



TCM

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www.trackingclubofma.com

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Message from the President!

Your Board of Directors, many of your Standing Committees, and your President are all busy at the moment with four important areas that pertain to managing our Club on your behalf. The areas that are currently receiving the most attention are the following:

- a. Conducting tests and events for the tracking community,
- b. Providing educational opportunities for our members,
- c. Ensuring facilities for our future events, and
- d. Keeping our corporate housekeeping up to date.

Conducting tests and events for the tracking community - This is what tracking clubs do. TCM has been doing so under the aegis of the AKC for thirty plus years. Few other kinds of organizations are either interested in, or capable of, conducting these tests and events. At each meeting, your Board spends time planning for and arranging how to conduct the best possible tests for the fancy in the next and coming years. This includes all the aspects of test management, from judge selection and site selection to tracklayers and hospitality.

Providing learning opportunities for our members - For a long time we have held Beginner Clinics. We have also had short sessions where chart-making and track-laying were taught. We have tried to arrange for small groups that could train together occasionally. However, we've never done well at holding long-term formal tracking classes. Such classes seem to take more time and planning than any one instructor can provide. If any of our members have ideas on this subject I'd like to hear about them. Lastly on this topic - In the near future, I will propose that sometime next year we hold a Certification Match.

President's Message (cont.)

Ensuring facilities for our future events - Finding quality sites for our tests and other events has always needed our attention. Over the years TCM has used at least a dozen sites for its events. As the changing availability or the reduced suitability of one site makes it less attractive, we try to replace it with another. The High Ridge Wildlife Management Area in Gardener is a good example. In years past, TDX tests were held at High Ridge using ten tracks and a spare. Today we can only fit in three tracks and a spare. We need a substitute for this site now. If any member knows of sites we could use for any of our events, I will personally join them to view the property.

Keeping our corporate housekeeping up to date - For the first dozen years, our Club held Membership Meetings or other gatherings nearly every month. Much of the business of managing the Club was conducted at these meetings. In the early days, none of the members felt that written policies and procedures were needed. Also, our original bylaws were fairly simple when approved. With fewer meetings and more events and in a more complicated world, it seems that we need more guidelines to best run our Club. To this end, at least three committees are actively involved in writing or modifying the documents by which we operate. The Policies and Procedures Committee is preparing guidelines dealing with how the Club should be run. The Bylaws Committee is making changes to legalize our use of email in our communications. The Membership Committee is preparing to incorporate mandates of the other two committees in its membership forms.

More about what your management team is trying to do is coming next time.

Miles Garrard
President

Test Site Report

The largest, long-term problem we face as tracking enthusiasts and as members of the Tracking Club of Massachusetts is the lack of quality sites at which to hold all of our various tests. Let's quickly review a few details of the problem. Our current test sites limit the number of entries that we can reasonably entertain. The problem is almost entirely a matter of all the sites being too small. Smaller acreage results in fewer tracks. If we're talking about TD Test sites, it would be nice if we had room for eight tracks or more instead of just five or six. For TDX Test sites, we should have space for six really good tracks instead of only four. In the case of VST Test sites, room for eight tracks would be good.

Our TCM members are good at what they do. This results in TCM running very good tests. Your Board selects good judges, manages most aspects of the test process well, and recruits outstanding volunteers to help get things done. These test teams pull together to create a series of high quality tests every year. We should be proud of what we do and how well we do it. If we could offer more entry opportunities in all our tests, more trackers could see what we do and benefit from how well we do it.

Unless we are to fall even further behind the demand for more tracks, we need to begin a serious assault on the problem right now.

1. We should solicit at least one suggestion for a possible site (for any one of the test types) from every member. Give us a name and a location and we will follow up on every one. There will undoubtedly be duplicates, but we should have lots of possibilities to work with.
2. Miles will personally lead a site search committee from our Board and our members who volunteer. If you're interested, please volunteer now.
3. The committee will list, research, inspect, and evaluate all the appropriate sites and will make regular reports to the membership.
4. Hopefully, we will be able to begin adding a few of the new sites to our list of useable tracking sites in the near future. We'd like you to go have a look at the ones near you and give us your comments.

The long-term future of TCM as a quality tracking club depends on how well we succeed on this project. In addition to being known as a club that runs really good tests, it would be nice to be known as a club that runs its tests at great field sites. If you wish to volunteer, or have suggestions of any kind, please contact Miles directly, and soon.

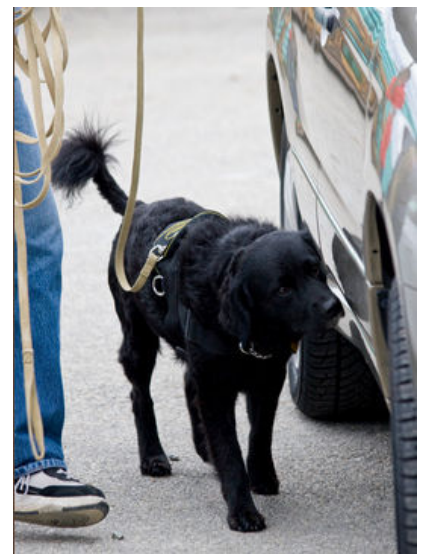
Noseworks

At the September general club meeting, Kari Lavalli and her dog Darwin demonstrated the new sport of K9 Noseworks with a number of challenging hides prepared by Randie Meyers. Established by the National Association of Canine Scent Work, noseworks has spread from California to Alaska, the central states, and throughout the northeast in a mere three years. Noseworks is a sport that is based on police dog detection work for drugs and/or bomb making materials. However, in this sport, dogs are trained to find specific essential oils: birch, anise, and clove. These oils are placed on Q-tips which can then be hidden in various locations for the dog to find.

Training typically starts with teaching the dog to hunt for a food item within closed boxes and rewarding when they locate the correct box. The dog learns that boxes can be large or small, up on things (chairs, desks, tables, car bumpers or wheel wells), or under things, or in things (bags, pipes, concrete blocks). Once they understand the hunt, food is paired with odor (oil on Q-tips) and then food is gradually faded as the reward value is transferred more and more to the oil odor. One can then use one odor to pair with a new odor, or return to food paired with the new odor to train search behavior for anise and clove. For highly confident dogs that are very scent sensitive, a new odor can simply be introduced without pairing and the dog can be rewarded for alerting to it. Throughout, dogs are always rewarded by hand with food beside the odor location to teach them to not only target the odor as closely as possible, but also to stay on the odor.

Before competing, dogs must demonstrate that they can detect the target odor by passing an Odor Recognition Test (ORT). This test is simply a box drill and takes less than a minute to complete. The dog enters a room with approximately 20 boxes present in two or three rows and the dog must locate the box with the particular odor being tested.

There are three basic levels of competition and one excellent level of competition, each consisting of four elements (containers, interior rooms, exterior area, vehicles) that must be passed with no more than three handling faults. As one progresses to higher levels of competition, food or toy distractors may be added into the search area, multiple odors may be used separately or in combination, and odors may not be directly accessible, or may be absent altogether (the dog must sweep the area and demonstrate that there is nothing there to the handler). Thus, the dog needs to learn a distinct signaling behavior that indicates odor location (sit, barking, paw up, lip smacking, head turn, etc.). Only in the lowest level of trialing (NW1) does the dog not need a particular signal; however, it is easier for the handler if the dog is trained to "indicate" in a manner that is unequivocal to the handler. The titles that can be earned are NW1, NW2, NW3 and NW3-Elite.



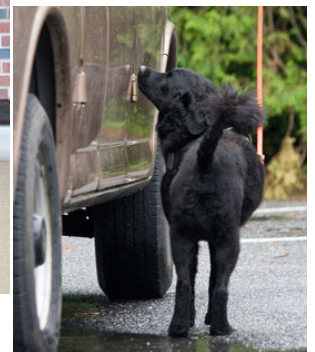
Noseworks (continued)

Because the dog works on leash without other dogs present and walks throughout the search area, this venue is perfect for young to very old dogs, as well as handicapped, reactive, or environmentally sensitive dogs. It builds confidence and is just plain fun.

Kari began training with her two Portuguese Water dogs when noseworks first came to New England in 2010. Her male, Darwin, was not quite a year old when he started and was in the first trial held in New England. He passed 3 of the 4 elements, failing the exterior search after a rainstorm had changed the odor pattern - a condition that she (and many others) had not trained for since only 3 dogs passed and titled that day. However, he titled in his second trial and become the 6th Portie in the country to get a NW1. Currently, 13 Portuguese Water Dogs have earned NW1 titles and 2 have earned NW2 titles. There are no NW3 porties - yet. Her female, Asta, is preparing to enter her first NW1 trial this fall and Darwin will be ready for his NW2 trial in the spring. Apparently he has yet to get over food distractors (sardines seem particularly alluring to him) and learn how to find odor in cement cracks.

Noseworks is interesting and very different from tracking. It involves air scenting and following an scent trail to its source. Dogs need to learn how to cope with wind patterns that may be confusing, with indoor air circulation patterns that may cause the odor trails to move in strange ways, with odor convergence, and handlers have to learn to read their dogs to understand the difference between the dog following an odor to its source versus only being in the odor area. For those interested in all things involving scenting behavior, this is a fun sport to do with your dog.

Those interested in this sport should know that New England has become a hot spot for nosework classes, mock trials, and trials. Instructors can be found in: Massachusetts - Lowell (Beyond the Leash & Cookie That), Littleton (Gemini Dogs), Sudbury (Especially for Pets), Hudson (DOGS! Learning Center), Westborough (SureFire Dogs), Franklin (Masterpeace Dog), Taunton (Performance Plus), Pocasset (Joseph's); New Hampshire - Bow (No Monkey Business Dog Training), Dover, and Auburn (Tova Training); Maine - York (It's a Dog's World). Mock Trials are excellent venues for you to see the kinds of tasks dogs will be required to do - if you are interested, check out www.nacsw.net where all trials and events are listed.



TDX Test, 6 May 2012

TCM held their spring TDX last weekend at the High Ridge Management Area in Gardner, MA. Sally Garrod was Test Chair and Sharon Concannon was Test Secretary. Judges were Art Twiss and Joe Hamzy with Deb Brown as Apprentice. Track and X-track layers were Amie, Martha, Lori, Leland, Denise, Randie, Kathy, Miles, Christine and Pam. What a great group of people. Plenty of help; plenty of food! Tracks were plotted after noon on Saturday as turkey season kept us out of the fields. So much of this site is unavailable because of road gates and the trails through the woods have been blocked intentionally with fallen trees. TCM has persevered, though, and five nice tracks were plotted.

Temperatures in the fifties, calm winds and overcast skies greeted us at the draw Sunday. Track 1 went to a Pointer dog and started in the first field after the prison. This dog started slowly but stayed pretty close to the first leg only to go past the first turn.

Track 2 was our first pass of the day. Cocker Spaniel dog Dalin's The Domino Effect CGC TD RN and handler Pam Frattallone made quick work of their track. The dog started along the road, headed for a tree line, and then turned up a hill past the first set of x-tracks. The next turn went down towards woods and had the second x-tracks. The next leg went through a brush line at a low point and then went up a hill to an article. The track continued towards woods and went in. The dog investigated several crosstracks between the article and the woods before going into the woods. There was a turn in the woods which the dog made and then an uphill climb over boulders and deadfall. Whew. Coming out of the woods the dog found an article and then made the final turn to the glove.

Track 3 was a heartbreaker. A German Shepherd dog made a start downhill then an open turn uphill through a tree line that had a large log to cross and then to the turn. Then the track went downhill to an article and into a woods. The dog was methodical and precise. He entered the woods and tracked down and up and over rocks and deadfall. There was a turn after exiting the woods and then a leg up a hill past x-tracks. Another turn and more x-tracks. And then an article. Just before the last turn the dog turned the opposite direction and pulled the handler to a fail. Ugh.

Track 4 was our second pass of the day. Bridal Vales Abbey Vom Fleischerheim CD NA NAJ TD and Carol Bolan tracked steadily to the glove. This team had suffered illness and injury but were ready this day. A start well away from the road took us up a hill to a turn, an open turn and a leg that had an article. Another turn and then a road crossing. Another turn, x-tracks and another road crossing and a woods entry. The entry to this trail through the woods was a mass of fallen trees. The dog made the detour around them and proceeded down the trail to an article. Out of the woods the track quickly turned, made a road crossing up a hill to a turn and then downhill to the last x-tracks and the glove. A difficult, long (970 yds) track performed flawlessly.

Our alternate track was used for titling. A Golden Retriever bitch made the first leg up a hill, an open turn into the woods but failed to find the track in the woods. This was a sentimental track for me as it contained parts, in reverse, of a passing TDX track Rick and I had thirteen years ago. I hadn't remembered that the hills were so steep but then I was thirteen years younger!

TDX Test (cont.)

Lunch and awards followed. Rosettes and paperweights were given to the passing teams and the Ruth Ridings Memorial Trophy was awarded. I remember Ruth from those many years ago. She was the Ruth in “follow Ruth’s van” as we went to our track and the one who insisted on a hug after our pass. A lovely lady. The day was capped as Art Twiss celebrated Miles Garrod’s birthday with a cake.

Joe Hamzy
TDX Judge



TD Test, 4 November 2012

As opposed to last year's fall TD test where it snowed and was cold, the weather for this year's test was just perfect. The sun was shining, there was a light wind, and the grass wasn't soaking (despite the hurricane rain from a few days beforehand). Pam Carlson, our club's new hospitality guru, had prepared a lovely breakfast of hot coffee, tea, and chocolate, doughnuts, and fruit and followed that up with a scrumptious lunch and fabulous homemade cookies.

We had five entrants. Martha Campbell, the trial chair, prepared a cute method for the draw - choosing different colored scarecrows which the nervous handlers got to keep. The first track went to an 11 year old corgi. This corgi took off at the flags charging down the first leg of the track, made it through the first and second turns, and then on the third turn headed down a hill fairly close to a tree line and a horse stable. The dog got confused at the fourth turn, choosing to head towards the tree line and stables, and was patiently handled by his owner while he figured out that there was nothing worthwhile that way. After being rescented, the dog made his way back to the location of the fourth turn and this time chose the correct direction. Then it was smooth sailing to the fifth turn and the glove with lots of whooping from his owner.

The second track went to a lovely four year old German shepherd bitch who tracked nose down steadily on the entire track, hitting every turn perfectly and working right to the glove. It was a flawless performance and a beautiful sight to see.

The third track went to an eight month old Labrador retriever whose handler had never been to a trial and was incredibly nervous. The gallery was first amazed and then positive that the dog would pass as they watched the young dog track his way to the first flag and then continue, head down, through the entire course. Certainly, this dog knew exactly what he was doing. The handler was so excited that he found the glove that she jumped up and down waving the flag for several minutes.

The fourth track went to a veteran TD tracker - a 10 year old Newfoundland bitch. The track was set on a downslope towards a marsh region and this dog had no difficulty following it through several changes of vegetation type. Again, a simply beautiful tracking job to watch.

The fifth and final track went to a German shepherd dog. The gallery was hoping that we would be able to celebrate all five dogs passing, but while this dog started off very strongly and made it through the first two turns, he became distracted by the gallery and lost his way. After trying to get the dog back on track for a period of time, we were all sad to hear the judge's whistle for guiding. It was heartbreaking especially since the dog started out so well.

All of these dogs were beautiful to watch work their tracks and their owners/handlers should be proud of their amazing performances. Thanks to our wonderful tracklayers: Kathy Pendergast, Leslie Baker, Matt Winters, Pam Carlson, and Martha Campbell.



Kari Lavalli
TD Trial Secretary

Science Corner

A new study that was published in November 2012 examined the effect of a meal on performance tasks of dogs. The study, entitled “The Breakfast Effect: Dogs (*Canis familiaris*) Search More Accurately When They are Less Hungry”, studied 14 privately owned dogs ranging from 1 to 10 years of age and from the following breeds: Belgian tervurens, and sheepdogs, golden retrievers, beagle, boxers, and mixed breeds.

All were fasted for 12 hrs and then either broken into a group that was fed 30 min prior to the sit/stay, a group that was fed 90 min prior to a sit/stay, or a group that remained fasted. All dogs were tested by first being cued to do an out-of-sight sit/stay for 10 min in a room separate from the odor trials. Then dogs were praised for their sit/stay, given a small treat, and moved to the odor room. Dogs were able to watch the experimenter place the food into a perforated box and then released within 10 sec of the food placement by a second experimenter. Scoring of the dogs was based on their first decision of which box the treat was in, although dogs were given 4 separate chances to find the correct box.

Dogs that were fed within 30 min of the sit/stay and search had a mean success rate of 75% compared to those fasted for 12 hrs or those fed 90 min before the sit/stay (65% success rate for fasted/90 min prior fed dogs).

The significant difference in scores suggests that the sit/stay requires concentration by the dog and this concentration uses up a lot of glucose stores in the dog's body. Those fed 30 min before the sit/stay have more glucose reserves than those fasted or those fed 90 min before the search and thus can do a task that requires self control and then a search, while those fasted or fed 90 min before use up their glucose faster (because their reserves are lower since their basal metabolism is using glucose up) when asked to do the self control task and then have even less energy to do the search.

Dogs were fed with Evo Turkey & Chicken which is a 42.7% protein, 22.7% fat, 1.43% fiber kibble that is grain free, but uses potato, carrots, cottage cheese and apple as carb sources. And yes, you can get glucose created from both protein and fat, but it is a slower metabolic process.

The authors provided a strong caveat to the results of their study being extrapolated to performance dogs in the ring or those that work SAR and various types of detection work: performance of tasks is related to arousal state which can be affected by hunger levels, so one must balance those two things, especially since for some dogs a full meal could be de-motivating by creating satiation and, thus, arousal for potential food rewards at the end of task completion.

The thing that wasn't so great about the study: dogs should have all been on same diet for a longer period of time (like a week or so) to equalize glucagen levels in' livers (meaning that dog owners would have had to agree to this beforehand and that could have been an issue). Dogs fed a less protein-rich diet normally might actually have more glucagen in their liver than those fed a protein-

rich diet and you might want to equalize this across all dogs before starting experiment particularly as other studies suggest a lot of intra-animal variation in the ability of glucagon to induce glucose production from hepatic glycogen stores, which are very high in overnight fasted dogs as per Bradley and Bergman 1992's article in American Physiological Society).

What should you take from this study? Don't ask your dog to do any task requiring self-control prior to a search (let the dog be a dog in the time leading up to a search). In a trial venue like that seen in noseworks, especially at the higher levels of nosework where searches are long and difficult, you might want to feed a very small meal between the first two searches and the second two searches to replenish the glucose reserves the dog has blown through doing the first set searches. In noseworks, you obviously want the arousal that is caused by the dog knowing that if he/she finds the odor, he/she gets a food reward. But in a venue such as tracking or search and rescue, you want the find (article, person) to be the reward so in those cases, you might want to feed your dog a smallish meal beforehand so that it has glucose reserves to focus on the potentially long search with the distractions that are out there in the real world (critters/crosstracks, etc.). That means you must have transferred the value of food to the find (article or person) prior to ever putting your dog into a real search situation.

In no way did this study say that you must feed your dog breakfast to get a good performance. It pointed out that that certain concentration tasks use up glucose reserves fast and that that then affects performance down the line if those reserves are not replenished.

Sources: Miller, H.C. and C. Bender. 2012. The breakfast effect: dogs (*Canis familiaris*) search more accurately when they are less hungry. Behavioural Processes 91(3): 313-317.

Bradley, D.C. and R.N. Bergman. 1992. Restoration of stable metabolic conditions during islet suppression in dogs. American Journal of Physiology 262: E532-E538.

TCM Upcoming Events

January 13, 2013 - *Membership Meeting* at 2 pm at the Lunenburg Library on 1023 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462.

March 20, 2013 - *Annual Membership Meeting* at 7 pm at the Lunenburg Library on 1023 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462. Come vote on your new board members.

April 13-14, 2013 - *Step One Clinic*.

May 4-5, 2013 - *TDX Trial* at Gardner Wildlife Management Area, Gardner, MA.

May 25-26, 2013 - *VST* at Holy Cross, Worcester, MA.

Please join us for our club meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for January 13th at the Lunenburg Library in Lunenburg, MA. Note that this date is a Sunday and the time scheduled is at 2 p.m. We hope that this might be a more convenient time for members than Friday night. Note that the Annual Meeting will be held on a Wednesday evening at 7 p.m.

See the TCM Website for details on additional 2013 meetings as they arise.

Also, please encourage your training buddies to join TCM. Membership rates are:

\$15.00 for Associate Member
\$20.00 for Full Voting Member

NOTE: TCM hats are now available for purchase. Contact Donna Kiuru at leomecs@aol.com. They are \$15 at all events or \$15 + \$5.95 S&H if ordered by mail.



Happy Winter Tracking!



Fall 2011 TDX Trial

