



Tracking Club of  
Massachusetts

# TCM

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[www.trackingclubofma.com](http://www.trackingclubofma.com)

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## Club Officers

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## Message from the President!

2013 has been a challenging year for the club and yet we have managed to engage a host of new and enthusiastic members to step up and to keep the club and its activities moving forward. The new board is working hard to offer activities that will be fun and useful for club members and welcomes all members to help us in our endeavors.

In the months ahead I am excited about our plans to move the club in a positive direction. Many of you have mentioned a desire to do more tracking in the club and less administrative things. We have heard you. I hope to give this membership more opportunities to participate. The board and I are working on matches for all levels, including the newest AKC TDU test. Also we will offer more workshops to address issues common to all, such as problem solving, transitions, corners, articles, properly reading your dogs, distractions, etc. We hope to be able to get some of our local judges to come out, as well as our own judge members.

The board has set up a notification message center on our Facebook account to announce get-togethers of people wanting to track. Right now those get-togethers occur on Sunday when hunting is not allowed and have been at Gardner's WMA, but we are looking around for other sites at which to track to accommodate the more southerly located members of the club. If you "Like" our Facebook page, you will be notified when these get-togethers occur. This board believes it is important to offer clinic participants as many opportunities as possible to continue their training after taking a clinic so that they and their dogs can proceed towards whatever goals the team may have.

I am putting together different locations for meeting with members to do tracking during our most favorite tracking times, Spring & Fall. I have locations now set up in Walpole, Ayer, Sutton, Gardner, and am also looking at a possible location in Lincoln, RI. If you have a location to meet for tracking practice please consider sharing it. My hope is to get a schedule so more experienced folks can meet up in different locations for all our members and practice tracking on a weekly/monthly basis during this time. These sites can also be used in the future for Certification matches as well.

## President's Message (cont.)

We also completed our spring and fall trials with a great group of judges and tracklayers. We thank all of these fine folks for their devotion to the sport of tracking. We hope, in the future, to offer a special emblem to our tracklayers as thanks for their service and, each additional time they lay track, we will offer a pin to add to the emblem. The devotion of our tracklayers provides an invaluable service to the club and should be duly noted.

Your board is also working on a bylaws revision that will streamline the running of the club, make the board's activities more transparent, and offer awards to all members. Within that revision, we plan to suggest that board members should be elected to two-year terms, rather than one year terms, because it generally takes new board members a bit of time to learn the ropes and make their mark on the board. Eventually, we'd hope to structure the board such that we would have staggered terms, so that new board members can cycle onto the board while still having some continuity with more experienced board members. We hope to get those proposed revisions out to members early in the new year so that everyone has time to read them and provide feedback to the board before we vote on them at the March Annual Meeting. We encourage members to weigh in on these changes.

Some of you may know that our history includes a commitment to agility as well as tracking, so we are thinking about including this fun sport back into our club's activities. We have identified a facility with all the equipment needed to host a trial indoors. So look for more information on this in the months ahead as well. On your membership renewal form for 2014, you should have noticed a request for information on your activities in this sport so that we could gather data on how many club members are interested and involved in agility.

This is your club, not mine. I want your ideas, suggestions, and your participation. My wish is to make this a gentler, simpler, and much more transparent club in the months and years ahead. I can't do it alone. Input from each and every one of you is welcome.

Finally, the board has obtained a debit card linked to our corporate bank account. This makes it possible for the treasurer (and/or the president) to directly pay for the large expenses associated with trials and other events (porta potties, judges' hotel rooms, rosettes and ribbons, and awards) which makes it much less burdensome on trial/event secretaries and chairs. We hope that we can encourage many of you to volunteer to be the chair or secretary for our 2014 and 2015 events as a result of this streamlined process. Please let us know if you'd like to help out!

And on that note, the club still needs a couple of directors to serve on the board. After consulting with our rep at the AKC, we are assured that TCM board meetings may be held by phone and videoconferencing, so we have adopted these technologies to make it easier for our far-flung board members to attend meetings without having to travel great distances. Anyone interested in helping the Tracking Club of Massachusetts move forward in a new direction, please contact me directly.

Happy tracking everyone!

*Martha Campbell*  
President

## In Memorium

TCM lost a long-term member who served on various of its boards on Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Joan Marie Muse was born in Tewksbury and was the daughter of the late James A. and Ann J. (McHale) Muse.

Joan was a graduate of Nazareth Academy in Wakefield. She was a former dancer and dance instructor and had worked for American Mutual in Wakefield before her retirement. Joan was also a dog trainer and had placed several titles on many German shepherds for obedience, agility, and tracking. She had also volunteered at the Stone Zoo for 6 years.



She was the dear friend of the late Ruth Ridings who founded the Tracking Club of Massachusetts. She is survived by many nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews and many dear friends. She is also survived by her two German Shepherds: Dansr and Tarra.

Her funeral was held at the McDonald Funeral Home on Tuesday and was followed by a Funeral Mass in St. Joseph Church. She was interred at Puritan Lawn Memorial Park, Peabody.

A group of Joanie's dog friends and colleagues provided a fitting tribute to her outside of the church.



## Science Corner

We are all aware that dogs have a fabulous sense of smell and we use this information when we train our dogs to track human trails, or to find narcotics and buried bodies. But how many of you are aware that there is an organization that uses the dog's ability to detect odors to do conservation work in the field?

Working Dogs for Conservation, based in Montana, was founded by four female biologists in 2000, each of whom not only had a strong interest in wildlife biology and conservation, but who also had considerable interest and experience in dog training. They combined their professional interests in wildlife conservation with their love of dog training to come up with a novel method for assessing wildlife populations - using dogs to find the scat of species of interest. Their initial project focused on locating kit fox scat in the San Joaquin Valley of California. The kit fox, a subspecies in California, is considered endangered not only because of urbanization, but also because they are prey to coyotes and introduced red foxes. Dogs were trained to find only their scat (about 1-3 cm in size and very difficult to find) which could then be used by scientists who would extract DNA and be able to determine family groups, paternity of individuals, and estimation of population size. This project is now into its 13<sup>th</sup> year and over 600 scats have been DNA analyzed, yielding long-term population trend data that has informed the Bureau of Land Management in deciding how to use public lands.

Due to the success of this initial project, the group expanded its work to searching for lynx, black-footed ferrets, live and illegally killed and buried wolves, red and gray fox, cougars, desert tortoise, black and grizzly bears, bobcat, pine martins, moose, ground squirrels, blunt-nosed leopard lizards, bog and wood turtles, and pine snakes throughout a number of western states and in New Jersey and New York. They also sent teams to Russia for a tiger project, to Kenya for cheetah, lion, and African wild dog detection, to Guam for brown tree snake detection, to China for Asiatic bear detection, and to Argentina for Andean cat detection. They then expanded into the field of invasive exotic plant species and highly endangered and rare prairie plants. Dogs have even been trained to locate invasive water snails in Hawaii. Their most recent projects have focused on locating the Cross River gorilla, which is one of the most endangered primates in the world, found only along the Cameroon-Nigeria border and in hunting for the invasive emerald ash borer which has threatened our North American temperate forests. The Department of Agriculture found the dogs to show such great promise compared to human inspectors that they have funded additional work for the dog detection project. The dogs are also being used to detect illegal ivory and bushmeat in Gabon and wolverines in Montana.

The work of these women and their dogs has yielded over 50 peer-reviewed scientific papers, a number of book chapters and a few books. Their detector dogs have included 2 black lab mixes, a Belgian malinois, 4 German shepherds, 2 border collies, a yellow lab, and an Australian shepherd mix. For more information, you can visit the organization's website:

<http://workingdogsforconservation.org/>.

So next time you are out tracking and your dog starts "crittering", maybe you should consider training for conservation work!

## TCM Upcoming Events

**Saturday, January 18, 2014 - Membership Meeting at 2 pm at NEADS, 305 Redemption Rock Trail, Princeton, MA (nominations to board can be made from the floor at this meeting)**

**Saturday, March 23, 2014 - Annual Membership Meeting at 3 pm at NEADS, 305 Redemption Rock Trail, Princeton, MA to vote in new board and vote on bylaw changes**

**Beginner's Tracking Clinic - April 12-13, 2014 at a location TBD (15 working spots; unlimited auditors)**

**TDX Trial, May 3-4, 2014 - Gardner WMA**

**Judge's Clinic - June 7, 2014 - Russell's Garden Ctr, Wayland, MA (20 participants minimum needed)**

**Advanced Tracking Clinic with Ray Desmarais - September 6-7, 2014 at a location TBD**

**VST Trial, October 18-19, 2014 - Westborough industrial park, Westborough, MA**

See the TCM Website for details on upcoming 2014 meetings and events.

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

\$10.00 for Junior Members

\$15.00 for Associate Members

\$20.00 for Full Voting Members

NOTE: TCM hats and bumper magnets are now available for purchase. We also have the old edition of *Tracking! A Practical Guide to the TD and TDX* available for \$10.00 or the newest edition for \$20.00. Contact Martha Campbell at [kcans@comcast.net](mailto:kcans@comcast.net) if interested in any of these items.

