



# Common Scents

September/October, 2013



The TD and TDX are fast approaching. Our TD will be on October 13 and our TDX is on November 10. We hope to see many members at both tests, even if you're not entering a dog.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

TD Test 2013  
----- Sunday, October 13  
TDX Test 2013  
----- Sunday, November 10  
Awards Dinner/General Meeting  
----- Sunday, January 12  
VST Test 2014  
----- Sunday, March 16  
Tracking Experience Day 2014  
----- Saturday/Sunday, April 5/6  
Tracking Classes  
----- Saturday, April 26  
----- Saturday, May 3  
----- Saturday, May 10  
----- Saturday, May 17  
---- Saturday, May 31 - Rain Date  
Certification Match  
----- Sunday, September 21  
TD Test 2014  
----- Sunday, October 5  
TDX Test 2014  
----- Sunday, November 16

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Tracklayers are always appreciated and we have plenty of other jobs. Just post an email to the yahoo group if you're available and we'll find something for you to do. I'm seeing a lot of the same faces at events, which is great, but it "takes a village" to put on some of these events so I sure hope everyone will consider volunteering at least two events this year. You don't need any experience to volunteer - we'll train you or find you something you're comfortable with.

The Awards Dinner is planned for Sunday, January 12, 2014 at a location to be determined. Don't forget to send me any updates on tracking titles you have earned this year! We'll hold a General Meeting at the dinner. We always try to find interesting programs for the dinner and right now we're trying to get an animal communicator to come out and give a talk on what they do. If you have any other ideas let me know. I'll put out a post when we finalize the place and program.

The Tracking Classes held last spring were a big hit and we plan to continue this next year in April and May. Tentative dates are April 26, May 3, 10, and 17 with May 31 reserved as a rain date.

TED is tentatively scheduled for April 5-6, 2014. We need to verify that the site is available and I will put out an update as soon as it's finalized. This event needs lots of people to staff it, so if you only make one event next year this is the event that we need the most help.

I don't yet do any tracking with my current dogs, but I've laid track for a couple of people recently. Please don't be shy about asking people to lay track for you. That's one of the benefits of being in the club. If you post on the yahoo group that you need someone to lay track I'm sure you'll get at least one person who is more than happy to help you. Just ask!

Anna

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Meet the Early Members ----- 2  
Tidbits----- 5

**President** - Anna Burbank \* **Vice President** - Judy Todd

**Secretary** - Janet Doerer \* **Treasurer** - Joan Luckhardt

**Board Members** - Jim Bunderla - Gina DeAlmeida - Nancy Grove - George Laubach - Rose Mary Laubach  
Past President- Peg Forte

**Editor** - Pat Etchells, deerhill.tracking@gmail.com

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## MEET THE EARLY MEMBERS

### JOYCE MILLER – JOINED 2009

#### HRC Nikita

Serendipity. That's how Her Royal Curliness Nikita came into our family. My son Reid was afraid of dogs, and all his friends seemed to have them. I had this romantic notion that he needed a dog, a four-legged buddy, to help him overcome his fear. As a family, we started looking through one dog encyclopedia, but stopped abruptly when my son fell in love with the look of Dalmatians. We had already decided to rescue a dog. I didn't know much about dogs, but I knew that some breeds were a better bet to rehome than others. I wanted an easy dog. Yes, I admit, we were looking for a perfect dog for free under the guise of altruism.

Serendipitously, I was walking at a local park when I saw this striking black Standard Poodle, standing patiently, waiting for me to admire her. I hurried over to her and her person. A Poodle! Of course! I had grown up with a black Standard male, who was such a great dog and companion. Many of my happiest childhood memories were with Pierre.

Anyone who thought Poodles were sissies was quickly dissuaded from that notion by Pierre. He surveyed his kingdom from his perch in front of the living room window. And he seriously did not like the neighbor across the street. To get into his car every morning without incident during warm weather months, Mr. Wick had to call my mother to ask her to secure the door. It wasn't long before Pierre made the connection between the phone call and my mother shutting the door. Just thinking about Pierre hitting the door and charging across the street to chase Mr. Wick back into the house makes me laugh to the point of tears. This was highly entertaining for me as a child, but as an adult, I wonder darkly what Mr. Wick did to earn Pierre's hatred.

I contacted Poodle Rescue here in the Garden State and underwent

the scrutiny by a responsible breeder making sure that I could provide a forever home. By then, I realized the dog would be for me, not just my son. This was fortunate, since parents who say they want a dog only for their children's sake do not pass muster. We were cleared for any available dog in the area and waited for our dog.



One wintry Sunday afternoon, I was curled up on the sofa, in my pajamas, watching football with my husband and son, when there was a frantic call from one of the PA rescue coordinators. Could I go to a kill shelter in Cherry Hill to see a blue Standard boy, now? There was a mix-up about who was picking the dog up, and the dog had overstayed its welcome. Logistically, there was no way, but I promised to call the shelter, show some interest, and see the dog on Monday. This worked for everyone.

After a miserable trip to the shelter, I was directed to the dog, who sat at the back of the run staring blankly at me. I had been assured by those in rescue that when I saw *my* dog, I would know. I felt no connection. After a few minutes, I headed back to the office. If I had left at that time, things would have turned out differently. I would not have given Serendipity a chance to strike.

Halfway out of the shelter area, I wondered, had I given this dog a fair chance or was the hellish noise of tens of dogs, many of them large mixes, getting to me? When I went back to this dog, he now barked at me, as though he was telling me that no, he wasn't mine. I hurried back to the office, where the rescue person had just walked in. We chatted together for a few minutes, then went back to the blue boy. I told her that our dog would be my first as an adult. I remember saying, "I need an easy dog."

Bonnie took him out of his run and confirmed that he was not for me and my family. He would need some retraining before he went to a new home. After she loaded him into her van and took out her bitch to potty, she told me about a female of hers in foster care with a friend. The female was 18 months old and severely beaten and starved in her first home. In her foster home, she was treated well but now the low dog of 7 non-Poodles. Although the foster mother adored this young girl, Bonnie knew she needed a home where she would be the only dog. Was I interested? I said yes before I could stop myself. To prepare for our girl's homecoming, we went to the local big box store for a collar, leash, comb, and Snausages. Thankfully at the time, I didn't know how much we had to learn.

I was at the kitchen sink when Bonnie pulled up in her van that weekend in early December. The window that overlooks the driveway is so narrow that I rarely see anything out of it. But on that day, I could clearly see our girl coming out of the van. She looked right into me, and I knew. She was mine. And I was hers. I called out to my husband and son, "Our girl is home!"

Over that weekend, we changed her name from Deana to Nikita, after our favorite show at the time, *La Femme Nikita*, about a young woman with a troubled past making a new life for herself. We thought it fit. Smart girl that she is, she knew her new name in two days, with the

help of countless Snausages and cheese treats. We crated her in the kitchen the first few nights; every morning, she greeted us with such enthusiasm and delight. She was then given full house access, but like every good Poodle, she liked to be where we were. I asked Bonnie too few questions about Nikita, but I did make sure she liked car rides since I drove my son to school a half hour each way.

Slowly, we figured out the nightmare Nikita survived. One morning, my husband was walking into the kitchen reading the paper as I was making breakfast. All Nikita saw was him walking toward her with the paper and dissolved into a quivering mess soaked in urine. Another time I was taking my son to school when he announced that he had left his lunchbox home. As this school had no kitchen facilities, I would have to add 90 minutes to an already packed day to get him his lunch. *What?* That's all I said. I yelled a lot back then, but looking in the rear view mirror, I saw Nikita shaking from fright. I told my son he was lucky to have her as a sister to save him. My yelling days were over.

She made me more patient, especially when we took the advice of the rescue folks and went to train at St. Hubert's in Madison. I started the long learning process about reactive dogs. Nikita had a strong prey drive and twice we found her out of the fenced yard in the middle of the road. Did I mention that we live on a blind curve on a road used as a pass-through during commuter traffic?

This was clearly a dangerous situation, but St. Hubert's did not teach recall until the most advanced course, months away. I wasn't convinced that we could wait that long. An Internet search of recall techniques during Memorial Day weekend led me to Leslie Nelson's Really Reliable Recall, then to Camp Gone to the Dogs in Vermont, where Leslie taught. On the homepage was the director surrounded by her...wait for it...Poodles! Hello, Serendipity!

The summer session of camp was just 10 days away, but I called anyway. Yes, there was room but we would have to find offsite lodging. Days of calling places in the area yielded no vacancies. Just as I began to doubt our ability to attend camp, here was a phone call saying that there *was* room for us! Did I have Serendipity to thank for that? Who knew then that the four-hour trip to camp would radically change the course of my life?

Serendipity was very busy that week. The summer session is held at Marlboro College; campers stay in the college dorms. In my particular dorm were two people who became very good friends. Nikita excelled at every class we tried and showed me just what versatile athletes Poodles are. She passed the Really Reliable Recall Test with flying colors. Agility? Of course! Lure coursing? Absolutely, but I couldn't trust her around white plastic bags for months. Hunting? You bet! Tracking? Sure! AKC Tracking Judge Mary Thompson, who taught the tracking classes, is not one for effusive and unwarranted praise. She told me flatly that Poodles get it. Nikita got it so well that Mary was the first to tell me to contact Lenape Tracking Club.

However, it was something that my two new friends, both with Old English Sheepdogs, convinced me to try that would be life-altering. AKC Herding Judges and competitors Roy and Debbie Johnson bring their sheep and Border Collies up from Virginia to summer camp so that everyone interested can try herding. Roy and Debbie are such characters that it didn't take much arm twisting to get me to try herding with Nikita. When in Rome, right? It was raining lightly when my friend Linda and I made our way to the sheep pen with Nikita. Would the weather cancel the lesson? Perfect herding weather, she told me. What I didn't know then is the big joke about herding and the weather. Freezing cold? Perfect herding weather! Boiling hot? Perfect herding weather!

We were chatting away, several hundred yards away from the sheep pen, when I realized that Nikita was focused on something up ahead. She had spotted the sheep, presumably for the first time, but like every good sheep dog, her eyes would not leave them until we headed back to the dorm. Somewhere in this house is a photo of me in the middle of the sheep pen, holding an umbrella, slackjawed, watching my girl herd those sheep like she had been doing it all her life. Roy whistled, and one sheep peeled away from the other two. Without missing a step, Nikita turned instantly to move that one back with the rest. When the session was over, Roy drawled, "You've got a good dawg there."

"Yes, she's a real sweetheart," I replied. Roy stared at me hard before repeating, "She's a good dog."

Clearly, I wasn't getting whatever he was trying to tell me. I thanked him, and when Linda and I had walked out of his earshot, I asked her what he meant. When she told me that Roy considered Nikita a good herding dog, I thought it was hilarious. A herding Poodle? What a hoot!

The joke was on me, though. By the time the next summer camp rolled around, I knew that Poodles had a historical background of herding and eligible to herd in American Herding Breeds Association's events. And Nikita was now known to folks on Poodle email lists as Her Royal Curliness, or HRC. At the second summer camp we attended, Roy was threatening to steal her and put herding titles on her. From that time on, HRC has herded everyday, often sporting a rhinestone collar, and never failing to attract an appreciative crowd.

Roy finally convinced me to start training her. She would earn later an AHBA HCT (Herding Capability Tested) under Roy and Debbie. We were getting ready for the next level, a JHD (Junior Herding Dog), when she would



sometimes limp at the end of an hour lesson. She had regular vet visits with Evelyn Orenbuch, who specialized in canine rehab, chiropractic, acupuncture, laser, and Chinese medicine. To be on the safe side, I followed Evelyn's advice and took HRC to our regular vet to x-ray her hips. Everyone was shocked by the results; HRC was significantly dysplastic on both sides. Only her excellent muscle tone hid her condition. Because herding can be dangerous and livestock unpredictable, I made the difficult decision to stop her training, except for a 15-minute session with Roy at summer camp.

After our first camp, we attended a TED weekend, but gave up tracking to concentrate on herding. Nikita was rarely reactive when sheep were around; the same could not be said in other venues. Now that herding was not an option, I signed up for lessons offered by Lenape but with some concern over her around other dogs. Her first response to other dogs is often growling. Some dogs take offense to that.

For the first lesson, I had the good fortune—or was it Serendipity?—to park next to Nancy Grove and Jim Bunderla. They quickly became friends, especially when Jim told me he gave the trail-blazing Poodle Bang a Senior Hunter Title. Nancy and Jim had their wonderful

Golden boy, Trooper, with them. Trooper was very patient with HRC, and they also became fast friends. Knowing that Nancy and Jim were members of Lenape made it easy to decide to join.

Speaking of easy, it wasn't hard to convince Nancy and Jim to join us at the second Fall session of camp, where we all concentrated on tracking in the postcard-perfect hills of Stowe, Vermont. When HRC was diagnosed with Cushings, I decided to stop all training but continued her daily hikes, mostly off-leash, which we have always enjoyed tremendously.

The last thing HRC and I do at the Fall2 camp is take a walk with Nancy, Jim, and the Golden Boys. It's a lovely way to end camp, with good friends in a beautiful setting. On my long way home from this last camp, I thought of how much Nikita has brought to my life, especially since she is now 15, a phenomenal age for a Standard. She gets me out of the house for fresh air and a chance to admire Nature every day. She has made me more patient. She has taught me so much about training, behavior, nutrition, and so much more. Bonnie once told that to make Nikita more confident, I must be more confident. And so I am. Because of her, I am active in dog clubs, dropping other non-canine clubs along the wayside. I joined

Lenape Tracking and found the all-breed club to be all-welcoming and always interesting. I am very active in the Poodle Obedience Training Club of Greater New York, a club started by Blanche Saunders herself, and in the parent club, the Poodle Club of America. I was asked by PCA to write the AKC petition so that Poodles can enter its herding events, even though I am not, and can never be, a full member since I am not a breeder. PCA also trusted me with organizing the Poodle booth for AKC's Meet The Breeds at the Jacob Javits Center in Manhattan held during the last weekend of September this year. I look forward to attending dog camps, where I find other people content to be in the company of their dogs. I have met fascinating people and have made wonderful friendships, which I probably would not have experienced if not for HRC Nikita. And Serendipity.

*Photos by Jim Bunderla*

Peg Forte found an interesting article on-line titled: *Improving Dogs' Ability to Detect Explosives*, which deals with training dogs to identify groups of odors as a category rather than to need to train each odor individually.

Rather than worry about copyright infringement issues, we are going to just post the URL and let members read it:

<http://www.bestinshowdaily.com/blog/improving-dogs-ability-to-detect-explosives/>



## TIDBITS



Bellocq (l) Spring (r)

ANNA BURBANK has had success in the breed ring lately! Her Pyrenean Shepherd **Spring** earned two majors at the Blue Mountain Cluster and is now up to 9 points. Spring's father **Bellocq** got BOB at one of the shows and Anna got a chance to participate in group!

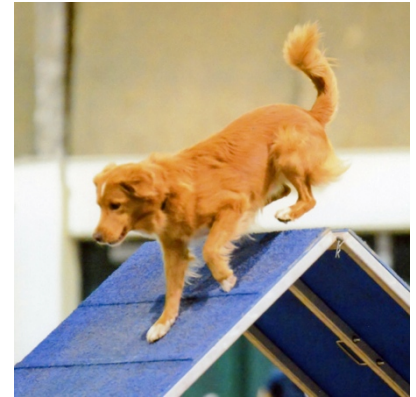
GINA DeALMEIDA reports: **Toro** & I entered the National Tracking Invitational this year with the hopes of getting the chance to strut our stuff at the AKC premiere tracking trial. There were 200+ invitations sent out to all Champion Trackers across the country. 55 dogs returned entries for the event. 10 dogs are drawn for the 2-day trial with 5 tracks run each day. There are 4 judges for the event with the first 2 assigned to judge tracks 1-5 on Saturday & the second 2 assigned to judge tracks 6-10 on Sunday. Unfortunately, we were drawn as 5th alternate for the trial.



Although we didn't get in, we were asked to write a bio for the program.

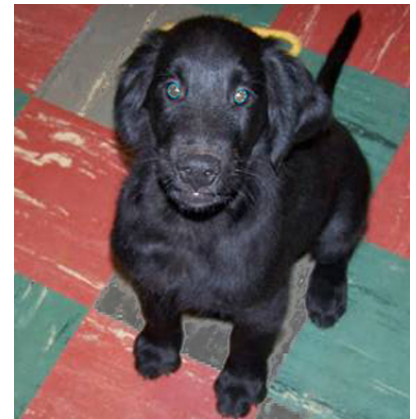
"Toro and I started tracking when he was only 5 months old. He so loved to be out in the fields from the very beginning. He achieved his TD at 1 year old on his first try. His TDX came quickly there after because it was his favorite thing to do - get wet & dirty. He has also achieved his Canadian TD & TDX as well as his ASCA TD & TDX. He then achieved his VST/CT title with minimal effort. Toro has since gone on to Schutzhund tracking & completed his FH title in 2012.

"His breeder, Norma Dikeman, is so pleased to have him as her 1st Champion Tracker in all the many years she has been an ambassador for the breed. Toro is also my first CT dog as well, but I'm looking forward to the next generation for his son to follow in his father's footsteps. I'm so proud to have been blessed with this Nordike dog. He is an amazing animal & a wonderful representative of what a working Rottweiler can achieve. Dogs teach us so much & I'm the first one to say, 'I'm ready to keep on learning'."



The ETCHELLS' Toller **Diggs** got his second Novice Standard and Jumpers legs at the Rogue Canine Agility Trials in September.

One of Wyn's Flat-Coated Retriever puppies has found a permanent home with PEG FORTE. He is *StormWatch Northern Lights* ("**Rory**" for Aurora Borealis). He will start KPT with Lenape member Lisa Pattison.



Meanwhile, Rory's brother has gone to live in Maine with RALPH and JOANNE MACKINNON. He is *StormWatch Rainbow Connection* ("**Beau**"). Joanne has already started him in tracking and basic field work.

