



Lenape Tracking Club of Central New Jersey

COMMON SCENTS

November/December, 1996
Vol. 20., No. 6



From the President's Desk

We had a great test! New TDs for Pat Etchells and Pippin, Joanne MacKinnon and Ruffie, and Hope Meaker and Pega. Martha Windisch also got a TDX on Tawny (though not at our test). Congratulations! Thanks to all who helped with the test.

After running the combination TD/TDX, we are not sure whether we would do it again. The timing of tracklaying was very complicated. Getting tracklayers and judges where they needed to be at precisely the right time required an incredible amount of coordination. It was much more difficult than a TD alone, especially since it takes a bit of driving to get to some of the fields. At the last board meeting we were toying with the idea of running two separate tests - a TD and a TDX. It would mean more work for our members, but holding a TDX is good experience and fun, too! Let us know what you think. Next year we will be holding the usual TD test, but if there is enough club interest in holding a separate TDX we might be able to do it the following year.

FIELDS - we need more of them. We lost a set of fields this year due to the owner's death. We often find ourselves scrambling around because one of the fields we were going to use is planted. Somehow Peg Forte always comes through for us, but it would be nice to have more choices. Ralph

MacKinnon is heading up a committee to search out new fields. If you know of land in your area, talk to the owner or get us the owner's address (available through tax maps). We could use new land for both the test and TED follow-ups.

Everyone have a Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, etc. See you all next year.

Anna Burbank

Millie Hefner passed away in late October following a short battle with cancer. Memorial donations may be made to the Hospice of Morris County, 282 West Hanover Ave, Morristown, NJ 07960.

Dates To Remember

Nominations Meeting

.... Saturday, February 16, 1997 - TENTATIVE

TED 1997

..... Sunday, April 20, 1997

Tracking Test

..... Sunday, November 2, 1997

President - Anna Burbank ♣ **Vice President** - Peg Forte ♣ **Secretary** - Pat Etchells
Treasurer - John Etchells ♣ **Board Members** - Barbara Greenfield, Joanne MacKinnon, Ralph MacKinnon, Linda Riley, Dot Vail ♣ **Editor** - Pat Etchells, PO Box 326, Lebanon, NJ 08833.
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11/14 Board Meeting Highlights

Cocker **Pippin** ETCHELLS earned his TD title at Lenape's test. His sister **Daisy** finished her CD at Dauphin.

Both **Deacon** and **Geneva** FORTE (Flat-Coat & Berner), earned their CGC titles.

MOLLIE HEIDE's Flattie **Rip** earned his CGC.

RONN & MAELEINE LOOS' rescue collie **Luckipenni** UDX earned her NA agility title with two perfect scores of 100. She was also the HS Collie in the country for 1995 in obedience.

Ruffie MACKINNON, JOANNE's Golden, earned her TD at Lenape.

HOPE MEAKER's Flattie **Pega** got her TD at Lenape. **Kelly** got her CGC.

Mariah, owned by BARBARA O'BRIEN, won NB at the Vizsla Nationals with a 197 (half a point off HIT).

TONY & MARY ANN SVIZENY's Basset **Ziggy** got his TD at an early fall test.

Earning a TDX was MARTHA WINDISCH's Golden **Tawny**, who passed at Mattaponi.

Hats off to LTC Members

As coordinator of hospitality for our certification workshop, I would like to thank all the members that arrived on Sunday with goodies in hand. When everything was put together, we had a lovely hot and cold buffet.

I would like to give a special thanks to Priscilla Gabosch, Pat Blake, and Kathy Gaynor for setting up lunch while I was out getting wet with everyone else.

Thank you all so much for all dishes and desserts

Barbara Greenfield

(Ed Note: It's not Barbara's fault this wasn't in the previous newsletter...)

Treasurer's Report

John announced that the loss on the TD/TDX test would exceed \$800.

Correspondence

- AKC sent a memo that obedience clubs (among others) which have held licensed events for ten consecutive years are eligible to apply to be member clubs of AKC.
- Hope Meaker gave Anna her letter of resignation from the Board effective 10/23/96. The Board voted to accept it with regrets.

Old Business

96 Test - Brainstorming for '97

- A committee was formed to look for more sites. Ralph MacKinnon will chair it.
- Before hiring judges, we need to find out more about their requirements:
- Next year. Our test will be strictly TD - minimum of 8 tracks, and maximum of 12, depending on what land we're able to find.
- Plaques are very expensive. We could do a cheaper form. Peg could do engraving or we could mount the judges' maps under plastic the day of the test.
- Certification "prizes". We used to give a key chain boot made of leather.
- Tracklayers need to be given an approximate time when they will be needed for plotting so that they don't have to spend the whole day hanging around.

New Business

- Ralph MacKinnon was unanimously voted into the vacant seat on the Board
- The nominating committee was appointed. It consists of Anna, Mollie Heide and Barbara (with alternates Ralph and Peg)
- Millie Hefner passed away in late October. The Club will make a donation to her charity of choice - the Hospice of Morris County.
- The Board voted to include Board highlights in the Newsletter

- Survey. Peg will prepare a semi-final version of her survey to mail with the next Board minutes.
- Scheduled training sessions. We could meet on a regular basis and focus on particular problems. A covered-dish luncheon could follow.
- Awards dinner. We need alternatives to the night dinner at Holiday Inn. Possibilities are a brunch, a potluck, or a catered affair at the town hall.

Abner Finds the Glove

©Mimi Ruch

Abner earned his TD at the Berks County DTC Tracking Test on October 13. I wasn't sure we were ready for this. I entered Lenape's certification match hoping for a good learning experience, but not really expecting to be certified. Well, ready or not, we got certified in the steady rain on Peg's track in Balmer's lovely field. That meant I had to do something about it, so I got my entries ready and used express mail in the hope we'd make the draw for Berks. We did, but were we really ready? Then I remembered Peg saying, "think positive," and an article I'd read recently about show-time jitters that suggested keeping a picture of success in your mind.

We drove two hours in the early morning dark to Blue Marsh Lake Recreation Area, just west of Reading, PA. I wanted to make sure we'd be on time for the draw. It was a perfect day for tracking: very little wind, cool, overcast, and damp from thunder showers that had passed through the area at 3 a.m. Coffee and homemade breakfast treats were ready for us. I kept the picture of success in my mind all morning - I'd drawn track 7, the next-to-last track.

Abner fiddles around at the start, but I was determined with my picture of success that we were going to get started before the whistle blew. We did, but not by much. Our track was on a lovely field much like Balmer's, with medium-long thick grass. The track was straight-forward with all 90° turns, little change in vegetation, and fairly flat. I thought I was going to count turns and paces, but soon forgot how many there were, so we

kept going. Abner is hard to read, but I'd finally discovered that he picks his head up very slightly when he's overshot a turn. That slight change in head position is my signal to stop and wait for him to circle and find the new direction. I kept the picture of success in my mind. We kept on going, finding the turns and getting off in the new direction. Abner walks the track and keeps a steady one-two, one-two rhythm with his tail. We kept on going straight for what seemed like a long time when Abner suddenly dropped into a Labrador-sized groundhog hole. As he hopped back out, I saw it just a few yards ahead. There it was: a large light blue leather glove just waiting for us. The picture of success. We'd done it. This was our first tracking test and our first try.



Eight dogs were in the test that day. Five passed. The three who didn't pass showed how the handler affects the outcome. One handler was very anxious and paced back and forth waiting for her turn. Another failed to follow her dog who gave strong indications of the direction while the gallery watched in agony wishing they could yell at her to do what the dog wanted. The dog finally gave up after numerous attempts to draw her handler the last few yards. The third dog couldn't manage to get past a groundhog apartment complex near the track. Maybe the handler hadn't taught a "leave it" or "pful" command. Several of the passing dogs ran their tracks. I was glad I wasn't behind the shorthair who charged up a hill or the Newfie whose handler looked as though her feet could leave the ground at any moment.

After all the tracks were run, the club had lunch for everyone, plaques, chrysanthemums and picture-taking for all those who passed. We got to keep our glove which the judges, Romaine Halupa and Sue Dolbin, signed.

Blue Marsh Lake is a huge, beautiful man-made lake that was created in the early '70s after Reading was extensively damaged by a hurricane. It has lots of pole barn pavilions with beautiful views and plenty of porta-johns. The ride home with pretty fall colors was easy. We'd succeeded.

The Test from the Chief Tracklayer's Perspective

by John Etchells

Instead of a "dark and stormy night" like Snoopy would write about, the test day started off as a beautiful day. It was the first really cool day of the season with the sun shining and a light breeze. I knew that the combined test would be an interesting one as we planned to run the four TD tracks before we ran the two TDX tracks which were plotted first. Complicating this was the fact that the two tests were held in four different fields halfway across the county. By the end of the day I had put 65 miles on the car running from track to track with the judges. Nevertheless, we accomplished it all without a single track getting too old.

Pat and Cocker Pippin ran the first track, laid by Karl Gabosch, on the top field at the MacKinnon's farm. Pippin put his nose down and took off like a shot! He had no problem in finding the track; however, Pat had to hold on for dear life. Pippin found the glove at the end of the track seven minutes after starting.

Next were Hope and Flat-Coat Pega on the MacKinnon's lower field on Anna Burbank's track. Hope had a good start, but Pega gave everyone a start when she flushed out a small flock of birds on her track. Proving what a good tracking dog she was, she stayed on the track even though her sporting dog instincts may have wanted to give chase. From that point on we knew she was also destined to pass. Things looked good. We still seemed to be on schedule.

Then on to Burrell's fields with Joanne and Golden Ruffie on a track laid by Martha Windisch. The breeze was starting to pick up a little, but conditions were still good. Ruffie was on the track but she seemed to find some distractions. However, she never stopped working. Finally, she made her last turn, put her nose down and worked like we were used to seeing her work. Another TD.

Lisa and Murphy had the last track. This one was laid by Dot Vail in Balmer's fields. The breeze had increased from the last track. Murphy made the first two turns but then seemed to get caught up by the scent around the hedgerow.

Finally back to the municipal building for the TDX tracks laid by Peg Forte and Ralph MacKinnon with crosstracks by Karl Gabosch and Mimi Ruch. Both dogs got off to good fast starts. They both made it through their first obstacle before being distracted as they came out of the hedgerows. Both tracked well with the help of the tracklayers once they got back on track after that first obstacle.

Barbara Greenfield laid the alternate TD track, but it was not used. Food was coordinated by Priscilla Gabosch, with help from Pat Blake, and Maryann Szviney (and all the tracklayers and member participants).

A Thank you from Art Twiss

Dear Anna,

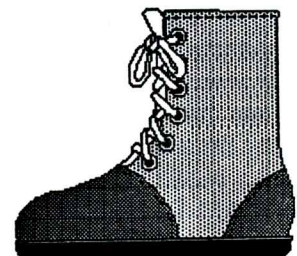
It is hard to believe that a week has passed since your trial. My bag is still unpacked and I'll be on the road again by week's end. But I did want to take a few minutes to "thank you" for everything you did to make that week-end so enjoyable. You have a nice group of members and I hope that I met your expectations.

Many thanks for the LL Bean gift certificate. I plan to buy a good quality set of rain gear. I could have used it this past Sunday at the Tracking Club of Massachusetts VST test, but this time I was only 20 minutes from home. Results - 0 for 6 but one got over half way through it.

Again, many thanks for all your work. It was a fun week-end which I will long remember.

Sincerely,

/s/ Art



RUFFIE'S TD

©Joanne MacKinnon

BIT O' SKYE'S DIAMOND IN THE RUFF, a Golden Retriever bitch bred and owned by Joanne MacKinnon, earned her TD at the Lenape test. Ruffie is the 4th Bit O' Skye golden to earn the Tracking Dog title.

Ruffie loves to track and up until Sunday, November 3rd it was her most favorite thing to do. Anyone who witnessed her certification track would concur that here was a real "gung ho" tracking dog, nose down, never stopping, pulling me down the track, around the corners and to the glove. We felt very fortunate to get in the Lenape test and even though Ruffie would still be "in season" I had every confidence that she would just do it! Well, think again folks. What follows is my recollection of that fateful day.

Because Ruffie was "in season" I was the last to draw for a track and since the club had one field that was totally isolated from the other tracks, the judges decided that this would be Ruffie's track. The one problem with this field, however, was that there was no room to park off of the road. Knowing this I opted to bring Ruffie to the test in our Subaru instead of the big van she was used to riding in. This was a mistake. Ruffie was very uneasy in the crate in the Subaru on the way to the Municipal Building. To compound this error on my part was the fact that we were not allowed to socialize with the other people while we waited for our track. I parked in front of the building and didn't even get Ruffie out. Finally it was time to go to our track and the ride to her field was up and down winding narrow roads and Ruffie was really stressed when we got there. I tried to let her have some time to air and settle down; however, there really wasn't much room and again she couldn't figure out why she couldn't visit with everyone including the judges.

As we approached the starting flag I tried to keep things as normal as I could but I could tell that Ruffie was still stressed. We had a fairly good start and soon she indicated loss of track but instead of her normal business-like search for the next leg she was really distracted, got interested in eating the wonderful treats the deer or some other animal had left. At this point I knew we were in trouble, this was not the way Ruffie normally behaved on

a track! She finally made a decision as to the direction of the track and headed right to the hedgerow. She investigated the hedgerow while I stood there waiting patiently realizing we were at another turn. After much searching in all directions she finally picked one and moved out down the next leg.

Things seemed to be going more normally. This proved to be a longer leg and she gained confidence in the track scent as we went along. Then Ruffie started wheezing! This has happened before when we have been tracking and usually she is able to continue tracking without much trouble but not today. She just kept wheezing as she tried to track. At this point she again indicated loss of track but with all the wheezing I really wasn't sure so again I just waited it out until she finally moved out again and headed right to another hedgerow! After much investigation she moved out again and as I looked up I realized we were heading toward the starting flags. I knew we couldn't go very far in this direction or we would be back where we started! However I didn't need to worry since Ruffie really got distracted, ate more stuff, wandered around halfheartedly sniffing the ground and decided she really wanted to visit the judges. She just stood there wagging her tail looking at the judges. At this point I was the one who was stressed. I knew we had to do something soon. The judges were being very patient. I said to myself, we've come this far and we are not going to fail if I can help it! We are a team and it was my turn to do everything I could to get Ruffie tracking again. So I backed up some and Ruffie wandered a little searching for something, the track? deer poop? Then she stood wagging her tail at the judges. Again I backed up all the time pleading with her to just put her nose down and find the track, the glove, the hot dogs, just do something! This went on for some time. I really don't how many times I backed up or really what happened but Ruffie finally put her nose down and seemed to be searching for the track. As she tentatively started out in a new direction I followed as soon as the tracking line was out the necessary 20 feet. She picked up speed and confidence pulling me down the last leg of the track to THE GLOVE! I don't know how, but we did it. Ruffie earned her "T".

Luck Be a Lady

(or how Pippin became DEERHILL UPSET THE APPLE CART, TD)

Pippin's tale could almost be the saga of Lady Luck. Not of whether he would do the track - he's the most reliable dog I've ever tracked - but whether he would ever get into a test in the first place. It seems like everybody who had ever owned a glove was out getting certified this fall - and tests up and down the East Coast had twice as many entrants as slots. First we were alternate #2 at Lenape. Then I drew alternate #6 at Dauphin the following week. I still hadn't heard from Hyattsville - but was giving serious consideration to a friend's suggestion that I come visit her and see how he handled a snow track in Illinois in December. The day before Lenape's test, things started to turn around. First I got a call from Hyattsville that we had been drawn #2. Then that evening I found out that two dogs were not going to run at Lenape - we were in!

The draw itself continued our reversal of fortune. The Halloween bag that was left in the bucket at the end had one dog biscuit in it - he had track #1. It was in a field where he had frequently tracked and the tracklayer was Karl Gabosch. He'd never tracked Karl - but Karl has kind of been a good luck charm for us - being present when Pippin's mother Robin got her TD and stewarding at many of the shows where she got obedience legs. Things were looking good.

The track itself. Well, I know there were two starting flags. I set up Pippin a ways back so they were aligned, and I remember keeping him on a short line as he approached the first flag so I could help him find the track - but he was already trucking. The knot on my line reached the flag, and we were off. At a run. Couple of little pauses to grab a deer cookie or two - then off again. I wasn't counting turns. I wasn't looking for landmarks I could align on in case I had to back up. I was running. About the point I when wondered whether I was going to make it, he stopped - at the glove!

Eighteen months ago we had no intention of keeping a puppy with the plumbing in the middle. It just didn't fit in with our plan of keeping only girls, and breeding once every three or four years. Then Pippin came along, and he made it pretty clear that he wasn't

going to go anywhere and we'd better re-evaluate our priorities.

Robin is a tracking fool and Pippin's father also had his TD before going on into field work, so we thought the litter might have some tracking potential. When they were about 8 weeks old, we got out our flags and hot-dogs and gloves and went out into the front yard. We learned one very important lesson. A puppy is not going to be interested in a hot-dog if he/she has no idea what a hot-dog is! A taste and then onto a second track - and it's amazing how fast the light went on. And it was also fascinating how different the puppies were - and what a good indication we got of their future tracking style. Pippin put his nose down and went to the glove. His sister Daisy tracked, crittered, tracked, crittered - just like their mother. The three other puppies eventually kind of got the point.

I'd read on the internet Tracking list about starting to train corners as curves and thought why not give it a try. Both pups got the concept really easily and were both doing well - but we weren't really getting out on a regular basis. (Well, we also did have the Winter from Hell in there). But in early summer Joanne MacKinnon and I realized that we needed to quit playing around and had to set goals and get organized if we wanted to get Ts this fall. At that point Pippin was a little better than Daisy at tracking and Daisy was a little better in obedience - so that's how I decided to focus - since I did have an agenda of putting four different obedience titles on four different Deerhill Cockers in '96.

As is usually the case, when you and your tracking buddy actually get out there and track, great things happen. Ruffie and Pippin both got certified at our match, and they both passed at our test. Pippin and I are very grateful to all of the fantastic club members who made it possible - both in terms of supplying manpower at the actual events and in helping with TED, which raised the funds to pay the bills. Thanks, guys!

Pat Etchells

