

FEATHERS & CURLS

Quarterly Newsletter of English Springer Rescue America, Inc.

SPRING 2019



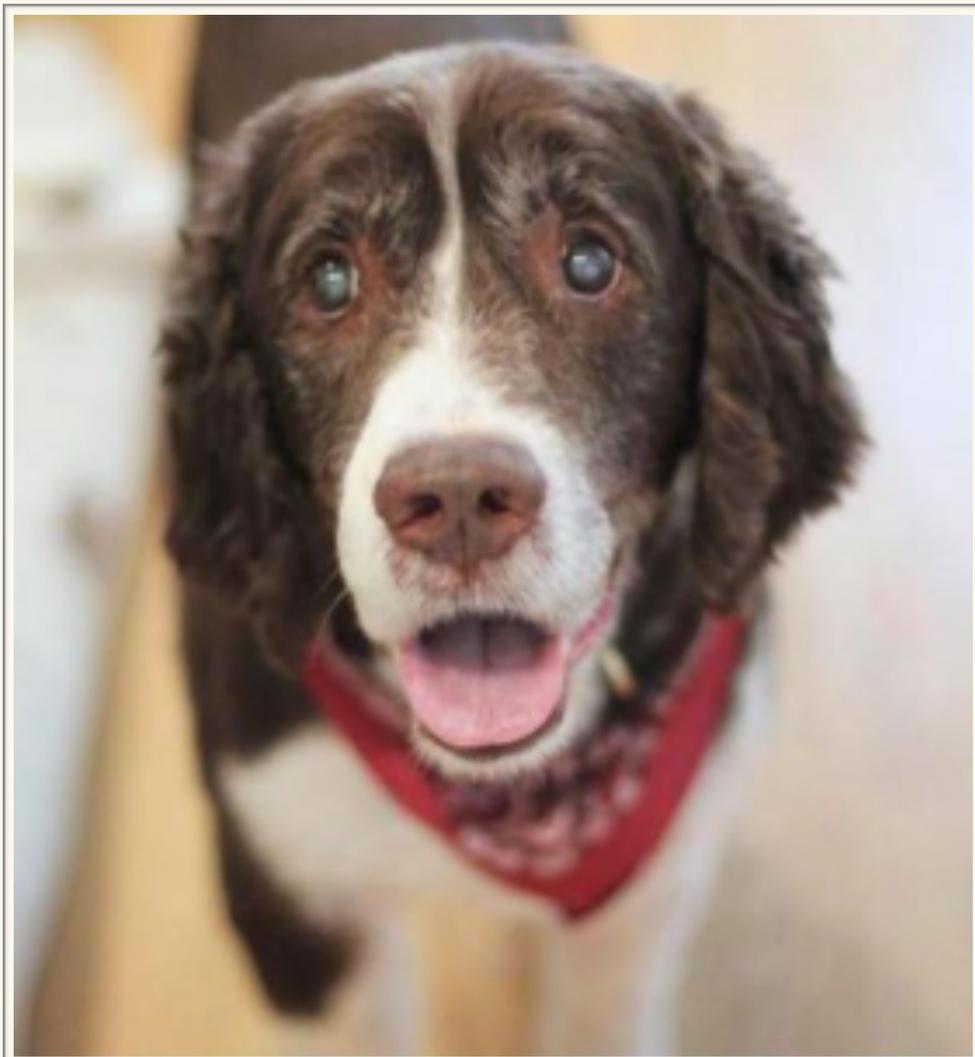
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NEWS FROM THE BOARD

What ESRA's Board Members Have Been Working On

There's no rest for members of ESRA's board, many of whom work daily on ESRA initiatives. Here's what they've been up to since the last newsletter:

- ESRA has created a planned giving team—Dan Spahr (Tennessee), Nicole Bellemare (California), Barb Doolin (Oregon), and Gabriella Filisko (Illinois)—to evaluate the best ways to educate members on how they can leave bequests to ESRA to continue to make a difference helping Springers long after those members have passed on.
- In November, the board appointed Anthony Roybal (New Mexico) to fill the seat vacated by Glay Wiegand (Ohio). Anthony became involved with ESRA in about 2010, when he and his partner began their search to adopt their first Springer rescue. After working closely with Felicia Adams in Texas, they became the proud parents of Maxwell. Anthony has also served as a foster parent for rescues in the New Mexico area. Before joining the board, Anthony agreed to also serve ESRA by working with Glay on a project to modernize its policy and procedures and job descriptions for leadership positions. He has more than 25 years of professional experience in management and HR.
- The board has approved a contract with TheDogStore, operated by ESRA member Maggie Ford, to sell ESRA-branded and other merchandise. You may recall that ESRA used to sell merchandise on its website, but state tax laws have made that incredibly complicated. ESRA's financial team would need to know how each state collects taxes and remit those amounts to each state for each purchase. This agreement allows ESRA to hand that task off to an expert online merchant while still offering ESRA and other merchandise. ESRA holds no inventory and pays no carrying costs.
- ESRA has a new logo to celebrate the organization's 20th year of rescuing, rehabilitating, and rehoming Springers. You can see it on ESRA's website and on all of its social media pages.
- In January, the board appointed Dan Replogle (Texas) to fill the seat vacated by Linda Parker. Dan first connected with ESRA in 2006. Since then, he and his wife, Amy, have fostered more than 100 dogs and have been involved with most activities that are core to ESRA operations, including pulling and transporting dogs, arranging for vetting, and interviewing adoption applicants. Over the past year, Dan has served as the adoption and foster home application coordinator for Sheri Cromwell and Beth Maryan, covering Texas and Oklahoma. Dan is an engineer who retired nine years ago as an executive vice president after a 35-year career with a Fortune 500 company.
- ESRA has, for the fourth year in a row, contracted with a third-party auditor to conduct a 2018 audit and prepare federal and California tax filings.
- ESRA has created a financial planning team—Mike Robbins (Alabama), Dan Replogle (Texas), Nicole Bellemare, Barb Doolin, and Gabriella Filisko—to evaluate how ESRA's strengthened financial position should affect operations. Among the questions it will tackle: Should ESRA use some of its funds to invest in tools or resources that will help ESRA grow and operate more efficiently? Are there long-term goals ESRA can now pursue because of its greater financial security?

A RESCUE ANNIVERSARY WORTH REMEMBERING

By G. M. Fillisko



ESRA volunteers throughout the country stepped up to save dogs endangered by a commercial breeder—and they changed animals’ and humans’ lives in the process.

The story was tragic, and since we’re all dog-lovers, we won’t repel you with too much of the sad detail.

It was the last week of February 2009, and then-Missouri/Kansas ESRA Coordinator Mark Samuel got a call from his contact at the Missouri Department of Agriculture, which oversees commercial dog-breeding facilities in the state. The state needed ESRA’s help with dozens of Springers left homeless after a tragedy at the River Valley Kennels.

“The state had been on this guy many times,” recalls Samuel, speaking of the facility’s owner. “They know who the offenders are, and he’d been in trouble with the state for his breeding facility. The guy’s wife left, either because of divorce or separation, and he essentially said, ‘Screw it. I’m going to burn it all down.’ He opened his kennels, let the dogs run, and set fire to the kennels.”

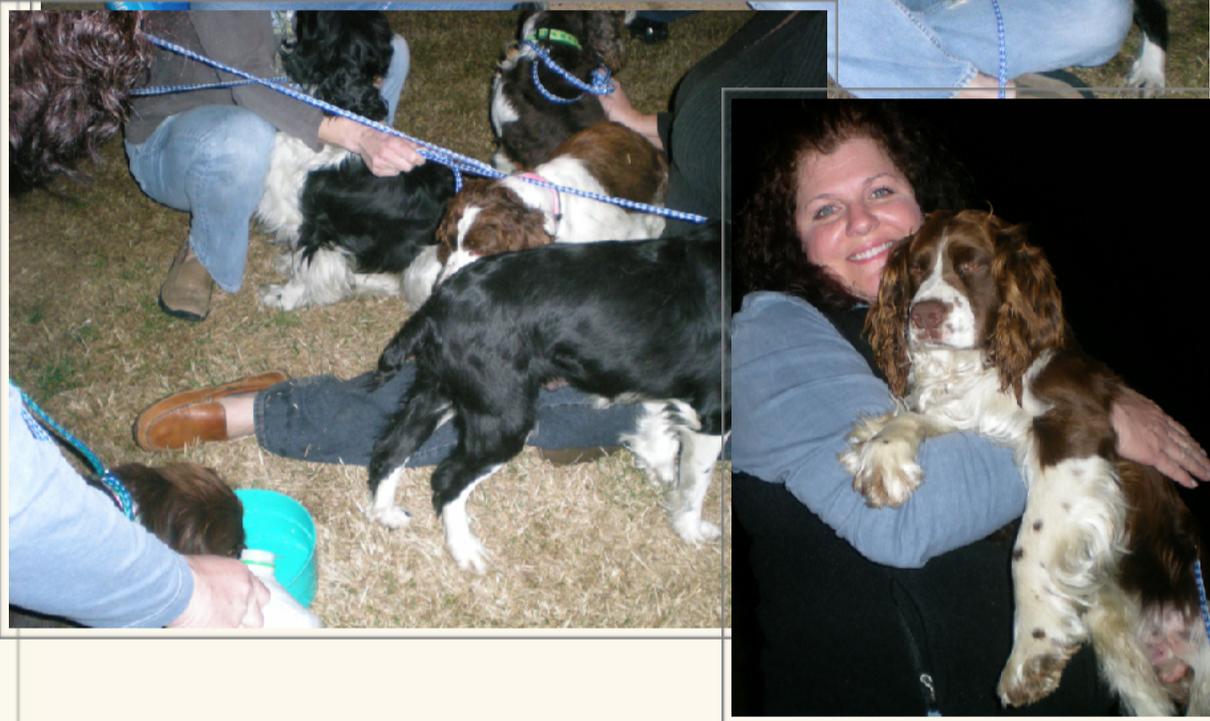
Thus began the largest rescue in ESRA’s 20-year history, and it was actually the second major rescue in two years after a Missouri commercial breeder shuttered in late 2008. ESRA took in more than 60 dogs in that 2008 rescue. It proved to be solid training for the 2009 rescue, in which volunteers from coast to coast again banded together to take in nearly 100 dogs, a total that became nearly 115 after a couple of the rescued pups gave birth in ESRA’s care.

“This rescue reminds us of the passion we all have for rescue and how, when the going gets tough, we can all pull together,” says ESRA’s Special Needs Coordinator Linda Plate, then known as Linda Lintz, when she served as ESRA’s Midwest vice president.

“It also reminds us of how we can impact lives—not only the lives of the dogs we save, but the lives of the people who end up adopting these dogs and giving them a forever home,” she notes. “It’s all about impacting lives, canine and human, and that’s why we do what we do.”

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The urgency of it all! The adrenalin flows again just remembering. A lesson I learned from the River Valley Kennels rescue is how amazingly willing to help all our members and other supporters were. People like to help; never hesitate to reach out. ESRA is an incredible group.

While ESRA's transporters were arranging to fly or drive in to pick up the dogs, others were working on other support issues. Caryn Pola, then ESRA's president, asked me to check around to see if we could secure crates.

Not knowing what to expect, I plunged in and contacted the president of a large crate manufacturer and literally said, "We're in a pickle!" and need to transport a large number of dogs by trucks and vans. I explained the rescue situation, and he said yes! They'd donate the crates, but they asked us to please keep the gift anonymous, and ESRA would need to arrange for and pay the shipping.

The crates were several states away and needed to get to Mark Samuel, our Missouri coordinator at the time, within days. So, the next plea for help to our members: Who has shipping connections? Judie Lemsky, an ESRA member in Alabama, had through her work a good relationship with her rep at United Parcel Service. That person put me in contact with the company's charitable representative (who knew?), who arranged truck transport at an incredibly reduced rate.

Meanwhile, the search for foster space was on by our coordinators across the country. It was amazing to see the number of new volunteers who were stepping up. This was another huge task to get these people interviewed and to get their paperwork in order.

Finally, to cover some of our vetting expenses, I applied for a grant to PetSmart Charities. They needed a tentative budget, verification paperwork from the Missouri Department of Agriculture, and lots of other info for the application. All was quickly accumulated and again—success! Thank you, PetSmart Charities, for supporting ESRA with an \$8,500 grant.—*Carolyn Molloy, ESRA foster home chairperson then and now and former member of ESRA's board of directors*

Memories and records tell the story

Ten years is a long time, and some memories have become fuzzy. Samuel recalls the River Valley rescue, but his recollection is that ESRA took in just 20 Springers. Likewise, some members recall that then-ESRA Director Emeritus Judy Manley was involved in the River Valley rescue, though Manley says she didn't participate in that particular effort.

ESRA's records, in addition to records from the time kept by several long-time ESRA volunteers, however, show that the nearly-100 dogs saved figure is accurate.

"I remember we had a board discussion about it," recalls Plate, who as a regional VP was often included in board meetings. "Could we commit to helping all these dogs? We decided that, yes, we needed to do that. But how were we going to do that?"

Samuel and his wife, Kim Ludwig, became the point persons on the ground where the operations were staged in Kansas City, Kansas, joined by fellow Missouri volunteer Heidi Thomas-Dunn and Chris Odell of Kansas. Plate and others coordinated from afar, primarily by phone and email, since social media wasn't the communications juggernaut it is today. Also assisting behind the scenes were ESRA's then President Caryn Pola and Vice President Marv Miller.

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Among the members who traveled to the Midwest to pick up dogs was Nita Watson, then Georgia's transport coordinator and today the head of ESRA's social media team. "I went with Beth Campbell, Cindy Peterson, and Leslie Allen, and we met Heidi; she was working with Mark on the ground," she states. "We did two caravans and brought back in the neighborhood of 30 dogs. We met volunteers in a park in Cobb County, Ga., and tons of people turned out. We had foster homes for all the dogs spread out in the Southeast."

Watson stresses how incredible the rescue was considering it happened during the Great Recession. "It was a terrible time in the country because of the economy," she notes. "That was why I could do it. I work in civil engineering. The housing market crashed, and I was underemployed. The company I worked for actually went under in early 2010."

"Leslie was also underemployed, and Cindy and Beth were unemployed," adds Watson. "People who could take time off were broke, but the people around us pitched in and covered the cost of the vans, the gas—everything. We also had the support of the local breed club, the Chattahoochee English Springer Spaniel Club of Greater Atlanta. People brought us crates and other things. People came out of the woodwork to give us stuff for the trip."

Plate still has records showing where each dog ended up. "From the spreadsheet I still have, and things may have altered slightly by the time the dogs ended up in foster homes, I show that 18 states took in dogs. For example, Michigan took in a pregnant bitch; Wisconsin took six dogs; Illinois took in five; Ohio took in three; Minnesota took in three; Georgia took four; Mississippi took one; Kansas took three; Florida took 19," states Plate. "These dogs ended up all over the country. We had a bunch that also went all the way to Washington and Oregon."

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On the way transporting to the west coast, it was a snowy night in Montana so they stopped. Asked if it was okay to bring a dog into the room. Then they smuggled in the gang!!!!

“Guys, I’m going to fly to Kansas City”

That’s where Kathy Armstrong entered the picture. At the time, she was ESRA’s coordinator for Idaho and eastern Washington.

“I remember saying to my family, ‘Guys, I’m going to fly to Kansas City and drive a van of dogs back,’” she says. “Nobody could argue with me; I knew I had to do that. My old boss was used to me saying, ‘Can I use two hours of vacation? An emergency has come up, and I need to meet someone about a dog.’ She didn’t even like dogs but appreciated my devotion to rescue.”

Armstrong recalls what she learned when she got on the ground. “We were told there were about 90 German short-haired pointers, about 20 dogs of another breed, and 80-90 Springers,” she explains. “Mark had made arrangements with a fantastic vet and boarding facility that was already friendly with ESRA, and they agreed to take more than 40 Springers.”

The dogs were vetted, and Armstrong says all had some sort of medical need, the most basic being infested with ticks or worms. Her job was to temperament-test the dogs. “The amazing thing was that none of these dogs had a bad temperament,” recalls Armstrong. “They were all so sweet; they were just scared.”

“There was one pregnant mom we were a little worried about,” she states. “She didn’t want anybody getting near her, and she was a little growly. But an ESRA volunteer just sat in the kennel with her. It took a couple of hours, but she finally came over and put her head in the volunteer’s lap.”

Armstrong, another volunteer, and fellow Pacific Northwest volunteers Wes Poetschat and Tracy Marik—both active foster dads with their wives, Cathy Poetschat and Marianne Lefebvre, respectively—rented two vans, loaded them with crates provided by volunteers, and began their journey back to the Pacific Northwest, with stops along the way to drop off dogs to more volunteers.

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*Foster and adopter meeting
in Spokane, WA*

“This was the most amazing part of the story,” she says. “We’d already had a call from Mary Guttieri, who was ESRA’s Ohio coordinator then, telling us to stop at a certain place in Nebraska on our way, where we could drop off a couple of dogs.”

What Armstrong still remembers so vividly, and what still makes her proud, is a crack-of-dawn stop in the middle of the country. “I remember this crystal clearly,” she recalls. “We were driving this big rig, and we got to this location in Wyoming at 5 a.m., and there were all these volunteers waiting to take dogs. People were saying, ‘OK, I’ve got these two.’ ‘This volunteer is taking three, and he’s going to meet another volunteer in Utah.’ We had very willing volunteers all over the West meeting us on our journey back.”

The highlight of the road trip happened because of a snowstorm. “Even though it was March, we got stopped in a snowstorm in the mountain passes of Montana; they had to close the freeway,” states Armstrong. “We were stuck in Missoula with 12 dogs. We ended up going to a motel that said it was pet friendly—but they probably didn’t mean 12 dogs in a room. We brought all the dogs into the hotel, and I still have a picture with six dogs on me while I’m half-awake. That was the best part of the trip. The ones who were so scared decided I was OK.”

Armstrong and her Washington co-coordinator Barb Doolin, who’s now a board member while still coordinating Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, ended up with 28 dogs upon Armstrong’s return; six of them then journeyed to their final destination in California.

“For the most part, all were adopted within about two months,” says Armstrong. “We had people lined up wanting to help and all of these wonderful adopters who couldn’t wait to adopt them. Finding homes was no problem at all because they had such wonderful temperaments, and it was just a matter of trying to get them healthy and acclimated.”

Shy Dogs Who Happily Hopped In for Their Next Adventure

The willingness of people to get involved and drop what they were doing to get to Missouri or to help in any way is still a profound memory for me.

A Spokane, Wash., member donated airline miles so that two Washington volunteers could fly to Missouri and help the team already on the ground drive dogs west. When the tickets were issued, the travel date was wrong, and the airline didn’t want to change it without charging a fee. I called the corporate travel agent at the company I was working for at the time. She talked the airlines into changing the flights free of charge when she explained that it was for dog rescue.

Sixteen dogs came to Western Washington, and they were all so sweet and shy. We met in a parking lot along I-405 south of Bellevue. Ten foster homes waited patiently to make sure they got the dog assigned to them. Everyone was so happy and excited. The dogs were nervous, but each one happily hopped in a car for their next adventure.

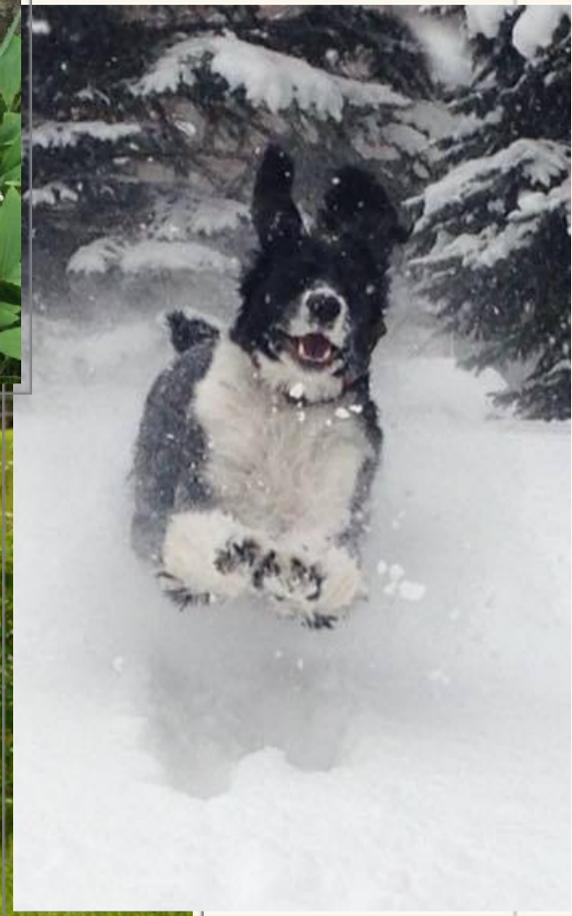
Six dog crates were loaded into my truck, and I drove south to Portland. I met two volunteers from California who’d flown into Portland that morning. We figured out how to get the crates into the rental SUV, and off to California they went.

Some of the dogs adopted in Washington have crossed the Bridge just in the last year. Others are still with us. It still makes my heart happy when I get an update from an adopter about one of the Missouri dogs.—*Barb Doolin, 2009 Washington co-coordinator, now an ESRA board member and coordinator for Alaska, Idaho and Oregon*

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-Iggy enjoying life with Laurie Craig and family



An escape artist decides to stay

Laurie Craig, an Ohio volunteer then who now lives in Pennsylvania, knows all too well the challenge of acclimating a dog from a rescue from a commercial breeder. She wasn't planning to adopt Ignatius, whom she and her husband, Shane, now call Iggy. ESRA took Iggy in with 21 other dogs in Kansas within weeks of the River Valley rescue. But Iggy made himself at home—after a week of scaring the heck out of them.

"At the time, I was doing volunteer work for ESRA, pulling shelter dogs and handling owner relinquishments," she explains. "Iggy had come with the bunch who'd come to Ohio and had been adopted by a couple. They had him for about a week, then called ESRA and said it wasn't working out and wanted to return him.

"Mary Guttieri said to me, 'You're the closest, and we want to get him out of there as soon as possible; can you just keep him overnight, and we'll arrange to get him to a foster home this weekend?'"

A snowstorm also changed the course of Iggy's rescue, turning that single-night foster into days before he could be transported. "Iggy was really cozying up with my other two dogs, even though he was really scared of my husband and me," says Craig. "I thought, 'Why don't we just foster him?'"

Then Iggy escaped.

Craig opened her front door to get the mail, and Iggy bolted. He was missing for nearly a week, though there were sightings during that time. "It was really cold, and we had about eight inches of snow on the ground," she recalls. "We'd see him; he was staying somewhat in the area, living in a gully. Sometimes, I'd hear his tags jingle.

"But he was like a feral dog—he wouldn't come to anybody," she adds. "We had traps set up, and we even had the warden come out thinking maybe we could dart him. It was horrible, but he was too elusive."

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Saving Dogs, Creating Cherished Friendships

There are three things I clearly remember from my time with the Springers from the River Valley Kennels rescue.

The first is the outpouring of support from ESRA members throughout the country. I had been an active member for only about a year-and-a-half at that point. The thought of 100-plus Springers in my state needing rescue seemed overwhelming. The volunteers who gave their time and resources will always remind me that together, anything is possible.

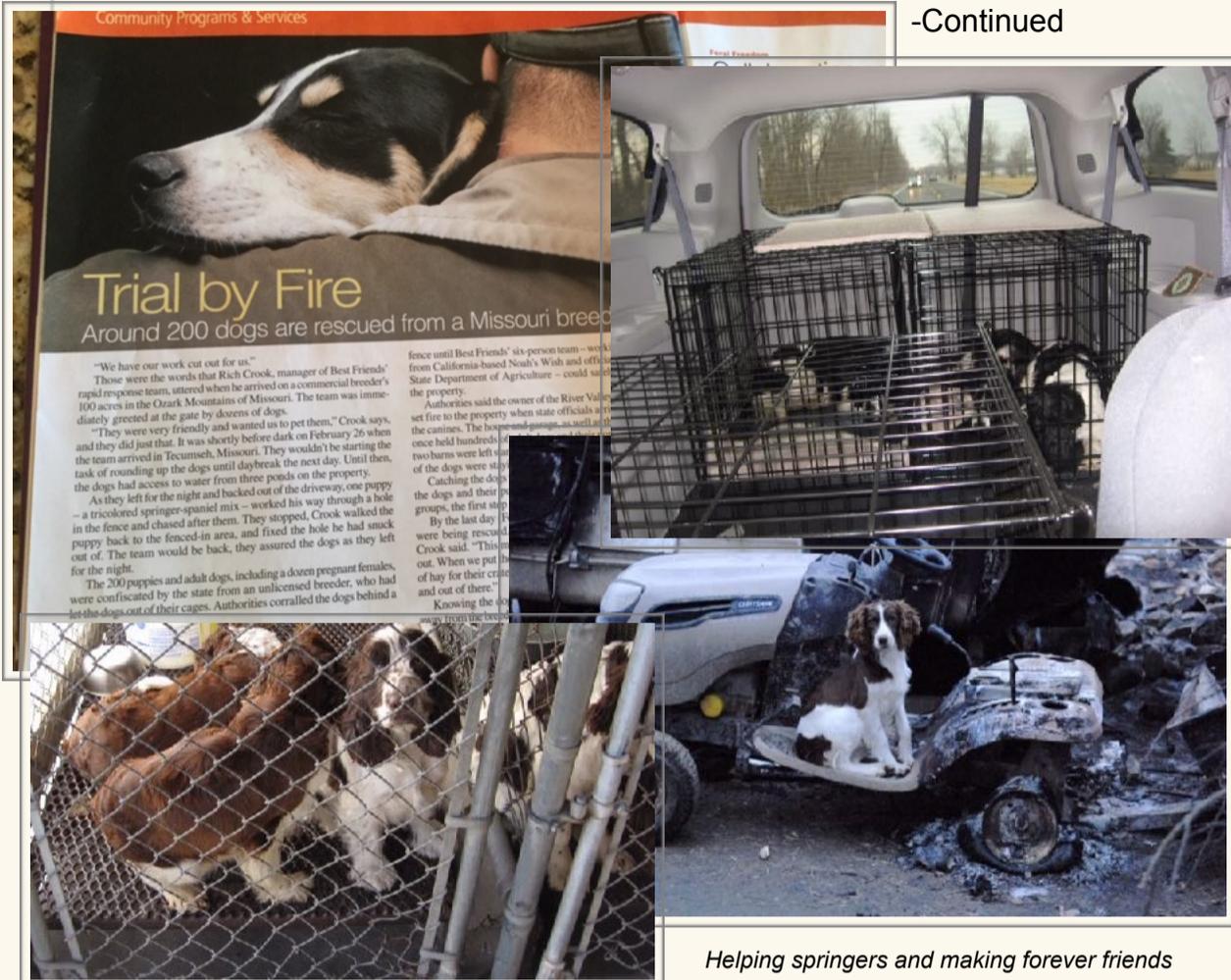
The second will always be the Springers themselves. I'd never encountered that many Springers from a commercial breeding facility. While there was certainly physical evidence of neglect, it was the psychological damage that was the most glaring. Typically, Springers are friendly, affectionate dogs. Sadly, many of the Springers from River Valley were fearful and unsocialized.

Something as simple as a collar terrified them. In fact, the night before transport, we placed identifying collars on each dog. By the next morning, all the dogs had chewed each other's collars off. I can now have a good chuckle about that!

The third and most rewarding memory is the information shared after the Springers made it to their foster or forever families. To see the transformation was gratifying. Each of them deserved a life filled with compassion and love.

As an organization, we certainly have grown from the experience. Personally, some of the friendships I made during that time are my most cherished.—
Heidi Thomas-Dunn, ESRA Missouri volunteer

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Helping springers and making forever friends

This wasn't Iggy's first escape. "Madeline Finnerty and I also lost him on the handoff at the truck stop on I-71 and Highway 83—in the dark," laments Guttieri. "He slipped his collar. I've double collared and martingaled dogs ever since. Thankfully, we got him back late that night. It was the worst experience in the winter at a truck stop ever.

"The mill dogs were something," she adds. "One of my fosters from a second, smaller set of commercial-breeder rescues had a dog that was out for a month before she came inside in the middle of the night. They were escape artists and had to choose to return."

Doolin agrees they were slippery. "One got away from us also," she says. "We had half of West Seattle on the lookout. She was elusive, but we got her back with food and a very, very fancy dog trap that some animal control agency loaned to us. She got adopted by a family with a special needs child, and she *loved* that child."

Choosing to return is exactly what Iggy did. In the middle of the night, Shane heard scratching at the front door. "There was Iggy on the other side of the house at the back gate trying to get in," says Craig. "I ran outside in my pajamas with no shoes. He tried to get away again, but the snow was deep, and I was able to move faster through it. I grabbed hold of him and brought him in.

"Then it was like, 'I can't wait to get this dog out of here!'" she admits. "But he settled in. We thought, 'This must be where he belongs.' We decided to adopt him about two weeks after that."

It took Iggy a little longer to become the Velcro Springer he is today. First, he decided hopping on the couch was safe. Later he decided the bed was worth the risk. "Like most Springers, today I can't go to the bathroom without him getting in there," jokes Craig. "He's still able to get up on the furniture without much help. He doesn't hear well. He doesn't see well. But he's healthy."

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ESRA at its finest

The River Valley rescue wasn't without its flaws. "A rescue of this magnitude comes with many challenges," explains Plate. "We learned a lot from mistakes along the way. For example, we had to move dogs so quickly that some dogs were moved immediately after their spay or neuter, and that wasn't always in the dog's best interest."

Still, Watson says it's an important reminder of the power of ESRA's volunteers. "When something big like that happens and you really need people to step up, people step up," she says. "We had an easier time finding foster homes for them than we do on a regular basis. It was a big deal, and people who didn't normally foster stepped up to foster."

In fact, Watson believes a large-scale rescue today might be easier in some ways. "Social media is a totally different animal than it was then," she asserts. "I wasn't even on Facebook then. So the means of communicating today would be totally different, and the amount of people who would support the effort would be exponentially greater. Because of social media, we also have more contact with people who aren't from the rescue world—they're from the show world, too."

Trey, the Three-Legged Goat-Like Springer

Don and Chris Henkins, ESRA Illinois volunteers and foster parents, loaded up their van with seven Springers from the River Valley Kennels rescue. When they arrived in Orland Park, Ill., all the dogs were vetted, and the process of finding loving families to heal both their bodies and little souls began.

After several weeks, they were all spoken for except one three-legged little boy named Trey. He was estimated to be four to five years old, had severe entropion on both eyes and many abscessed teeth that needed extraction. He was beautiful, and I couldn't help but wonder why his leg was amputated. With so many Springers, why did the owner choose to surgically remove his injured leg and not simply put him to sleep? He had both a beautiful face and a lovely coat, but what made him so special?

I took him home to recover from his surgery and soon learned what made him special. He came into a home with two other rescues—Maggie Mae, a Springer, and Big Jake, a Great Pyrenees. Trey had never lived in a home and jumped on or over everything. He jumped on my stove to get to the hamburgers in the frying pan. He jumped on my counters, kitchen table, and dining room table to explore. He went overland by way of the end tables to get to the couch and love seat.

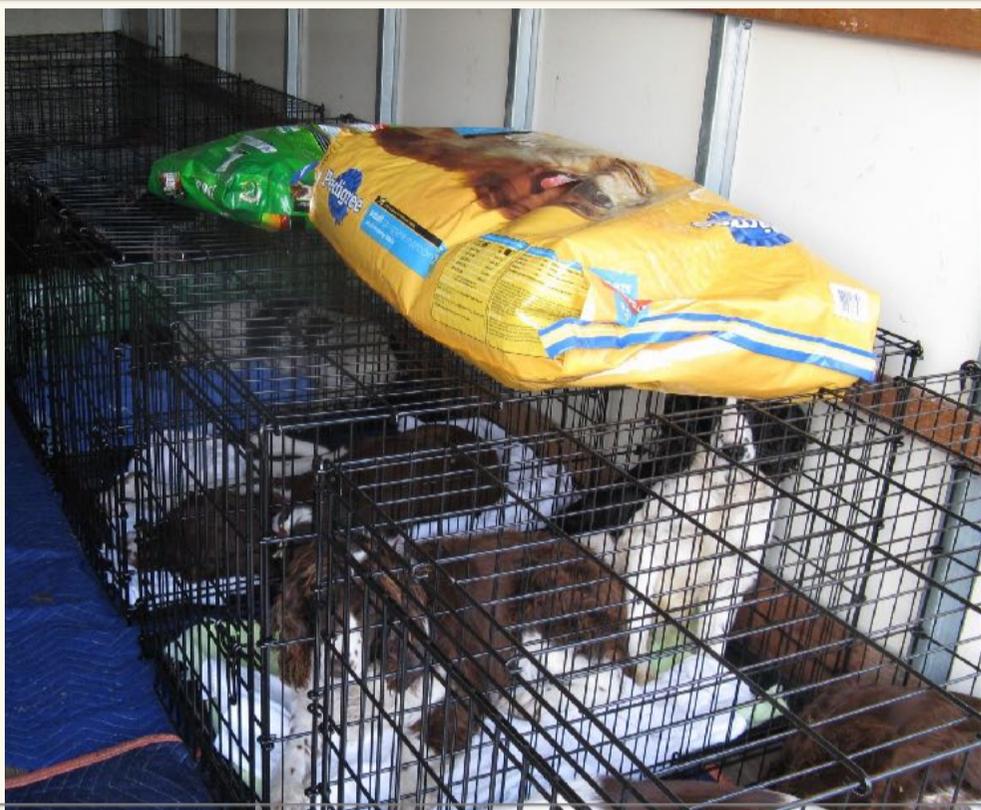
He loved my bed; he made a nest of my comforters and peed on them. He loved Maggie and would pee in her empty food bowl on his way outside. She would look at me, and her eyes said it all, "When is he leaving?!"

He would take every toy he could find, place them in a big circle, and lay on them. He never played. He just sat on as many as he could.

After two weeks, I realized what made him so special—his exuberance for life and loving nature. Trey is still with me. He's almost completely blind, and we carry him down the stairs. But he can still go out for a short walk and a sniff.

He jumps (we lift; he thinks he jumps) on the couch to sit with me and never leaves my side. He worries if he doesn't know where I am, so as I write this, he's snoring on the pillow next to me. I'm so blessed to have had him in my life for the last 10 years.—*Anne Solak-Tennant, Coordinator, ESRA Illinois and Northern Indiana*

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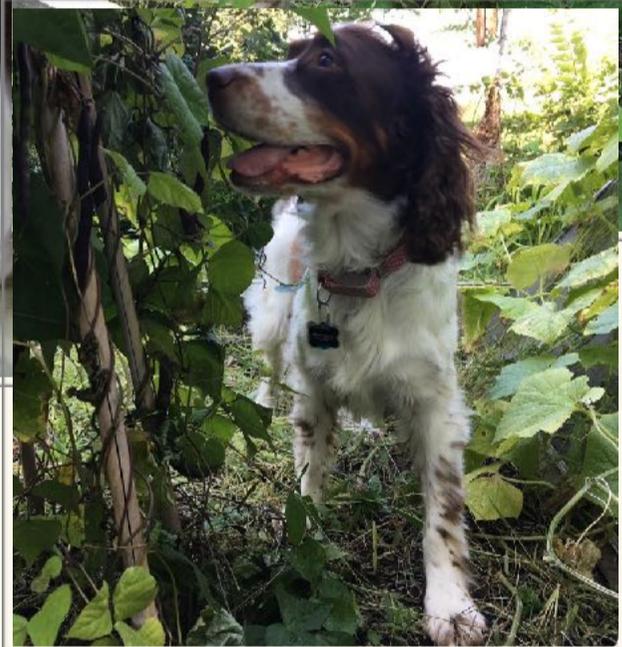
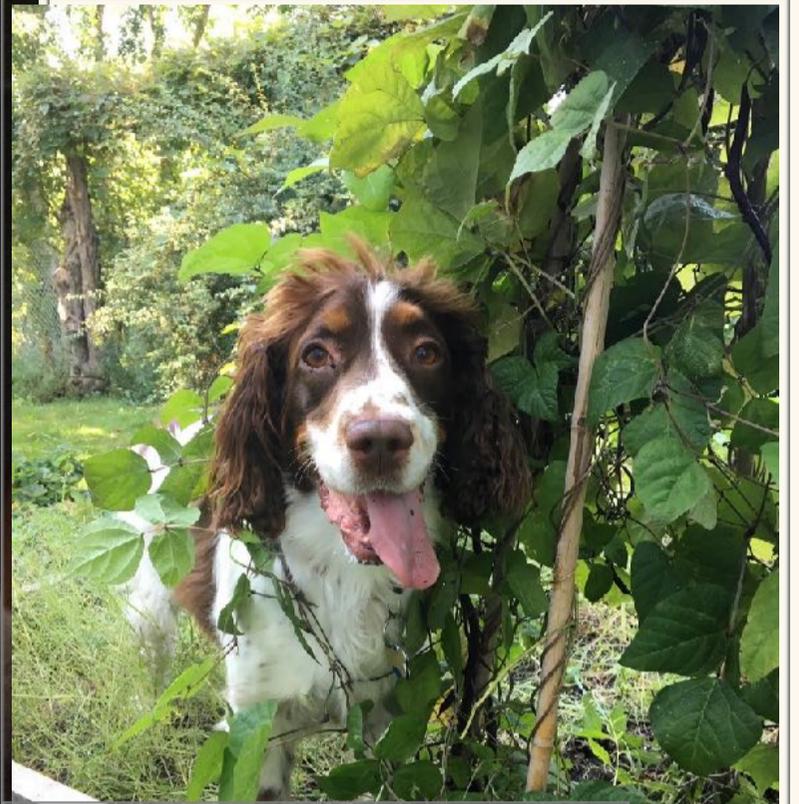
Armstrong says it's important to recognize what took place 10 years ago to remind all of us of the importance of the work we do. "We stepped up to the plate in an amazing way, and I think ESRA is stronger than ever," she says. "We have the potential to make a world of difference in a situation like this. Maybe there are fewer puppy mills today, but there will be another situation like this at some point. If we can stay united and make our work about the dogs, we'll be able to handle it."

Samuel says ESRA's work literally can't be done by anybody else. "These stories make it clear that ESRA's existence is critical to saving and protecting this breed from rogue breeders—it's critical," he says. "The shelters typically don't know Springers like we know them, and they don't have the capacity. These dogs also require special fostering that you can't get through shelters. They might be aggressive or skittish because of fear, and it can take six months for them to trust."

"It's all about ESRA's mission to rescue, rehabilitate, and rehome Springers," he says. "Five months later, when you get that photo of the dog on the couch, it makes it all worth it."

G.M. Filisko is a professional writer by trade and chair of ESRA's board of directors in her spare time.

SPRINGER SILLINESS



One of the reasons we love Springers is that they make us chuckle.

Here, two members share their latest laugh.

The garden's for me, right?

Last summer was the first one we spent with ESRA-alumn Toby. We plant a couple of small veggie gardens along with two small strawberry patches. When the strawberries were ripe in June, I was out picking them and would occasionally eat some myself and give some to Toby and his corgi brother, Gizmo.

Little did I know Toby was taking notes, and the next time we went outside, he was happily picking his own berries! His new-found skill transferred to picking wild raspberries on our portage trail in the Boundary Waters (he refused to keep walking until he had his fill!).

Finally, the beans were ripe, and he decided to watch me pick those so he could help himself to those delicious snacks, too! Here he is eating the beans.—*Christina and Joseph Burton, Minnesota*

Did he just do that?

This is something that my Bratso started doing when I ask him to get off the bed. He sticks his tongue out at me and gives me the raspberries!

The first time it happened, I was trying to change the sheets on the bed while he was trying to take a nap. I thought it was a fluke, but I grabbed my camera and said, "Bratso! Get off the bed!" and, sure enough, the raspberries!

—*Bunny K. Brueggeman, Minnesota*

Want to share the funny things your Springer has done? Email your funny Springer story of no more than 200 words to gabriella.filisko.esra@gmail.com, along with a photo of the "incident," if you have one.

BEQUESTS TO ESRA GROW



Did you know that you can help Springers even after you're no longer around?

It's true. You can arrange in your estate planning documents to provide a gift to ESRA. In fact, it's something that's happening more frequently.

"I've been ESRA's treasurer for 3.5 years," reports Sue Schroer. "In that time, we've received four bequests—all of them within the last 14 months. The amounts range from \$1,000 to \$13,000."

Schroer expects ESRA to receive more of these contributions in the future. "I've received many phone calls from people asking how to leave funds to ESRA in their wills, so I believe there will be more to come. This is a wonderful way to be part of ensuring ESRA's future."

What kinds of questions does Schroer field? Here are just two common queries, along with the answers:

Q. Who will take care of my dog?

A: ESRA's adoption contract states that if the adopter can't care for the dog for any reason, the dog must come back to ESRA. Please make sure your family and friends know about ESRA and how to contact ESRA if needed.

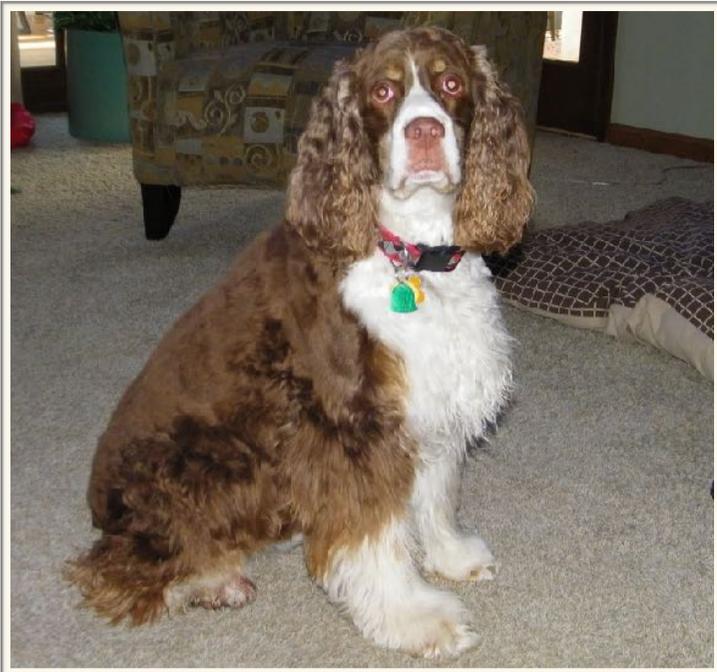
If your dog isn't one adopted from ESRA, we're still here to help any Springer that needs us. So even if your Springer isn't an ESRA alum, again, please spread the word to family and friends about how to reach out to ESRA.

Q. Can I leave funds specifically to care for my own Springer?

A: ESRA suggests you speak with your attorney about setting up a pet trust for this purpose.

If you have questions or would like to hear more about arranging a gift to ESRA in your estate plan, please email treasurer@springerrescue.org.

BOONE'S STORY



Rescue Can Be Hard, But It's Still Worth It

By Glay and Nancy Wiegand

Boone's story starts with Sport, a 75-pound, large boned, gentle giant of a Velcro Springer who succumbed to cancer. Wanting another Springer, we found ESRA. Phil Sproat, Ohio's adoption coordinator, asked us if we would be interested in a true rescue: Boone was having trouble with his house partner, a female littermate, and with the family's very young children. He had not done well in a trial shelter placement and was now, perhaps, on his way to being a farm dog. Time was of the essence.

We agreed to take him as a foster with the intent to adopt, giving us a chance to see if things could work out. When Boone, who was 48 pounds at the time, got out of the transport, we thought maybe he was a Cocker. But he was just a normal-sized Springer, not the big guy Sport taught us to expect.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Over the next two weeks, we were perplexed. Why would anyone want to re-home this beautiful, wonderful, shy Springer? Then the four horsemen of the Apocalypse arrived in the form of person, place, food, and fear aggression.

Whenever we encroached on Boone's person, food, or fear horseman, he'd drop his butt, but not fully sit, lift his nose in the air, tense up, give us the evil eye, then lift his lips to show one or two canines, depending on how ticked he was. Then he'd snarl. If this didn't create the intended reaction, he'd locate a free appendage and snap at it. When we met the "place" horseman, usually by inadvertently dropping a hand into his immediate territory, the reaction was immediate and severe: He'd jump to his front legs and snap-snarl at the offending appendage, all the while giving the evil eye. Strangely, he'd also attack any uncovered toes. What saved Boone was that he had bite inhibition—since we were never actually bitten.

Vet: "He'll always be conflicted."

Behaviorist 1 and 2: "He'll always be a demon."

Call to ESRA: "This isn't working out."

ESRA to us: "You're his last hope."

Us to ESRA: "OK, he deserves a chance..." (can anyone say "softie"?)

Behaviorist 3: "He has issues, but mostly he needs to know he's a dog."

The Modification Plan Begins

So began a six-year behavior modification program—ours and his. Boone needed to learn that "Nothing in Life is Free" and to be guided toward behaving like a well-mannered dog with our consistent leadership. Sometimes, this was easy and other times not so easy. He had daily walks with frequent commands to "sit." We chose his potty and sniffing places. He always walked to the side or rear of us—no leading. Boone always went through a door last, had to get permission to eat, to receive attention, to play, etc.

All Boone caves (any place that had what Boone considered a roof) except three—the kitchen, great room, and bedroom—were walled off. And finally, any undesirable behavior would be met with a loud, sharp "BAH" to get his attention followed by "no." Anyone coming to the house surely thought, even absent the "humbug," that Scrooge lived here year-round. After the attention-getting with "BAH," then Boone was instructed to "sit." Then he needed to lie down and lower his head. Repeated "down" commands, and either assent or boredom would, after five minutes, result in the desired response of Boone calmly lying down. All the while, we'd be standing big, bold, and tall. It's possible this is also the training plan for Buckingham Palace guards. In any event, once the "down" was achieved, we'd be free to resume normal activities. At this point, Boone would get the final say by jumping up, raising a lip, and snarling before resuming his life as well.

Boone would find out he was a dog, we'd think things were better, and slack off. Then he'd forget he was a dog, and the intensity would return. As with most things in life, there was an ebb and flow to our routine with Boone.

BOONE'S STORY -Continued



Boone's body was a war zone

But there's another part to Boone's story—his war with his body. Boone arrived with lamb and rice food to combat his frequent ear infections. Our vet switched him to venison and potato to clear his ears for further trial-and-error testing. But it became apparent that Boone had an allergy manifested in small skin lesions over large parts of his body. The venison and potato should have cleared that as well, so off to a dermatologist, who found that Boone also suffered from a rare strain of staph. Boone's treats became limited to anything that got him to take his pill: Hopping Oats from Serenegy in Seattle, dried sweet potato chips, and, eventually, salmon and sweet potato biscuits from Natural Balance. Over time, we changed food to kangaroo and potato then to salmon and sweet potato, as disgust with the current food became manifest in not eating. He also got canned tuna, fried tilapia, and baked salmon as periodic food treats. Boone received shots to control itching four or five times a year. In his last year, he developed staph sensitivity, which required twice-a-week medicated baths and killed staph injections to desensitize his body's defenses. The good news is this allowed him to eat grain-free beef dog food.

Boone was on antibiotics about half the time over the course of the years. But his biggest trial was cancer. About three to four years after coming to us, a malignant, nonmetastatic tumor was found on his inner right thigh. It was removed, but, because removing every last cell at the margin was impossible, it needed to be removed again 14 months later, then again nine months later, then every six months four times. He was being examined for his eighth surgery on November 30, his last day. With so many surgeries, the sutures couldn't always be put through firm skin and so would pull out to leave a gaping quarter-sized wound. Once when this occurred only days after surgery, the decision was taken to leave it open, without bandages. His muscle and tendons were clearly visible for more than a week as the wound healed over the next six weeks. Through it all, Boone never seemed to realize that he had any wound at all. Three times the sutures failed. But we got a first-hand look at the miracle of healing.

In the end, Boone developed an enlarging spleen that pressed on his digestive tract, causing nausea and vomiting and failing kidneys that were somewhat painful. Their deterioration was progressing such that a ruptured spleen and kidney shutdown were only days away. It was these two ailments that took him, not the cancer. What was amazing was that he never in his life showed discomfort, except itching. But you could tell discomfort was always there by the constant tenseness in his body and his panting when inactive.

Other than that, a normal Springer

The last part to Boone's story was his day-to-day life. Apart from his aggressions and his medical concerns, he was a rather normal, if standoffish, Springer. He always wanted to be in the room with you, but mostly at a six foot distance. He loved his walks because he could usually chase three or four squirrels. He hated car rides: He'd always curl up in the foot well of the passenger seat and move the occupant's feet to his liking. We often wondered what people thought of us as we traveled to and from vacation locations with Nancy's feet on the dash. And, often it would be "Driving Miss Daisy" going to the store.

Although not normal for a Springer, Boone terrorized the grandkids when they'd run noisily through the house, get near his food, or impinge on his personal space. At least once each visit, we'd hear, "Come get Boone; he has me cornered." He'd also terrorize Bandit, our daughter's dog, who was three years older, in similar ways. After \$160 to repair a wounded ear of a transport dog named Dexter, who stayed two nights and got too close to food, we stopped bringing ESRA dogs home for any reason. But, otherwise, he was a typical Springer.

Boone knew his time was short

It's been said that dogs know when their time has come. I believe it. In the last six months of his life, Boone protested our leaving home by barking "please don't go." Then he would run and bound around the house with ear flaps flying like a two-year-old for minutes on end upon our return. He now loved to be petted and would lie still for attention 20, 30, 40 minutes at a time. The Four Horsemen were pushed to the background more times than not. And he watched our every move as if he wanted to take their memory with him. He went to the rainbow bridge at age 15 on November 30, 2018. To the end of his days, Boone lived life on his terms. He let us modify his behavior, but always seemed to have the last woof.

We absolutely don't regret bringing Boone into our home. In his own way, he gave and received affection, if not dog love. He kept us active and alert, and he had all the attributes we love in Springers. Perfection is tough to talk about, but attitude has lots of stories. As much as we loved Sport, his personality merited maybe two minutes of discussion. Boone, on the other hand, is worth 30 to 40 minutes or more—much more. We thank Boone for the memories. And the privilege he bestowed by his adopting us. Boone's story isn't unique, but it's worth telling in full. Rescue isn't always idyllic. Sometimes it involves acceptance, accommodation, hard work, and worry. Many adopters of rescues have similar stories that never surface. We hope that telling Boone's story lets others know that it, at the end, is worth it. Thank you, Mary Guttieri and Phil Sproat for bringing Boone into our family.



HOW TO HELP A



STRESSED DOG

By Nancy Kelly and Linda Plate

First priority: Don't scare the pants off the dog! Dogs that are already stressed can react dramatically to "just one more stimulus" (or the straw that broke the camel's back) and you may not even realize just how stressed they are or how your behavior may be affecting them in a negative way at first.

When you go to a shelter or a private home to pick up a new rescue dog, you should assume the dog is highly stressed. If you do, you will use low-stress handling techniques and begin decreasing his stress level the moment you meet him. A dog may be shut down, and you may unknowingly think she's a quiet, calm dog when in fact she is so stressed she can't think straight, make good choices, or express her playful side. Another dog may be excited and you may think he's an active, energetic guy when in fact he's so stressed he's jumping around impulsively, and not making conscious choices using his "thinking" mind.

Our goal in ESRA is to make dogs' lives better. It starts immediately when we realize the impact of our choices in how to handle, lead, transport, and manage a dog from the beginning to reduce his stress level.

Much of a dog's success in adapting once ESRA begins fostering it or places it in a home is based in the level of stress he is under. When dogs are stressed, they are not using the problem-solving part of their brains and are responding from their instinct to survive. Even though a dog may not be in a physically threatening situation, the anxiety and stress is real for him, and we cannot discount its physiological effects.

If we can reduce their stress, they can begin using their "thinking" brain or forebrain, training will go more smoothly when we apply consistent positive reinforcement, and a dog can really bloom in foster care or an adoptive home. We all know that shelters are stressful environments. Do you know that dogs are also often stressed and anxious in family homes due to other pets, inconsistent training techniques, or the inability of owners to observe the stress signals dogs are showing?

It's always best to use low-stress handling techniques to decrease the stress to the dogs. It can never hurt; we can be pretty sure we're not creating stress or adding to what's already there.

How do you do that? Here are tips for pulling dogs from a shelter, transporting them into the care of a new foster home, or perhaps even fostering them yourself.

A few quick videos to help

Start by viewing two of the many short YouTube videos on Achieving Forever, created just for rescues and foster homes, which you can find here, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TC9E3Vlh5sI>, and here, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDan5C37BE0>. In each case shown or discussed, the dogs are either preparing to or just exiting a shelter where they've been kept temporarily prior to being released into the loving care of a rescue volunteer. The stress level of the dog may dictate how you interact with the dog, but defaulting to low-stress techniques ensures we don't inadvertently add to a dog's stress.

In the videos, you'll see recommended ways to remove a dog from a shelter kennel while providing them ample space, avoiding inadvertently startling them or encouraging defensive responses, and minimizing their stress level in the process. A dog's stress level in a shelter or a home can vary greatly from minimal stress to all-out fear and obvious anxiety.

Stress is a physical phenomenon, and many shelters, kennels, and private homes don't succeed in promoting a quiet or relaxing environment to their charges. The goal we seek is to contribute as little stress as possible to the dog while removing him or her from the current environment, no matter whether it's a shelter or a home.

From the kennel safely

While there are no steadfast "rules" to removing a dog from its kennel at the shelter, you can certainly follow a number of guidelines to assist both the dog and yourself. First, pay attention to the dog's responses to everything you do. Try carrying yourself in a way that is neither intimidating to a dog, nor that presents your own fear in such a situation.

If you're afraid, stop and make a new plan for getting the dog. Ask for help from another volunteer or a shelter staff member. Trust your own responses and do not continue moving forward if you are fearful. Being in a hurry is not a good way to reduce a dog's stress.

HOW TO HELP A STRESSED DOG

-Continued



Dogs are particularly good at reading body language, from canines and humans alike. It's helpful for you to read their body language, too. Don't approach a dog head on, but, rather from a side-standing position. Don't make direct, extended eye contact with the dog; glance at his face, move your eyes to his other body parts, then across his face again as you observe his behavior.

Lower your posture by squatting outside his kennel (don't bend over toward the dog—this is likely to make him feel threatened. Keep your head and face safely away from the dog's reach and keep yourself in a position from which you can quickly move if necessary. If the dog seems relaxed enough that you might be able to enter its kennel, slowly, with no abrupt movements, enter the kennel with your leash in hand.

Before you enter, make a loop out of the leash by threading one end through the handle that will enable you to delicately place this over the head of the dog. Hold a treat through the loop of the leash, and as the dog is eating the treat, drop the leash over his head. As the dog allows, you may tighten the loop of your leash to a comfortable, yet secure, position. Continue giving the dog small treats to continue associating everything you do with something positive. Remember Pavlov? Everything you do can become a positive experience when associated with treats.

Once you and the dog have exited the shelter or kennel, you're one step closer to helping him or her embark on the next chapter of their journey to, hopefully, a forever home.

Loading the dog into your vehicle will also involve similar steps to what you have taken to free him from the confines of the shelter. Here's another video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFUr33pFfkA&t=38s>, to take you through the steps of this process.

Safety for you and the dog come first. "Happy talk" may be helpful in calming the dog; try it and see if the dog calms or becomes excited. If it excites the dog, don't talk any more. If it calms him, continue. Be aware of your own behavior and change it as needed; if you like the dog's response, keep doing it; if not, do something different.

Treats are usually helpful; a treat every step of the way as you move through the process of putting the dog into your vehicle again associates your movements and what's happening to him, possibly very strange to the dog, with something positive. That helps the dog learn to load nicely into a car in the future.

We hope you've found this article and the videos a helpful resource to just one of the many facets of being a rescue volunteer, and we look forward to providing you many more such features in future quarterly newsletters. If you have a subject of particular interest, please feel free to let the editors of this publication know.

Nancy Kelly is a certified professional dog trainer and behavior consultant. Linda Plate is a long-time ESRA volunteer in Georgia who heads ESRA's special needs program and volunteers on the newsletter team.



ESSFTA 2019 NATIONAL

The 2019 National is almost here and we would love to see you! It is a great time to meet other Springer lovers and volunteers and see a bunch of amazing dogs in all kinds of activities.

We will have a booth with unique Springer items and a silent auction. Come for a day or the whole week!

We are actively looking for volunteers to help out with the booth, the rescue dinner and the Parade of Rescue! If you will be attending and can help out in any way please contact us.

If you are a crafter or have any unique Springer items you would like to donate to the silent auction, we would love to hear from you too! Contact Cindy Pierson if you can volunteer or donate items. Her email is lpie229620@gmail.com.

We can't wait to see you there!



You're Invited: 2019 National

Pala Mesa Resort
2001 Old Highway 395
Fallbrook, CA 92028
<http://www.palamesa.com>

ESRA will have a rescue dinner Thursday, October 10 and be holding the popular Parade of Rescue on Friday October 11 at 9:00 am.

Please register for a welcome bag:
<https://essftanational.com>



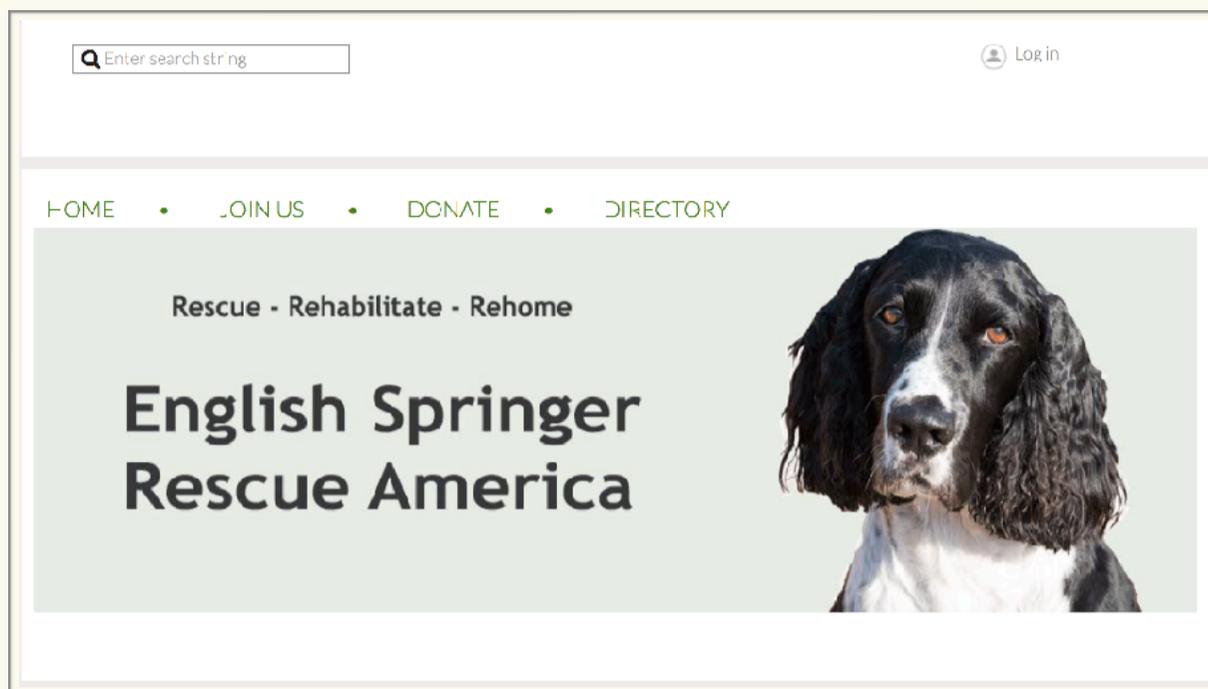
We Need You: Join Our Newsletter Team

If only ESRA's newsletters were magical and wrote themselves. But they don't, and that's why we need people to join our team.

If you'd like to brainstorm good article ideas, write articles for, and help proof ESRA's quarterly newsletter, please contact us at newsletter@springerrescue.org



RENEW NOW!



ESRA members who have not returned a ballot since 2015 are receiving notices that their membership is about to lapse.

These members will need to log into their member profile at:
<https://englishspringerrescueamerica3.wildapricot.org/>

You will be prompted to renew your membership.

All members are strongly encouraged to keep their contact information up-to-date by logging into their profile at the above email address. If you have any difficulty navigating this process, please contact ESRA's membership chair, Shelley Dearmin, at join@springerrescue.org.

NEXT NEWSLETTER: SUMMER 2019

Be on the watch this Summer for our next newsletter containing Happy Endings, upcoming events and interesting news about what ESRA does day in and day out to make this a better world for both our beloved Springers and their families.

If you're like most members, you don't know all of the literally hundreds of people across the nation working hard to rescue Springers through ESRA—they're quite literally ESRA's unsung heroes. If you have a story to share, please let us know!

If you'd like to nominate someone in your area to be featured in an upcoming issue, or have an idea for an interesting story please email the newsletter team at newsletter@springerrescue.org.



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