



# Common Scents

Lenape Tracking Club of Central New Jersey  
March - April 2004 Volume 29 Issue 2

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## *The President's Message...*

Well today we had our annual meeting, luncheon and awards for members who have earned tracking titles this year. It really is a shame that more of you do not make an effort to attend this meeting. Members of Lenape only have 2 general membership meetings all year - February and March. It would be great if more of you could attend. That said... We had wonderful speakers; Officer Jones and Officer Frinzi from the New Jersey State Police K-9 unit along with their dogs. They were really great.

Our awards this year went to Diane Thompson who put TDs on both of her Rotties, Jack and Georgia, at Lenapes TD test and to Teryl Lebkuecher who put a TD on her Cardigan Mace. Also, each year the club awards one of the members with a Good Sportsmanship award and this also went to Teryl and rightfully so as she is a very hard worker for our club and always ready to give a helping hand to whoever needs one.

We had a very good lunch and everyone was home by 3:30. Next year maybe more of you will try to make this nice affair honoring your fellow club members who worked so hard to get these titles.

April 17th is our TED (Tracking Education Day) It is the only event the club sponsors that puts some money in our account so that we can continue having tracking tests. We need all of the members to make an effort to come and work at this event. Please contact Alice Crans about lending a hand.

That's it for this newsletter, looking forward to seeing everyone next month. Meanwhile...HAPPY TRACKING.



*Bev Olsen*



**April 17, 2004**  
Tracking Experience Day

**October 31, 2004**  
Tracking Dog Test

**Sept. 26, 2004**  
Certification Workshop

**Nov. 7, 2004**  
Tracking Dog Excellent Test

# ***Tracklayer Certification***

February 21, 2004

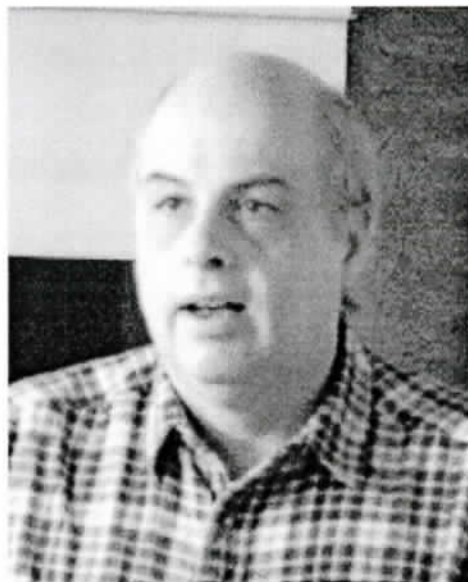
***What a successful day! Lenape Tracking Club now has an additional 8 new certified tracklayers.***

The day began at 9 am. The weather was cooperative; the sun was bright and most of the snow had melted. John gathered his students and begin the day with a little Lenape history, stories and encouragement. Then it was off to measure the distance of footsteps, plot tracks, take a test and find those chips.

## **Walking the Measured Pace**



Members and tracklayers were teamed up and sent out to lay tracks, complete with clipboards, pencils, gloves and flags. These are the items all good tracklayers carry at all times! You never know when you will come across a nice grassy field.



**Instructor & Chief Tracklayer  
John Etchells**

*"Okay, don't loose count...23, 24, 36...don't anyone talk to me!!!"*

## **Map Making**





## *Tracklayer Certification* continued



*"I think it went that way, but I am too cold to be sure."*

*"I know they say this helps but...  
Oh I hope no one sees me doing this."*



*"Two flags, 500 yards, 5 turns, 30 minutes and I am supposed to find this teeny, tiny little chip?!?!"*



*"HaHa...I'm staying here."*



*"Really, honest John, you only gave me 2 chips!"*



*"A test? I don't like tests. I thought the test was for the dog?"*

# *Congratulations!*



## Lenape Tracking Club's Certified Tracklayers



*From left to right*  
Gail Thompson  
Carol Shields  
Frank Shields  
Diane Thompson  
Claire Gelok  
Melody Kist  
Gina DeAlmeida  
Karin Damon  
(not pictured)

A special thanks to the Lenape members who helped make the day a success: Peg Forte, Marilyn Mueller, Hope Meaker, John Etchells, Lisa Pattison, Laurie Shuren, Mimi Ruch, Beverley Olsen, Teryl Lebkuecher, Pat Etchells and Peter Heide.

*Thank you Lisa for helping with the photos!*

### *Lisa Pattison & the Aussies Are At It Again...*



**Lacey** earned 2nd AKC CDX leg at First Dog Obedience trial. **Murph** has earned his UD title with **STYLE!** **Shelby** earned an ASCA CDX leg at the Garden State Australian Shepherd Show.







## ***Tracking Experience Day Saturday, April 17, 2004***

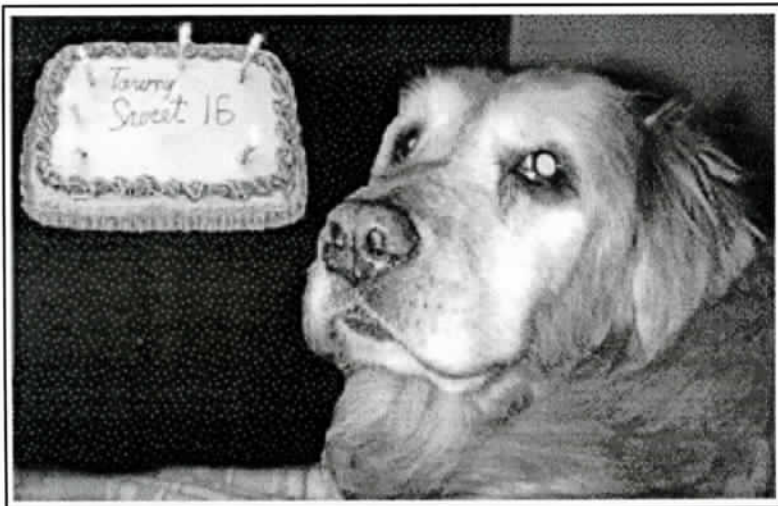
*Alice Crans  
Lenape Vice President  
TED Chairperson*

Saturday, April 17 is the date this year for Lenape's Tracking Experience Day. We need absolutely all the help we can get – people to greet newcomers in the morning and handle parking, people to help start dogs in the afternoon, people to guide and herd and help clean up after the event's all over. We expect our full enrollment of 24 people – thus we need a minimum of 24 club members to assist. If you are not free to assist at the event during the day, perhaps you can drop off a desert or morning munchie.

Please contact me, Alice Crans, at (908) 537-2574, e-mail [crans@blast.net](mailto:crans@blast.net) to let me know you will be helping out. We need your response before April 9 in order to make assignments.

Many thanks for always making this event one of our most successful!

### ***In Remembrance...***



**Tawny Windisch UDX TDX WC  
January 3, 1988 - February 19, 2004**

Tawny - you gave me more than I could ever return. Being my first Golden, you taught me how to use motivational training for obedience. You also taught me how to read subtle tracking dog body language and, for me, you tracked through much disliked prickles on the second-to-last leg of a TDX track to earn your title.

Thank you Tawny. We will never forget you. *Martha Windisch and Family*



## ***Skunk Scent: a Common Scent***

By Mimi Ruch

At this time of year we're all looking for welcome signs of spring. An unwelcome one is increased skunk activity.

I haven't had the misfortune to be able to test these recipes for deskunk personally, but I'm told they're better than tomato juice:

(1) Wet the stinky dog down thoroughly and apply a solution of Massengill's douche. Work it into the coat well, rinse thoroughly and apply baking soda. Allow the coat and baking soda to dry. After the dog is dry, brush baking soda out as needed, or

(2) make up a solution of 1/4 cup baking soda, 1 large bottle of hydrogen peroxide, and 1 tablespoon dish detergent. Work into the wet coat and allow to stand 20 minutes and rinse out.

Skunks, of course, have web pages. One of these web pages ([Humboldt.edu/~wfw2/deodorize.html](http://Humboldt.edu/~wfw2/deodorize.html)) gives recipes for deodorizing, the reason tomato juice doesn't work, and several precautions. The author warns not to store a mixture of peroxide and baking soda in a closed container because the mixture releases oxygen which could break the container. Tomato juice doesn't work because "...because at high doses of skunk spray the human nose quits smelling the odor (olfactory fatigue). When this happens, the odor of tomato juice can easily be detected. A person suffering olfactory fatigue to skunk spray will swear that the skunk odor is gone and was neutralized by the tomato juice. Another person coming on the scene at this point will readily confirm that the skunk spray has not been neutralized by the tomato juice."

A number of pet supply catalogs have commercial skunk deodorizing products. Has anyone had any experience with any of these?



## ***Lenape's February Meeting***



For those of you who could not make the meeting, you missed a good time! We had a good turn out. The conversation was good and the food was even better. A big thanks to all the folks who brought food and drink. I am sure no one went home hungry. The members who took part in the tracklayer's certification had plenty of fuel to complete the afternoon session.



## ***Sit! Stay! Testify!***

*Dogs have identified suspects in thousands of criminal cases. But how can we be sure that they're telling the truth?*

**By Grainger David**

The first thing most people notice about TinkerBelle is her nose. A female bloodhound, TinkerBelle has a fabulous snout, and like any dog, when she isn't sniffing garbage or a chew toy, she might sniff you in places you'd rather not be sniffed. It could be worse. Some of the people TinkerBelle sniffs end up in jail. That's because TinkerBelle is an expert for the South Pasadena Police Department and the FBI in what's called a "dog scent lineup."

Dog scent lineups have played a role in thousands of criminal cases in the U.S. since 1923. In a scent lineup, dogs match the smell on an item from a crime scene to a suspect in a group. Though dogs don't actually perform in court (anymore, at least), their scent identifications are admitted as evidence in most states. People have been convicted of robbery, rape, and even murder when the primary evidence against them is, effectively, a bark.

You would think that the scientific and legal work supporting a dog's ability to actually do this—match odors from all kinds of objects (clothes, doorknobs, even a bullet casing) to a criminal days or months later, in a room filled with other smells—must be pretty strong. It's not. In fact, the most comprehensive scent-lineup studies done so far show that highly trained dogs are wrong a whopping 30% to 40% of the time.

That's dangerous stuff when it finds its way to the courtroom. Just ask Jeffrey Allen Grant, a softball coach whom TinkerBelle identified as the Belmont Shore rapist in 1999. She followed a scent from a crime scene to his door and later picked him from a crowd at the Long Beach Police Department. Grant was arrested and imprisoned—and then, three months later, proved innocent by DNA tests and awarded \$1.7 million in damages. (The real Belmont Shore rapist was caught in 2002.) "I've been studying dogs a long time," says I. Lehr Brisbin, a scientist at the University of Georgia, "and when I test dogs that are supposed to be able to do this very well, they fail. Invariably."

What's going on? Aren't dogs made for this kind of work? According to Charles Wysocki, a scientist at Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia, dogs have something like 250 million olfactory receptor cells, more than most other animals. In the same way that humans make visual images and memories of what they see, dogs get through life making "scent pictures." This quality makes dogs very useful for narcotics work (where they identify the same smell over and over) and in cases where they're trailing a "hot" scent (say, from a fresh crime scene or in search-and-rescue jobs).

But expecting a dog to take a step back and piece together a scent puzzle in a lineup might be one cognitive step too many, according to Brisbin. Because dogs' noses are so sensitive, they are able to differentiate among smells from different parts of the body. But asking them to connect the odor your finger leaves on a bullet casing with the full range of smells you emanate in person is a more complicated association. "It's like showing a child the color red," Brisbin says, "in hopes that he'll return with something orange because it contains red."

Whoa, doggy. Handlers can also confuse their dogs by unintentionally and unconsciously "communicating down the leash," according to Larry Myers, a biologist at Auburn University in Alabama. Tests have shown that in addition to responding to the tiniest tugs of the leash, dogs also pick up on note taking and even on subtle facial movements in hope of pleasing the handler by picking the "right" answer (which the handler shouldn't know but sometimes does: Myers has encountered lineups where, for example, only one guy is handcuffed and wearing a prison jumpsuit).



Even assuming that a dog's nose is reliable and that the animal understands what's being asked of it, there are questions about technical errors in scent lineups. For example, does the controversial Scent Transfer Unit, on which dog scent lineups often stand, actually work? The STU 100, as it is known, operates something like a crime scene dustbuster: It vacuums scent onto a gauze pad, which is then placed in a plastic bag, frozen, and stored in a "scent bank" where it's kept until trial time, when the pad is thawed and offered to a dog as evidence. The STU 100 isn't approved by either of the national bloodhound associations, and scientists like Auburn's Myers have been flying around the country testifying against it, but it is still used by groups including the Southern California Police Bloodhound Handlers Coalition.

Finally, there's the potential for human error and worse. If you know dog owners, you probably know at least one who believes his animal can do no wrong. Handlers—who live and work with their canine partners—aren't much different, and that can lead to less than objective testimony. There have even been cases of possible handler fraud. The most recent example is the case of Sandra Anderson and her dog, Eagle. The pair had an international reputation for turning up evidence in difficult cases. Then, in 2002, Anderson was caught allegedly planting human remains at a crime scene for her dog to "discover." She was arrested on federal charges of obstructing an investigation. Though she denies the charges, the FBI is said to be pursuing up to 50 cases she may have tainted.

None of that would matter if we weren't predisposed to treat a dog scent lineup as something more than the "corroborative" testimony it's supposed to be. But there's just something about a dog's word, isn't there?

From Lassie to Rin Tin Tin, all the way back to Odysseus' dog, Argos (the only one to recognize Homer's hero after his 20-year absence), our culture is littered with testaments to the honest dog and his reliable nose. As a result, "people have an inflated idea of what kind of feats dogs are actually capable of," says Russ Hess, president of the U.S. Police Canine Association. There's no doubt that dogs are extremely useful in police work, but relying on them for case-closing testimony can be dangerous. "Juries tend to really like it," says Ted Hamm, a California handler who worked more than 300 calls and testified in dozens of cases last year for the L.A. County sheriff's department. "After a day of legalese, it's a real break for these folks when I start talking about something as low tech as a dog. It's like, 'Oh. I've got one of those at home. I can deal with this.'"



### ***Lenape Tracking Club Central New Jersey***

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