

VOX

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!!



VOYAGEUR



SUMMER 2026

ISSUE TWO

WELCOME TO THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS :

Sarah Willms (President)

Alice Musburger (Vice P)

Jean Dockendorf (Secretary)

Gretta Thorson (Treasurer)

**Courtney Hansen, Kathy Patregnani,
Heather Rand, Diane Slais and Tekla Viker
(Members at large)**

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

I am also on the board of directors for TCVESSA and am blown away by all the details needed to put on our current events for this year! The board is very aware of many interests and ideas that members would like to see or do. Please be patient as so many changes are in the air, but all takes time, money and volunteers. It is imperative that you as members show up, speak up and give feedback!

I hope you enjoy this issue of the VOX! It is my hope that we can all be informed and work together.

Sincerely, Alice Musburger



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Are you TCVESSA Proud?

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Summer TCVESSA Members!

We certainly went abruptly from Spring to Summer weather. Hopefully you have lots of plans to enjoy summer activities with your pups.

Our Specialty and All-breed Obedience and Rally Trial was a success thanks to many club members who exhibited, volunteered, and worked on planning for the weekend events. It was fun to see so many great Springer Teams having success! A special thank you Kathy P. and Courtney H. for all their work to make the show a success!

The club also hosted an all-breed Agility Trial that was very well attended! Club members and volunteers kept the packed schedule moving smoothly. There were many new titles earned, and lots of good sportsmanship on display. Well! done! Thank you to all the club members who volunteered! Special thanks again go to Kathy and Courtney for organizing a great weekend.

Next up is our 4-days of Supported Entries, and our concurrent Specialty in June. We reached out to the membership to Sponsor trophies and ribbons with excellent results. Thank you for your generous donations. It helps to make our shows memorable to exhibitors to offer nice prizes and ribbons to commemorate special wins. Please join us at the Isanti County Fairgrounds and cheer on the springers!

Planning is well underway for our Fall specialty with the Crow River Classic. Keep an eye out for volunteer opportunities!

Thanks for all that you do to support English Springers locally and nationally. Enjoy your summer!

Sarah Willms

DID YOU KNOW?

- Approximately 60% of a Springer's weight is carried on the front assembly (shoulders, legs and feet). This is all the time, and even more is on the front landing from jumping!
- A Springer's eyebrows and stop are bred to assist water to drain away from the eyes after water retrieves or in the rain.
- Our club currently has 70 members.
- Our club has an email address (TCVESSAMN1977@gmail.com). Our secretary, Jean Dockendorf, kindly answers these emails. If you need to know, Just Ask ☺.
- Our club has a PayPal account that uses this email. Funds go to our treasurer, Gretta Thorson.
- Our club has 5 members heavily involved with our parent club, the ESSFTA! Amazing! (Liz Pike is President the parent club, Kathy Patregnani is a Regional Director and Sarah Willms is a Director at Large and the Chair of the Breeder's Education Committee. Carol Hathaway is on the Judge's Educations Committee. Michelle Berge is on the Awards Committee. Both Liz and Kathy are Co-Chairing our National Specialty this year and Courtney Hansen is on the Ribbons and Prizes Committee for the National. Kathy is also the Agility Trial Chairperson for the National.
- **Next year, 2027 will be the 50th Anniversary of TCVESSA?**

NEEDED! A NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIR FOR TCVESSA

Job description for membership chair:

- the chair needs to keep and update the club membership roster noting member names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses.
- Keep birthdates and dates dues are paid annually.
- Announce club membership due dates in last quarter of the year to all members.
- Correspond with members and collect new membership/renewal forms and dues.
- Work closely with club treasurer in collecting of dues by check or PayPal.
- Publish updated roster for the new year April 1st of each year.
- Work closely with the board regarding new membership applications.
- Work with the club secretary to update the club roster annually with the AKC.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!!

(Please contact any board member or Alice Musburger at rosebudspringers@gmail.com)

ALSO NEEDED! A SUNSHINE COORDINATOR FOR TCVESSA

(An easy Job!)

The duties of a sunshine coordinator would be to work closely with the membership chair to observe club member birthdays and to send out “birthday cards” via email and FB. This person would also send out sympathy cards for club members who experience human or canine loss. This chairperson would also send appropriate FB or real cards via USPS for personal losses of members such as dog or family member deaths. Lastly, this chair would need to report quarterly or so to the board about these duties and occasions as they occur.



OTHER NEWS FROM THE BOARD

- The by-laws review committee (Karin Anderson, Heather Rand, Carol Hathaway & Alice Musburger) will meet for the first time on Tuesday, June 23, 2026
- It is not too late to help with our Specialty Show this coming Saturday, May 20 at the Isanti County Fairgrounds in Cambridge, MN. Contact Sarah Willms or Courney Hansen.
- There are trophies and ribbons that need sponsors for our Fall Specialty in Hutchinson, MN. Please contact Sarah Willms if you want to be proud to donate to such a worthy cause! Watch for an online signup on TCVESSA FB page later this summer. You may pay online too!
- The agility trial our club holds to raise funds for the ESSFTA is held July 17-19. It is a way our club can contribute but is also another event that needs your help. Please consider volunteering even for 2-4 hours just one day. Contact Kathy Patregnani if you can help.



TWIN CITIES VOYAGEUR ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL ASSOCIATION

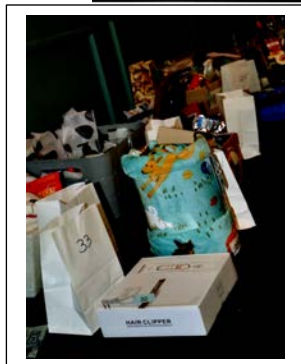
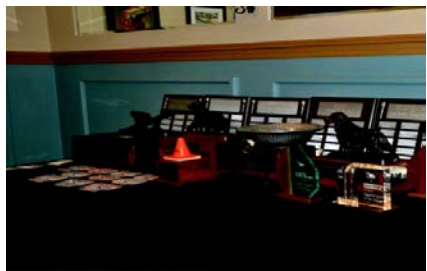
CANINE AND COFFEE REVIEW

The Canine & Coffee Presentation took place Saturday March 21, 2026. It was well attended with 16 members and well worth the wait. Sarah Willms led an informational discussion on the Springer Spaniel standard and how even the smallest details such as the Stop between the eyes have a practical function in the Breed. Members were both conformation and performance persons who gleaned knowledge about the breed. The open discussion format was well received. The business portion took time, and the standard discussion was so fruitful that time expired before the entire presentation could be completed. Sarah would like to finish the discussion and possibly have the grooming and appearance portion be part of a grooming seminar. Keep your ears open for plans!



2026 BANQUET REVIEW

TCVESSA Annual Awards Banquet April 11, 2026



The 2026 banquet was a successful gathering of 33 club members ready to celebrate the accomplishments earned in 2025. The event was held for the third time at Lord Fletcher's on Lake Minnetonka. While the evening was rainy, it did not dampen the atmosphere of joyful camaraderie. The raffle table was large and overflowing with donated items. Carmen Laing once again did herself with lovely table decorations and most everybody's favorite, Byerlie's delicious cupcakes. Alice, Courtney and Michelle Berge coordinated the trophies, crate tags and name plates as mementos. Thanks to all who made this a terrific night!

TCVESSA AWARDS 2025 SUMMARY

9 Major Awards (Trophies Presented) (Crate Tag with attached plates, mento)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Best of Breed | Allie |
| 2. Best Opposite | Tate |
| 3. Best Owner Handled | Allie |
| 4. Best Grand Champion | Allie |
| 5. Obedience Springer | Asher |
| 6. Rally Springer | Rizzo |
| 7. Agility Springer | Odie |
| 8. Agility Preferred Springer | Ella |
| 9. Versatility Springer | Sparx |

11 Minor Awards (Crate tag with attached plates, mento)

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| 1. Nov Obed | Asher |
| 2. Open Obed | Seger |
| 3. Utility* | none |
| 4. UDX* | none |
| 5. Nov Rally | Allie |
| 6. Adv Rally | Spangle |
| 7. Ex Rally | Rizzo |
| 8. RAE Rally* | none |
| 9. Master Rally* | none |
| 10. Nov Agility | Jeje |
| 11. Open Agility | Halie |
| 12. Ex Agility | Jeje |
| 13. Master Agility | Josephine |

2 Miscellaneous Awards

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. TOP for most titles | Jeje |
| 2. Ambassador Award | Carmen, Lincoln & Elsa |

34 new Titles (Large glossy Crate Tags) - 22 Awards – 4 not given = 18 Awards Total
14 different dogs earning Awards - (Crate Tag with attached title plates)

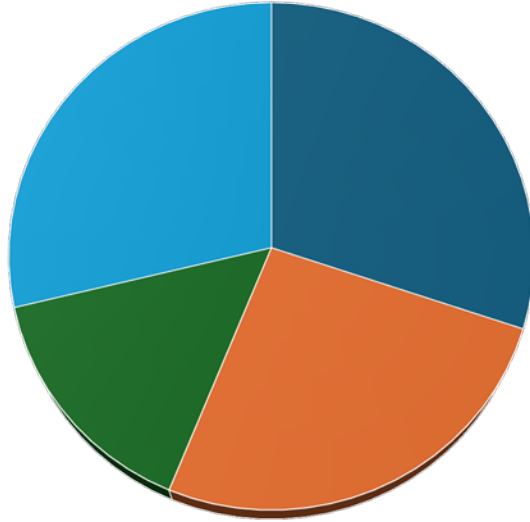
*Awards without applicants



I was there!

A Big THANK YOU to all for the RAFFLE Table Coordination!

2026 MEMBERSHIP STATUS



■ 100 Miles ■ Very Active ■ Inactive ■ Untapped

As of April 1, 2026, the club has 70 members. Only 2 are juniors. Spouses are counted as separate individuals. We are down from 80 in 2025. When planning events and activities, it is good to see how many persons are available to help. The light blue (Untapped) area consists of lifetime, long time, relatively new and persons who have indicated that they would like to help on the membership renewal form. In number, this represents about 21 persons. Very active is about 19 persons, inactive is 11 persons, and those living far away are 22 people. An all volunteer club need most of it's membership to help most of the time in large and small ways. We are doing a VERY good job!

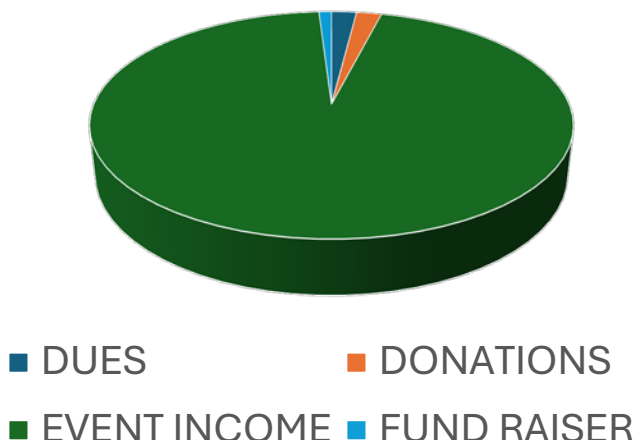
A successful club is always on the move! Our club is off to a terrific start for 2026 but there is more work and fun to be had. If you belong to the Untapped, light blue area above, we need your ideas and energy. Please help!

NOW, that you see how many times volunteers are need for our club activities, how many hours a year do you think a member should donate? Please check just one choice.

- ☐ 10 hours per year?
- ☐ 10-15 hours per year?
- ☐ Less than 10 hours?
- ☐ Not by hours but by event?
- ☐ How many events?
- ☐ By job (setup or clean up)
- ☐ Other _____

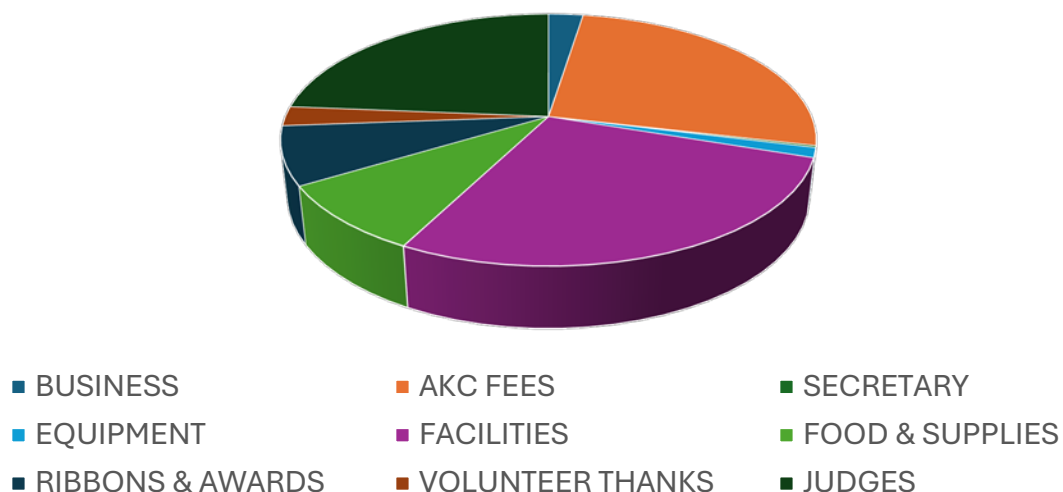
I know this is NOT convenient, but could you email or text me your choice, comments? We need to put together a new membership/renewal Form with an accurate volunteer questionnaire. Your input is VALUABLE! Send to Alice at rosebudspringers@gmail.com or text me at 320-290-3124.

2025 TCVESSA INCOME



It is very easy to see that the large green area that represents event income and is by far the biggest piece of the pie. This area for 2025 included 4 agility trials, 4 days of shows and 2 specialties at the Crow River Cluster as well as the awards banquet. Donations, dues, and fundraising make up the small wedges.

2025 TCVESSA EXPENSES



As for club expenses, the purple, orange and dark green take up most of the pie. These areas represent facility, secretary fees and AKC fees. Food, supplies and judges are next largest leaving area with ribbons, awards and volunteer thank you(s) next. Business and equipment expenses are small.

Overall summary boils down to: Starting Balance in January 2025 – Ending balance in December 2025 = net loss of \$2512. We are a proud club who works hard to keep afloat in difficult times for most clubs across the country. As one can see, Volunteering makes our club operate! **Let's Keep up the great work for 2026!**



NOHS Levels of Achievement Titles

The American Kennel Club is pleased to share an exciting update regarding the National Owner-Handled Series (NOHS) program. Effective May 20, 2026, owners of dogs that have earned NOHS Levels of Achievement certificates will have the option to add these accomplishments as an official suffix title to their dog's AKC record. This title will be reflected on all future AKC pedigrees and registration certificates. Owners may apply for the title at any achievement level (Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum), and titles will be grandfathered back to the inception of the NOHS program.

The NOHS program was created to showcase dogs exhibited by non-professional owner handlers. Launched as a pilot program in 2012, it has become extremely popular and is now offered at 92% of All-Breed shows across the country. The first NOHS Finals were held in Orlando in 2013, and the event has continued to expand, reaching 818 entries in 2025. Since 2022, AKC has recognized owner-handler achievements through the NOHS Levels of Achievement certificates and pins. The program continued to grow with the introduction of Regional stand-alone NOHS events in 2024.

Adding NOHS Levels of Achievement as suffix titles allows these accomplishments to become a permanent part of a dog's official AKC record, offering lasting recognition of the success of owner-handlers. Owners can apply through [AKC Title Application Portal \(TAP\)](#) using their dog's AKC registration number. This new addition reflects AKC's continued commitment to supporting owner-handlers and celebrating their contributions to the sport. Questions can be emailed to clubdevelopment@akc.org.

Guy Fisher Director Club Development (919-816-3705) guy.fisher@akc.org

Amy Hagy Manager Club Development (919-816-3701) amy.hagy@akc.org

ONLINE PUPPY EVALUATIONS THROUGH THE ESSFTA!

THIS IS A MUST WATCH!

Springer members of our parent club can now watch puppy evaluations via the ESSFTA website. The following is from such a presentation made by our club members April 4, 2026. It is still currently available if you did not yet get to watch it.

TO VIEW:

Go To ESSFTA.org

Choose the Members Only Tab and Sign in

Choose the Announcements Tab

Virtual Puppy Evaluation

This educational video features Sarah Willms of Tagalong English Springer Spaniels leading a live puppy evaluation, assisted by Rebecca Hoskins and Tekla Viker. The litter, bred by Sarah in partnership with co-breeder Donna Larson, is sired by Thomas and out of Amelia. Because the breeding is linebred on influential early winners, the presentation offers a valuable opportunity to discuss pedigree, type, and the goals behind thoughtful breeding decisions.

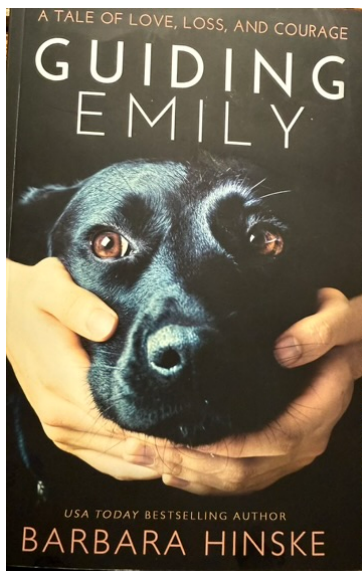
The program focuses on evaluating puppies at eight weeks of age, a stage widely regarded as one of the most important for assessing future show and breeding potential. Viewers are taken through the structure and balance of each puppy, with close attention given to essential features such as shoulder layback, fore chest, depth of chest, ribbing, angulation, outline, and overall symmetry. The discussion also considers temperament, movement potential, and the ways early observations can help guide future decisions.

One of the video's greatest strengths is its collaborative format. Sarah Willms, Rebecca Hoskins, and Tekla Viker demonstrate the value of having several experienced breeders participate in the evaluation process, sometimes informally called a "puppy party." By comparing observations and discussing preferences openly, they show how multiple knowledgeable perspectives can lead to a more complete and thoughtful assessment of each puppy.

The male puppies are examined both individually and in comparison, to one another, allowing viewers to see how subtle differences in construction, balance, and attitude shape evaluation. The presenters explain hands-on techniques for assessing puppies and offer commentary on how experienced breeders interpret what they see and feel. The same careful attention is then given to the female puppies, with discussion of breed type, expression, symmetry, and potential for future success in the show ring.

Throughout the presentation, Sarah and her assistants share practical insights, personal experience, and candid observations that make this video especially useful for breeders seeking to sharpen their evaluative skills. The result is an engaging and informative exploration of puppy evaluation as both an art and a discipline, encouraging breeders to observe carefully, think critically, and continue refining their eye for the breed.

BOOK REVIEW



Guiding Emily is a heartwarming tale of love, loss, and courage as Garth and Emily make their way to each other. This book explores the process of choosing, rearing and training guide dogs for the blind. It also explores the feeling of losing one's sight and all the services available to assist the blind. This is the first book in a series of six about Emily and Garth.

When I began the book, I thought it was like a Hallmark movie – a little on the sappy side. Little did I know that the author has produced Hallmark Christmas movies! Barbara Hinske is a USA TODAY best-selling author.

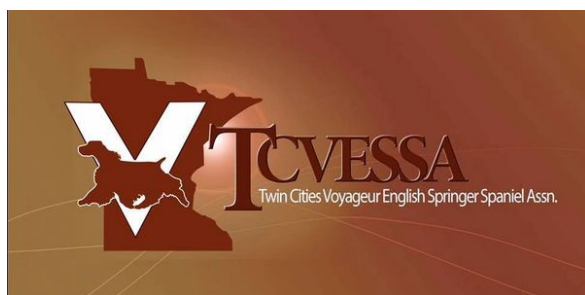
It is a quick read and a good introduction to anyone interested in the guide dog training process. Garth is a black puppy who fulfills his destiny to become that most esteemed of all creatures: a guide dog.

THIS BOOK AND THE SERIES CAN BE PURCHASED ON AMAZON

THE NEW CLUB WEB SITE

HERE IT IS IN ALL OF ITS GLORY!!!!!!

Thanks to Jean Dockendorf, the club website is well on its way! The new design is gorgeous, and the layout is easy to view. So far, a brief history of our club as well as the by-laws are on board. Jean has included the board minutes from last year and this year to date. The VOX Voyageur is included. The photo certificate the annual awards from 2024 are there to review. Jean has posted upcoming events and locations with contacts. More information will come with time. Please check it out and become familiar with it!!!!!!



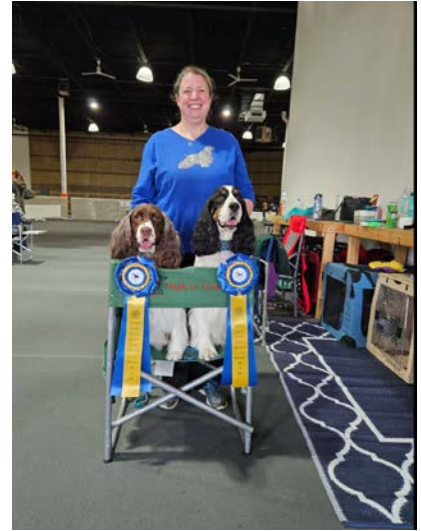
Join the TCVessa
English Springer Spaniel
Club

TCVessa members participate in a wide range of activities with their dogs including conformation, obedience, rally, agility,

— BECOME A MEMBER TODAY —

MAY OBEDIENCE AND RALLY TRIALS

The Annual TCVESSA Obedience and Rally Trials was held May 16 & 17, 2026 at Cloud Nine. This trial was open to all breeds. Friday evening was very busy with run throughs with competitors getting ready for the competition to come. Entries were a bit lower than normal as there were MANY other dog events being held the same weekend in the Metro area. Despite this issue, the trial was a great success! Local judges, Phil and Cindy Rustad were excellent. Thanks also to judge Anna Husa and Patty Fulton.



Did Someone Say *RAFFLE*?



The raffle even went online via video and tickets were purchased via PayPal! This raffle was huge and An even bigger success! **THANK YOU TO SANDI KLIMERS, BONNIE MAFFIT & JENNIFER JABLONSKI**



Many legs were earned as well as several titles in both rally and obedience. Much was posted on FB but very few sent in as brags for this VOX!



If you would like to have a copy of the photos of you receiving your awards at the Awards Banquet, please contact Alice Musburger at rosebudspringers@gmail.com. I will be glad to email them to you as well as the group photo.

JUNE AGILITY TRIALS

The annual Spring agility trial was held May 29-31, 2026, at On the Run Canine Center. All three days filled which is remarkable considering it was the Memorial Day Weekend. The trial secretary was Extreme K-9 Dog Sports with Mike Teh, and the judge was a local judge, Danielle Wagner. There were many fabulous runs and much accomplished with great times. A photographer was there and there will be photos to be had. (Contact Kathy Patregnani). A HUGE thank you goes out to Kathy, Courtney and all club members who worked so hard to make this a great success!

ALL MEMBER CLUB ANNOUNCEMENT



THE NEXT CLUB BOARD MEETING IS
FOR

ALL MEMBERS!!

IT WILL BE HELD VIA ZOOM ON
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15

AT

8:00 p.m.

This will be our first all-member club meeting via Zoom!
Please watch your email in box for the Zoom link on or before July 15!

All-member Meetings (from our by-laws)

SECTION 1. MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Meetings of the Membership shall be held six times each year at such hour, and place as may be designated by the Board of Directors. Such meetings shall be held in the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The Secretary shall send written notice of each meeting by U.S. Mail or by E-Mail at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting. The quorum for such meetings shall be 20% of the members of the organization who are in good standing. At any meeting of members of the Club, voting shall be limited to those members in good standing. The club may conduct any of its meetings and/or business **in person or** via live videoconference (e.g. Cisco Webex Meetings, GoTo Meeting, Microsoft Teams, Skype, or Zoom) **or a combination of the two** in accordance with state law provided that all members so participating:

- (a) are provided with the means to participate.
- (b) identify themselves by name and confirm that they are voting members in 'good standing'.
- (c) can simultaneously hear each other during the meeting and
- (d) agree to participate in this manner.

A member so participating in a meeting by these alternate means is deemed to be **and can fully participate in discussion and voting**. The vote of the majority of eligible members present at a meeting at which a quorum is Present, provided the total number of ballots/votes cast **meets or exceeds** the quorum requirement, shall be necessary for the adoption of any manner voted upon the members. Notification of club meetings, club correspondence related to the conducting of club business, and notification of board meetings may be sent by email, provided that: Each member requesting receipt of email correspondence has signed an authorization agreeing to this method of communication. (Signed on your membership renewal form.) Such authorization, which is revocable, will also release the club from any liability should the notification be received late or not received by the member or board member due to circumstances beyond the club's control.

BRAGS AND PROUD MOMENTS



MCD'S According To My Heart
"Frankie Mae"
Owned by **Sandi Klimers**

Frankie Mae received her beginning novice Obedience title.

April 25, 2026. 199 ½ St Paul Dog
April 26, 2026. 199 St Paul Dog
May. 9, 2026. 199 BOTC

**CONGRATULATIONS
FRANKIE MAE!**

Tessa received her first let of Beginner Novice B Obedience at the St Paul Dog Training Trial on April 24th. She had a score of 191.5 from judge Chuck Kline. Tessa is owned by **Deanna Henshaw and Tom Lenzmeier**.

NICE JOB TESSA!



Karin Anderson and her Springers **Lukas & Miranda** have had a busy May.

CH Wuerlwind N Hillcrest Miranda Rights BN RA BCAT ACT1 ACT2J CGC TKI.

On May 3rd Miranda was Select Bitch under Judge Molly Martin at the Wisconsin Janesville-Beloit Kennel Club Dog Show. Jo Magney had her show ready with her awesome grooming and Dawn Wuerl, co-owner and one of her breeders, showed her. The next weekend, she completed her CDSP (Companion Dog Sports Program) Starter Novice Obed title with a 1st place and the next day at TCOTC (Twin Cities Obedience Training Club) she qualified and titled in AKC Agility's ACT 1 and ACT 2 Jumpers. On May 29 she completed her DCAT title in Fast CAT.

Patriot Lukas Sunshine RA BCAT ACT2 ACT2J DS DJ TKI.

Lukas also showed in CDSP Obedience on May 9 and titled in Novice Obed with a 2nd place. The next day at TCOTC he qualified and titled in AKC Agility's ACT 2 and ACT 2 Jumpers. At Fast CAT on May15 he ran his personal best of 23.57 mph.



GRETTA THORSON AND TEDDIE

I am happy to introduce (pending AKC approval):
CH Foxboro It All Began On Wildwood CGC TKN "Teddie"
Sire: GCHB CH Polesitter Politician "Pete"
Dam: CH Foxboro Justify "Justine"
Bred by Melissa Thorson and Susan Still
Owned by Melissa Thorson and me

Teddie and I had an amazing weekend at the Fargo-Moorhead Kennel Club. It was exhausting doing 4 shows in 2 days, but worth it! She was WB at the first show, completing her Championship, then went on to get Select Bitch in the next 3 shows, earning all 3 of the majors and 14 points towards her Grand Championship! Thank you to Judges Butch Schulman, Ben Wasylyshen, Karen Hynek and Jean Nelson.

- I am so grateful for all the help along the way. - For the expert handling by Melissa, who showed Teddie to her first 5-point major at 7 ½ months and Jody Paquette who gained her second and third majors shortly after.
- To those who kept her groomed and helped me learn – Melissa, Susie Hatch, Tekla Viker, Courtney Hansen, Sarah Willms, (and I know I'm forgetting others).
- To the TCVESSA members at this last show for cheering me on and celebrating with me – Mary Dahl, Carmen Laing and Joan Beck.
- And lastly and most importantly, to Melissa – my lovely daughter, my friend, my coach and my co-owner - who trusted me with Teddie, was patient with me, encouraged me and supports me in all things Teddie. Love you!



Odie and Ella

Odie attended the TCVESSA All Breed Obedience & Rally trial in May and completed his Rally Novice title and got the first leg on his Rally Intermediate title. Odie is now CH MACH PACH Cedarwood's Odin Of Arrowrock RN MXG MJG MXP4 MXPB MJP4 MJPB PAX OF MFP T2BP.

Ella picked up a few more Qs toward her Agility Grand Championship. Earning this title requires Beat and Fast; and 100 each in regular Jumpers and Standard. She now has 298 of the 450 qualifying runs she needs, so she's 66% of the way there! Ella is now CH MACH Cedarwood's Dream A Little Dream MXS MJG MXF MFP T2B2 T2B.

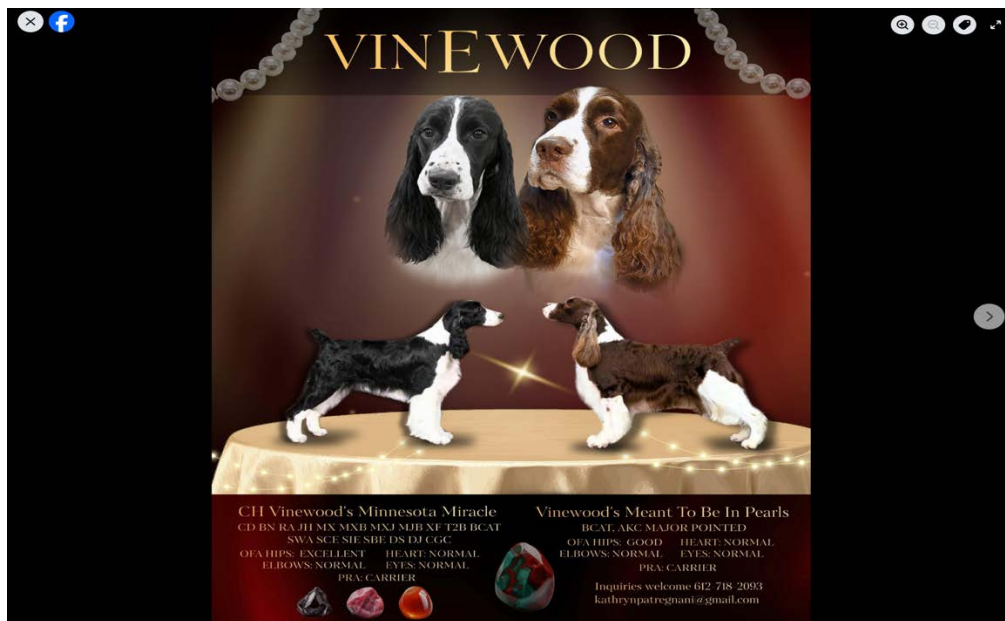


LITTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Two litters due in June at VinEwood!
Contact Kathy Patregnani at 612-718-2093, or kathrynpatregnani@gmail.com



SEGER & HALIE



DIGS & PEARLE

LEGACY BREEDERS

In a groundbreaking interview for the Legacy Breeder series, Julie Roberts shares her extensive insights from over five decades of experience in breeding English Springer Spaniels through her kennel, Eldamar. Sarah, the interview host, seeks to uncover the knowledge and history associated with long-term breeders in the ESSFTA, starting with Julie's journey into the world of dog breeding.

Throughout the interview, Julie reflects on her 53 years of breeding experience. Although she no longer actively breeds, she collaborates with various kennels, including Dartek and Journey, and has achieved notable success. Julie estimates that she has usually bred about one litter a year, with an emphasis on producing sound temperaments, an aspect she considers part of her legacy. Sarah and Julie delve into the evolution of Springer temperament, noting significant improvements over the decades from the challenging behaviors seen in the 70s and 80s—referred to as “springer rage”—to the generally more positive and manageable dispositions observable in the breed today.

Julie highlights notable successes, including her dog Kayla's national win in 2003 and several champion producers, emphasizing her strong bitch line stemming from her foundation dog, Neogahbow's Magic Marker. She recounts how her bitches Star and Spinner contributed significantly to her legacy, each producing multiple champions and demonstrating impressive show careers. Julie underscores the importance of various health clearances, including for elbow dysplasia and PRA, reflecting on how such measures have benefitted the breed. She stresses the significance of breeding for not just conformation, but also for good temperament, which contributes to a dog's ability to thrive as a family pet, performance partner, or show contender.

The interview further explores Julie's approach to breeding, including her evaluation of conformation, structure, and the importance of lineage. In terms of breeding strategies, Julie shares her preference for line breeding over inbreeding or outcrossing, elaborating on the risks associated with each method. She emphasizes the need to meticulously evaluate potential mates based on soundness, health, and overall temperament while also trusting one's intuition in making breeding decisions. The discussion wraps up with Julie offering wisdom to newcomers in the breeding field, encouraging them to seek comprehensive knowledge and hands-on experience while considering the long-term implications of their breeding choices.

Overall, this enlightening interview with Julie Roberts not only celebrates her legacy as a breeder but also serves as a rich resource for current and aspiring breeders looking to navigate the complexities of responsible breeding practices.

Note: This interview is difficult to find. Go to ESSFTA.org and login to the members only section. Then select “Announcements”. Choose the Virtual Puppy Tab and then click on “next”. Contact Sarah Willms if you need help.

Duke University Studied 101 Puppies to See How Their Minds Developed

By Stephanie Gibeault, MSc, CPDT
Updated: Oct 08, 2024, | 5 Minutes

There's no question that puppies are adorable, but what's going on inside their heads? Do they all learn the same way and at the same pace? Or does every puppy have their own strengths and timeline of cognitive milestones? Vanessa Woods, a research scientist at Duke University, and Dr. Brian Hare, a professor at Duke University, explored these questions in their new book *Puppy Kindergarten*. Their research followed 101 puppies to see just how puppy minds develop, and what they discovered might surprise you.

Why Raise 101 Puppies?

Woods and Dr. Hare enrolled 101 Labrador Retriever puppies in Duke Puppy Kindergarten to help discover why some dogs make great service dogs and others fail to graduate from their rigorous training programs. The goal was to develop a standardized set of tests to assess untrained puppies for which careers they would be best suited for, from drug detection to service dog to family pet. All the puppies were bred by Canine Companions, one of the world's largest service dog organizations.

Jared Lazarus and Canine Companions

Fifty-two of the puppies were raised on the Duke University campus. Volunteers with Canine Companions raised the remaining dogs in their homes. All the puppies underwent a series of cognitive tests every two weeks between the ages of 8 and 20 weeks – their final period of rapid brain development. The tests were really games, such as fetch or find the hidden treat, designed to look at various cognitive abilities and how they develop.

How Do Puppies' Brains Develop?

As Dr. Hare and Woods explain in *Puppy Kindergarten*, the traditional idea of intelligence is “something you have more or less of, like coffee in a cup.” If a dog can solve one kind of problem, they can likely solve all kinds of problems. But a different way of looking at intelligence is to see it as a selection of cognitive abilities that vary across individuals. This way of thinking is known as multiple intelligence theory. So, for example, just because a specific dog is good at navigation, that doesn't mean they have a good memory, too.

In their earlier work with adult dogs, Dr. Hare and Woods found that the multiple intelligence theory fit dogs best. And the same was true with the puppies. According to Woods, their main discovery was when these intelligences, or cognitive abilities, appear in a puppy's mind. “Like us, puppies are not born with all the bulbs in the box; these different cognitive abilities appear at different times. For example, their self-control develops slowly from 10 to 14 weeks old – so accidents in the house, tearing up everything in sight, and acting out every thought in their heads are pretty common before the four-month mark.”

What Are the Different Types of Dog Intelligence?

Puppy intelligence isn't like a lightbulb that switches on at a certain age; instead, it's a suite of lights that all turn on at different times. Some show up early and burn bright right away, whereas others come later and are slower to reach maximum brightness. The order in which the puppies acquired different abilities wasn't what you might expect. For example, understanding basic human gestures like pointing arose before the puppies learned to understand the physical world or developed self-control. Woods says, "It was extraordinary to watch these 8-week-old puppies, who could barely walk across the room without falling asleep, who couldn't navigate their way around a door, reading our communicative gestures better than any other species, including our closest living relatives, chimpanzees, and bonobos. Interestingly, just as it is the first intelligence to develop in puppies, it is also the first to develop in us."

Jared Lazarus and Canine Companions

It wasn't until the puppies reached 10 weeks of age that self-control began to emerge. They were between 12 and 14 weeks when they achieved adult-like abilities with self-control problems. One such problem involved putting a treat in a transparent tube with the open ends turned away from the puppy. Since the tube was see-through, the puppies' eyes said the treat was right in front of them. But they had to resist the urge to go straight ahead and instead detour around the tube to one of the open ends.

Once they were between 12 and 14 weeks, the puppies could understand basic physics problems, such as understanding if two towels are lying on the floor, the one lying flat isn't covering anything, whereas the towel with the bowl shape underneath is the one hiding the bowl. The puppies began making eye contact at this age. They also achieved adult levels of mastery in simple memory problems like remembering after 20 seconds which of two overturned bowls was hiding a treat.

But these are generalities. Not every puppy showed the exact same pattern of development. One puppy mastered all the problems before she was 13 weeks old, while some puppies struggled with tests designed for pigeons. Other puppies shone bright in one area, like communication, while they struggled with another, like physics.

How Does Puppy Brain Development Influence Training?

How does this new information impact how you train and interact with a puppy? Woods says it helps you modify your expectations of what your puppy can do at a given age with the reality of what they're capable of. For example, the slow development of self-control makes puppy-proofing essential. "A 10-week-old puppy running around and tearing up the house is not intentionally misbehaving. They don't have the self-control to inhibit one behavior over another. This is what training is. You're asking a puppy or a dog to do something when they would prefer to do something else. Understanding that self-control comes online at a certain period helps you decide when to train your puppies to do various commands."

Jared Lazarus and Canine Companions

Also consider that puppies aren't the strongest at understanding the physical world. They have a hard time with gravity or understanding that objects roll down or fall in a specific direction. They are also challenged by the concept of connectivity or being connected to you by a leash. Woods advises when it comes to physics, you must do a lot of your puppy's thinking for them.

Finally, the research showed that each puppy is an individual with their own timetable and set of skills. So, it's important to realize that no matter how many puppies you've raised before, there will

always be something surprising and unique about your next puppy. It's not about success or failure with these skills, but about understanding the strategy your particular puppy uses to solve problems. That might make them suitable for search and rescue work, service work, or cuddling with the family on the couch. In Woods' opinion, "Puppies are a lot like us in that they're going to thrive in a job that is suited to their particular skill set, and it's up to us to figure out what that skill set is."

What Is Left to Discover About Puppy Brain Development?

For Woods, her favorite part of the Puppy Kindergarten research was seeing the puppies matched with somebody who needed them through Canine Companions, whether that was helping a child with autism, helping a young adult navigate their way through college, or assisting a person in a wheelchair. But what makes continuing this research so important is the fact that Woods and Dr. Hare still can't predict which puppies will make great service dogs. "We've had puppies we never thought would make it just from their personalities and temperaments who went on to be great service dogs and puppies who we thought were surely going to make it who didn't. So that's why we need the science; without a rigorous form of testing, you'll always be guessing."

Jared Lazarus and Canine Companions

Woods says they have just barely scratched the surface when it comes to exploring the puppy mind. She looks forward to discovering even more types of intelligence in puppies because the abilities they tested in their research aren't the only ones that exist. She also wants to expand their aptitude testing for potential service dogs. She believes because service dogs seamlessly blend into the lifestyles of their human partners, we have much to learn from them about how any puppy can become a great pet.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

TCVESSA Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2026,

Byerly's, St. Louis Park

Attendees:

Sarah Willms, Carol Hathaway, Heather Rand, Liz Riel, Joanne Riel, Kathy Patregnani, Deanna Henshaw, Karen Anderson, Sandy Klimers, Tekla Viker, Michelle Berge, Joan Beck, Jean Dockendorf, Gretta Thorson, Alice Musberger. Later Attendees: Diane Slais & Shelia Koon

- Meeting called to order by treasurer Gretta Thorson, 2:17
- Meeting Minutes from April 5, 2025. Moved to accept: Karen Anderson, second by Tekla Viker

President's Report: Courtney Hansen, absent, no report

Secretary's Report: Mary Dahl, absent. Per Gretta, Mary reports that we have 80 paid members, no new applications to be read.

Treasurer's Report: Gretta. New report will be emailed.

Old Business:

Obedience & Rally Trial (Kathy):

- May 16 & 17 and Cloud 9.
- Premium is posted at Xtreme K9s <https://xtremek9s.com/upcomingevents/>
- Kathy is looking for ring stewards/volunteers.
- Local judges, no additional expenses anticipated.
- Ring rental/run throughs on Friday, May 15. Kathy to establish fee. Rally and obedience rings available.
- Sandy Klimers: Volunteered to investigate doing a raffle at the obedience and rally trial

Agility Trial (Kathy)

- May 29-31 at On the Run – local judges, no additional expenses anticipated. Volunteers are always welcome, especially for the novice & open classes in late afternoon.

TCVESSA Meeting Minutes, March 21, 2026• October trial – Judge originally hired cancelled. Kathy was able to hire Christy

Bowers. She will charge travel, not to exceed \$1300. Most out-of-town judges cost between \$1800-\$2000.

VOX Newsletter: (Alice):

- Many attendees thanked and complimented Alice on the new issue!
- Alice encouraged members to submit dog-related articles, book reviews, etc. in addition to Brags, etc.
- Next publication date is June 15. Deadline June 1.

TCVESSA Fundraising Idea:

- Discussed how club members could donate/sell used dog equipment, clothing, etc. at events or on website. Attendees were very excited about this as a fund-raising idea and an opportunity for newer members to acquire equipment from others who are down-sizing.
 - Gretta reminded everyone that Diane is looking for more fundraising ideas
- Summer Solstice conformation shows (Sarah)
- June 18-21, 2026, Isanti County Fairgrounds; Cambridge, MN; Cambridge Minnesota Kennel Club, Anoka Kennel Club, Onofrio is superintendent.
 - TCVESSA will do 4 supported entries, one each day
 - On Saturday, we will have a concurrent specialty in p.m. Sweeps, puppy, etc.
 - Info on sponsoring trophies & ribbons will be available at the Awards Banquet.
- Crow River Fall Classic conformation shows (Sarah)
- October 6-9, 2026, Hutchinson, MN; Wright County KC & Granite City Kennel Club, Baray is superintendent
 - We won't have our own separate building like last year, but we will have nice grooming area close to rings.
 - TCVESSA will do 3 supported entries and 1 designated specialty.

TCVESSA Website (Jean)

- Website (www.tcveffa.org) has been moved to new host GoDaddy using GoDaddy Basic content management system. Monthly price for hosting when paying for 1-year in advance is \$9.99 per month. Jean donated first year's hosting fees. Future charges (beginning in March 2027) will be billed to the club.

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TCVESSA Meeting Minutes, March 21, 2026• The domain name registration, currently \$17.00 per year, will need to be moved from

Lycos to GoDaddy (or another domain name registrar) when it comes due later this year.

- Website is still a work in process, but we have home page, events calendar, about us and newsletters/meeting minutes.

New Business:

Nominating Committee (Alice Musburger, Jo Magney, Brian Schaffer)

- Slate read by Gretta. President: Sarah Willms; Vice President: Alice Musburger. Secretary: Jean Dockendorf; Treasurer: Gretta Thorson; Directors: Heather Rand, Diane Slais, Kathy Patregnani, Courtney Hansen, Tekla Viker.
- Floor was opened for any additional nominations – none received.
- Karen moved to accept; Michelle Berge seconded. Approved by all, none opposed.

Amendment to Bylaws, section 9

- Gretta read proposed amendment to allow remote meetings via zoom or another platform.
- Club members will vote on proposal at General Membership meeting at awards banquet.

Additional Discussion:

- Kathy brought up topic of how to raise a hand to take turns speaking on zoom.
- Alice discussed future examination of Robert's Rules of Order and potential article in zoom etiquette in newsletter.
- Kathy mentioned idea of possibly having a breakfast buffet awards banquet rather than having an evening event.
- Bylaws Review Committee: Karen Anderson and Carol Hathaway volunteered to be on committee to review bylaws. Discussed possibly adding proxy voting.

Motion to Adjourn 3:14 p.m. made by Kathy Patregnani, second by Karen Anderson

Other Items:

English Springer Spaniel Rescue Plant Sale:

Diane Slais handed out order forms for 2026 Spring Plant Sale which is a fundraiser for English Springer Spaniel Rescue America. Order form includes hanging baskets, patio pots

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TCVESSA Meeting Minutes, March 21, 2026and tomato plants. Order forms and payment due April 20th. Order pickup is May 7 & 8 in

Chaska. Contact Diane for details.

ESSFTA 100th Year Anniversary Pins

Kathy is selling ESSFTA 100th Year Anniversary label pins for \$12.00 each. Contact Kathy to get one.

Virtual Puppy Party

Sarah Willms will conduct a virtual evaluation of her current litter of puppies on April 6, at 3 p.m. The zoom meeting will be through the ESSFTA website as part of the Breeder's Education Committee.

Legacy Breeder Interviews

Sarah also mentioned that the ESSFTA Breeder's Education Committee will be doing interviews with legacy Springer breeders, and the first one will be with TCVESSA's own Julie Roberts! Details on when this interview will be available to come.

Canine & Coffee Discussion

Sarah Willms led attendees through a presentation on "An Interactive Discussion on the ESS Standard.

" Attendees said they found this extremely beneficial and are looking forward to another session and continued Discussion on this topic.

TCVESSA Board Meeting

April 11, 2026,

Annual Awards at Lord Fletchers

Roll Call – Attendees sign in Please

Meeting Called to Order

Minutes from the last meeting (Canine & Coffee, March 21, 2026, Byerly's in St. Louis Park)

President's Report - Courtney

Secretary's Report - April first deadline has come and passed. Final membership roster Has been completed by Mary Dahl and published. We now have 70 members which is a drop from 80. We need a new Membership Chair to replace Mary Dahl and a new Sunshine coordinator.

Treasure's Report - Gretta

Unfinished Business –

- a. Discuss idea to have a breakfast buffet awards banquet instead of an evening dinner.
- b. The website is up and running however, it is a work in progress. TCVESSA.org
- c. Fund raising committee needs members. Diane Slais is Chairperson.
- d. Sandi Klimers is looking to do a raffle table for the obedience/rally trial and needs helpers/donated items.

New Business –

- a. Next year is TCVESSA's 50th Anniversary! Be thinking of ideas and ways to celebrate.
- b. (Explain and vote on Zoom Amendment. Use secret Ballots. Passes by 2/3 of those Present).
- c. Election of Officers and Board Members.

President Sarah Willms

Vice President Alice Musburger

Secretary Jean Dockendorf

Treasurer Gretta Thorson

Board At Large Courtney Hansen, Kathy Patreggiani, Heather Rand, Diane Slias, and Tekla Viker.

Reminders of upcoming events – Obedience/Rally Trial May16 & 17, Agility Trial May 29-31, Summer Solstice Cluster June 18-20, ESSFTA Agility Trial, July, Crow River Cluster Oct 6-9.

Fall Vox Deadline is September first.

Adjournment

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MAY 7, 2026,

VIA ZOOM

TCVESSA Board Meeting Agenda

Thursday, May 7 at 7:30 PM CST

Attendees: Sarah Willms, Kathy Patregnani, Courtney Hansen, Tekla Viker, Alice Musburger, Diane Slais, Jean Dockendorf, Heather Rand, (Gretta Thorson absent)

Meeting Called to Order at 7:34 p.m. by Sarah

Approval of Meeting Minutes: from April 11, 2026. Moved by Alice, second by Diane to approve with one name spelling correction. All in favor.

President's Report (Sarah): Sarah expressed appreciation for the board's efforts and looked forward to a productive year ahead, with members agreeing there were promising ideas to implement.

Treasurer's Report: Sent by Greta via email.

□

Beginning Balance: April 1, 2026 \$5451.99

Income:

Banquet Income	\$980.00
Trophy Donations	\$2460.00
Raffle Income	\$670.00
Total Income	\$4110.03

Banquet Expenses:

Lord Fletcher's	\$1971.56
Desserts and Incidentals	\$777.27
Total Banquet Expenses	\$2748.83

Other Expenses:

Ribbons and Awards	\$641.08
Incidentals	\$12.29
Total Other Expenses	\$653.37

Net Gain/Loss \$707.83

Ending Balance: May 1, 2026 \$6159.82

Treasurer's Comments:

Banquet:

- Members paid \$1140 for meals, 17 volunteer cards were used @ \$30 each
 - Lord Fletcher's cost was \$1971.56
 - Incidentals (dessert, coffee, table favors, etc.) was \$777.27
 - Net cost was \$1608.83
- Donations for trophies have been highly successful, nearly all slots for May Obedience/Rally trial are filled.

Several trophies for June Specialty are also covered

Expenses

- Paid invoices to Ravishing Rosettes and FMS Dog Beds for June Specialty
- Expenses for Obedience Trial and Agility Trial are coming in and not yet reflected:
- \$571 to Hodges Badges
- 4 Judges
- Facility fees
- Food and Supplies

Courtney moved to accept treasurer's report; second by Tekla. All in favor.

Old Business:

1. Meeting Schedule

- The group discussed scheduling future meetings, with agreement to hold the next board meeting on June 10th at 8 PM and to decide on the next all-member meeting at that time.
- The board agreed to publish a statement in the Vox newsletter clarifying the meeting format and process for members to bring board business forward, with plans to potentially implement an every-other-month schedule for future meetings.
- The group decided to determine whether the July meeting would be board-only or all-member during their June 10th meeting.
- They agreed to publish meeting minutes on the website with a 30-day window for members to provide corrections or feedback, rather than waiting until the next meeting to approve them.
- The group also discussed potentially revising their bylaws to clarify these processes and establish a more regular meeting schedule, though specific details about the schedule were left for future discussion.

- The board discussed the requirement to hold six total member meetings per year, with current plans showing they have already completed four meetings (January, February, March (Canine & Coffee) and April (Banquet)), with the fifth being the upcoming fall meeting. The board was uncertain whether the "year" was a calendar year (Jan-Dec) or starts with the election of new officers (Apr-Mar).
- 2. TCVESSA Obedience & Rally Trial, May 16 & 17 at Cloud 9 (Kathy):
 - a. Entries Closed: Many other events these dates.
 - b. Ring rental/run thrus on Friday, May 15.
 - c. Sandy Klimers, Bonnie Maffit, Courtney & Kathy are raffle coordinators
 - d. Alice: only three trophy sponsorships were still needed
 - e. The group confirmed that funds for obedience and rally ribbons had already been approved at a previous meeting. Kathy confirmed that ribbons have been ordered.
- 3. TCVESSA Agility Trial, May 29-31 at On the Run (Kathy):
 - a. Entries close: Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 6:00PM
 - b. Volunteer Signup here:
- 4. ESSFTA Agility Trial Fundraiser, July 17-19, Cloud 9 (Kathy):
 - a. Cloud 9
- 5. TCVESSA Agility Trial, October 16-18 at On the Run (Kathy):
 - a. OTR
- 6. VOX Newsletter: (Alice):
 - a. Submitted dog-related articles, book reviews, etc. in addition to Brags, etc.
 - b. Next publication date is June 15. Deadline June 1.
- 7. Summer Solstice/Cambridge Conformation shows, June 18-21, (Sarah/Courtney)
 - a. 4 supported entries, one each day; Saturday concurrent specialty in p.m.
 - b. Tekla provided an update on specialty ribbons and prizes, reporting that ribbons are complete and prizes have been ordered (Minkey dog beds & blankets; colors to match ribbons), all under budget.
 - c. The team still needs to arrange for reserve prizes and supported entry rosettes, with Courtney planning to work on these items and follow up with Gloria (copy Sarah) regarding arrangements, while confirming whether flat ribbons for lower placements would be automatically provided.
 - d. The group discussed setting up refreshments including cheese, crackers, water, and pop in the event building.
 - e. The team also addressed the need to order an ESSFTA Anniversary cake, with Kathy volunteering to order the cake using a photo from the parent club. The club will be reimbursed up to \$50.
 - f. Courtney to check with club on whether they provide tables. Also discussed sourcing tables for the event with multiple options available from team members.
 - g. The board addressed the need to complete judge contracts for the specialty, with Jean offering to handle this task.
 - h. Sarah agreed to contact Liz about obtaining an ESSFTA banner for the June specialty.
 - i. Info on sponsoring trophies & ribbons will be posted.
 - j. Sarah to send contract template to Jean; Sarah & Courtney to send judge contact info to Jean for completion of contracts.
- 8. Crow River/Hutchinson Conformation shows Oct. 6-9, Hutchinson, (Sarah/Michelle B)
 - a. 3 supported entries, 1 concurrent specialty. Order an ESSFTA 100th anniversary cake, the club will be reimbursed up to \$50.
- 9. Fundraising (Diane S):
 - a. TCVESSA Logo gear/Big Frog: Sarah to ask Ruth Dehmel about new art
 - b. Wooden Springers: Courtney contacted Liz R about her offer to make wooden Springers for specialties and obedience trials
 - c. Dog Portrait Fundraising: The group discussed implementing a fundraising activity where an artist would create dog portraits at events and a portion of the fee would go to the club. The artist confirmed she could handle both headshots and full-body drawings. The board identified a few logistical challenges including tax implications, pricing structure, and operational details that need to be worked out with the artist. Diane will check with Greta about tax implications, and Sarah offered to meet with the artist and Diane to discuss logistics.

New Business:

- 1. Volunteer Opportunities:
 - a. The board discussed reorganizing volunteer roles, particularly combining the membership secretary and sunshine coordinator positions into a broader "motivational chair" role. Alice proposed creating a welcome packet system and suggested expanding the role to include birthday reminders, bereavement notifications, welcome packets for new members, and mentor assignments.
 - b. The group agreed that this might be too large a responsibility for one person and discussed potentially creating a committee structure instead. They decided to collect ideas and discuss the proposal further at the next meeting in June, with Alice offering to draft job descriptions in the meantime.

- c. All Board members are asked to collect ideas on volunteer recognition/management and discuss at June meeting.
- 2. Bylaws Committee (Alice M):
 - a. Committee members: Alice, Heather, Karin Andersen, Carol Hathaway
 - b. Goal: Have all revisions completed so that it can be voted on at our annual fall meeting.
 - c. Alice asked all board members to review the bylaws with highlighter and send feedback to bylaws committee.
- 3. Fall All-Member Meeting:
 - a. Kathy to reach out to Bark and Bond to check availability of November 7/8 and 14/15 for fall all-member meeting, then update group.
 - b. Sarah to message Joan about her offer to do an activity at the meeting and check her availability.
- 4. Next Meeting
 - a. The next board member meeting will be Wednesday, June 10 at 8 pm.

UPCOMING EVENTS

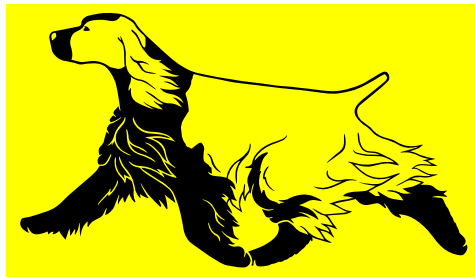
June 18-21 Summer Solstice Show Cluster at Isanti County Fairgrounds in Cambridge.

July 17-19 Agility Trial for ESSFTA at Cloud Nine

October 1-4 Crow River Cluster McCleod County Fairgrounds, Hutchinson, MN

October 10-17 ESSFTA National. Linn County Expo Center, Albany, Oregon. 97322

October 16-18 TCVESSA Agility Trial at On The Run



ARE YOU TCVESSA PROUD?

P.S. Remember to be careful with your dogs and their sensitive hearing on the 4th of July!

Be sure to send any articles, book reviews, comments, questions about our Springers, our Club ETC to me for the next VOX.

Deadline will be September First, 2026



(WOULD BE CUTER IF IT WAS A SPRINGER!!!)

