

February 17, 2011

Mr. Hank Hartnek President American Brittany Club
6909 E Camino Garcia
Sierra Vista, AZ 85650

Dear Hank,

Mr. Robert Wire contacted me and indicated the BOD had not heard about the Marvin D Nelson Jr. Memorial Fund in over two years and they were withholding 2010's donation to the Fund until they had an up date. That date assumption is incorrect. Please see the write up on the ABC web page about the Marvin D Nelson Jr. Memorial Fund. There was also update in the Journal about a year and half ago and information sent to the Veterinary talk lists about sending DNA samples to the lab much more recently.

The University of California at Davis, Center for Companion Animal Health, is continuing Brittany DNA Studies. Dr. Danika Bannasch is heading up these endeavors. This is spelled out in the ABC website.

The Marvin D. Nelson Jr Memorial Fund has all of the donated money as originally given and interest earned. None of the donated money has been spent. There is about \$60,000 in the fund and \$2,000 in usable money. The economic turn down of 2006-08 diminished the Fund by about 14%. All Brittany DNA research in the past was covered by the Center for Companion Animal Health. Currently the Center does not have money to continue to fund the project as it was able to initially help in Brittany DNA Studies.

To insure the continuity of the Marvin D. Nelson Jr Memorial Fund for Brittany DNA Studies a committee was organized (Brittany DNA Studies Committee) with a list of those members given on the ABC website. Steve Ralph was the initial Chair, but some months back indicated he could no longer serve, however, he was present at the last BOD meeting in 2010 to give an update.

Dr. Bannasch needs DNA from newborn pups with cleft palate. She should be contacted for submission of such samples. She is working on four breeds with cleft palate and has good evidence for a gene marker in one of the breeds. Thus, if she had sufficient samples from the Brittany, the first gene marker for a defective inherited trait in the Brittany will be found. This research is costly and donations are always needed.

It is obvious, Brittany DNA research needs ABC annual donation of \$2,000. Eventually, Brittany enthusiasts will come forward with substantial gifts to fund research to find additional gene markers. Some persons have indicated substantial donation upon their deaths. We are fortunate to have the caliber of genetic researcher such as Dr. Bannisch to do Brittany DNA Studies.

As a life long research worker and long time owner of the Brittany, I feel there is nothing more important for the breed than dedicated breeding and doing DNA Studies to find gene markers that would help eliminate many undesirable inherited traits and diseases I believe all other ABC activities are of secondary importance, because with out a healthy and genetically sound breed other activities are minimized.

Thank you and the Board of Directors for help and leadership.
Sincerely,

Gordon Theilen DVM Committee Member Brittany DNA Studies
CC: Mr. Robert Wire West Coast Director