

STA on Track

the newsletter of Southwest Tracking Association
of Metropolitan Houston, Inc.



Winter 2004 / 2005

www.southwesttracking.org

Did you know that 2005 marks the 15th anniversary of the founding of STA? STA received its Articles of Incorporation on February 9, 1990, but actually, the formation of the club predates that by several years. As you'll read in Linda's article, Ted Hoesel encouraged Nancy Whipple to form an association of trackers in the Southwest as an educational forum to encourage and improve the training of tracking dogs and handlers, to support and promote tracking tests and related events, and to serve as a liaison between clubs, individuals and the AKC. Many conversations ensued, lots of paperwork and examples were shared, and finally, on January 30, 1990 a group of friends met over lunch and had the first official, organizational meeting, and became the five founding members of STA. They were Nancy Whipple, Connie Schott, Anna Lee Rucker, Bess Tobin and Linda Bryan.

By March of 1990, the club had bylaws, a logo, the beginnings of a newsletter, and was actively recruiting members. In addition to the original five, there were quite a few others who helped get things going, including David Meredith who spoke about "Taking the Hassle out of Handling" at STA's first workshop in September 1990. I've included information from one of his handouts in this newsletter.

Although we have all the "official" documents and a lot of information from the early days, there are a few holes in the club's records and no photos of past events except those in old newsletters which are too grainy to reproduce. Personal computers, scanners and digital cameras, email and the internet has made sharing photos so much easier. If you have photos from any of the early seminars, training sessions, matches, or tests, please share. If you have premiums or catalogs from any of STA's "firsts", ie: match, test, etc., or old newsletters, or other items you think may be of interest to the membership please make a copy and send it to me.

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SOUTHWEST TRACKING ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN HOUSTON, INC. – IN THE BEGINNING!

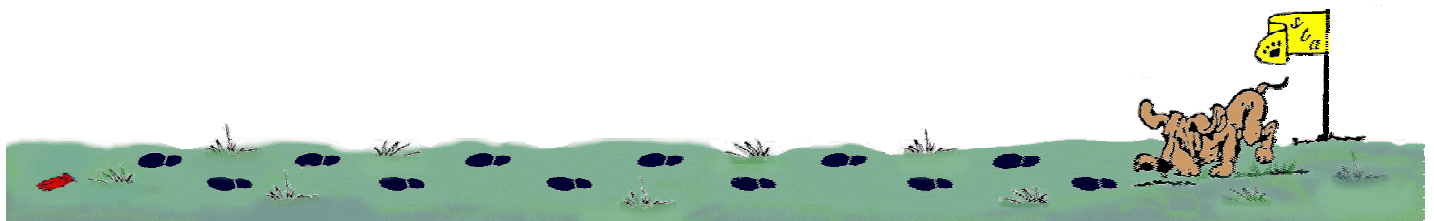
Many years ago, a remark made in passing by Ted Hoesel, *one of the sport's most respected trackers, judges, teachers, and friends*; to Nancy Whipple, *one of this area's most respected trackers, former judges, teachers and a friend to all*, planted the seed of an idea which she would eventually bring to life so tracking in our area could grow.

Ted was a member of MTA (Midwest Tracking Association). This organization spread information on tracking, matches, tests and all things related. He felt there was a need for such an organization in the Houston area and told Nancy (while laying track for a test) that she should think about doing something similar.

I have no idea how long that seed germinated, but as I got closer to Nancy, I learned she never let a good idea go to waste. Soooooo, during lunch with Bess Tobin, Anna Lee Rucker, Connie Schott, Nancy and I, the seed broke ground. We all agreed there was a need, and STA was born.

I don't know why she told me to find out what I could and get it started – probably because I couldn't say no fast enough. But then, very few people could say no to Nancy. First thing was securing the name with whatever papers were required. We got chartered and incorporated, though I don't remember much about that (just paperwork). Now we had to find out what we were doing!

After a few years of correspondence and copy work with MTA's then president, Jim Proffit, who was of tremendous help, we were on our way to producing a Constitution and By-Laws. Now we needed people, advise, and support. First we contacted then tracking rep John Barnard, who was always one of our biggest fans. Then we obtained the mailing list for all AKC





Marki Barta earned both a TD with her Boxer and a TDX with her Shepherd at STA's April 2004 Test.



Glenda Robbins and Kayla earned their TDX at STA's April 2004 Test.

tracking judges and asked them to join us. We wanted input from any source and we wanted workers. We had mailing lists from several clubs, some tracking, some not, but invitations went out to everyone. At the end of our first year, our membership was approximately 25-30, nearly all judges, from 4 states.

We held meetings, workshops, seminars (several with AKC), and were asked by John if we would hold a seminar on VST. "Sure," Nancy said, and put me to work on it. We sent in an announcement to AKC for the Gazette, only to be told they couldn't advertise for a non-AKC club. I picked up the phone and called them (I won't say what I called them), but told them their own rep asked for this seminar and we had done all the work and the least they could do is give us a couple of lines. They did! The seminar was a huge success!

Our membership started asking why we didn't put on matches – we did. Tests? – we couldn't because we weren't sanctioned. After a vote of the membership, Nancy told me to do it – get us sanctioned. So, for the next few years I corresponded and talked (argued) a lot with AKC, mainly regarding what they would and wouldn't accept, and what we did and didn't want, in our By-Laws. I'd say the final breakdown was about 70-30, in our favor.

We were on our way, now it was time to let the membership make it work. After nine years, I backed off as President (a position she forced on me since I was the only one who knew every step we'd taken from the beginning) and sat with Nancy to help in other ways. You will find all of the minutes in STA's files. She was an excellent Secretary. These records are open to the membership and I invite, in fact, urge, all members to peruse them and get a taste of why we are now celebrating our 15th year. As with a lot of you, this will be the first year without her by my side – the first without our founder, my mentor, and the better half of a very long friendship. Thank you, Nancy!

Linda Bryan

According to our bylaws, the objectives of Southwest Tracking Association are to:

- promote the training of purebred dogs and their handlers;
- conduct, support and promote tracking tests and sanctioned tracking matches under the rules of the American Kennel Club;
- sponsor seminars, workshops and other related events;
- encourage and promote the training of tracking judges; and
- disseminate knowledge regarding tracking and encourage the organization of independent local tracking clubs in those areas where there is sufficient interest to meet the requirements of the American Kennel Club.

With that in mind, we've used the groups' feature of Yahoo to start an Internet list for our tracking community called **STA in Touch**. This is a free service and you do not have to be a Yahoo user to participate. It's not intended to duplicate or replace the types of discussions already taking place on other tracking lists. In fact, this is not a "chatty" list at all. It is intended to be a resource to announce upcoming tests and events, recruit tracklayers, share premiums, look for someone to train with, etc. **for any and all the tracking activities in our area**. The list is open to anyone who tracks in or around Houston or who enters tests in Houston. If people don't want to get these kinds of emails, then they don't sign up on this list. It's also up to them to keep their email address current in order to get the postings.

This will be an unmoderated list, but flaming, abusive language or belligerent postings will not be tolerated. Those who violate any of these guidelines will be removed from the list. Postings are restricted to list members only.

I realize that email is both a blessing and a curse. We all get more than we can read, however, after having to move events out of Bush Park, three weekends in a row, and with postage scheduled to go up to \$0.41 next year,



TC Crippen
and Roo
earned their TD at
STA's November
Test



Nita Chambers
and Harley
earned their TD
at STA's
November Test

we've got to find a more efficient way to disseminate information to people. For those who are computer challenged, if they have a Premium, Seminar or Workshop Flyer, etc. they'd like to share, I'll be glad to help them by scanning and loading the document to the list.

So if you're interested, visit our website and follow the link to join **STA in Touch**. Once you join you'll receive a file with guidelines about the types of things the list can be used for. If you have trouble subscribing, let me know and I'll start the setup process for you.

Remember, our sport can only thrive if we continue to bring new trackers into it, and we stay in contact with those who may have left us for a while to try out other sports. We'll use **STA in Touch** to encourage newbies to get involved and make it easy for the "I use to track" group to come back.

On another track, if you haven't visited our website recently, be sure to take a look at all the photos from recent tests and events. We've added a link to the Texas Parks and Wildlife's Office where you can learn what the poisonous snakes indigenous to our area look like, and we've added a link to the US Geological Survey's site where you can explore aerial photos of the areas typically used for tests in Houston. You can also download some of the back issues of our newsletter, **including the first two issues!**

We've set up an online store through Café Press where you can buy STA logo items such as t-shirts, sweatshirts, and tote bags, and added information for all the tracking tests being held near Houston with links to their premiums when available. Yes, we've been busy this Fall, but we've been having fun! -- *Kathleen*

AKC UPDATE: *Changes to the Tracking Rules and Regulations have finally been approved and go into effect June 1. Check the Secretary's Page in the Gazette or AKC Board Meeting Minutes on their website to review the entire list of revisions.*

Since our last meeting, STA members have put together two, work-sessions. The first was held on December 18th at the San Jacinto Monument. A young Brittany pup had the most fun as it experienced tracking for the very first time.

Then during the week between Christmas and New Year's, Nita Chambers and Glenda Robbins spent two days in Austin conducting individual work sessions with area enthusiast. The session was organized by Jennifer Phillips and gave these trackers, many whom train alone, the chance for an evaluation of how their dog is doing and advice and counsel on how to proceed with their training and problem solving when needed.

If you would like to help organize a sessions in your area, let us know.



STA lost a long time member on November 18, 2004 when John Freeman passed away. John along with his wife, Marj and their Chesapeake Bay Retrievers had been active in STA, almost since our inception. John had been a Scoutmaster and a Volunteer Fire Fighter.

A meteorologist by trade, his accomplishments are too numerous to list, but they include work for the U.S. Army Air Corps., U.S. Weather Bureau, Texas A&M University, Gulf Consultants and the National Engineering Science Company. He conducted research at the University of Chicago, the Institute for Advanced Study and was a Professor Emeritus at the University of St. Thomas. He was the founding director of the Institute for Storm Research and conducted research at the Weather Research Center in Houston.

STA members will remember him as an ever willing crosstrack partner, ready to pull on his boots, roll under a fence and take a long walk across the muddiest field with you, all the while pointing out the cloud formations and other telltale indicators of pending weather changes. He had a keen sense of humor which was evident in the stories and remembrances shared by members of his family at the services. Like many of you, I am glad I had a chance to visit with him at our Test on November 7th. He will be greatly missed.



Jennifer Phillips earned her TDX at STA's November Test

Kathleen Milford and Austin earned their TDX at STA's November Test.



“A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR TRACKING DOG”
as shared by David Meredith at STA's first Workshop in September 1990.

STARTS, RESTARTS

<u>You say:</u>	<u>You mean:</u>	<u>Dog does:</u>	<u>Dog means:</u>	<u>You do:</u>
“TRACK!”	Let's get started	--	--	Having previously restrained dog, you release him.
--	--	Dog away, searching as required.	“I'm looking.”	Wait, stay in vicinity of start flag.
--	--	Dog appears to take a line.	“This may be it.”	Get ready to go, but wait.
“Is that it?”	Is that the track?	--	--	Stay ready, waiting.
--	--	Dog breaks off and takes an opposite line.	“No, that wasn't it but maybe this is.”	Stay ready, waiting.
“Where's the <u>track</u> ?”	Where's the track?	--	--	Stay ready, waiting.
--	--	Dog keeps on moving, picking up pace.	“I'm pretty sure this is it, I'm going on.”	Start releasing line, ready to step out.

ANY CHANGE OF DIRECTION

<u>You say:</u>	<u>You mean:</u>	<u>Dog does:</u>	<u>Dog means:</u>	<u>You do:</u>
--	--	Loops off track.	He lost the track.	Stop and let dog work the problem.
“Where did it go?”	Where's the track?	--	--	Wait, moving appropriately as the dog moves.
--	--	Loops and searches in vicinity of track.	“I'm not sure, but I'm looking.”	Wait, same as above.
“Can you find it?”	Can you find it?	--	--	Wait, same as above.
--	--	“Nose hooks” over by the grass clump on the left.	“This might be it here.”	Get ready to encourage the dog as required.
“Is that it?”	Is that the track?	--	--	Same as above.
--	--	After casting again, dog begins moving out from vicinity of grass clump on the left.	“I'm pretty sure this is it; I'm going on.”	Same as above.
“Is that the <u>track</u> ?”	Is that it?	--	--	Be ready to step out.
--	--	Dog keeps on moving, picking up the pace.	“Yes! This is it.”	Step out with the dog.
“Good dog!”	Good dog!	--	--	Keep on tracking.

ARTICLES

<u>You say:</u>	<u>You mean:</u>	<u>Dog does:</u>	<u>Dog means:</u>	<u>You do:</u>
“Do you want to: lie down, sit, or fetch it?”	Please indicate the article.	--	--	Wait.
--	--	Dog: downs, sits, or fetches	“This is it!”	Be ready to praise.
“Good dog!”	GOOD DOG!	Smiles and wags tail.	I'M SO GOOD!	Accept congratulations of judges, friends and spectators as appropriate.



It was a very wet day in Houston for STA's November VST Test at Rice University.

Other STA firsts?

- TD match, 4/15/1995 (?)
- Club's presence on the www 5/1996
- TD Test 1/11/1998
- TDX Match 5/3/1998
- TD/TDX Test 1/10/1999
- 1st Spring TD/TDX Test April 23, 2000
- VST Match 10/1/2000
- VST Test 5/26/2002

Upcoming Events

January 9, 2005
 STA TD/TDX Test
 Contact: Kathy Daniel

Sunday, April 24, 2005
 TD/TDX Test
 Contact: Vikki Youngmeyer

Track this down: The AKC has added a new pamphlet available for downloading entitled "A Beginner's Guide to Tracking" on their website. There's a link to it on our website from the top navigation buttons.

STA

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