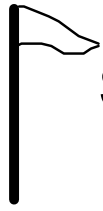


# Southwest Tracking Association



S

T

A

On

Track



Spring 2002

Volume 11 Issue # 1

The Official Publication of The Southwest Tracking Association of Metropolitan Houston

Editor: Ginny Conway

## CONGRATULATIONS!

STA's January 6, 2002 Test was a huge success.

- New Tracking Dog titles were awarded by judges, Lynda McKee and **Linda Bryan** to: "**Nash**" a 7 month old Cocker Spaniel Dog officially known as Harmony Crosby, Stills & Nash, TD, owned and handled by **Nita Chambers**
- "**Dev**" aka Ch Ehrenvogel Daredevil JH TD, a German Shorthaired Pointer, owned and handled by **Nancy Ward**

At the same test, a Tracking Dog Excellent title was awarded by judges, Art Twiss and **Linda Bryan** to:

- "**Dancer**" aka Cajjoy Last Dance, JH TDX CD NAJ, a German Shorthaired Pointer, owned and handled by **Nancy Ward** - big day for Nancy!

Please note, I said awarded above to acknowledge our judges who worked so hard throughout the weekend. We all know you aren't given a tracking title. These teams have worked hard and earned them. Many thanks also to **Donna Rice**, her committee chairs and all the volunteers who helped make it such a great day!

Other Tracking News from STA Members:

- **Jon Bishop** and his Golden Retriever "**Tess**" Ch Rockhills Tempo T Trueheart CD TDX JH earned their TDX Title in El Paso, TX on March 3, 2002.
- **Phyllis Dorrough** and her Dalmatian "**Quanah**" Paisley's Comanche Chief TD earned their TD Title in Hutto, TX on March 10, 2002 at the Dalmatian National.

The HOT Dog Club also had a very successful test on March 24, 2002 awarding four new TD titles and a TDX title. STA members earning titles at the test were:

- **Kathy Daniel** and her Pembroke Welsh Corgi "**Dory**" Ch Elfwish A Little Jazz TD earned their TD under judges Darla Huffman and Sharon Jolly.
- **Judith Bowers** and her Papillon "**Trey**" Ch MACH Serna-Stedt Treasure TDX, MX, MXJ earned their TDX under judges Ralph Sneve and **Ginny Conway**. By the way, this was Ginny's very first assignment as a new provisional TDX Judge!
- **Jon Bishop** and **Abbi** passed there TDX in Missouri, April 7 at Gateway test in St Louis. Ch Rockhill Lonely Heart Advisor UD TDX JH

## **President's Corner – Kathleen Milford**

**Do you remember when you first started tracking?** For some of you it might have been just last year. Most STA members have been tracking for five or more years. Believe it or not we have some members who have been involved in the sport for more than 20 years!

I love to track - that's why I'm involved in this club. I love to get out in the field with my own dogs. I love to help others train their dogs and I love to go to tests and watch dogs that I'm not familiar with track. I think I'm more nervous watching others at a test than I am with my own dog.

In addition to the dogs I regularly work with, I've had the pleasure during this year of introducing to tracking, for the very first time, eight new dogs: two German Shorthaired Pointers, two German Shepherds, two Rottweilers, a Doberman and a Papillon. They range in age from nine months to four years and each seems to have their own timetable. One of the handlers has a lot of prior experience and has already certified her dog and passed their T. Two handlers took a few classes in the past with other dogs and are just getting started again. The others are all brand new to the sport. Some will stick with it and eventually earn their titles. Some will try it for awhile then move on to something else. That's ok - it's fun to work with them and I learn something new almost every time we head out to the fields.

I love laying a dog's first track then watching the handler help the dog understand what this concept of "nose down" or "find it" is all about. It's been a blast to watch their progression and observe their different styles. It's such a joy to watch a "newbie" and observe the moment that things click and they finally understand what it is you've been asking them to do. Do you remember the day this happened for you and your dog?

Some dogs are naturals -- they put their nose down at the start and never pick it up again. They are often ready to certify long before their handlers are. Some dogs just walk along the track, grinning at you as you point to the ground repeating your tracking command. Usually on about the third day out they figure out what this game called tracking is all about -- much joy and enthusiasm follow from both the dog and handler. Some teams work slow and steady, building up their skills and stamina from week to week. One day you realize it's time to pull up the corner markers and get them certified. Some dogs always seem too busy to track. They're distracted by anything and everything, but they have that occasional day when things come together, so you keep bringing them out hoping that when you enter a test - it will be held on one of the "good days."

I always ask new students if their dog is right- or left- pawed. I love the look of confusion on their face as they ponder this question. It's fun to explain how to determine this, then tie it into introducing corners on a dog's track. If they naturally turn to the left, that's the seems to be the easier direction for them to learn about corners.

It's so fun when the day comes that they finally learn how to "read" a dog. Two relative beginners were following behind me on a track. The dog was crittering and was told to knock it off and get back to its track. He begrudgingly complied with the request. I heard the newest beginner ask the veteran beginner how we knew that the dog wasn't tracking. The dog's nose was buried deep in the grass and he was actively sniffing the area, wasn't he looking for the track? I grinned as the veteran beginner explained about body language, and pointed out the difference as the dog returned to its track. How fun is that!

I love the look of terror on a student's face when they realize that the track you've laid for them only has a start and 30-yard flag. It's their first blind track. I reassure them that the dog is ready -- it's time to see if they can relax, trust their dog and enjoy the ride. You can see them loosen up as the dog progresses down the track, watch their excitement build as their dog indicates the first corner, then the next and then there's that complete look of joy when the dog stops at the glove. They did it - they're officially trackers. How fun is that!

## President's Corner (continued) –

I love to problem solve. One week it's trying something to help build the confidence of timid dog and get them un-glued from their handler's leg and encourage them to bravely venture 20 feet out in front. The next week it might be how to build solid article indication in a dog that is so busy tracking it barely pauses at the glove. Then there's the dog who won't keep his nose down - his heritage dictates that he should keep his eyes on the things happening around him. A bicyclist goes by, and he's lost to tracking as he watches the bike disappear into the horizon. Next week you try adding a little extra scent by dribbling hotdog juice along the track and, low and behold, his nose is glued to the ground and he rushed to the glove and the promised weenies! How fun is that!

So what's the point of all this? Tracking is fun and sometimes that is easy to forget. I work tracking tests for three different clubs. There is a never-ending cycle of paperwork; the discouragement of trying to find a Test Chairman/Secretary; the endless phone calls you make to line up judges; the emails and calls that go unanswered when you're trying to find the committee chairs you need; and then the frustration of finding enough experienced volunteers with the weekend free to lay the tracks you need at a test.

It's been so much fun to work with these "newbies" that it has really refreshed my enthusiasm and dedication to the sport. I hope all of you have the opportunity to see tracking with "fresh eyes" by helping a beginner get started. Be sure you encourage them to get involved and bring them along to tests and club activities. We need new people out there training and testing their dogs and it would be great if some of them wanted to get involved with STA. I don't know a single club that couldn't use more "active" members.

We also need new people to step up and volunteer to help put on tests. Local trackers are fortunate that there are currently four clubs in the area that hold tests. But if more people aren't willing to help, these clubs will eventually have to cut back on the number of tests they hold each year. It doesn't take a lot of people to put on a tracking test but the pool of those who are willing to volunteer seems to be shrinking rather than growing.

I encourage each of you to take the time to introduce someone new to the sport. Be brave, adopt a new buddy, and drag them along as you head off to your favorite field. I hope each of you can have as much fun as I've had this last year seeing tracking through "fresh eyes." Eventually, our sport will be better off because you took the time to share the fun with someone else.



*Jon Bishop's dog Abbi*

## Donna Rice regarding next January's STA test

Dear Members – As some of you know, I have volunteered to chair and secretary the test for January. I probably will not be at the April test, because I am tied up with my Rottweiler club specialty show. I am the secretary for that - it closes April 5, and the show is May 6, and I typically have 500 dogs entered. Lots of work.

Anyway, I will need a chief tracklayer, hospitality chairman, equipment chairman, and a judges' transportation person. Please let me know of your interest in helping me out by October 1<sup>st</sup>, or earlier. Without these key people it will be tough to put on a test.

*STA welcomes your descriptions of your tracking successes. I don't know about you, but if you can't be there, reading about a dog passing a tracking test is almost as good. Please feel free to email your narratives to Ginny Conway at [thesieve@swbell.net](mailto:thesieve@swbell.net)*

## **Tess and Jon Bishop, new TDX** *(briefly, from a quick email)*

**Finally!!!!**

Well we finally did it; we passed while in El Paso. We passed with Tess, ironically the one that I have been having most of my troubles with. The track was 3hrs and 15 minutes old and 940 yards. No problems with cross tracks, but had a problem with one of the deep gullies that we had to cross. They went at an angle thru the gully and when we went thru it we came out on the opposite side at a different angle than we should have. With a lot of finesse, patience and time working around to find the correct direction of the leg, we finally did, and the rest was history. Hope to see you in Houston on 24th. Please pass on my good news to all that you know and the ones that might want to know.

## **Abbi and Jon Bishop's TDX**

We were first X alternate in St. Louis at Robertsville State Park. My self and the 2nd alternate got in because there was a woman that had 2 dogs entered as first and second draw, but due to health reasons (I believe) she had to pull out. Very sad and sorry for her, but very happy for us.

There were only 3 X slots, so I was drawing second. I drew track #1. Now here's the "weird part". Track #1 was in the same field that I had several years ago. Not the same track, but the same field. It was also my first entry in an X test. This means that Robertsville was my first and my last X test. How coincidental could that be?

The sky was overcast and there was a 50% chance of rain. We didn't get any until the drive home last night and boy did it rain on us. The temperature was around 55-60 degrees and the wind was blowing lightly. A perfect day, the most perfect...

Our track was 848 yards long, 3 hours and 15 minutes aged. We started out in short grass, made a turn and went into grass ankle to mid thigh high. We also went into, and made a turn in woods, similar to Houston only not as dense. Once we were out of the woods we were back in the tall grass again. We crossed 1 asphalt road and proceeded into and through an area with 5-6 foot tall water reeds and into short grass again. Here we made another turn which went over a small rolling mound and across a ditch just on the other side of the mound. The ditch was made from water that was running off, kinda like a small creek. The last article was across this small creek or water run off area.

Abbi gave a little head bob at each cross track, but never even attempted to check them out, boy was I glad. It was definitely her day. It was a rare day where, for the most part, all I needed to do was hang on. She was so on it was scary. She had me worried and I was having to tell her "easy" so she would slow down. I just didn't want to pass up any articles. I don't know for sure, but someone had mentioned that they thought we ran it in 10 minutes.

Well that's the story and boy was it an exciting day. When I get more time and can gather my thoughts about Tess's X pass in El Paso I will try to send notes about her's. Until then.....good tracking.

## “Tracking With a Blonde”

I track almost every weekend with a “blonde”, a blonde Pembroke Welsh Corgi, that is. Now don't all you real or enhanced blondes out there get upset. I'm just making a comparison to the stereotypical comic blonde image you see on the tv or movie screen. You know the one I mean – Judy Holiday, Marilyn Monroe, Alicia Silverstone - the girl who cares more about how her nails and hair look than how she's doing on the job, the girl who cures the blues by going shopping at the mall, the one who thinks her beauty and charm will get anything she wants. Ch. Elfwish A Little Jazz, aka Dory, or the Princess is a practicing member of the “Clueless” club.

When we started tracking Dory as a puppy she didn't care for any bait we offered her. She liked using her nose, but wasn't food motivated. Our friend Jan Nuzzo would lay a fifty-foot track, using baited steps and would hide in a ditch or depression at the end of the track for Dory to find. Finding an adoring fan at the end of the track was much more motivational for a Princess than mere food. The hidden person trick helped us train through hundred yard legs and even the first turns. Eventually Dory became interested in the bait as a reward and would track longer tracks with multiple turns and age on them. That's a good thing, as our friends were getting tired of hiding in ditches and behind trees.

Last fall, after Dory turned two and finished her championship, she began to take tracking seriously. She began to stay right on the track for its full length, with fewer “blonde” moments where she smelled the flowers, stared into the sky at the birds, or wandered off the track to shop. When Dory was certified in early March, I decided we might as well start entering tracking tests because it might take us a while to get in one. The first test we entered was H.O.T. Dog Training Club's on March 24<sup>th</sup>. We rarely get to that test as it is on the same weekend at a Pembroke Specialty in Ft. Worth. At the same time that I sent my entry to the tracking test, I sent my entry in to the Saturday Houston Kennel Club Show – to practice showing one day and then tracking the next. Then we traveled to Ft. Worth to compete in the breed specialty on Friday; we drove home to Houston on Saturday.

On Sunday morning, I loaded all four of my Corgis in the car, just like any normal practice tracking day. We drew the sixth of six TD tracks; our friend Jane Trude and her Pembroke Jordyn drew Track #1. They did the track like Jordyn had a map in her pocket; that would be a tough act to follow. As we waited for our turn, there was a fail, then a pass, then a fail, then a pass. I didn't like the pattern that was being established here. It was finally our turn and clouds were beginning to roll in; the breeze was becoming really strong and gusty.

Our track was in a field bounded on one side by a main road through the Park, a dirt road on the West and a soccer field on the East. Dory and I walked to our start flag; the flags were made of a heavy plastic and were flapping wildly in the wind. When we faced the thirty-yard flag, we were facing right into the strong wind that was coming from the South. Dory took several steps forward and immediately turned around, tracking past me in the wrong direction. Then she circled and stared up at the flapping flags. I took a step forward and urged the blonde to track, hoping to get her away from the fascinating flag. She zigzagged down the first leg, checking out the flapping thirty-yard flag. As we got past the thirty-yard flag, her concentration improved a little. At what must have been a corner, she headed toward the dirt road, then changed her mind, heading East toward the soccer fields. The blonde checked out some ruts on the right, then a tree on the left. Being an alpha blonde, she left her mark at the base of the tree. As we got closer to the soccer games, someone scored a goal and a cheer went up. The Princess stopped and took a show pose, looking toward the cheering to see if any of her adoring fans were in the crowd.

Dory took a right turn into the wind again, stopped to leave her autograph in the grass at a strategic location along the leg. There were whistles coming from the soccer field, but I was listening for the really important one behind us. Another cheer went up and the Princess struck another show pose. Eventually, after what seemed like an eternity, she turned to the West and moved on, stopping to leave her autograph along the way again. For the first time ever in my tracking career, I counted the number of turns we had done – one, two, three. This could be a really long leg or there could be another turn. Dory took a sharp left turn into the wind again and began to track faster, her ears flat against her head in serious tracking mode.

I was told that when Dory took that turn, the tracking gallery cheered. We were upwind and so far away, we couldn't hear it. Suddenly the blonde stopped and did the most beautiful show stack – over the glove. Dory gave me an incredulous look when she realized that I didn't have any treats with me; but all was forgiven she turned around. People were coming to greet her – two judges, a tracklayer, and the AKC Tracking Representative. That's what every blonde Princess lives for – her adoring fans.

*by Kathy Daniel*

## Upcoming Tests

### San Jacinto Kennel Club

George Bush Park, Houston, TX  
TD & TDX test on April 28, 2002 already closed

### Southwest Tracking Association

Rice University, Houston, TX  
VST test on May 26, 2002 closes May 15, 2002  
5 dog test \$75 Kathleen Milford, test secretary

### Greater Houston Golden Retriever Club

George Bush Park, Houston, TX  
TD test on Nov 10, 2002 closes Oct 31, 2002  
3 dog test \$40 Judges: Judith Bowers & Ginny Conway  
TDX test on Nov 10, 2002 closes Oct 31, 2002  
2 dog test \$70 Judges: Judith Bowers & Ginny Conway  
Peggy Walkingstick, test secretary

### STA ON Track

Newsletter of the Southwest Tracking Assn  
Ginny Conway, editor  
14511 Trophy Club  
Houston, TX 77095-3420



*Kathy Daniel & Dory, new TD*



Judith & Trey, new TDX