.S. breeders are choosing to keep the natural tail and not dock tails.
2. **Animal Rights (AR) concerns:** There are many discussions and opinions about the possibility of legislation to ban tail docking and that this change in our breed standard could trigger such a change. Because this is a concern for all of us, the committee discussed how likely it would be that this change could trigger or empower a law change to ban tail docking. We did some research and found that the docked tail issue is not on the AR’s list of priorities. Animal rights activists work to protect animals from neglect, harm, and to reduce suffering. Their priorities appear to focus on the control of businesses that use animals, reporting abuse, and encouraging people to become vegan to eliminate animals as food, etc. We did not find information where ‘tail docking’ is mentioned as a focus by any of these groups. Over the last twenty years, other parent clubs in the United States have changed their standard to allow natural tails, and to date we did not find evidence that legislation was brought forward in response to their changes. It does not appear that changing our standard would give any group motivation or power to pursue the ban of docking tails.
3. We also discovered that the legal process to create a bill and for it to become law is quite lengthy and complicated. **We encourage you to do your own research, read, and come to your own conclusion** as to the likeliness that the wording change would have an impact. Following are some links describing the legal process to introduce and pass a bill.

1. **Surveys – Cristy Joy**

**a.** Breed Illustration Standard. A motion was made and approved at the August 31 meeting to *“present the Breed Illustration Standard (BIS) as a survey for comments to the membership.”* The survey is expected to come out in the early part of 2023

* 1. RWD and RWB at annual bench national specialty to be entitled to receive points.

b. A motion was made and approved at the August 31 meeting t*o “conduct a survey of the membership for comments regarding the following: To allow the reserve winners dog and reserve winners bitch to be granted the major point wins at the annual national bench specialty.  As per AKC, a three-point major would be awarded to the dog designated Reserve Winners Dog and Reserve Winners Bitch provided there are at least twice the number required for a five-point major in the winner’s sex.* “

c. Best Puppy & Best Bred-By Puppy. *A motion was made and approved at the August 31 meeting  “to conduct a survey of the membership for comments regarding the following: The ESSFTA may further divide the Bred-by-Exhibitor class into two age groups consisting of Puppy, for dogs that are six months of age but under twelve months, and Adult, for dogs that are twelve months of age and older. The 1st place winner may compete from the Puppy bred-by class can go on to complete for "best puppy and best Bred-by" in the specialty.*

1. **Breeder’s List Update – Cristy Joy**

a**.** Language for the New Breeder’s List has been updated.  There is a $10 fee for any member who wishes to be on the list.  Members can select the option on the membership renewal form.  Breeders will be listed by state, alphabetically.  Breeders on the list will be required to complete the Code of Ethics.

1. **Discussion/ Needs for the ESSFTA Web Site – Cristy Joy**
   1. Please send any concerns, comments or items to Cristy, Cathy or Sue Burgess.

**F. New Business**

1. Emergency judging assignment numbers (Field) – Elaine O’Keefe

a. Field judges are allowed to judge 3 times this year (open).

* 1. Book is vague on emergency assignments
  2. Looking to clarify that judges are only allowed 1 emergency assignment and must that assignment.

1. New Apprentice Program Amendment – Mike Nolan
   1. Item was taken off from the agenda
2. Cut off dates for qualifying for awards – Judy Manley
3. Judy would like specific dates published for qualifying for awards.
4. New members joining after October 1 – Judy Manley
5. Recommended that new members that wish to join after October 1 be promoted to membership for the following year
6. Judging contract for nationals – Judy Manley. Requesting that in the judge’s contract at the bench national a judge must excuse an exhibitor that they have had business dealings within a certain length of time prior to the judging assignments.
7. Additional items – Public to be heard

1. **Adjournment**

Next Meetings:

* February 7, 2023 (Quarterly) at the Hall of Fame Trials (Lagrange TN)
* May 5, 2023 (Annual Meeting) in Minneapolis MN
* October 10, 2023 (Tentative) at Purina Farms with the Bench National Specialty
* November 27th, 2023 (Tentative) NAC in Central Nebraska – 60th Anniversary

Respectfully submitted by:

Cathy A. Flanders

ESSFTA Corresponding Secretary