



## DFW Tracking Club Holds VST Test

On Sunday, January 17, 2010, the eight handlers with their dogs gathered at Harris Methodist HEB Hospital to attempt to earn a title in Variable Surface Tracking. This day culminated the efforts of Club members to hold an AKC approved VST Test for the first time. The first hurdle had been to gain AKC approval which meant a series of e-mails and phone calls to show that we had indeed held a sanctioned match and should be approved. Judges John and Darlene Barnard were approved, and travel arrangements made. Nancy Barclay would serve as chair/secretary, Rod Barclay was the chief tracklayer, and Deb Lyons took on the job of providing food and hospitality. We had set a limit of eight dogs and before closing we had nine dogs entered, which meant a drawing for places was required. The drawing was done but early on one of the entrants needed to withdraw so the alternate was put on the permanent list. Of the eight dogs entered, two were whippets, two German Shepherds, a border collie, a miniature poodle, a border terrier and a Labrador Retriever. The test was full. We would need to lay eight tracks. Because of construction going on at Harris Hospital, space had become limited so we had to look elsewhere. The best location was a few miles away at the northeast campus of Tarrant County



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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi All

*WELL I HOPE WINTER IS OVER (I THINK WE HAVE HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH SNOW) AND SPRING HAS SPRUNG OFF TO A GOOD START. THE SPRING BEGINNERS AND INTERMEDIATES ARE PROGRESSING WELL THANKS TO CHARLENE DUNN AND TRACY FREELING. I WISH THEM LOTS OF FUN WITH THEIR DOGS AND THE JOY OF ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU GET CAN FROM SPORT OF TRACKING.*

*I AM VERY HAPPY TO SAY OUR FOURTH TRACKING DOG TEST WAS A SUCCESS. WE HAD A BEAUTIFUL DAY OUT IN ENNNIS, TX A BIG THANK YOU TO TONI SKILES FOR THE USE OF THE LOVELY FACILITY; WE HAD TWO PASSES OUT OF FIVE EXHIBITORS. CONGRATULATIONS TO JEFF SHAVER ON NOT JUST ONE PASS, BUT TWO PASSES. I AM GUESSING THE TRIP HOME TO HOUSTON DIDN'T SEEM SO LONG.*

*THANK YOU TO OUR JUDGES GILLIAN SALLING AND JON BISHOP THEY DID AN EXCELLENT JOB. A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MEMBERS THAT HELPED, YOU ALL DID A WONDERFUL, OUT- STANDING JOB.*

ENJOY YOUR SPRING

DEB

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College. Once again we needed to get permission from AKC to use this location. We were approved to lay three tracks at the college and the other five at the hospital, which would be the Test Headquarters.

The judges arrived on Friday and, after a quick lunch, went directly to the test sites to begin plotting tracks. Tracklayers were assigned and met with the judges and the college tracks were plotted before dark on Friday. That left the remaining tracks to be plotted on Saturday at the hospital. It was a long day for everybody and the judges still had paperwork to do after dinner. But we were up before dawn Sunday morning to meet the first tracklayers, who had to walk their tracks by flashlight. Since the rules require the track to be laid three to five hours before being run, the first track needed to be in by 6:00 a.m. There was fog on Sunday morning but as the sun came up it was burned away. The rules for the VST Test state that the track must be between 600 and 800 yards long with 4—8 turns. One of these turns, the “moment of truth” turn must be on non-vegetated surface. The track must include at least three different surfaces including vegetation and two areas devoid of vegetation such as concrete, asphalt, gravel or mulch. There will be four articles dropped at intervals on the track - 1 leather, 1 metal, 1 plastic, and 1 fabric.



Drawing for tracks

With all the entrants gathered at the Test Headquarters, the drawing for tracks was held at 8:45 and shortly thereafter the first team left to run their track. Things went smoothly as each track was run and, when it was over, two teams had passed and earned the VST title: a whippet owned by Connie Austin and a miniature poodle owned by Suzy Cope (Look for the article written by Suzy later in this report).

After the work was finished, everyone gathered back at headquarters where Deb Lyons had set out a wonderful homemade soup and sandwich lunch. The judges finished their paperwork and awards

were given out. John and Darlene were very complimentary about how the test was run. We thank them for all their hard work. Thanks go to the tracklayers: Freda Burks, Tracy Freeling, Mary Bender, Charlene Dunn, Deb Lyons, Sarah Helber, and Tom Holcholksi. And thanks to the committee members



The gallery follows behind the judges



Judges Darlene & John Barnard with tracklayer Sara Helber as Connie Austin prepares to track



New title holders: Connie Austin and Suzy Cope



Lunch at the end of a long day!

who were there to jump in whenever needed: Charlene Dunn, Rod Barclay, Cindi Todd and Deb Lyons.

## **Earning a VST Title** by Suzy Cope

Variable Surface Tracking is the post grad level of a tracking odyssey. I am no expert at tracking, and I doubt many humans will ever truly understand even a small part of the knowledge and ability dogs possess. JIB has lead me, literally, down tracks of friends, family and strangers. He took me on the final ride to his CHAMPION TRACKER title January 17, 2010 in Bedford Texas.

Prior to that day two dogs had passed a VST test on Texas ground. Passing rate for VST is slim everywhere, but our home state just doubled the statistics with JIB and a whippet on a beautiful test day. Judges Darlene and John Barnard plotted tracks for eight dogs, on cool damp ground, through parking lots and around buildings for the first VST held by Dallas Fort Worth Tracking Club.

Though we live less than 30 minutes from this site, we have only once practiced there, and once tested. The video of JIB working a VST test was taken in 2009 on a track at the Bedford location. You can find it on the web site [www.geocities.com/jibandsuzicope](http://www.geocities.com/jibandsuzicope)

JIB passed his TDX test on the sixth test, and this was his sixth test at VST, so I hoped we were on schedule. I drew the seventh track and enjoyed watching each of the dogs before us. The conditions were very good, and dogs were doing well. When the whippet passed, the gallery and judges were delighted and increasingly optimistic.

It was afternoon, about 60 degrees and calm when we approached the flag. The start was a clearing on leaf covered sparse grass between a busy street and a tree-lined drainage. JIB worked the start briefly after picking up the leather glove start article. I was confident of the direction, and that gave me the patience to wait it out while he reassured himself. If there is one aspect of handling in tracking that was hard for me, and I have improved on, it is patience.

JIB pulled ahead to a corner, past a tree line, with only one possible turn direction. Again, I was assured of not screwing up as the dope on the rope. There was very little vegetation, plenty of trash, and we were near the road intersection. JIB worked hard, having passed the turn. He refused water before we started, and denied a need to void, but these things have a way of catching up. Now I was able to give him a drink, and regroup by backing up

as he did. He then easily found the right turn and pulled stronger and faster as he moved down a dry grass curb strip toward the hospital building.

We passed over the drainage and still on the thick dry grass he grabbed a hard ninety degree right turn between a fence line and the drainage. I had no doubt about his decision. There was not an instant of question on his part, and he moved in classic form along this leg. Article #2 was a metal disc, which he easily found and retrieved. I was certainly having some fun now!

Another sip of water, for both of us, and we were off. Ahead was continued dry grass with buildings to our left and drainage to the right. JIB found a turn, and took about 30 seconds to decide it went left. I was just thrilled to see his confidence, which in turn gave me the same. The fourth leg of the track went between buildings, onto a concrete pad, past a picnic area, onto sidewalk, and out into an asphalt square with loading docks. This was obviously a heavy traffic area. JIB kept straight, than went left until he moved over a curb and onto dry grass. He indicated that there was no scent on the grass, so he came back my way. I backed up to the spot we had entered the square, and gave him enough line to work. He checked the area again, and this time turned right. The entry road there between buildings had a small bit of grass on one curb. JIB went to the grass, and pulled along the building, but broke off when we cleared one building and were in the open. He seemed to be working something out, and turned back up the road. Needless to say I was afraid this was a bad move, because behind us was the judges and gallery!

As I have heard so many times, "trust your dog". There in the middle of the street was a sock I had not spotted. JIB retrieved the article #3, and accepted a drink of water. He turned right when we were back on track, heading across a small parking area toward grass and the drainage again. Once he was on the grass he stopped for that potty break refused earlier. This seemed to distract him enough that we struggled on the next section. JIB took me right to a dead end, than back left, tracking on grass, asphalt and concrete. A spectator said later "he was pulling hard there, how did you know it wasn't the correct direction?" You learn the body language that is visible in this case I call it his Texas

Two Step. When JIB is on track his back feet take tiny determined quick steps. He wasn't dancing on this leg of the track yet.

JIB returned to the grass area where a wooden foot-bridge crossed the drainage, and this time he suggested we take it. I trusted my dog, and yet was still listening for a whistle. But, when we crossed into a wooded area with dirt and leaves, no whistle sounded and JIB indicated track up an embankment. He then took a slight left and moved down onto dry grass again, and stopped for yet another potty break. By now, I am sure we are close to the end of the track, but he is not acting certain. Right in front of me is a memorial statue with plastic flowers, and toys. Thankfully JIB found nothing of interest and decided to work back up the hill to the trees.

Among the leaves he picked up scent and pulled with conviction toward a parking lot. Only about six feet onto a side-walk, he found a blue plastic lid, with the magic number FOUR taped to it! Our VST photo with the judges includes the blue plastic lid in JIB's mouth, as it should be.



## WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER: DOG CAMPS

Check out these camps for your next canine adventure:

Camp Barking Hills, Hackettstown, N.J.: spring  
908-996-90911- [www.campbarkinghills.com](http://www.campbarkinghills.com)

Camp Dogwood, Ingleside, IL: spring & fall  
12-458-9549 - [www.campdogwood.com](http://www.campdogwood.com)

Camp Unleashed, Becket, Mass: summer & fall  
518-781-0446 - [www.campunleashed.com](http://www.campunleashed.com)

Camp Gone to the Dogs, Vermont: summer & fall  
888-364-3293 - [www.campgonetothedogs.com](http://www.campgonetothedogs.com)

Camp Winnaribbun, Stateline, Nev.: summer & fall  
775-348-8412 - [www.campwv.com](http://www.campwv.com)

Dog Days of Wisconsin, Almond, Wis: summer  
800-226-7436 - [www.dogcamp.com](http://www.dogcamp.com)

Dog Scout Camp, St. Helen, Mich: summer; Fort Worth, TX, winter

989-389-2000 - [www.dogscouts.com](http://www.dogscouts.com)

Dog Sports Camp, Oregon: summer

541-826-6592 -  
[www.pawsitivelybullydogtraining.com](http://www.pawsitivelybullydogtraining.com)

The Dog's Camp, Swannanoa, N.C.: fall

828-649-3691 - [www.thedogscamp.com](http://www.thedogscamp.com)

DFW Tracking Club was founded in the summer of 2005 by members of the tracking community who wished to offer tests, teach classes, and serve the tracking needs in the DFW area.

The mission of the DFW Tracking Club is to provide a need to the tracking community for tracking tests, tracking classes, and tracking education.

DFW Tracking Club has instructors who can service all levels of tracking from the novice to the advanced tracker. Our classes are structured to teach dogs and their humans to track for an AKC tracking test.

DFW Tracking Club is an AKC recognized club, and a 501(c) tax exempt organization.

For more information about the DFW Tracking Club, check out our yahoo group at [dfwtrackers@yahoo.com](mailto:dfwtrackers@yahoo.com) or email the club secretary at [info@dfwtc.org](mailto:info@dfwtc.org)

# A Danger to Your Dog: Foxtails

With the warmer weather and longer days of spring and summer approaching, dog lovers can look forward to spending more time outdoors tracking or just romping with their canine companions. Before you grab a leash though you need to be aware of a prickly problem lurking in the bushes: foxtails.

**WHAT IS A FOXTAIL?** The term “foxtail” or “speargrass” is used to refer to a number of grasses with bushy spikes that resemble the tail of a fox. The bristles are usually yellow-to-reddish, green or purplish in color. All foxtails have a hardened tip, sometimes referred to as a “callus,” as well as barbs pointing away from the callus. While foxtail grasses grow predominantly in the western portion of the United States, a few varieties can be found throughout other parts of the country. They bloom predominantly during the spring and summer months of the year.

If your dog spends time romping outdoors, especially in tall grasses, he is at risk of coming into contact with a foxtail. The sharp point of the barb causes the foxtail to cling to fur and, any time the dog moves, the foxtail will burrow deeper into his fur. Because most wild mammals have short fur, the foxtail will eventually become dislodged. However, this is not the case with domestic dogs. Many breeds, especially those with long fur, are more susceptible to complications from foxtails. The barb can not only embed itself in a dog’s fur but can also become lodged in the mouth, eye, anus, paw, nasal cavity or ear canal. Once the foxtail enters the body, it can travel into soft tissues, causing discomfort, infection or serious illness. In rare cases, a foxtail can prove fatal if it reaches an internal organ like a kidney or lung.

“Foxtails are very sharp and have little barbs, so they penetrate the skin rather than back out,” says William H. Miller, Jr., DVM, a board certified veterinary dermatologist and medical director of the Companion Animal Hospital at Cornell University’s College of Veterinary Medicine.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO.** To help insure that your dog doesn’t come into contact with the weed in the first place, remove all foxtails from your lawn or yard by mowing the grass often, especially in late spring when the plant grows most rapidly. When you’re away from home with your dog, avoid hiking trails or parks where foxtails grow. It’s also important to check your dog often for any signs of foxtails. Look closely at the fur, in the nose and ear and between the paws. Regular grooming will help remove foxtails before they cause a danger to your dog.

In a few instances, you may be able to safely extricate a foxtail yourself. For example, if you can plainly see a foxtail on your dog’s fur, you can remove it by using your fingers or tweezers. If a foxtail becomes stuck in a sensitive area such as near an eye or in an ear, however, immediately seek treatment from your veterinarian rather than attempting to remove it yourself.

“A veterinarian may have to go on a fishing expedition to extract a foxtail from a dog’s nose, ear or paw,” says Dr. Miller. “If it’s really deeply embedded, the dog may need to be anesthetized to remove it.”

Foxtails need not cut into your dog’s fun this summer. Pay close attention to your dog and act quickly if he exhibits any signs of pain or discomfort. The more quickly you spot any problems and take your dog to a veterinarian, the sooner you can get back outside and enjoy the long dog days of summer.



**“WE ARE ALONE, ABSOLUTELY ALONE**

**ON THIS CHANCE PLANET, AND**

**AMID ALL THE FORMS OF LIFE THAT SURROUND US,**

**NOT ONE, EXCEPTING THE DOG**

**HAS MADE AN ALLIANCE WITH US.”**

**MAURICE MATTERLINCK**

# MARCH, 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Class
7 TR	8	9	10	11	12	13 Class
14 TR/TX VST	15	16	17	18	19	20 Class
21 TR/TX VST	22	23	24	25	26	27 Class
28	29	30	31			

# APRIL, 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 TR/ TX Class
4 VST	5	6	7	8	9	10 Class
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 Class
18 Meeting	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 TR/ TX	26	27	28	29	30	

## EVENTS

March 7: Greater Kansas City Dog Training Club—**TR**: Smithville, MO Closes 2/28  
(Cathy Daniels: puppyheadcate@gmail.com)

March 14: DFW Tracking Club—**TR** Fort Worth, TX Closes 3/4 (Tracy Freeling: taf76137@yahoo.com)

March 14: Gateway Tracking Club—**VST** St. Louis, MO Closes 3/4 (Linda Schulte: Imschulte@yahoo.com)

March 14: Louisiana Capital City Obedience Club—**TR/TX** Jackson, LA Closes 3/4  
(Cheryl Warren: 225-202-0080)

March 21: Houston Obedience Training Club—**TR/TX** Houston, TX Closes 3/14  
(Brenda Gin Joe: rotti4us@flash.net)

March 21: Sandia Dog Obedience Club—**VST** Albuquerque, NM Closes 3/10  
(Vickee Jones: gordongirls@comcast.net)

April 3: Dalmatian Club Of America - **TR/TX** Smithville, MO Closes 3/17  
(Onofria: mail@onofrio.com)

April 4: Springfield MO Dog Training Club—**VST** Springfield, MO Closes 3/17  
(Anna Freeman: aandjfreeman@sbcglobal.net)

April 25: Southwest Tracking Assoc. of Metro Houston—**TR/TX** Houston, TX Closes 4/15 (Gayle Mahar: gmahar@att.net)

# MAY, 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 TR/TX	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 TR	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 /	24 /	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## EVENTS

May 2: Indian Nations Tracking Club -  
TR/TX: Skiatook, OK. Closes 4/13  
(Sue Young: readtype@hotmail.com)

May 11: American Belgian Malinois Club—  
TR: Sullivan MO  
(Sue Fregian: secretary@caper-dogs.com)

# JUNE, 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Meeting in June: Date will be set at the  
April Meeting.

# FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

DFW Tracking Club

February 7, 2010

HEB Hospital

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by President Deb Lyons. Members in attendance were Deb Lyons, Charlene Dunn, Paula Gifford, Sarah Helber, Tracy Freeling, Cindi Todd, Rod Barclay, Nancy Barclay and Koni Vahdat.

October minutes were read. December minutes were read. Charlene Dunn made motion to approve minutes as printed in newsletter. Tracy Freeling seconded the motion. Motion passed.

President's Report – Discussion about the class that ends in late February. Class is going very well and one new student is inquiring about Intermediate.

Vice President's Report – No report.

Secretary's Report – Cindy Morrow received notification from AKC on the Corresponding Date for our November 2010 TD test. She requested AKC change the date to the weekend following Thanksgiving.

Treasurer's Report Income/expense report was passed around to attendees for reading. Treasurer noted that the VST test lost just over \$300 which is actually a good margin for VST tests.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

March Tracking Test: The test is March 13th & 14th. Chairperson / Secretary is Tracy Freeling. Cindi Todd was volunteered as Chief Tracklayer. Paula Gifford volunteered to do Hospitality. Cindy Morrow will be bringing cinnamon rolls and cream puffs for Sunday breakfast. Discussion ensued about track site, what might need to be cut for easier visibility, track layer availability. Nancy Barclay moved, Koni Vahdat seconded, to purchase 4 more DFWTC signs as directional indicators for this test. Motion passed.

Belgian Tervuren Tracking Tests. DFWTC is providing flags and tracklayers for this event. Test is April 24th & 25th. There will be 4 TD, 4 TDX and 5 VST's offered. Motel rooms will be provided but we do not know how many yet. Sarah will be finding that out plus: do tracklayers need to bring their own articles and is the end article provided by the Belgian Tervuren Club.

Deb and Sarah will be reporting to the Belgian Tervuren Club how many of us have committed so far: Tracy Freeling, Deb Lyons, Charlene Dunn, Natasha Decker and Marion Beck-Edwards have committed so far. The Belgian Tervuren Club will be providing breakfast and lunch for tracklayers.

November Tracking Test. The test is on the 27th & 28th. Charlene suggested a combined TD/TDX at Toni's. It was discussed to keep the test at TCC NW and have it be TD only. Cindy Morrow volunteered to be Chair/Secretary. Nancy Barclay moved to have Charlene Dunn and Tom Hacholski be contacted to judge. Cindi Todd seconded. Motion passed.

January VST Test. Sarah Helber volunteered to be Chair/Secretary. Nancy Barclay moved to ask Carol Clark and Linda Baschnagel to judge. Paula seconded. Motion passed. Connie Austin and Ulysses James would be alternates.



## OLD BUSINESS

By-Laws Revision Committee. Discussion tabled.

## NEW BUSINESS:

Complaint received on entrant to our VST test. Debra Lyons called a Special Board Meeting to discuss this and a letter was written to the entrant about the behavior that was in the complaint. A copy will be sent to AKC to document the behavior.

Classes. Next class to begin on February 27. Charlene will change the website information to convey the change.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 18th, 2010 at 1:30 pm at the HEB Hospital. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindi Todd

## Spring Tracking Test

On March 14th the DFWTC held a TD Test under the leadership of Test Secretary/Chairman Tracy Freeling. The site was a new one for us. Toni Skiles had offered her land in Ennis for the Club to hold a tracking test. The land was spacious and beautiful with lots of room to lay the tracks. The judges (Jon Bishop and Gillian Salling) met with the track layers on Saturday, March 13th to plot and lay the tracks. Deb Lyons was chief track layer, helped by Pam Raymond, Karen Yates, Cindy Morrow, Charlene Dunn, and Sarah Helber. There were five entries so five tracks were plotted plus an alternate track (which was not needed). Paula Gifford was there to offer sandwiches and snacks for lunch.

The nice weather held on Sunday and the five entrants and their dogs were on hand for the draw (rubber duckies). Track #1, laid by Karen Yates was run by Joe Greenland and his Basset Hound. Track #2, laid by Cindy Morrow, was run by Jeff Shaver and his Rottweiler. Track #3 was laid by Charlene Dunn and run by Jeff Shaver with another Rottweiler. Sarah Helber laid Track #4 which was run by Robin Elliott and her Giant Schnauzer. Finally Track #5, laid by Deb Lyons was run by Betsy Watkins with Paula Gifford's Rhodesian Ridgeback. The two Rottweilers passed to earn their TD.

By lunch time everyone was glad to come in and eat. Paula had furnished a great lunch with help from Club members. All in all the test ran smoothly thanks to Tracy, Deb, Paula and all the Club members who helped out.



## Tracking Class

Charlene Dunn is currently teaching two classes-Beginners and Intermediate.

The Spring classes began February 27th and will run through April 17th.

Tracy Freeling serves as Charlene's backup when needed. The Beginners Class is full with four handlers and dogs. There is an interesting variety of breeds represented: a Beagle puppy, an Anatolian puppy and two German Shepherds. The Intermediate class has two Golden Retrievers, one Labrador Retriever, and one German Shepherd.

Charlene is planning on continuing to work with interested students throughout the summer when she is available. Contact her ([crdslabs@yahoo.com](mailto:crdslabs@yahoo.com)) to find out where and when these sessions will take place.