

# **2002 Archive Tracking News For the Saint Bernard**



**Volume 1, Inaugural Year, 3 Issues  
October, November and December**

# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

October 2002

Volume 1, Issue 1

## ONLY ONE TRACKING DOG TITLE SO FAR THIS YEAR!



The year started off well when **Echo's Utmost TD** earned her Tracking Dog title at a Golden Retriever Tracking Test in February. Yes, Echo's Utmost is a SAINT BERNARD but when a breed specialty test does not fill, other breeds are given a chance to try for a title providing they entered. Nothing like showing the Sporting breeds what a Working breed can do. There are only 34 TDs and one TDX in our breed!

After finding that leather glove in the field she headed to the Saint Bernard Club of America's National and Regional Obedience Trials and Draft Test in Arizona.

Echo's Utmost TD then added a CD title to her name along with several High In Trials at the Specialties.

Now it is on to CDX and Agility training! One more title to go for induction into the Saint Bernard National Hall of Fame.

On May 5, 2002...

**CH** Story Books Future V Sand Creek  
**CD TD** completed his CD title and entered the Hall of Fame by achieving three AKC titles. Very few Saint Bernards have a Tracking title, a breed championship, plus an obedience title.



### AKC TRACKING REGULATIONS

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### ANY MORE TRACKING DOGS OUT THERE?

If you have a dog in training for tracking let us hear from you. This newsletter would be a great place to get in touch with each other and share techniques and problem-solving methods. Write your comments to [saintbernardnationalarchives@attbi](mailto:saintbernardnationalarchives@attbi).

### BOOKS

Do you know of a  
good tracking book?

**Enthusiastic  
Tracking**

William (Sil) Sanders

Kris is now in training for a TD title. We have been working on and off since August. He now is doing a track about 300 yards long and aged about 15 minutes. We have a ways to go in time and distance.



# TRACKING NEWS

**SAINT BERNARD**

November 2002

Volume 1, Issue 2

## A SAINT BERNARD HAS BEEN CERTIFIED FOR TRACKING!



On October 29th, **CH XmaxKris Van 't Hof Ten Eynder (Kris) UD, NAP, NJP, DD** earned his certification for tracking. For those new to tracking, a dog must first be certified by an AKC tracking judge in order to enter a tracking test. There is only room for so many dogs (8-10 average) in a tracking test due to the large amount of land needed.



To earn a Tracking title (TD) a dog must track a trail that is about 1/4 mile in length and aged to from 1/2 to 2 hours. At the end of the track there is an article that must be indicated by the dog.

A certification has all the aspects of an actual test but only requires one judge. It is kind-of-like a tracking "leg". The judge signs a form that must accompany an entry for a tracking test.

Since tracking tests usually have a limited entry, one enters the test and HOPES to get in. If there are more dogs than the test limit, there is a drawing of entries to see who gets in the test.

Kris has entered a couple of tests and is awaiting to see if he is in!!

### FUTURE ISSUES

Story about the 1st TD Saint Bernard in 1962

History & Future of Saint Bernard Specialty Tracking Tests

Listings of the 34 TD Saint Bernards, & 1 TDX

### WHERE TO FIND A TRACKING HARNESS

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

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Send Photos!

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Do you know of a good tracking book?

### Enthusiastic Tracking

William (Sil) Sanders

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# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

December 2002

Volume 1, Issue 3

## THE FIRST SAINT BERNARD TO EARN A TRACKING DOG TITLE

**Brandy** graduated from pre-novice training at Port Chester Obedience Training Club under the well-known trainer Milo Pearsall who was also the Tracking Trainer. Lesley says, "Tracking makes more sense to her, Brandy is her proudest and happiest when running to join the tracking class with a glove in her mouth."

### POPULAR DOGS article circa 1962

**Brandewijn Von Reiland**, owned by Lesley Reiland of Larchmont, NY passed her Tracking Test at the Port Chester (NY) Obedience Training Club, judged by Bob Noerr and Guin Smith. Congratulations to "Brandy" and her owner! I received such an interesting letter from the proud owner that I am taking his opportunity to reprint part of it. Mrs Reiland writes: "A dog is not required to have any other titles in order to try for a 'T'. But, in order to teach him to track he must be under control. The score at a Tracking Test is either 'passed' or 'failed'. A dog is compared only in respect to HOW WELL HE DOES HIS TRACK. He is not in competition with other dogs entered."

"Brandy enjoys tracking much more than CD work. It is like a detective story to her and she is very proud of her successful tracks. Once, when we were practicing last winter a friend held her Poodle and Brandy while I laid a track. Brandy got loose just as I was finishing and ran the whole track by herself. Great fun! "I have found she does not like to be corrected while tracking and will quit on me if I pretend to know more about a track than she does. So even if I know where the track is supposed

to be laid I do not make any attempt to tell her. I just watch to see how she acts when she is tracking and when she is 'goofing' I talk to her only when she is confused or goofing because I have found that it distracts her to be talked to when she is doing well. There came a time last spring when she suddenly decided she didn't feel like tracking any more -EVER.

"Since she tracks for the fun of it, not because she is told to do it, we had to get her to think it was fun again. This we did by having my little girls lay tracks for her and hide at the end of them. She went on those tracks when they were very fresh and she ran all the way. It did the trick and since then she has yet to become disinterested in tracking. We have also found that it is not a good idea to ask her to do more than two tracks a day (this would not include the initial stages of training where tracks are very short). It is usually better to do only one if the first one is good. This way we both finish happily and that bodes well for the next time.

"It is foolhardy to generalize on the work of only one dog, but I guess that Saint Bernards are a natural for tracking. They are known certainly for their ability to find people. Tracking amounts to just that-plus picking up a glove the tracklayer has dropped. The most difficult part of training for me was pulling Brandy away from a groundhog or rabbit hole. "I would like to see a lot more Saint Bernards in Tracking Tests. I think our breed should have an opportunity to prove that they are still working dogs and to enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done."

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If anyone has information on the owner, or photo, of **Brandewijn Von Reiland** please notify me at the Archive address.

**BOOK?**  
Do you know of a good tracking book?

Enthusiastic  
Tracking  
William (Sil) Sanders

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### FUTURE ISSUE:

Saint Bernard  
Specialty Tracking  
Tests...



# **2003 Archive Tracking News For the Saint Bernard**



**Volume 2, 12 Issues**



# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

January 2003

Volume 2, Issue 1

## TRACKING, WHILE LIVING IN A BIG CITY, CAN LEAD TO A FIELD OF DREAMS!

By John Cox

Before training a dog to track, **you first** have to WANT to do it. A tracking title, like any other title, has to be a serious goal with a set target date for achieving that goal, which is reasonable and reachable. If you won't set a goal and a target date, you will not have the *drive* to accomplish that goal. At least, that is what has spurred me on to earn 7 American and Canadian TD titles on four different Saint Bernards, plus 1 TD on a Pembroke Welsh Corgi. I set a goal and followed through. When you have a real goal in mind, **you will** find the time to achieve it and not make up excuses—it really is that simple!

I live in the middle of Seattle, Washington, close to the University of Washington—not exactly an area of large open fields. So how do you start to track a dog without driving to find a field? Simple. I do not use open fields to start teaching my Saint Bernards to track. I go to the city parks in the neighborhood and track in spaces that have long un-kept grassy areas. Some parks are better than others; one just has to keep an eye out for such areas. I took notes on areas when I was out driving around on other errands.

To start with, I want to teach the dog how to use its nose to follow a particular scent. That is what tracking is all about. I start out with short tracks (50-feet), aged very little, and drop weenies (cut to the size of nickels) along the track. At the end of this very short trail of weenies, I stuff a leather glove with a bigger food prize. I used the methods in **Sil Sanders' Enthusiastic Tracking** book on my last TD and found them to work very well. All the steps are laid out for a beginner to follow to successful tracking with your dog.



One does not need a lot of space to start training. You first are teaching motivation and positive attitude on the short tracks in the park. Each session was only about 1/2 hour tops, from when I arrived to the time I left, and that was it for that day's session. I repeated it on a regular basis (three to four days a week). As my dog learned, I became more excited and expanded the training sessions. When goals start to look obtainable one **will find** more time to continue.

In **August 2002**, I had set my mind for a TD on Kris. The goal was the November tracking tests (90 days away), *not* a very realistic goal in timing, but nevertheless it was my goal for Kris and I. What motivated me was the TD title. It was the missing link for the new AKC Versatile Companion Dog title (VCD) and his Working Dog Championship (WDCH—a Saint Bernard

Club of America title). The VCD title rewards a dog which crosses over and titles in the different venues of obedience, agility and tracking. (There are different levels to this title as outlined in the AKC Obedience Regulations.)

Kris had all the qualifications for the VCD1 and WDCH *except* the TD title. Plus, there was no Saint Bernard which had earned the VCD title and I wanted Kris to be the first! I was determined to give it a shot so Kris and I started out on our training sessions three to four times a week. We progressed well in the parks and the tracks became longer, plus aging the tracks little by little at each new training session.

In **September**, it was time to find a field. Even in a city the size of Seattle (over 1 million in the surrounding areas) one can locate a field. I found several that required a 30-45 minute drive. Once there, the time to lay a full track (440+ yards) was only about 7 minutes. I let it age for 30 minutes while sipping coffee and reading Sil's book in the car.

On **October 29th** (his third try), **CH XmaxKris Van 't Hof Ten Eynder (Kris) UD, NAP, NJP, DD** earned his certification for tracking. For those new to tracking, a dog must first be certified by an AKC tracking judge in order to enter a tracking test. A certification has all the aspects of an actual test but only requires one judge. It is kind of like a tracking "leg". The judge signs a form that must accompany an entry form to a tracking test.

Kris made it into the **November 24th** tracking test and qualified. We met our goals and he is now the **first VCD1 & VCD2 Saint Bernard in breed history!** His proud name is now: **CH/WDCH XmaxKris Van 't Hof Ten Eynder UD, VCD2, DD** (Draft Dog). We will be setting our goals for a TDX soon and give that a try!

### Tracking Regulations

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# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

February 2003

Volume 2, Issue 2

## THE HISTORY & FUTURE OF SAINT BERNARD SPECIALTY TRACKING TESTS

### HISTORY

There have only been **TWO** Saint Bernard Specialty Tracking Tests since 1936 (when tracking was introduced by AKC). A sad note for a breed that has a history steeped in the rescue of finding lost people!

The **first** specialty tracking test was hosted by the SBC of America in **1988** in Colorado. We had three dogs entered and one passed the test. One of the other entries passed a test (not hosted by a Saint Bernard Club) later in the year.

In 1989 the SBC of America hosted another test in New York and there were **NO** entries. Tracking was then dropped from the National do to lack of interest and expense.

In the 1970s, the SBC of Puget Sound (Washington State) put on an OB Tracking Match. They never went any further to be approved to hold a test.

Only 34 Saint Bernards have earned TD tracking titles since 1936! There is one TDX. There are no Saint Bernards who have earned a VST or the coveted CT (Champion Tracker).

### FUTURE

Right now, the future of having a specialty tracking test for Saint Bernards looks grim. There are very few Saint Bernard working in tracking and hence specialty clubs are not interested in pursuing approval to hold specialty tracking tests and rightly so! Why go to all the work when there are so few interested?

If an interest in tracking evolves (that is the first step), clubs should then be encouraged to work towards approval to hold a specialty test. In the past, only Saint Bernards could be entered in a Saint Bernard specialty test. This has now been changed and the AKC Tracking Regulations now will allow a specialty club the option to open their tests to all breeds.

**Chapter 1, Section 12** now reads..."National, Regional and Local Specialty clubs have the 'option' of opening their tracking tests to all breeds. Specialty clubs may choose either (1) only their own breed, or (2) through the use of a lottery draw, they may allow other breeds to enter their specialty using the following procedure:

Draw (1) Specialty breed without a title;

Draw (2) Specialty breed with a title;

Draw (3) Other breeds without a title;

Draw (4) Other breeds with a title."

Therefore, if a Saint Bernard club fell short in the number Saint Bernards entering, (and they had chosen option 2) other breeds could come in and fill the test. The work and cost of putting on a test would be worthwhile as most likely entries for the test would fill.

We have had one Saint Bernard earn her tracking title at a Golden Retriever specialty!!!!

Some food for thought but first let's get those Saint Bernards off the sofas and out into the fields where they can have some REAL fun and tap-in on their instincts. Life is short, don't get in a rut, TRY something new!

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Pictured left **WDCH Mar-Wil's Markus Von Hyden UDT DD** starting his show career at the SBC of America's Tracking Test on June 15, 1988. Markus was, and is, the **ONLY** Saint Bernard to earn a TD title at a Saint Bernard Specialty. Let's hope others will follow in Markus's paw steps and earn TDs at future Specialty Saint Bernard Tracking Tests.

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**BOOKS**  
**Enthusiastic Tracking**  
William (Sil) Sanders

# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

March 2003

Volume 2, Issue 3

## 2002 A YEAR IN REVIEW FOR TRACKING



The year 2002 started off with **Echo's Utmost CD (Miranda)**, pictured above) earning her Tracking Title (TD) at a Golden Retriever Specialty Tracking Test. The test was in February in the Bay area of California. Yes, other breeds may enter a breed specialty test if the entries do not first fill with the specialty breed. Miranda marched from the tracking field to the Agility rings. She also

earned her Novice Agility (NA) title and two legs towards her Novice Agility Jumpers with Weaves title. Plus, she earned one leg towards her Open Agility (OA) title too in 2002!

The rest of the year did not see any other tracking Saint Bernards until the month of November.

Then **CH XmaxKris Van 't Hof Ten Eynder UD, NAP, NJP** headed out on

his track in Washington State. **Kris** (pictured above) earned his TD and set all sorts of records for the breed as the TD completed his requirements for a **CH UDT, WDCH & VCD1**. It was quite a year for Kris as he earned **NINE** titles, **eight** being AKC titles in Obedience, Tracking and Agility. Both TDs were short-haired Saint Bernards and West Coast dogs! TDs #34 and #35 for the breed.

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# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

April 2003

Volume 2, Issue 4

## THE SECOND TIME AROUND! AN OLDIE, BUT GOODIE, SERIES FROM THE *SAINT FANCIER* NOV/DEC 1977

By Janis Sanderson

### A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER... AN OLD ONE FOR THE SAINT BERNARD — Part I

When I was new to the Saint Bernard breed and very new to the sport of dog obedience I had great respect for any novice who managed to get a CD on any of the "unusual obedience breeds." That was any dog not a Sheltie, Dobie or Golden. I had struggled through a 12-week novice training class with my first Saint, a "backyard special" who was "sharp-shy." That is, if you got close to her she would bite! The fact that I had a 140-pound "problem dog" kept me in obedience.

I was quite proud to get her through class, and at graduation to have her stand quietly on the Stand For Examination exercise and allow the trainer to actually touch her!

With about six months more hard work we managed to get ready for our first match! My first trip into the ring was a real experience. I remember going in and coming out, but nothing in between! I had to keep my husband at ringside for the first several matches to tell me what happened while I was in there. I seemed to suffer from some particular kind of mental blackout while in the ring with Wendy. Perhaps it was because I never knew what to expect from her. I always held my breath when a male judge walked up to her on the Stand For Examination, but she always kept her cool. However, she would find some way to keep me up-tight. Perhaps by talking off on the Heel Free heeling exercise to visit a dog in the next ring or, maybe by sitting like a stone statue while I called and called her to "Come!" on the Recall exercise. But Wendy loved dog shows and I

**"I always held my breath when a male judge walked up to her on the Stand For Examination but she always kept her cool."**

loved her and although Wendy is gone, my "sharp-shy" Saint, who was biting at four months of age, earned her CD and learned to trust her handler and overcome her unrealistic fears. I learned a lot while training Wendy. I owe her much.

While I was working on Wendy's CD, I met a lady who had a UD-titled Old English Sheepdog. At that time I felt anyone with a UD was at least as wise as Moses and I hung on her every word. One of her comments was pretty hard to take, however. The causal remark that, "Anyone can get a CD...Well, almost anyone." Now I know what she meant. Anyone who is willing to put in the work can get a CD, with a very few exceptions.

Since my first Saint, I have put another CD on a Saint in three weeks from first leg to last, a CDX on the same dog in four shows and recently finished a UD on her at age 3 1/2. This same dog has five High in Trial awards with one being an all-breed High in Trial. After getting Nita's CDX, I was enthusiastic to get on to Utility. The fact that there was no utility training instructor in our area didn't stop me. With four brief lessons to get me started, I rushed in "where angels fear to tread." I had lots of confidence in my dog.

She was super and we would make it. And we did. But what a bumpy road it was. Oh, how many mistakes I made! But at last, that most coveted of all titles (Utility Dog) is proudly worn behind Nita's name. What worlds are left to conquer.

Naturally my thoughts drifted to tracking. And there my thoughts have lingered for some time. Again, there is no tracking instructor in our area. But if we can teach ourselves Utility, can't we do the same with tracking? So I sent away for Glen Johnson's book on tracking. Unlike obedience, tracking requires lots of room. Lately as I drive about in the area, I find myself looking for likely spots. Perhaps we can find the space.

How about equipment? First you need a harness for the dog. This should be "non-restrictive," or in other words,

# A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER...!

constructed in such a way as not to interfere with the free movement of the dog.

So, one Sunday afternoon I asked my husband, a very resourceful, creative person, "Can you make a harness like this?" showing him the picture in the book. He said nothing but disappeared into the workshop, reappearing in a few minutes with some nylon webbing and snaps. "Get out your sewing machine," he said. Well, about two awful old TV movies later we had transformed a pair of old car seat belts into a "non-restrictive" tracking harness for Nita.

She stood in the living room wearing "the thing" looking very forlorn and probably wondering what new indignity was about to befall her. For those persons who are not blessed with a resourceful, creative family member, tracking harness can be ordered. (see the SBCA web site: [www.saintbernardclub.org](http://www.saintbernardclub.org))

Next I made a trip to the local handyman store looking for driveway reflector markers to use as marker stakes for the track. I couldn't find what I wanted so instead made do with plain stakes sharpened on one end with a tag of plastic tape on the other to make it more visible at a distance.

The other essential equipment was a tracking line, and the leather glove to use at the end of the track which is the object of the dog's search. I used a 40-foot piece of 3/8" nylon rope from the hardware store. It is soft but strong, very durable and doesn't tangle easily. On one end is a bridle snap which can be snapped on the D-ring of the harness.

Now I had the dog, the harness, the line, the markers and the glove. We were almost ready to start. But still I had great misgivings. My difficulties in teaching myself Utility made a lasting impression on me. So, back to the book.

I am using Glen Johnson's "*Tracking Dog, Theory and Methods*." It is thought to be "the" book on tracking. It is published by Arner Publications, 8140 Coronado Lane, Rome, NY 13440. Copies can be ordered from the publisher or obtained at most large dog shows. The author goes into the theory of how the dog tracks. Since man can't see or smell the track, some basic understanding of how the dog tracks is essential to success.

Now we know the Saint Bernard was originally bred as a search and rescue dog, but it has been many years since any Saints were bred to carry out his original purpose. Do we still have that ability in our dogs today? There is only one way to find out — try it!

Mr. Johnson describes the working group breeds as the best for tracking with sporting group dogs as second best. He says,

**"Now I had the dog, the harness, the line, the markers and the glove. We were almost ready to start."**

"They are more stable dogs, that are not hyperactive, with an attention span that is long makes the better trackers when the track becomes longer, older and distractions are present when the dog is on the track. The more trackable (responsive to the handler) the dog is, the easier it is to train in tracking. Dogs that are kennel dogs have not had the opportunity to establish a rapport with the handler have difficulty in learning to track, while those dogs that have established this rapport are the easiest to train." After almost continuous training for the past three years, Nita and I certainly did have a rapport. Also, she was able to concentrate for relatively long periods of time without being distracted by things going on around her. She sounded like a good candidate for tracking.

On reading further, Johnson says, "The best age to start a dog into tracking training appears to be between four and six month of age." (Emphasis mine). Well, Nita was a little bit old at four years now but I'll still bet this old dog can learn new tricks! Reading on, I learned, "Scent discrimination training, as found in the Utility class of obedience, has no bearing whatever as an asset or liability when it comes to tracking training. Contrary to the belief of many novices in training, the tendency of a dog to constantly sniff the ground, floor or objects is not an indication that the dog will do well in tracking."

It would seem then that one would be better off starting tracking before training seriously for novice obedience. Perhaps the best schedule for a person wanting to earn all training titles would be: Kindergarten Puppy Training from age eight weeks to sixteen weeks, tracking to title, Novice training, Open and finally Utility. Actually, there is only one obedience command needed in tracking training and that is the "down" command. Mr. Johnson says to put the dog on a "down" in the "scent puddle" (a one-square yard area of trampled down vegetation at the beginning of the track). This is to "give him the scent."

From what I have read in Johnson's book, tracking training is nothing at all like obedience training. There are no "corrections" for failure to respond properly, only encouragement to keep on tracking. The dog is in command in tracking instead of the handler as in obedience.

Now we needed an area in which to train. "Ideally, it should be heavily vegetated with reasonably short grass. The ideal height of grass should be approximately up to your dog's pastern or slightly higher," according to Johnson. "Once the program is well under way, other types of vegetation should be used such as stubble fields, wheat, rye or other grain fields and pastureland that has liberal sprinkling of manure." Being right in the middle of a California drought, there are no fields such as described by Johnson. To start, we would have to use the local park as it is the only green patch around.

# A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER...!

Johnson gives two measures for instilling incentive to track in dog. One is for "natural retrievers" (I have yet to see a truly natural retriever Saint) and one for the "non-retrievers." Nita was definitely the non-retriever type (although she is an extremely reliable retriever; it is trained, not natural). For the non-retrievers, food is used as the incentive. Some nutritious food that the dog really likes is used on the track to keep the dog interested. It is used in this manner: The day before the first tracking trainings session the dog is given no food. The food that is to be used on the track is proportioned into "food drops" with the largest drop aging at the end of the track. It is at least twice as big as any other food drop. Knowing Nita to be one of the all-time great "chowhounds," I felt a surge of hope as I read about this method of training. Nita will go to unbelievable lengths for food! I doubted the need to fast her for 1 or 2 days before our first track and only skipped dinner the night before. I set about making her food drops. I used hamburger meat (one pound) with one tablespoon of bone meal mixed in and formed into meatballs, simmered in water and then baked in a 200-degree oven for about an hour. This turned out a small dry meatball about the size of a walnut. These can be carried in the pocket without "messing up" the clothing. I stored several pounds of prepared meatballs in the freezer. At least I was ready to give it a try.



The next morning I got dressed, got the kids ready for school and left them with instruction to "leave for school at 8:15," got my dog, harness, long line, stakes, glove and "meatballs", got in the car and headed for the park. A new adventure was about to begin!

What happened next? You will have to wait for the next *Saint Fancier* to find out. I'm inviting anyone who is interested to follow Nita's and my adventures as we try to teach ourselves tracking. I'm certainly not an expert. In fact, I know next to nothing about tracking. But hopefully I'm about to find out. I hope some of you out there will have your interest aroused and try it with me. How about it? Surely a search and rescue breed such as the Saint Bernard deserves to have more than 13 TDs in the history of the breed! ([article, circa 1977](#))

**To be continued.....**

# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

May 2003

Volume 2, Issue 5

## A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER... AN OLD ONE FOR THE SAINT BERNARD – PART II

By Janis Sanderson

If you read part one of this series in the last *SAINT FANCIER*, you remember this is a chronicle of a Saint and her handler learning in a very first-hand way about tracking. I am writing this as Nita and I teach ourselves about tracking. The most interesting part of this experience is that even I don't know how this story will turn out!

Last "episode" left Nita and I as we were starting out on our very first tracking experience. I'll continue from there. We arrived at "our" park about 7:45 on Monday morning. Conditions were perfect for a beginner. It was overcast with a heavy fog. The grass was wet and there wasn't a breath of wind. I found a likely-looking place, put Nita on a down-stay command and proceeded to lay out the track.

One of the first things I learned from Johnson's book is that there is quite a lot more to laying a track than is apparent at first. **"So I knew I'd be far from the ideal on my training program. But for me, that is the norm."**

The most important thing is that the tracklayer must know exactly where the track is at all times. Most people do not walk in a straight line, but unconsciously drift to the right or left. In order, therefore, to lay a straight track, the tracklayer lines up naturally occurring objects such as large rocks, trees, bushes, etc., (as one would line up the sights on a rifle) to insure that the track is straight. Also, this will enable the tracklayer to always pinpoint the exact position of the track by lining up any two of these objects.

The Johnson book advocates using another person as tracklayer and tracking every day. Unfortunately, I was unable to find anyone to lay track for me and decided I'll have to do it myself. I know I'll be lucky to be able to get out 3 or 4 mornings a week to track. So I knew I'd be far from the ideal on my training program. But for me, that is the norm.

I found a spot in the park where I could line up my starting stake with a post in the distance and several sprinkler heads were in a direct line in between. The distance from start to finish was about 50 feet instead of the 100 feet advocated by Johnson in the first session. But I was anxious to try it, so I made a "scent puddle" to the right of the starting stake and stepped off 10 feet down the track and deposited a meatball on

the ground. Stepping on it, I continued another 10 feet where I dropped another meatball. Two more meatballs and 20 feet later, I planted the finish stake. I filled the glove with 3 meatballs and put it on the ground in front of the stake. Then I retraced my steps carefully back down the track and back to Nita. The wet grass showed my steps clearly so I knew exactly where the track was.

Next, I had Nita stand and put I on her harness, attached the line and put her on another down with her nose right in the middle of the scent puddle. I took a deep breath and gave the command, "Nita, FIND IT!" She jumped up and took a few steps and stopped, looking back at me. "Find it," I encouraged her. She looked around and took a few more steps. Then I pointed out the first meatball to her. She devoured it and started sniffing around for more. "Good girl!", I praised, "FIND IT!. Go on, FIND IT!" We proceeded down the track with me pointing out each meatball and Nita wandering around sniffing here and there. Finally she came to the glove. She was not a bit interested in it. So I picked it up excitedly, getting her attention, and gave her the meatballs inside, in which she was plenty interested.

We turned around and I led her back to the starting point. Then I went down the track again depositing the meatballs every 10 feet and leaving the glove filled with meatballs at the end. Again we tried it. She was a bit better this time. A bit more confident. She went the first 10 feet herself and got the first meatball. But I had to point out the others and the glove. We worked the same track four times. By the fourth time she found all the meatballs herself and was pulling hard into the harness. I was thrilled!! I praised and petted Nita telling her what a terrific dog she was. I felt we had done very well for our first time. So we packed up and went home, anxious for tomorrow so we might try again.

The next morning we were back at the same spot. This time as I put the first meatball on the ground 10 feet down the track, I was almost knocked over by Nita who had broken her stay to hurry and get to those meatballs! I grabbed her by the collar and took her back. I was put out about her breaking her stay and I let her know it! (Mistake number one!) After laying the track, I came back and gave the command, "Nita FIND IT!" She jumped up, took two steps, stopped and looked at me.



## A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER...!

She was uptight now about possibly being corrected. On an impulse I slipped Nita's collar over her head and tossed it aside.

"FIND IT!," I said again and she flew off, almost pulling me off my feet! She went straight down the track, found every meatball with me at least 6 feet behind her all the way.

It seems that the collar has much significance to Nita and is a symbol of my control. Taking it off tells her this is something different and she will not be corrected. From then on, I always took off her collar just before giving the command to "Find it."

We worked the track 4 times again that morning with excellent results. After the last track, I took off her harness and let her be free. As I walked back, I noticed she was carefully tracking right behind me as we walked back to the starting flag.

After several sessions using the same place in the park, we were doing very well. I had begun to lay the track and then returning to her by another route. I also avoided going out to track on mornings that were dry and windy. By the third week I was using fewer meatballs on the track and had extended it to 80 to 100 feet. Nita could go the whole distance with only one food drop, and was still doing well. I was anxious to get on to more advanced stuff! (Mistake number two!)

I decided to find a bigger place to track. I knew of a large baseball field near the freeway. So our next outing found us there. Then I noticed the grass was sparse and the wind was bowing, but I decided to try it anyway. I laid a 120 foot track into the wind. I used bits of paper to mark the track and dropped meatballs about every 20 feet. Then I returned by a different route. I gave Nita the command and she was off. She made it to the first meatball and then ran into trouble. She kept going off the track to the right. I would point it out to her again, she would go a few feet and get off again and start "casting." She acted like she just couldn't find it. Then I noticed the wind had changed and was blowing from a different direction. "Maybe that was the trouble," I thought to myself. In the beginning all tracks are laid into the wind so the scent will be blowing right to the dog.

I laid another track in the new wind direction and we tried it again. Again it was a disaster. I had to point the track out to Nita time and time again. But we finally got to the end for the reward. I went home very disappointed, but realizing I was trying to progress too fast. I needed a better, more grassy place to work. So, while I gave that some thought, I went back to the book.

Johnson says the dog must always find the glove. If you lose the track and can't find the glove, the handler must have one ready to throw out so the dog can "find" it and always be successful in his search. At this point, I didn't need to carry an extra glove as I could plainly see it out there when we got near the end. In the beginning, I worried about the fact that the glove was visible. But I noted that dogs don't see worth a darn. Nita could be within one or two feet of the glove before she saw it. Dogs rely much more on their noses than their eyes.

In a tracking test, the dog is expected to "indicate" the glove to the handler. How he does this is up to the handler, but Johnson says to teach the dog to pick up the glove and bring it to the handler. This sounded very wise to me. So far, Nita has paid little attention to the glove at the end, and I had picked it up and given her the goodies. No, she was starting to come back to me when I acted excited as she got to the glove. That was a "no-no." I figured I had better teach her to pick it up right away as soon as she saw it. The next day I took a bunch of meatballs and the glove and went out on the front lawn. I gave the command to "fetch." She trotted out, carefully picked up the glove and came back. Surprise! The glove was full of goodies! Several more times and you never have seen any dog of any breed do a faster fetch! Nita flew out and grabbed that glove and flew back with it. Oh, the power of "goodies"! From then on, when Nita came to the glove on the track, I quickly said "Fetch!" and she would grab the glove and bring it to me.

It was at about this point that my life, as does everyone's at times, became more complicated. I took a part-time job. It is 20 hours a week, which doesn't sound like much. But to someone whose days are already too short, it's a big chunk of time. I actually almost didn't take it because of the possible interference with my "doggie" interests. But it was so ideal for me. Jobs like this one are not easily found. The hours are 11 AM to 3 PM, 5 days a week. Plus, I can get off for any important personal business such as dog shows! I just couldn't turn it down.

Getting used to a new job completely out of my field (I am a registered nurse and the job is as a secretary in a real estate office!) was a real strain. I worried about how I would keep up my other responsibilities. I had a new Saint in Novice training, a breed Newfoundland starting his show career, a Cocker ready to start Open training, a part-time business I operated from my home, two Novice classes to teach, and a dog to teach tracking!

I didn't see how I could work Nita even three mornings a week now. So, for about three weeks we did nothing. Then my Saturday mornings became free. I had been teaching an Open obedience class on Saturday followed by an obedience ring preparation class. These two classes had tied up Saturday mornings completely for months. Now they are over for a few months. So now I track with Nita on Saturday mornings. Will that be enough? I have no idea. But I am going to keep trying. That doesn't seem to be as much of a problem to me as the weather here.

Our drought continues here. Each new day is bright and sunny. I never thought I could become sick of sunshine. Those of you who are reading this in mid-February in the East are not likely to be sympathetic, but, oh, how we pray for rain! If there is no rain again this year (we had six inches last year) it will put us into the third year of drought. Without rain, there will be no grass. Without grass, there will be no tracking. Parks are good to start on but just aren't big enough for the regular quarter-mile long tracks necessary to get a dog ready for a tracking test. So for now, we practice on Saturdays in the parks and wait for rain!

To be continued.....

# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

June 2003

Volume 2, Issue 6

## A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER... AN OLD ONE FOR THE SAINT BERNARD – PART III

By Janis Sanderson

As of last December, the California drought had not yet broken. The only patches of green grass were in the city parks (too small now for Nita to track on) and the bigger regional parks outside the city. A friend encouraged me to use a park about 10 miles from my home. "There is all kinds of grass out there," he said. Perhaps my problem of finding a place to track was solved.

The next Sunday morning at 8 AM, I was off with Nita to Royal Oaks Park. One thing about using parks for tracking is if you get there at 8 AM, especially on weekdays, you've got it all to yourself! There was lots of grass there, nice thick well-watered grass. I decided to really get on to a longer track. So I put Nita on a stay, planted my starting stake and laid a 100-yard track. I used 10 food drops and came back to Nita on the same track, making it a "double laid" track. (Johnson says that a double-laid track is not twice as strong as a single laid track, as one might suspect, but apparently is 4 times as strong.) I gave Nita the command to "FIND IT!" and we took off. She stayed precisely on the track, moving at a fast walk and never lifted her head until she reached the glove, which she picked up and brought immediately to me. I was thrilled. We were really making progress. I laid two more tracks that morning; each was 120 yards long, double-laid, with 6 food drops. Results on both

were excellent. I went home very satisfied with my dog and very encouraged.

**"Our self-taught tracking program was coming along. Nita and I were gaining confidence."**

Monday morning I was off to Royal Oaks again to get in some tracking before work. That morning the grass was crunchy with a thin layer of ice. It was cold but Nita loved it. I tried to keep warm by keeping on the move. I laid 3 track each one 120 yards long double-laid with 5 food drops. Nita was much more confident now on the track and she would actually break into a run from time to time. She was pulling hard into the harness, which is good. When the dog pulls hard into the harness it makes it easier for the handler to "read" the dog; that is, to tell if he is really on the track or not. Of course, I still knew where the track was, but at some point in training, the stakes will not be

there to guide him. Our self-taught tracking program was coming along. Nita and I were gaining confidence.

Then Christmas was upon us. My husband, Barry, had 4 days off for Christmas. This would be a good opportunity to try a track laid by someone other than myself. At first Barry was unimpressed with the idea of getting up early in the morning and "tromping around in the cold." But I said, "You have never seen Nita track; come with me and see how she is doing." So, reluctantly he agreed to go. Christmas Eve morning we took off for the park. I laid the first track for a distance of 110 yards using 5 food drops and Nita ran it very nicely. Well, Barry was impressed! So he says, "Let me try laying a track." Happily, I said, "Sure!" Barry laid 2 more tracks, each 110 yards long.

I had expected some trouble at this point as apparently some dogs have a problem when a new tracklayer is used. But to my surprise, Nita ran the next two tracks perfectly. Another milestone passed successfully!

From then on, Barry became my tracklayer. He got up every morning on his days off and went with me to lay track. We used the park each time. The tracks were about 120 yards long and only 3 food drops were used. I thought Nita was doing beautifully.

About this time California got a beautiful Christmas present — rain! Days and days of hard rain! What a beautiful sight to people weary of bare brown earth. And just in the nick of time. The two dams that supply water to the Salinas Valley, an intensive agricultural area, have a combined capacity of about 700,000 acre feet. The combined amount of water in the two dams as of December 1, 1977 was 45,000 acre feet! Disaster was averted by a steady downpour that lasted on and off for 6 weeks bringing central California 14 inches of desperately needed rain.

Barry had another 4 days off over New Years and we spent three mornings at the parks. Now we introduced the first turn. This is another milestone in tracking. I again expected trouble and was very nervous about trying the first turn. I needed a quick consultation with Johnson's book to get the technique in my mind. When using a turn for the first time, the tracklayer takes heel-to-toe steps for the last 6 feet before the turn,

# A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER...!

makes a right angle turn and does another 6 feet of heel-to-toe in the new direction. The tracklayer plants a stake at the turn so the handler knows just where it is. Also, it is a good idea to put down a food drop after about 10 feet in the new direction to immediately reward the dog for making the turn.

Barry laid a track 50 yards in one direction and made the first turn going another 20 yards and put down the glove, filled with "goodies." By now our tracks were all single-laid. That is the tracklayer returns to the starting point by an alternate route so the track is weaker. I put Nita on the track with a "FIND IT!" command and she was off carefully following the track with her nose about 2 inches off the ground. I could see the turn stake coming up and increased the tension on the line hoping she would not overshoot the turn. What a surprise and thrill when Nita came up to the turn and carefully made a perfect right angle turn as if her nose was tied to the track! Nita found the glove immediately and got her reward, plus extra praise from a very happy handler! We ran 3 more tracks that morning, each one with one turn, with excellent results.

What we needed now was a little more room. Royal Oaks park was okay, but now was just too small. For some time I'd had my eye on a 50-acre field about 20 miles from my home. But it had been barren of vegetation until recent rain had brought forth a thin carpet of green. Perhaps now was the time to move to this new area. New Years Eve morning at 10 AM, we were out in the field looking it over. This could turn into a super place to track. There was different types of grasses, bushes, even small animals. There would be scent of rabbit, deer, and probably lots of other little "critters." This would be good and teach the dog to keep on the track even with these distracting scents.

**"Tracking is something that can seem like a rotten idea when the alarm goes off on Saturday and/or Sunday morning."**

The first track was only 50 yards long and double-laid as the grass here was still sparse. Nita ran it well but with her head up higher than she had previously worked. Perhaps it was due to the fact that there were lots of old dead weeds with stickers standing up about 2 feet tall. As time went on, this presented certain problems. Nita tended to cast more and not be as precisely on the track as before. But his area was going to be perfect for tracking and after a few weeks would be thick with grass. From here on, this field would serve us well.

Tracking is something that can seem like a rotten idea when the alarm goes off on Saturday and/or Sunday morning. The desire to turn over and forget the whole thing is strong, especially if you are tracking alone. That's one reason to track with a friend. Not only can you be company for each other, but you can also share the ups and downs that are part of any training program. Also, it is almost as much trouble to

get up, think of a good excuse, and call your partner to tell them you are not coming as it is to get up and go! So find someone to track with if you can.

Once you get out in the field, tracking is exciting and lots of fun. If you are early enough, you can enjoy that special stillness of the early morning. Don't forget to enjoy the smells and sights of the country. There is something about tracking that makes the handler feel a part of something very old and honored between man and dog. It's a new feeling for me and a very enjoyable one.

To be continued.....

## 2003 National Tracking Invitational

**There are six more weeks remaining in order to qualify for the first AKC Tracking Invitational!**

Plans are moving forward. In several weeks the information regarding the host hotel, special passes, the banquet and all other details for the first AKC Tracking Invitational will be available. In the meantime, if you have any interest in Tracking mark this date on your calendar, September 20th & 21st. Not only will it prove to be special because it is the first of its kind but the setting it is held in will be hard to top at any future event! So schedule those vacation days now. Come enjoy the top tracking dogs doing what they love to do and all the extra amenities made available to us in the splendid setting of the Biltmore Estate! Please read on for more information.



**The Biltmore Estate**

The AKC will hold the 2003 National Tracking Invitational at Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina on September 20 and 21. Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Biltmore Estate is the home of George W. Vanderbilt and occupies 8,000 acres. It is the largest privately owned home in the United States.

As a result of the interest generated from the 2002 National Tracking Exhibition, held in conjunction with the National Obedience Invitational in June, the AKC has approved a separate tracking event to showcase the top tracking dogs in the country and their remarkable scenting ability. This event will provide owners of Champion Tracker (CT) dogs an opportunity to participate in an event designed especially for them.

### AKC National Tracking Invitational Requirements

The tracks will comply with AKC Tracking Dog Excellent (TDX) requirements, with the following modifications:

**Turns:** 5 – 8

**Age of Track:** 3 – 5 hours

**Length of Track:** 800 – 1,000 yards

**Articles:** 4 (metal, leather, cloth, plastic)

**Cross-tracks:** 1 cross-track

**Surfaces:** Terrain and surfaces as available.

**Eligibility:** All dogs that have earned the Champion Tracker (CT) title prior to June 23, 2003 will be invited to participate. Priority will be given in the draw to participants who did not exhibit in the 2002 AKC Tracking Exhibition in Chicago, Illinois.

**Entry Limit:** Entry is limited to 10 dogs. If more than 10 entries are received, a draw will be conducted in accordance with the Tracking Regulations Chapter 1, Section 12.

**Judges:**

Team 1 – John Barnard, Chicago, Illinois and Joyce Klamut, Dover, Ohio.

Team 2 – Robert Brown, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma and Jill Jones, Brownville, Oregon.

**Closing date:** Monday, July 21, 2003

**Draw:** July 25, 2003 - AKC, 5580 Centerview Dr, Raleigh, North Carolina 27606 in Companion Events

**Entry fee:** \$150.00 (Entry fee will include cost of event pass and the banquet Saturday evening)

Five (5) dogs will be exhibited on Saturday under Team 1 judges and five (5) dogs will be exhibited on Sunday under Team 2 judges. All dogs will be allowed to complete their tracks under the observation of the judges and will be individually critiqued.

Exhibitors, workers and spectators will be able to tour Biltmore House, gardens and winery at their leisure. The estate has several excellent restaurants and gift shops. Biltmore Village, near the entrance to the estate, hosts a small town atmosphere with numerous shops, featuring local artists and quaint eating establishments. For more information visit [www.biltmore.com](http://www.biltmore.com).

Those who are interested in working as tracklayers, please contact Herb Morrison, AKC Tracking Field Representative at: [whm@akc.org](mailto:whm@akc.org).



# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

July 2003

Volume 2, Issue 7

## A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER... AN OLD ONE FOR THE SAINT BERNARD – PART IV

By Janis Sanderson

In late January 1978 I began using a 50-acre field for my tracking training with Nita. The heavy rains had brought out a carpet of green everywhere and how we loved it! By this time I was only able to work with Nita on Saturday and Sunday mornings. So every weekend, except for major show weekends, we got up and went tracking.

One good thing about teaching yourself something like tracking is that you don't learn that certain ways of teaching tracking won't work until you've already taught it that way! You have probably heard, "You have to go out at 6:00 in the morning to teach your dog to track." Since I had no instructor telling me to go out at 6:00 AM I didn't. If I got out in the field by 9:30 or 10:00, I thought I was doing great. And, it worked! Most of the time I was working in bright sunshine but with moist ground from all the rains. I did have to get a new harness for Nita, however. My homemade harness worked well in the beginning, but as the track got longer and she pulled harder, her harness slipped badly due to the fact it wasn't completely adjustable. So I sent away for a nylon adjustable harness from Wenahs Dog Packs in Lynnwood, Washington. It was only \$9.50 and works beautifully. I also had to change the way I made the "meatballs." The bone meal I added to the hamburger made the meatball too crumbly so I dispensed with the bone mea.. Eventually I ended up making ten pounds of meatballs at a time and storing them in one-pound packages in the freezer. It was very handy to grab one package which was enough for one track.

For about four or five weeks, we would go out to the field on Saturday and Sunday morning and Barry would lay three tracks of about 150 yards each. Nita would do a super on the first one, okay on the second, and awful on the third. It took several weeks for me to realize how easily a dog's nose gets dried out and how quickly a Saint can get over-heated and give up on the track. So I learned to keep my dog in the shade and cool until ready to put her on the track, and also we switched to one long track and saw immediate improvement.

Our one big problem seemed to be the turns. Nita would overshoot the turn and then have an awful time finding the new direction. Still we had trouble. So we laid off for a couple of weeks awaiting the help that was on the way.

John Cox, SBCA Obedience Chairman and owner-trainer of two remarkable dogs, Am/Can. CH. Can. OTCH Cherryacres Nicklus von Hyden Am/Can. UD (Nita's sire), and Can. OTCH Frederick Von Hyden Am/Can. UDT (Nita's litter brother) would be in California for the SBC of Greater San Jose's Specialty. He would be staying several days and was anxious to see Nita's progress in tracking and to offer any help he could. So the day after the specialty (where Nita added a sixth High in Trial to her record) Barry and I, along with John and another experienced tracking handler Marilyn Suthergreen, trainer-handler of Can. OTCH Beautysweet Cindi Am/Can UDT (Dalmatian) along with all our distinguished four-footed friends, got out to the field for some tracking!

This would be the first opportunity to watch a dog other than Nita track! After picking a good spot, both John and Marilyn set off to lay tracks for their dogs. Both Freddy and Cindi have Canadian and American TDs and are in training for the Canadian TDX which is much more difficult than a TD. After laying tracks of about 500 yards they returned and let the track "age" about a half hour. John put Freddy on his track and I followed behind to pick up pointers.



"Freddy tracked slower than Nita, so it was easy to keep up with him. I learned I had been giving up too easily when Nita ran into trouble on the turns."

Freddy tracked slower than Nita, so it was easy to keep up with him. I learned I had been giving up too easily when Nita ran into trouble on the turns. When Freddy had trouble on a turn, John kept encouraging him and waited for him to find the scent and "get on with it." I watched John's handling carefully. As in any phase of dog training, be it conformation, obedience or tracking, handling is everything. After a few rough spots, Freddy completed the track and got his reward. Then we returned to the start and I decided to run Nita on one short straight track since she had been "off work" for several weeks.

Barry laid a straight 70-yard track and I put Nita on it. John and Marilyn thought Nita did very well and was well on her way toward that TD! It was

# NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER...!

terribly encouraging to me to hear them say that. After some discussion, we decided to run Nita again on a track with some turns. John laid the track and I watched nervously as the track became longer and longer and ended up with FOUR turns. I had an attack of no confidence as he suggested we let it age fifteen minutes.

So far, Nita had been making only one turn and running the track after only five minutes. When we finally started, John followed behind to give advice on handling. I found one of my biggest problems had been that I had kept Nita on too short a line. John kept saying, "Let out more line. Let out more line." When I let out almost the entire 40 feet of line, Nita did better on the turns. To my surprise, Nita made the first three turns, but lost the track on the fourth turn. By that time it was about 11:00 AM, the temperature was in the 70s and she just got too hot and dried out to pick up the track. So John went ahead and retraced his steps on the last leg to "freshen" the track so Nita could finish the track and be successful. The handler must make sure the dog always finds the glove one way or another. It was a very enlightening day and I came away very much encouraged and anxious to get back to my training program.

By the first of March, my Saturday mornings were again taken up with training classes. So, back to one day a week tracking—Sunday morning. About that time I learned that a nearby dog training club was putting on a tracking match in about six weeks. The match would be held just like a regular test. The track would be at least 440 yards but not more than 500 yards long, would contain at least two right angle turns and be aged from a half to two hours. The entry was limited to four dogs. I briefly considered entering Nita in the match, but when I learned that preference would be given to dogs trying for "certification," I decided not to take an entry from a dog more ready than Nita. Nita had never gone 440 yards and had no experience with aged tracks. But I planned to be there as a spectator. I was anxious to see other dogs run a track.

We continued to track with Nita in the 50-acre field for several weeks, lengthening the track to about 350 yards, including two turns. I used one meatball on each leg and began to remove the meatballs from the glove slowly and began carrying them in my pocket and giving them to Nita when she picked up them glove and brought it to me.

Nita gained confidence and began working the tracks faster. Now I was putting as much tension as I could on the line and having to run behind her about a third of the way as Nita



"Time passed quickly and the tracking match date arrived. How different tracking matches are from conformation and obedience matches."

moved faster. By keeping a lot of tension on the line I was able to "feel" it immediately when Nita lost the track and to feel it again when she picked it up again. Also, keeping the line tight prevents the dog from doing a lot of "casting" back and forth to the sides of the track and prevents the dog from running past the turns so easily.

Time passed quickly and the tracking match date arrived. How different tracking matches are from conformation and obedience matches! The tracking site was a large horse ranch at the edge of green gently rolling hills. There was good grass cover about 3 to 5 inches high. We arrived at 7:00 AM to be greeted by the ranch owner who opened the big gate to the barns and pasture area. Several motor homes and pickups were parked near the buildings. The match-giving club had provided hot coffee and sweet rolls for exhibitors and spectators. There were four entries, two German Shepherds, a Sheltie and a Lab, with one alternate, another German Shepherd, in case a regular entry was absent.

The atmosphere was relaxed and informal as we sipped hot coffee and talked tracking. A few minutes before judging was to start at 8:00 AM the four exhibitors drew slips of paper from a bag giving them their track number. The first three tracks had already been laid, and were aging. The first dog to go was a 7-year old German Shepherd bitch. We all walked out to the tracking area and watched the Shepherd give a good exhibition of how NOT to track. She had trouble taking the scent and was off the track before reaching the 30 foot stake. She stopped after about 50 feet to relieve herself and then found a puddle of water about 30-feet further on and stopped for a long drink. Finally, only minutes after starting, the judge "blew the whistle" on her.

Track number two was run quite nicely by the Sheltie and although he had a lot of trouble on one turn, he found the glove and was "certified" by the judge. (Any handler wishing to enter his dog in a regular tracking test must first be certified by an approved judge as to the dog's ability to successfully complete a track. This certification paper must be sent in with the entry. A certification is valid for only six months from the date on the form and if not used by then, another must be obtained.)

Track number three was the Lab's. After a good start, he ran right over the first turn and "got the whistle," putting him out.

The last dog, a male Shepherd, did everything fairly well but ran right over the top of the glove and was marked "failed" by the judge.

After watching the four entries in the match, I felt a surge of confidence. Nita was faster than any of them and lacked only experience with an aged the track.

After all the tracks were run, there was a lovely brunch given by the match committee where the day's tracks were discussed in detail by the judges, exhibitors and spectators. All in all, it was a very enjoyable and relaxing morning and I learned that my Saint Bernard was a lot closer to being ready for a test than I thought.

# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

August 2003

Volume 2, Issue 8

## A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER... AN OLD ONE FOR THE SAINT BERNARD – PART V

By Janis Sanderson

In late April I attended, as a spectator, Monterey Bay Dog Training Club's first tracking match held outside of Salinas. It was lots of fun and boosted my determination to earn a tracking title on my Saint Bernard, Lovecrafts Nita Nicklus UD.

We were well on our way to being ready to enter a test. Nita was, at that time, able to complete, in about 5 minutes, a 350-yard track with three turns. At this stage of our tracking experience, the only real problem I was having was in keeping up with Nita as she moved faster and faster on the track. Hopefully, as the tracks were aged longer, she would slow down. There was not much time left to work Nita on tracking. The summer show season was approaching and we were making plans to travel to the Willamette Valley SBC Specialty and the SBC of Puget Sound's specialty as well as some Canadian shows, all in June.

Soon June was upon us. Almost too soon! There always seems to be much more to do to get ready for these dog show vacations than there is time to do them! But it's all worth it. Combining beautiful scenery, visiting good friends and dog shows is my idea of a perfect vacation. Our two children left by plane a week ahead to fly to Oregon to visit their grandparents while we packed for our trip.

Four days before we were to leave, my brother offered, or rather insisted, that we take his brand new Winnebago Mini-motor home. When I got a look at the air conditioning unit sitting on top, I couldn't refuse him. I always worry about the dogs when we get into hot country. With Jim's motor home I could relax and know they were in no danger from the heat.

The Willamette Valley show was first on our itinerary. It was held in Portland at East Delta Park. The location was very easy to find and we had perfect weather that day. It was overcast and cool enough, but no rain. Nita was entered in Utility, Open B and Versatility. She failed Utility on the directed jumping exercise and also failed Versatility on the same exer-

**"We were well on our way to being ready to enter a test. Nita was, at that time, able to complete, in about 5 minutes, a 350-yard track with three turns."**

cise. It isn't the jumping she has trouble with, but the "go out." Nita could never understand why, after all that training to stay close to her handler, she should now be running away from me. Nita has had her problems with Utility, but has always been a very consistent Open competitor and came through that day with a score of 189.5 in Open B which gave her Highest Scoring Dog in Trial.

My other Saint bitch Cache Retreats X-mas Fantasy, co-owned with John Cox, was entered in Novice B for her first CD leg try. Unfortunately, she didn't get it. Later she said she didn't hear me when I called her the first time on the Recall.

The next day Nita was entered in Utility and Open B at the SBC of Puget Sound Specialty. Again she failed Utility but earned a 197 in Open B which was High in Trial again. Then Fantasy surprised us all with a beautiful job of heeling and took first place in Novice B with a 194 for her first leg. The Puget Sound club always puts on a lovely show with unusual and very beautiful trophies. It is one of my favorite shows.

That followed a week in Seattle visiting friends and sightseeing. Our host and tour guide was John Cox, who had every minute planned full of interesting things to do and see. Included was a visit with Roberta Anderson of Oak Harbor, Washington. Roberta has put numerous TDs on her Golden Retrievers. We had planned to do some tracking with Roberta giving us pointers and advice.

It was about noon and quite warm when we got to her kennel. Roberta has a nice area for tracking right outside her country home. I was concerned that Nita would not do too well as she hadn't tracked in weeks and it was so warm. But she surprised me by doing two short 150 yard tracks quite well. Then we took an iced tea break and gave Nita a chance to rest and cool down before trying our last track of the day. This one was in a sheep pasture and was a new experience for her. Nita was a bit intrigued with the sheep and this new scent but remembered, with a bit of urging to "FIND IT!", what we are there for and moved steadily at a walk to the end of the track. She picked up the glove and brought it to me smiling and wagging her tail in anticipation of lots of praise and a few meatballs. Being off her training program had not seemed to affect Nita's ability to track at all. As Johnson says in his book on tracking, the handler may forget how to handle, but the dog does not forget how to track.

## A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER...!

The next Friday morning before dawn, we left Seattle for Chilliwack, BC in Canada and the two-day Lions Gate shows. Nita and Fantasy both were entered in Novice B. I understand that up until now a Saint Bernard in Obedience was a rare sight at the Canadian shows. However, at these two shows there were five Saints in Novice B and one in Open B. The Novice dogs were, Nita and Fantasy, John Cox's Cherryacres Thibideau V Thiz, a two-year-old son of CH Cherryacres Mr. Thisbie, and CH Siegfried's Bella CDX owned by Howard and Phoebe Brown of Southern California.

The Open B dog was Griffin Von Bruno Can. CD Am. CDX (Nita's other litter brother) owned by Loretta Griffin of Tacoma, Washington.

It was definitely the Saint's day! In a class full of American dogs (I couldn't believe how many familiar faces I was seeing), Nita earned a 195 which would have

**"We left Canada very pleased to have 2 legs each on Nita, Fantasy and Tibs. Now we would have to return to Canada next year to finish Fantasy's CD, but for Nita there was a different and ambitious plan."**

been good for 2nd place (Canadians give only 1st in the class). Fantasy also qualified with a 186. Bella, Thibideau and Bruno each received a qualifying score with Bruno finishing his Canadian CDX making him a dual CDX. The next day again, in very warm weather, all the Saints qualified!

We left Canada very pleased to have 2 legs each on Nita, Fantasy and Tibs. Now we would have to return to Canada next year to finish Fantasy's CD, but for Nita there was a different and ambitious plan.

Nita would not be going home to California with us in two days. She would be staying in Seattle with John. Being a man who likes both a challenge and Saint Bernards, John had agreed to keep Nita until Christmas and show her in Canada. He would attempt to finish her Canadian UDT by then! I have to say that putting four obedience titles on one dog in six months would be difficult for any breed and, if accomplished, all the more spectacular for a Saint Bernard.

Leaving Nita behind when we left was very hard and many a tear was wiped away as we left Seattle. But I couldn't think of anyone I trusted more to take good care of her. Nor could I think of a better trainer/handler than John. He is truly a natural with dogs. It was hard to leave her but I did so with the complete confidence that Nita would have every opportunity to show that she really is the truly remarkable Saint Bernard I believe her to be.

**To be continued by John Cox.....**



# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

September 2003

Volume 2, Issue 9

## A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER... AN OLD ONE FOR THE SAINT BERNARD – PART VI—FINAL CHAPTER!

By John Cox

In the Nov-Dec 1977 *Saint Fancier*, Janis Sanderson started a series of articles on how she was “self-teaching” herself and her Saint Bernard the techniques of tracking. There were no tracking instructors in Salinas, CA so Janis started reading books and explained to us the step-by-step approach she used in a series of five articles. In one of Janis's articles she mentioned, “I am writing this as Nita and I teach ourselves about tracking. The most interesting part of this experience is that even I don't know how this story will turn out!” This final chapter brings to a close the series of articles with a HAPPY ending!

In the last article, Janis mentions a very ambitious plan we had. After the Sanderson's trip to the Northwest, Nita would be staying with me so I could show her in Canada to complete her UDT by Christmas. At this point in time, July, Nita had 2 Canadian CD legs. She had her American UD so we were sure she knew what she was doing when it came to obedience. However, Nita was now 1000 miles away from home without her “mommy” and there were a lot of adjustments for her to make. With some dogs this could have been quite a problem but “cool Nita” settled right in place and never missed a meal. I gave Nita one week to adjust and settle into the routine of things before any formal obedience training.

After the week was up the vacation was over! It was work, work, work and more work. By this I mean two 15-minute work sessions a day—that is all I work my dogs if they are lucky. Before any training for tracking I had to establish a rapport with Nita and build on team work which is so essential to obedience. Working on basic obedience routines did the job and I became better acquainted with her and learned to “read” her different reactions.

Two weeks elapsed and it was back to Canada to earn finish

the last CD leg. There were two trials in one weekend so I entered them both and Nita came through with flying colors. She earned a 195 for second and a 196.5 for third place. The CD was now behind us and I knew we could work together well so it was time to try a little tracking.

Since it was July we took advantage of the long daylight hours and did tracking in the evenings after work and before Nita's dinner. I loaded up the car with the track markers, harness, tracking lead, leather glove and of course, meatballs. We drove to a large field and parked the car so Nita could see the field. The next step was to fill the glove with Nita's favorite snack. She watched as every meatball fell into the glove. Then I left her in the car and went to lay the track. I walked in a straight line 100-yards into the field and placed the second marker in the ground, made a ninety-degree turn, walked another 50 yards and dropped the glove.

After the track aged for about fifteen minutes, I got Nita out of the car. She was ready to get the food! The harness went on and we were off. Nita tracked at a slow trot in the correct direction, came to the turn and went right on past the marker. I watched her very closely to see what she would do after she lost the scent. Her head popped up as she cast around. As she came to the correct direction I poured on the praise and encouraged her to “Track.” She continued on and found the glove and received her reward. Our first time out together was a success! I needed a little more work in learning how to read Nita and she needed more work on tracking. Nita had to learn to track a longer track with more aging of the scent. Janis had done a SUPER job in training and I saw no reason why Nita could not earn a Tracking title. Nita just needed more practice which Janis could not give her because of the foxtail season in California.

**“Nita was now 1000 miles away from home without her ‘mommy’ and there were a lot of adjustments for her to make.”**



Nita at the starting marker waiting for the command

# A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER...!



**Nita is at a corner track and is casting to find the correct direction.**



**She finds the scent and continues "hot on the trail"**



**Nita finds the glove!**

Nita and I continued to work on tracking about twice during the week and once during the weekends. Each time out I would make the track age five minutes longer and lay the track about twenty-five yards longer. Then in early August I received a Premium List for a Tracking Test in Portland, Oregon.

When a Premium List comes out for a Tracking Test one must enter immediately or chances are slim you will get in. A Tracking Test usually limits the entries to about ten dogs due to the large amount of land needed to lay ten 1/4-mile tracks. Also, to enter a Tracking Test the dog must be certified by an AKC judge. I was in luck as the Premium List came on Friday and I called an AKC judge and asked if she could observe Nita on Saturday. She was free and we made arrangements to meet in a field early in the morning. The pressure was on—Nita had to do her track correct if we hoped to get into the test.

Saturday morning we met the tracking judge and she laid a track about 300-yards long and let it age for about 30 minutes. Nita started and did a super track as if she was driving down a highway. Before I had a chance to get nervous it was over and Nita was certified! I had the entry filled out and with the certification certificate we were off like a rocket to the main branch of the Post Office to get the entry into the mail. Now we had the waiting game to see if we were entered. The Premium came out late so the closing date and Test was near. The next step was to call Janis and tell her the good news!

A week passed and the mailman brought news that Nita was entered in the test. In fact, there were only four dogs entered in the test! One reason for the small entry was no one was expecting the Tracking Test and the Premium Lists came out late. So now this left us with two more things to worry about. First, could she pass her first test? And would three of the four dogs show up to qualify the test? Just like obedience, it takes a certain number of dogs to "qualify" a tracking test. A Tracking Test requires three dogs to compete. (Remember circa 1978, this does not hold true now. Just one dog can be in a test and it would count.)

The first thing we had to concern ourselves with was to practice and be ready for the test. For the whole week before the test we practiced every day. We were tracking on a soccer field which was now being used for, of all things, soccer. So instead of tracking in the evenings when everybody was all over the fields, we got up early in the mornings before work and breakfast. I am one of those people who love my rest and it really had to be something I wanted bad enough to get up early in the mornings and walk in a field! I REALLY WANTED Nita to finish her tracking and earn the title TD so it was up at 5:00 AM for a week. If Nita could finish her TD that would also make her a UDT—the eighth of the breed. Also, Nita and her brother, Frederick Von Hyden Am/Can. UDT, would be the ONLY brother-sister UDTs in the history of the breed. Plus, these two UDTs are sired by a Champion with a Utility title—Nicklus. Now if that was not an incentive I don't know what is and that is what it takes to get me up in the mornings.

August 20, 1978, arrived and it was off to Portland at 3:30 AM so we could arrive at 6:30 for the draw of the track. We arrived in Portland and the weather was rain and very little wind—Perfect! There were three dogs at the test so it qualified. We

# A NEW FRONTIER FOR THE HANDLER...!



**Canadian OTCH Lovecraft's Nita Nicklus AM/CAN UTD — STILL (25-years later) the breeds' only 2nd DUAL UDT**

drew a number from a hat and Nita was the first to track. I love being first because there is less time to worry and fuss. We went out to the track and started. Nita was fussing around and not concentrating on tracking. I tried to keep my cool and kept encouraging her to "TRACK!" I reminded her of goodies and she was off. There had been a lot of cows in the field and they left their calling cards all over. Nita was doing her track and I was watching where I was stepping. Nita was moving at a walk and made very nice turns. Soon her head went way down very close to the ground and she stopped tracking. I wondered "what now," and then she turned around with the glove in her mouth. WOW! Nita was now the FOURTEENTH TD SAINT BERNARD AND THE EIGHTH UDT!!!! Believe me, there is ABSOLUTELY nothing more exciting than finishing a TD. I have shown a Saint to his championship (now numbering three) and I have shown two Saints to their Utility titles (now four) and they don't even come close to the fun of tracking. It is a lot of work sometimes but the reward at the end is worth it.

Nita came home and rested on her laurels for a few days. Then it was off to Canada for three shows. After the three shows, Nita was a Canadian CDX. She earned a 197.5, 197 and a 192.5. The next week was a Canadian Tracking Test so it was back to practice. We worked out every day like before except this time I put Nita's breakfast at the end of the track for a reward to keep her interested. Believe me, this "chow-hound" was interested!

On September 16th Nita earned her Canadian TD and became the third Saint to earn dual TDs. For some strange reason Nita had a hard time on the track but with constant encouragement she got through. No telling what scents were on the track to confuse her—that is something only the dog knows.

In the following weeks, Nita finished her Canadian UD and became the second DUAL UDT of the breed. Her litter brother Freddy was the first. Janis laid a good foundation of obedience training on Nita which made my job quite easy. In just **108 days** Nita had put FIVE titles behind her name, American TD, Canadian CD, CDX, UD and TD. She now boasts nine titles—just like her daddy Nicklus and brother Freddy. When it came time for Nita to return to California, it was real hard to say good bye. But she will be back to visit again.



# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

October 2003

Volume 2, Issue 10

## TRACKING IN THE U.K.

By Sil Sanders

In March 2003, I visited the U.K. and had the opportunity to watch a championship tracking trial. This is my attempt to communicate to American trackers what this test is like.

**"Teaser: Imagine the fun you and your dog might have being able to enter and get in 10 or more advanced tracking tests a year and passing many or all of them."**

This is a little long and may be controversial since it describes a competitive form of tracking that turns out to be a lot of fun for the dogs and the handlers -- something most AKC tracking people think is impossible (certainly I did before going to this trial).

A disclaimer (e.g. don't jump to conclusions): The format is somewhat like Schutzhund but other than being derived from police dog work and following a similar test format, UK tracking requires little of the precision and close control that is a hallmark of Schutzhund tracking.

And let me say that my understanding of the full Kennel Club Working Trial program is incomplete so any corrections by people more knowledgeable is welcome.

The Program has several levels which lead up to the Championship level in the way that most dog events in the UK have quite a few levels or classes. Tracks in the lower levels are apparently similar to the AKC TD in overall complexity and work up to the Championship level. Since I only saw the Championship level, I will focus on that but one should understand that there are lower levels as well.

At the Championship level, one is first trying to qualify and then trying to get the best score of anyone at the Championship level and thus earn a Championship "ticket." Several of these tickets earns you a Championship. So it is both a pass-fail qualification test as well as a winner-take-all competition.

### The Championship track itself.

The Champion tracking test is a 3-hour old track in uniform cover without obstacles or cross-tracks. It is 1000 to 1500 yards long with 14-20 legs. Legs can be quite short and parallel legs can be quite close (I saw a 25-yard leg at the top of a hat, so the incoming and out-going long legs were only 25 yards apart). There are three articles, each quite small, and there is no article at the start. Corners can be acute or obtuse, but many are 90 degrees.

Dogs have 20 minutes to complete the track. They might lose a few points if they are just a couple of minutes over time, but due to the day-long scheduling of the whole test (which I'll describe later), time is important. Dogs also lose points if they circle a corner more than once or if they circle in the middle of the leg. They get 10 points for each article the dog finds, or 5 points if the handler finds an article without the dog indicating it. So there are 100 maximum points for the track plus 30 for the articles.

Clubs choose land which is uniformly flat and farmed in a uniform way. Each track in a given test is the same shape which is designed by the judge beforehand. The test I saw was in ankle high grass which had not yet started to grow (late March in the UK is still chilly). But I understand that other tests are on crop stubble or mud or tall grass depending on what kind of land is available at that particular time of year.

Every dog gets the same track which is uniformly aged three hours. In this way, scores between dogs are pretty meaningful.

The judge stays at the side of the field a short distance from the start and judges from that position. So he is making no attempt to judge precisely that the dog is on the track, only that the dog follows the given pattern and finds the articles (much like we judge AKC tests in terms of allowing the dog some freedom to follow the track without perfect precision).



All the dogs I saw were very enthusiastic trackers. They started quickly with deep noses and worked happily through the track. Many circled more than they should and lost a few points, but overall they are very efficient and a pleasure to watch. There is no question in my mind that this program is producing excellent tracking dogs. Exhibitors were pretty relaxed and no more up-tight than tracking handlers at an AKC test.

### **The full trial is more than a single tracking test.**

Now immediately after the track is complete or 20 minutes is up (pass or fail), a different tracklayer lays out a search-square about 30 yards on a side with flags at the corners and puts down four small articles at pre-determined locations within the square. The dog is worked off leash and has 5 minutes to find the four articles without the handler entering the square. The handler can direct the dog in his search so long as he does not enter the square. Finding all four articles is worth an additional 35 points (I don't know how they score exactly, but most of the points come from finding the articles).

And finally, the dog does a sit-stay with the handler a few feet away from the dog while the judge shoots a gun off a couple of times. This is worth an additional 5 points. So the dog can earn up to 170 points in his half-hour. If he is qualifying, he comes back on Sunday (the last day of the test) and competes in a pretty casual form of obedience (heel, retrieve, send away, down stay) and police dog style agility (clear jump, scale vertical wall, long jump). The highest total of both days combined wins the Championship ticket. But just qualifying earns the handler a good deal of bragging rights.

### **Logistics of the tracking test.**

These three tests consume about 25 minutes and with another 5 minutes to say a few pleasantries and walk to the next track, every track can be started on half-hour intervals. At the test I saw, each tracklayer laid four tracks at half-hour intervals, so the single judge was able to judge 16 dogs in a day. They had 27 dogs entered at the Championship level, so they tracked Friday and Saturday and ran the obedience and agility on Sunday. The same fields are used on each day of the test (they don't seem to recognize any issues with 24-hour old cross-tracks).

Tracks are not plotted the day before, but rather the tracklayer is given a copy of the track design which shows some flags at the edge of the field which are used as landmarks. The tracklayer first sets these edge flags, then lays his track, and then removes the edge flags so only a start flag is left for the dog to start.

Tracks are designed to be pretty tight, so they make good use of the available land. No air scenting is allowed as the legs are so close together than any tendency to fringe would get the dog into trouble.

The trial I saw was multiple level -- there were 12 more dogs at lower levels being tested in this same multi-day event. The number of workers seemed similar to the number of workers required for a TDX test: one judge, 4 tracklayers, 1 search square layer, a chief tracklayer, a secretary and a hospitality crew.

### **Comparison with AKC.**

The lack of obstacles and cross-tracks makes this test much simpler than an AKC TDX. The many corners and close spacing of legs does not challenge the dog in the same way as a TDX. The corners (even the acute) and short legs are scoring opportunities rather than obstacles. This leads to dogs which are much more confident in their tracking ability than a typical AKC dog. In addition, the fact that the dog gets to go to lots of tests a year adds to their confidence.

The UK tracking test does not prohibit "guiding" although it will probably not get as high a score as the dog who works everything out on his own (E.g., when a handler finds an article that the dog misses, they get only five points instead of the 10 they would have earned if the dog indicated it.)

Judging the test looked pretty easy. No long day before of plotting tracks and no long night of drawing them up (just some homework before the test to make a design which will fit in the available fields).

The fact that these are rural tests on natural covers rather than urban tests on artificial surfaces makes any comparison to AKC VST inappropriate.

At lower levels, the obstacles for agility are scaled in size to match the size of the dog, so it is opened to all breeds. At the Championship level, the obstacles are only one size (suitable for a large dog) and so small dogs do not compete at this top level. (I find that a shame being a small dog tracking person but then it is their country).

### **The Kennel Club calls these events Working Trials but it would be just as logical to call them Versatility Trials.**

The idea that my dog could track in many tests a year has caught my imagination. I love tracking and my dogs love tracking. In fact, the bad thing about passing a TDX test is knowing you are unlikely to ever get into another TDX test. But in AKC tracking tests, given how overbooked tests are, as soon as one passes, one is effectively shut out of tests with that dog (except perhaps for a specialty test that does not fill).

So I recommend to the AKC tracking fancy to take a hard look at this English "Working Trial" and see if we can derive a similar but different "Versatility Tracking Trial" to expand the AKC tracking program.

# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

November 2003

Volume 2, Issue 11



## 2003 AKC NATIONAL TRACKING INVITATIONAL September 20th and 21st, 2003 Asheville, NC

### From the AKC web site....

The excitement was building as people began arriving at the tracking test headquarters in the early morning fog on September 20th, 2003. With anticipation, they gathered around for the draw to determine what track each dog/handler team would have. While the draw took place at 9:15 a.m., we were unable to start the first track until 11:00 a.m. because the dense fog made it impossible for the tracklayers to lay the tracks. It was worth the wait, as the sun came out and the fog cleared to honor us with a gorgeous sun-filled day.

The first AKC National Tracking Invitational was a showcase for the 10 top champion tracking dogs in the country. Every dog and handler did a phenomenal job demonstrating the ability of the dog to detect odors so faint, their highly developed sense of smell to find lost humans or animals, and to detect drugs, bombs or other articles. Eight different breeds from ten states were entered, one traveling all the way from California to take part in the event.

Assisting were the best qualified tracklayers, judges, and volunteers from all over the country and abroad, including Diane Rooth from Alaska and Ginny Conway who came all the way from England. We couldn't have asked for a better group of people -- the camaraderie and fellowship was something to behold. From the first hello at the Welcome Reception on Friday night to the hugs and congratulations late Sunday afternoon.

We would be remiss if we did not mention the fabulous buffet banquet on Saturday night and the wonderful time had by all. We had the pleasure of having Dr. I. Lehr Brisban, faculty member from the University of Georgia, address the group and challenge them to scenting "experiments". With some of the top tracking enthusiasts in the country present, Dr. Brisban hopes to get some additional insight into how dogs scent in different situations.

The exhibitors and canine companions deserve a standing ovation for their performance and it was an honor for the AKC to host such a fine event!

### Saturday, September 20, 2003

- CT Bi-Kentucky Noreko CD – Billie French
- CT Hershey's Blazing Supernova NA – Anne and William Hershey
- CT Wildfire Smoking Gun NA NAJ – Phyllis Dorrough and Ed Presnall
- CT Jay-San Blaise of Phantomwood CD – Karla Ebert
- CH CT Tifflyn The Funseeker VCD2, MX, MXJ – Lynda McKee

### Sunday, September 21, 2003

- CT Antares Michelob Lite CD – Donna and Bonnie Kircher
- OTCH CT Ashmead's Con Brio of Dulcimr UDX – Amy and William Vose
- FC CT Owl Farms Rising Star ML, VCD3, MX, MXJ, NJP, ME – Betsy Fortman
- CT Phenix's Radical Air Twister – Vincent Ramirez
- CT Glen Oaks A Christmas Carol NA, NAJ – Marjorie Schultz

The First AKC National Tracking Invitational was truly one to remember. The sport of tracking could not have been better represented. Congratulations! ***This event was in memory of Ellie Boldt - a true tracking hero!***

# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

December 2003

Volume 2, Issue 12

## Exhibitor Input Sought for 2004 Tracking Advisory

*[Thursday, October 16, 2003] via the AKC web page...*

Patricia Krause, AVP for Companion Events, announced a Tracking Advisory Committee meeting January 24 and 25, 2004 in Raleigh, NC. This is in keeping with the overall AKC plan of convening Advisory Committees every four years. The purpose is to evaluate input from the fancy and set the course for tracking.

Exhibitors, instructors, judges and clubs are encouraged to suggest ideas for tracking tests, titles, regulation changes or clarifications that they believe to be in the best interest of AKC Tracking. Submissions will be accepted at [tradv@akc.org](mailto:tradv@akc.org) or they may be mailed to Patricia Krause, AKC Companion Events, P. O. Box 37930, Raleigh, NC 27627-7930.

From past experience, the tremendous number of suggestions makes it impossible for Companion Events to respond to each individual's ideas, but every suggestion received will be brought to the committee's attention.

This is the opportunity for interested folks to have a voice in shaping the course of tracking.



# **2004 Archive Tracking News For the Saint Bernard**



**Volume 3, 3 Issues**



# TRACKING NEWS

**SAINT BERNARD**

January 2004

Volume 3, Issue 1

## Getting Started in Tracking for the NEW YEAR!

### Getting Started in Tracking (AKC web site [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org))

There you are, with your cute little puppy, and you've noticed that everything you try to teach her she learns very quickly. Plus, she seems so proud of herself for doing what you ask of her. Wouldn't it be great for her (and you, too) to have a way to show off what she's learned?

Or you've noticed that whenever your dog goes outside, his nose is to the ground and he's obviously following the trail left behind by another animal crossing your yard. So maybe he's not going to get a job at Scotland Yard but there must be something for him to do! There is!!!

Under the rules and regulations of the American Kennel Club, local dog clubs sponsor Obedience and Tracking Trials that allow dogs to demonstrate their natural skill as well as their ability to work as part of an animal-human team. In these events, dogs and handlers compete against a standard of perfection, rather than against each other...and, theoretically, every dog entered can be a winner!

### Who Can Participate?

Any purebred dog over the age of 6 months and registered with the AKC can be entered in Obedience or Tracking events. (Of course, you and he should be trained in order to know what to do!) This includes spayed females and neutered males. Also dogs that may not be "show quality" due to things that would disqualify them according to their breed's standard (such as size, incorrect color, improper bite, etc.) can be part of the working world.

Additionally, dogs with an Indefinite Listing Privilege (ILP) number --- that is, breeds in the Miscellaneous Class or purebred dogs without registered parents who nevertheless meet certain criteria --- can participate in these events and earn titles.

Anyone can handle their dog in these events. This includes people of any age as well as individuals with disabilities.

### What Can You Do?

#### Tracking...

We've all seen countless movies of dogs following the trail of an escapee through swamps. The AKC's Tracking Trials allow dogs to demonstrate their natural ability to recognize and follow human scent. This vigorous outdoor activity is great for canine athletes. Unlike Obedience events that require a dog to qualify 3 times, a dog must successfully complete only one track to earn his title.

**Tracking Dog:** A dog earns a TD by following a track laid by a human from 30 minutes to 2 hours before. The rules describe certain turns in a 440 to 500 yard track.

**Tracking Dog Excellent:** A TDX is earned by following an "older" (3 to 5 hours), longer (800 to 1,000 yard) track with more turns while overcoming both physical and scenting obstacles.

**Variable Surface Tracking:** In the real world, dogs track through urban settings, as well as through wilderness. A VST dog has demonstrated this ability by following a 3 to 5 hours-old track that may take him down a street, through a building and other areas devoid of vegetation.

## How to get Started

Sounds like fun and you want to get going. Here are some ideas and resources:

**(1)** Don't wait! Puppy kindergarten classes are designed for 2 to 5 month old dogs and really focus on the very basics of training. Many basic training classes start puppies at 5 to 6 months of age. And just like kids, puppies pick up lessons very quickly when learning is made into a fun game.

**(2)** Your local dog club may hold classes taught by people knowledgeable in the sport that can help you train for these exercises. There are 5 kinds of dog clubs to check out: Obedience Clubs, Tracking Clubs, All-Breed Clubs (devoted to the entire dog experience), Group Clubs (devoted to a variety group, like Toys or Terriers), and Local Specialty Clubs (devoted to one breed). There may be one or all in your area that holds classes and publishes newsletters with articles. Getting involved with a club can teach you many more things about your dog that can be helpful.

If you need to find one of these clubs, please visit the club search section of our website.

**(3)** The American Kennel Club can supply you with information. We have lots of material available for you:

- Obedience and Tracking Regulations
- AKC Dog Care and Training Book
- "A Beginner's Guide to Dog Care and Training" (video)
- "Tips on Training" (video)
- The AKC Gazette. The AKC's monthly magazine contains great articles on all facets of the dog world, including training, and an Events Calendar which lists upcoming Obedience and Tracking Trials

To order any of these items, contact Customer Service, visit the AKC Store or e-mail [info@akc.org](mailto:info@akc.org).



# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

February 2004

Volume 3, Issue 2

## Tracking Stories

### Tracking With My Saints

By Lovey Olbrich

Both my husband and I have been on vacation (at home!) these last two weeks. I've done lots of dog training. Since he is at home to console Wendy for being left behind (we call it "suicide watch"), I have been taking both Katie and Miranda out for training. Usually I can't take both of them because Wendy goes just nuts when she is left behind and alone, and at her age I worry about her pushing herself too far.

Anyway, Wendy has clearly (to me) been longing for something to do so yesterday I took her out with Katie for some tracking (now Miranda is going nuts at being left behind, but she's young and so it just counts as cardiovascular exercise!). I've been working on Wendy's fronts and finishes and signals at home, but that clearly wasn't enough.

I laid her a short track, probably just 150 yards, with two turns. Unlike most of the hilly terrain in this area, the ground was fairly level. It aged, in the sun and wind, for an hour and a half before we could get back to her. This is a fairly long time for a TD level tracking dog.

She was so happy to be let out of the car at the tracking place (she knew where we were). She trotted out the fire road, nose going and ears up. She did a terrific job on her track; searched vigorously for her turns and pulled hard when she knew she was on the right track. She was so happy and proud to find that glove! You could just see that St. Bernard smile of satisfaction from ear to ear. I was happy that I had given her a chance to get back to work.

So looks like I am going to have to find a way to work her into the training rotation. My Mazda MPV is a little full with three Saint Bernards in it, so I may be limited to just two dogs at a time. But I'll figure something out.

I think working her is a bit of a push for her body. But clearly it is something she wants, and I believe if I'm careful it will be to her benefit to have her limits (gently) pushed. Her heart and liver disease both appear to be under control right now, and I'm pretty hopeful that we will get to enjoy her 11th birthday (Feb 3) and some time beyond.

I learn so much from these dogs. I wanted to share with you another of the many lessons Wendy has taught me about heart and purpose.

### History of Tracking Events

From the AKC Web Site

April 10, 1936 - the first official "Regulations and Standard for Obedience Test Field Trials" was published. The first licensed test held in accordance with these regulations took place on June 13, 1936, and appropriately enough, was held with the North Westchester Kennel Club all-breed show at Mount Kisco, New York.

Tracking was originally part of the Utility class, and a dog had to pass a separate tracking test in order to earn a UD. For roughly the first ten years, tracking received one paragraph of description in the regulations, which set out the barest basics of length and age of the track. On the day of the test, the tracklayers were to walk the tracks, deposit the article, and retrace their steps to remove all but the two starting flags. By 1938, it was added that the tracklayer could not wear rubber-soled shoes, and the dog had to be on a 30-40 foot leash and work without help from the handler. By 1943, the tracklayers were required to follow the track, deposit the article, and walk directly off the course.

In 1947, tracking was made a separate class, and more detail began to appear in the regulations: The tracklayers were required to wear leather-soled shoes until they deposited the article, whereupon they were to put on a pair of rubbers and walk off the course at a right angle. The article was to be a leather glove or wallet. Finally, the dog was permitted one additional chance to take the scent between the starting flags, provided he had not passed the second flag. It is obvious from the changes in the regulations that there must have been considerable discussion of how a track was to be properly laid by the tracklayer. Tracking and advanced tracking regulations were destined eventually to swell, from the original single paragraph of description in 1936, to forty-five pages today.

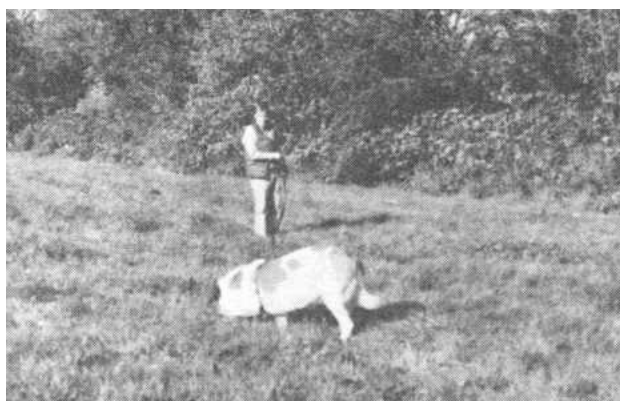
As early as 1947, and encouraged by Obedience Advisory Committees, the tracking fraternity urged AKC to approve a more advanced type of tracking test that would test a dog's ability to track a person over a course that had aged for at least three hours and for about twice the distance



required by the Tracking Test. This advanced test, called Tracking Dog Excellent, was approved by the AKC in 1979 and became effective on March 1, 1980. The first TDX dog was a Dachshund, Gretel Von Bupp Murr UD, who passed the Tracking Dog Excellent Test on March 15 of that year. This dog was owned and handled by George Richards of Sun City Center, Florida.

From the beginning of the sport, all tracking tests were held in fields and open spaces. Due to urban pressures, these are fast disappearing in many areas of the country. A new test, called Variable Surface Tracking, was designed to utilize industrial and office parks, college campuses, etc.

In 1985, Merrill Cohen laid the number one track at the first Variable Surface Tracking Test on a beautiful, clear morning in Ellicott City, Maryland. Darlene Ceretto competed on the track laid by Cohen, track one (of six). "The tracks were the epitome of what VST is all about," said Ceretto. "Although none of us actually passed, all the dogs did a remarkable and credible job, working with determination and perseverance."





# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

March 2004

Volume 3, Issue 3

## Tracking Advisory Committee Results

**Results of the Tracking Advisory Committee Meeting** [Thursday, March 04, 2004] Exhibitors, instructors, judges and clubs are encouraged to comment on the recommendations from the Tracking Advisory Committee. Submissions will be accepted at [tradv@akc.org](mailto:tradv@akc.org) or they may be mailed to Patricia Krause, AKC Companion Events, P. O. Box 37930, Raleigh, NC 27627-7930.

See the following pages....



## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRACKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Tracking Advisory Committee was held in Raleigh, North Carolina on January 24-25, 2004.

The committee was made up of the following members:

Barbara Adcock – San Jose, CA  
Pam German – Belvidere, IL  
Joseph Hamzy – Palm Beach Gardens, FL  
Rosemary Janoch – Chagrin Falls, OH  
Patricia Krause – Raleigh, NC  
Herb Morrison – Athens, GA  
Allison Platt – Baltimore, MD  
William “Sil” Sanders – Standwood, WA  
Arthur Twiss – Reading, MA  
Betty Winthers – Lynwood, WA

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m., by Patricia Krause, AVP of Companion Events. After committee members introduced themselves, the process of discussing the suggestions received from tracking exhibitors began.

After considering each suggestion received from the tracking community, the following changes are recommended by consensus of the Committee. (The recommendations of the Committee are given in general terms; the exact language of the revisions in the Regulations will be developed by the Obedience/Tracking Department staff).

**Chapter 1, Section 1 – Tracking, Tracking Dog Excellent and Variable Surface Tracking Tests** – The Test Secretary’s phone number or email address must be given in the Premium List

**Chapter 1, Section 1 – Tracking, Tracking Dog Excellent and Variable Surface Tracking Tests** – add to end of paragraph 1 ...Tracking tests held on the same area of a site shall be held so as to be at least three (3) days from test day to test day.

**Chapters 1, Section 2 – Tracking Test Chairperson and Tracking Test Committee** – add to end of paragraph 1 ...A person designated as the Chief Tracklayer is responsible for coordinating the track-laying schedule with the judges on the day of the test.

**Chapter 1, Section 5 – Dog Show Rules and Obedience Regulations** – In reference to the Obedience Regulations, Chapter 1, Section 14 (Dogs That May Not Compete) delete “boarded or has been regularly trained or instructed, within one year prior to the date of the obedience trial, by the judge or by any member of his immediate family or household. “Trained or instructed”

~~applies equally to judges who train professionally or as amateurs, and to judges who train individual dogs or who train or instruct dogs in classes with or through their handlers.~~

~~No dog may be entered or shown under a judge at an obedience trial if it is owned or handled by an person who has regularly served as a trainer or instructor of that judge within one year prior to the date of the obedience trial, either individually or through classes."~~

**Chapter 1, Section 10 – Duration of Test** – provided that the change of date is satisfactory to the majority of the handlers and owners of entered dogs. If an exhibitor chooses not to participate in the rescheduled test, the next eligible alternate shall be given the option to run. The entry fee should be refunded to the owner of the original entered dog. If a satisfactory date cannot be agreed upon, the test is then canceled.

**Chapter 1, Section 12 – Drawing for Entries and Alternates** – Specialty clubs have the "option" of opening their tracking tests to all breeds.

Specialty clubs may choose either (1) only their own breed, or (2) through the use of a lottery draw, they may allow other breeds to enter their specialty using the following procedure:

Draw (1) Specialty breed without a title and with a certification;

Draw (2) – Applies to TDX and VST tests only – Specialty breed without a title and without a certification;

Draw (3) Specialty breed with a title;

Draw (4) Other breeds without a title and with a certification;

Draw (5) Other breeds without a title and without a certification;

Draw (6) Other breeds with a title.

For All Other Tests, The Draw Order is:

Draw (1) Any dog without a title and with a certification;

Draw (2) Applies to TDX and VST tests only – Any dog without a title and without a certification;

Draw (3) Any dog with a title.

**Chapter 1, Section 12 – Drawing for Entries and Alternates** – New 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph – Upon written request to AKC, one (1) authorized certificate may be issued to any dog earning a TD title prior to the effective date of the certification program for use in entering a TDX or VST test. (See Coupon Certification Program explanation)

**Chapter 1, Section 13 – Judging Program** – The Judging Program should provide a cell phone number of a committee member present at the test site the day(s) of the test.

**Chapter 1, Section 13 – Judging Program** – Prior to the draw for running order on the day of the test, the judges shall be provided with the catalog number, breed, sex and AKC number for each dog entered.

**Chapter 1, Section 16, Dogs Running Free** – Due to the changing nature of the fields being used by clubs for tracking tests and the increased population at these sites by the general public, all dogs, shall be “on lead” at all times on any area of the tracking site. ~~A dog that is allowed to run free and off lead, at any time before the test, during a test, after failing or after the completion of it’s track, shall be failed and excused. If this occurs before the test, the dog shall be excused and not allowed to run in the test.~~

**Chapter 2, Section 2 – Disturbances** – If in the judges opinion the circumstances warrant, the dog shall ~~may~~ be failed.

**Chapter 2, Section 4 – Plotting** – (remove first paragraph) ~~A test track which is plotted within three (3) days in the same field may not cross or be within 75 yards of a previously used test track unless prior approval has been obtained from The American Kennel Club.~~

**Chapter 2, Section 4 – Plotting** – (paragraph 3) Both judges must be present on the day of plotting and both judges must walk every track. At a TD test, only regular status judges may divide the plotting responsibilities and then walk the other judges’ tracks.

**Chapter 2, Section 5 – Alternate Track** – New 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs – The priority for use of the alternate track is to replace a fouled track; However, when an unused alternate track is available, if agreed by both judges, it may be used as a titling track if it does not exceed the maximum number of tracks allowed by either judge to be judged in one day.

For an alternate track to be used as a titling track, it must be plotted on the same day as the other tracks.

**Chapter 2, Section 9- Drawing for Tracks** - (paragraph 4) A person cannot act as a tracklayer for a dog if that person has ~~boarded~~, laid a track for or regularly trained the dog whose track he or she is to lay, within the past 30 ~~60~~ days.

**Chapter 2, Section 10 -Tracklaying** – The tracklayer must be present on day of plotting and walk their track.

**Chapter 2, Section 10 – Track Laying** – New last paragraph – While it is not encouraged, at a combined test and if circumstances require it, a person entered in one test may lay tracks in another.

**Chapter 2, Section 10 – Track Laying** – (paragraph 5) ... In TD and TDX, no tracklayer after completing the track, may return within 50 ~~75~~ yards of any unused part of a track. \_

**Chapter 2, Section 13 – Distractions on the Track** – The judge is responsible for seeing that spectators ~~and unauthorized persons remain.....~~

2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph -~~However, the appearance of an animal or a vehicle in the field, whether or not it has crossed the track, is usually not justification for a retest. The presence of people in the~~



~~tracking field could represent conflicting cross-tracks. The decision whether or not to invalidate the track is left to the discretion of the judges..~~ Should an animal, pedestrian, or vehicular traffic appear or move across the track prior to running the track and/or while the dog and handler are working the track, the dog and handler will continue to work the track, as incidents such as these shall be considered a normal occurrence for tracking tests. The decision whether or not to invalidate the track, is left to the discretion of the judges.

**Chapter 2, Section 16 – Guiding and Restraining** – Guiding is defined as behavior by the handler which ~~influences or determines the dog's direction~~ indicates the location or direction of the track. Guiding is prohibited and the dog shall be marked failed.

Restraint is permitted to slow a dog that is moving too fast for the handler or in cases of an unusual distraction. However, repeated restraint, which ~~influences or determines the dog's direction~~ indicates the location or direction of the track, is not permitted and shall result in the dog being failed. A dog that is at the end of the leash actively searching, including casting should not be considered as being restrained.

**Chapter 2, Section 24 – Protective Clothing** – Allow dogs to wear coats, providing the coat and harness are put on in the presence of both judges.

**Chapter 3, Section 2 – Certification** – (remove last paragraph) ~~However, in no case will The American Kennel Club issue more than four (4) such certifications to any dog.~~

**Chapter 3, Section 4 – Track Requirements - #11.** (first sentence) A track shall not cross a body of water or a paved road. Tracks may be plotted that cross sidewalks, bike and jogging paths that are about six (6) feet in width. Tracks may be plotted to allow passage from one field to another through an opening in a hedge row with cover in said opening being about the same as the surrounding area with no heavy undercover, brush, or logs. There shall not be a turn less than thirty (30) yards before or after passing through the opening.

**Chapter 3, Section 6 – Start** – (new paragraph 2) The tracklayer will begin at least 10 yards from the starting flag, lining up with the starting flag and the next flag. The tracklayer will proceed along this line so there is no turn at the starting flag. While walking this line, the tracklayer will pause momentarily at the first flag and drop the start article, then continue walking the track in the manner specified in Chapter 2, Section 10. The start article must be made of cloth and must be the same approximate size of a glove or wallet. The handler may pick up the article at the starting flag and use it to give scent to the dog while on the track.

**Chapter 4, Section 3 – Track Requirements** – (#6 end of sentence) There should be both left and right 90 degree angle turns

**Chapter 4, Section 4 – Cross Tracks** – Allow two or three cross-tracks on TDX

**Chapter 4, Section 5 – Obstacles for a Tracking Dog Excellent Test** – Obstacles may occur on the first leg of a TDX after the first 75 yards.

**Chapter 5, Section 4 – Variable Surface Tracking Test Requirements** - #2 (second sentence)– The areas devoid of vegetation shall comprise ~~at least one-third (1/3) to one-half (1/2)~~ two-thirds (2/3) of the total length of the track.

**Chapter 5, Section 4 – Variable Surface Tracking Test Requirements** - #9 – ~~Should an animal, pedestrian or vehicular traffic appear or move across the track, the dog and handler will continue to work the track, as incidents such as these are considered a normal occurrence for the test.~~

**Chapter 5, Section 4, Variable Surface Tracking Test Requirements** - #6 - Turns shall be on various surfaces as dictated by the terrain. There shall be at least four (4) and not more than eight (8) turns on a track. Both right and left turns shall be used. At least three (3) of the turns shall be right angle (90 degree) turns and there should be more than three (3) such turns. At least one 90-degree turn shall be in an area devoid of vegetation and plotted to allow at least thirty (30) yards before crossing or returning to vegetated surface. Articles shall not be placed less than 30 yards before this turn. Article may not be placed after this turn before crossing or returning to a vegetated surface.

**Chapter 5, Section 5 – Articles for Variable Surface Tracking Test** – (Paragraph 4) - No article shall be dropped less than ~~ten (10)~~ twenty (20) yards from a turn except as indicated in Section 4 # 6.

**Chapter 5, Section 8 – Judge** –Delete this section from Chapter 5 and place in Guidelines as indicated below:

**Pilot Introductory Title – VST/Urban Test – Committee is continuing to discuss options.**

**Guidelines for Tracking Test, Section 14 – Judges Qualifications** –TDX Judges or Provisional TDX Judges will be eligible to apply to judge VST after they have attended at least two (2) American Kennel Club Variable Surface Tracking workshops.

**Guidelines for Tracking Tests** – Tracking Guidelines

Tracking Guidelines(New Section 15) Unusual Circumstances – If the age limit for a track is within one-half (1/2) hour of expiring, judges should split, and .....

Allow a National Specialty tracking test to be held on the same day as other events at National Breed Specialties

Require the tracklayers in all tests to prepare an extra start article so that it will be available should the start article be missing. The spare article should be bagged and kept in the tracklayers possession in the event it is needed.

Tracking Guidelines (New Section 16) Reference Obedience Guidelines – Chapter 1

## Coupon Certification– 2-Year Pilot Program to enter Advanced Tracking Tests –

**One Coupon certification will be issued per dog\***

In an effort to reduce the long alternate list in TDX and VST and allow exhibitors to have fair opportunity to enter a test when the dog is prepared, a priority/certification program is proposed. This will allow the exhibitor to prepare his/her dog and have more assurance of getting in a test without having to maintain performance for such a long period of time. The certification procedure tests the dog's ability to meet significant requirements of the TDX or VST tests without a complete test like track. At the present about 40% of the dogs that fail do so between the start and the first turn. While the proposed certification test is not a full VST or TDX test, it does address the areas where most failures occur.

The six (6) week period between certification attempts balance both the possibility of a dog to have priority at too many nearby tests and at the same time controls the demand on judges to certify dogs.

This priority coupon/certification program is being proposed as a pilot program to last two (2) years with the results being reviewed at the end of the trial period to see if the overall performance of the coupon holders/certified dogs and pass rate improves compared to non-certified dogs. It should be stressed that dogs that do not hold coupons or certification, may still enter.

1. Passing dogs receive a signed and dated coupon certification from the judges at the TD test. (For dogs that have already earned a TD, they may request a coupon certification from the Companion Events office)
2. The coupon certification may accompany the entry blank to enter either a TDX or VST test and the coupon number must appear in the test catalog.
3. If the dog does not pass the TDX or VST test, the judge must sign and date the coupon certification and mark it "failed"
4. After six weeks (6) following the date of a failed certification, TDX test or VST test, the dog may then attempt another certification by an approved tracking judge. The certifying judge shall sign and date the coupon certification indicating whether the dog passed or failed.
5. If the dog is marked "passed", once again, it may be sent with the entry blank to enter either a TDX or VST.
6. A dog that does not have a coupon or certification may enter a TDX or VST test, but priority at the draw will be given to dogs with coupons or certification.
7. When a dog passes a TDX and has not earned but wishes to compete for a VST, or passes a VST and has not earned but wishes to compete for a TDX, the judges will sign and date the certificate (or issue one) to be used in entering the next class.

To be certified the following minimum requirements must be met.

The start shall be in grass

The track shall be at least 300 yards and no more than 500 yards in length.

The scent on the track shall be not less than three (3) hours or more than five (5) hours old.

A total of 3-5 turns shall be used. Both left and right turns shall be used.

There shall be changes in cover.

No planned cross-track shall be used.

Obstacles shall be at the option of the judge.

\* A duplicate certification coupon may be obtained by sending your request to Sydney Suwannarat, AKC Companion Events Coordinator, along with a check for \$25.00. The duplicate will be dated the date the request was received and marked "Failed".



Dog's Name\_\_\_\_\_

AKC Registration # \_\_\_\_\_

Date Passed TD Test\_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

# 2005 Archive Tracking News For the Saint Bernard



Volume 4, 1 Issue

# TRACKING NEWS

SAINT BERNARD

March 2005

Volume 4, Issue 1

## NEW TDX — First Female TDX & Breed First UDTDX!



By Lovey Olbrich

The day dawned overcast, cool, and slightly breezy. There was the promise of rain, made good at the time final photos were taken. The sun peeked out for a few minutes mid-morning, but otherwise it was obscured by the clouds. In other words, it was perfect tracking weather in Los Altos Hills the day of the Palo Alto Foothill Tracking Association (PAFTA) Tracking Dog Excellent test on February 27, 2005. The test was held at the Arastadero Preserve; those with long memories will be amused to know this site is directly off Page Mill Road and just a few miles down the hill from the home of the late Bets Young, owner of Cyprus Woods Kennels.

This story's heroine, **WDCh Echo's Utmost, VCD2, UD, DD, WP**, known to her friends as Miranda, was drawn for the fourth of the five tracks of the day. This worried me because if the sun came out the day

could heat up; Miranda's track wouldn't be run until almost noon.

While Miranda napped in her crate, the first three dogs (a Golden Retriever, a Rottweiler, and a German Shepherd) ran and passed their tests. Given that one or maybe two dogs pass at a TDX test, particularly at this location which is full of natural obstacles, the day was already turning out to be a happy one for the test committee. Miranda and I were driven to near the start of our track, where we waited a few minutes for the judges to arrive.

After instructions from the judges, I put on Miranda's harness and showed her the start of the track. The first leg was under about an inch of water, and although Miranda really isn't that fond of getting her feet wet, she made a good start. Sometime down the first leg she stopped and air-scented, intrigued by a scent she clearly found particularly interesting. Later I learned that mountain lions had been seen in the area, and I wonder if she was fascinated by this new-to-her smell. With short encouragement she was persuaded to leave that distraction and she gamely continued her track.

The first turn and obstacle (a very large downed oak tree) were successfully navigated. We then overran the next turn and found ourselves in a large patch of three-foot high teasels. They presented a handling challenge because the line frequently was caught up in the thistle heads and I had to drop it many times. After determining the track was nowhere where we were, we backed up, stopped, and regrouped. I gave Miranda some water, let her re-scent the starting article, and asked her to track again. Ten minutes after we had first overran the turn I was relieved to see the head twitch that indicated Miranda had found her track again and we were on our way.

After this the rest of the track was mostly routine and within the scope of our training experiences. Although the judges noted several hills as steep, we have done much steeper and Miranda handled them as normal track segments. I saw no indication that she noticed the first cross-track, but was able to identify the location of the second by a brief pause in her brisk tracking walk. The challenges of note were the two turns on hilltops – by this time a light breeze had started up. Many dogs find them difficult, and Miranda had been no exception. I had been training them in the months before the test, and she confidently navigated them as she had learned to do. The roads and paths we crossed were routine for her (in the San Francisco Bay Area you have to learn roads during TD training to be able to get enough track length) and they presented no challenge.



Her first of the three on-track articles was indicated by a prompt down. Interestingly, the last two were indicated by sits about 10 -yards in front of the article, at which time I gave her water. I then sent her on, and she ran to the articles themselves and dropped like shot. The next-to-last article was a dark sock folded up into a small square; there is no doubt that it was her nose and not her eyes that found that article.

By the time she was sitting at what I later realized was the pre-indication of the last article Miranda was hot and tired. I watered her and gave her the last "go track" command. She ran to the glove and dropped to a down. I followed her, found the glove, and raised it over our heads. The judges and then the gallery, which could see much of the track, cheered. The judges came up with congratulations and Miranda was very happy to say hello to them. We then walked the short distance to the gallery, and she broke into a gallop (still on her long tracking lead) to greet those nice people who had come just to see her.



The track was 888 yards long and took Miranda 31 minutes to run. While I combed her for ticks back at the staging area, the last dog, a Belgian Tervuren, successfully completed his track. The post-test lunch with the entrants, tracklayers, judges, and committee was a jubilant affair, not in the least dampened by the light rain that had started. It was then a very short happy ride home with my snoozing Saint in the back of the van.



#### Photos:

Credit Chris Anderson, Dreamboat Photography

Captions

Miranda at the starting flag

Miranda mid-track

Miranda and Lovey show the final article (a leather glove) to the judges

Award photo (left to right)

Tannis Witherspoon (judge), Lovey Olbrich (the person with the great big smile), Miranda, Kaye Hall (judge), Bob Norrie (tracklayer)