

THE RETRIEVER BELIEVER

Newsletter of the Puget Sound Labrador Retriever Association

Volume 21, Number 4, April 2004



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WHY VOLUNTEER?

In the last newsletter and in this one, we call upon our members to help with our spring hunt test on May 1 and 2. For particulars, see Cindy Meyer's article on page three. To heighten your interest in volunteering, I thought I would mention the top ten reasons why you should volunteer.

10. You get a free lunch
9. You experience the great outdoors
8. You are in the company of nearly 300 Labradors and other retrievers
7. You get to shoot a shotgun loaded with blank shells
6. You get to use an automatic bird launcher called a winger and load it with dead ducks or pheasants
5. You get to meet new people
4. You don't need any special training
3. You save the club money
2. You get a front row seat to watch the amazing retrieving abilities of our great dogs
1. In addition to all of the above, you get to have a fun time

All kidding aside, we do need YOUR help. A hunt test needs an incredible number of volunteers to run smoothly. And when club members come out in sufficient numbers, we don't have to hire extra help. What this means in real terms is that if we can hold down the costs of our tests, we will have more money left over to fund things like genetic research on Labradors.

So please e-mail Cindy Meyer or me and offer some of your time. We will make every effort to see you have fun.

OF SPECIAL NOTE

Many thanks to Terrie Sato and her helpers responsible for the fun/training day last month. Club members pitched in to help other members learn more about field work and conformation handling. Many members later told us how much they appreciated the opportunity to work with their dogs. For some, it was their first exposure to birds, let alone live-shot flyers, so it was a new experience with sometimes happily unpredictable results.

Many of you who belong to the club's chat list have followed the story of Chance. Chance is a Chelons Lab bred by long-time member, Cheryl Collins. Much to Cheryl's horror, she discovered that Chance was soon to be sold at auction. Cheryl and also Sirinda Krueger leapt into action and with the cooperation of other Lab breeders in the midwest managed to rescue Chance. Chance came back to his northwest home, but is still struggling with health issues, so please keep him in your prayers.

I repeat the story of Chance, because it shows the devotion of breeders to their dogs and the willingness of the greater Labrador community to help when the call goes out. Thanks to Joy Windels who fostered Chance for a time after he returned to the northwest, and to everyone else who lent a hand to bring Chance home. We wish you well, Chance. --Ron

IMPORTANT DATES

April 10 5 Series Singles
May 1-2 PSLRA Spring
 HRT, Carlson's
May 8-9 RHRC Spring
 HRT, Pepper's
May 16 Tracking Test

Newsletter Information:

Publishing of an article or advertisement does not constitute endorsement or agreement by the PSLRA.

All submissions should be sent to:

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Submissions must be received by the editor by the 22nd of each month.

The Retriever Believer is published monthly by the Puget Sound Labrador Retriever Association in the interest of providing information and promoting the Labrador retriever. Non-member subscriptions are \$20/year. Contributions in the form of articles, letters or money are always welcome. Letters to the editor should not exceed one page of typeset in the newsletter. It is our goal to provide an open forum where members can present their views to the club. The editor and the board of directors reserve the right to decline publication of advertising and other material submitted for publication.

The Retriever Believer will publish brags (free) and Puppy Referral litter listings provided a club member owns either the sire or the dam and a \$10 listing fee has been paid to Puppy Referral. All litter listings and other advertising of litters must comply with the PSLRA Code of Ethics.

Membership in the PSLRA is open to anyone interested in Labrador retrievers. Annual dues are \$20 for individuals, \$25 for families. Junior memberships are \$10 (for a separate listing in the membership book and a separate newsletter). Please note that new members require the signature of two sponsors on the application form.

Requests for information, applications and/or payment of dues should be addressed to:

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club business

March Board Meeting Minutes

The regular March meeting of the Puget Sound Labrador Retriever Board of Directors was held on March 24, 2004, at Becky Jack's.

Minutes of the February meeting were approved as submitted via email.

Secretary's report: Correspondence received from AKC regarding approvals and arbitration language to be added to all premiums.

—New members welcomed to the club are: Fred & Cindy Valasky, Bellevue, Washington, sponsored by Barb and Don Ironside;

Jennifer Schmitke, junior member, Mesa, Washington, sponsored by Terry McFadden and Barb Ironside; Randy Norman, Snohomish, Washington, sponsored by Don and Barb Ironside.

—Acknowledgments: To Terrie Sato for organizing the very successful fun day, to Becky Jack and Sharon Edwards for the conformation handling practice, to Pat Murphy for offering birds in a crisis, to Liz Skillingstad for hauling all the equipment, to Doug Gallucci, Michael Carsley and Leif Carlson for gunning.

—More generally, to Becky Jack for hosting the Board meeting, to Gregg Mourges for negotiating a good ammunition price for the club, and to Corene Musga for all her work as Puppy Referral Chair.

Treasurer's report: We have a total of \$12,716.95 in cash, checking and savings, which includes \$2,297.94 in rescue savings.

Committee reports:

—*Fun/training day:* The birds cost more than last year and not all the people who participated went on to help others learn, which was one of our goals. On the other hand, a lot of people turned out who had a very good time with their dogs.

—*Specialty:* The online applications have been submitted and all the judges have been approved. The draft premium has been sent to the Superintendent and the premium will hopefully be mailed by June 1.

—*5 Series:* Kimberly reports everything is on track. We are piggy-backing our bird order on a field trial order.

—*Spring HRT:* Approval of judges received from AKC listed one judge incorrectly. AKC has been advised. Otherwise, everything is on track and entries are starting to come in.

—*Tracking Test:* Lee has mailed the premiums and reports no problems.

—*Puppy Referral:* Many thanks to Marlys for taking this on.

Old Business:

—*Club Merchandise:* After some discussion, a decision was made regarding the engraving of the judges' gifts. For some events we will engrave the name of the specific event, for some, *Event Judge 2004*.

—*Web page:* The web page is still inoperable and Marcy Johnson has agreed to get it up and running.

New Business:

—*Litter Listings:* Sirinda proposed including the Optigen marker test as an optional clearance to be reported in the litter listings in addition to the optional heart clearance reporting. The wording will be voted on next month.

—The suggestion was made that we should develop an article on puppy contracts for the newsletter.

—The date of the Christmas Party was changed from December 11 to December 4 so people who attend the December shows in Canada could attend. Terry and Karen Coulombe will be asked to chair. The Skills Center in Everett has been reserved.

Next Meeting April 28 at the Walkley's.



Editor's Corner

The club year is in full swing now with lots of activities scheduled. As activities increase, I am expecting more brags. Please be sure to send your brags directly to me so that I can publish them for all to see. Though I appreciate accomplishments shared on the chat list, it is too difficult to get the information I need from the casual style of list posting to include those brags in the newsletter. Please send your brag to my e-mail address or call me. Include your dog's full name and titles as well as your name, the date and location of the event, the accomplishment and any other pertinent information.

I want to thank Lee Foote for taking time from her busy schedule to share her tracking experiences with us. Lee's passion for her versatile Labradors is inspiring. I have been out in the field with my boys, only to look up and see a woman with "baby on board" and Labrador at the end of a tracking line marching through the grass and admired Lee's dedication to both sport and motherhood. Lee is chairing the May 16 tracking test. If you would like to see a tracking test in action and learn more about track laying, contact Lee and volunteer as a track layer.

A big thank you also to Franna Pitt who does an excellent job explaining several techniques for training agility weave poles. Franna is another club member who is passionate about her dogs and is involved in the many different venues offered to Labradors. By explaining more than one way to teach this exercise, Franna points out that the goal need not change even if the dog is having difficulty understanding the job. A change in technique may be all that is needed to teach your dog and accomplish your goal.

I am excited about some of the stories scheduled for upcoming newsletters. This club is filled with amazing human resources and wonderful dog tales. I appreciate the willingness of so many of you to share your stories.

Terrie

A Note from the Hunt Test Chair: Cindy Meyer

Hunt Test premiums are out and the Hunt Test will be under way before we all know it. I know everyone has a very busy life, and you might not think you can fit this into your schedules. But I'm asking everyone in the club to pitch in and help make our May 1 and 2 Hunt Test a fun event for all and especially for those who do most of the work. Burn out can happen fast so this year I'm trying my best to avoid it. There's a lot of hard work that needs to be done to make this event successful. We train—no experience is necessary.

We need volunteers for the following:

Marshals, Throwers, Poppers—16 years of age or over, Blind Planters, Winger Loader.

Stake Chairs—A Stake Chair is someone who comes to set up the night before and makes a list of all the necessary supplies. On the day the event the Stake Chair oversees and helps the judges all day. Stake Chairs also help to recruit volunteer helpers for his or her Stake. It's a very necessary job, and more than one person can do it.

Stake Chairs needed for: One Junior, One Senior, One Master.

Also needed are:

—A person to host the judges' dinner

—A traffic person at 7 a.m. sharp—needed in the morning only, both days

—People to stay around and help clean up on Sunday after the test

I know it seems like a BIG commitment but it sounds harder than it really is.

You can call me at 253-846-9583 (evenings, please—5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.) or email me at rockingmlabs@qwest.net

Any help is greatly appreciated. Thanks for your time. Can't wait to hear from you!!!!

HRT DATES

LOCAL EVENTS

April 10 PSLRA 5-Series, Greenleaf's
May 1-2 PSLRA Spring HRT, Carlson's
May 8-9 RHRC Spring HRT, Pepper's
June 19-20 RHRC 10 Series, Greenleaf's
June 26-27 Evergreen Golden Retriever Club HRT, Bob Pepper's
August 1 PSLRA Working Certificate, Whidbey Island, WA
August 7-8 RHRC Fall HRT, Pepper's
August 28-29 PSLRA Fall HRT, Pepper's

REGIONAL HUNT TESTS

April 3-4 Sand & Sage Retriever Club, Mesa, WA
April 10-11 Snake River Retriever Trial Club, Downey, ID
April 17-18 Idaho Retriever Club, Payette, ID
May 1-2 Eastern Idaho Retriever Club, Roberts, ID

May 15-16 Salem Retriever Trial Club, St. Louis Ponds, OR
May 22-23 Missouri Headwaters Gun Dog Club, Three Forks, MT
May 28-29 Oregon Hunting Retriever Club, Sauvie Island, OR
May 30-31 Oregon Hunting Retriever Club, Sauvie Island (back to back)
June 5-6 Western MT Retriever Club, Missoula, MT
June 12-13 Umpqua Valley Retriever Club, Glide, OR
June 19-20 Treasure State Retriever Club, Butte, MT
June 26-27 Missouri Headwaters Gun Dog Club, Butte Forks, MT
July 17-18 Salem Retriever Trial Club, St. Louis Ponds, OR

Online AKC event information can be found at:
<http://www.akc.org/dic/events/search/>

club business

Yahoo Group Notification Messages

Hello, PSLRA Members!

Since the new membership book came out, I have been doing some maintenance on the Yahoo Group that the club uses for notification messages. This is not the Chat List that many of you belong to. It is another Yahoo Group that is only for sending out bulletin board type messages or notices. Only the moderator (which is me) can send out messages, so no chatting allowed! When the board wants to notify everyone of an upcoming event or other special news item, they will request the moderator to send out an information message. Last year we sent out only 15 such messages! Here are some examples of the type of information that we relayed by email: reminders of club events, requests for assistance at these events, news worthy items that Lab owners or the dog community would be interested in, websites that offer something *special* for our members, and so on.

If any member does not want to receive these messages, Yahoo has a means to remove yourself from the Group or I would be happy to remove you if requested.

I have been checking the new 2004 membership data against the Yahoo Group and have found that some of you changed or added email addresses since last year. In addition, Yahoo occasionally puts an email account on 'bounced' status when they have a delivery problem of some sort. I have found that the easiest way for me to correct a bounced account or to change to a new email address is to delete out the old account and re-add the member. Unfortunately, this generates a new invitation! Sorry about this but please just follow the directions in the email. If you have questions, please contact me at 425-836-4601 or sirindakru@hotmail.com. Let me also remind you that you need to update any address, phone, or email changes with our membership chair, Joni Willing, at memberchair@amerion.com.
Sirinda Krueger

BRAGS

Little Miss Katie VII JH earned her Junior Hunter title in Oregon on March 14. Katie is owned and trained by Dixie Humble.

Willowridge's Free Cup of Cappuccino went Winners Dog and Best of Breed on March 21 at the Bremerton shows. He is co-owned by Greg Phillips and Andrew Welch. He is just seven months old and this was his first time shown.

On February 27 and 28, at the Lower Mainland CKC shows, seven-month-old **Cougar Creek Paint It Black** (Mick), was RWD and best puppy! Mick is bred by and loved by Cecilie Drege, Cougar Creek Labradors.

On February 27, at the Lower Mainland CKC show, seven-month-old **Cougar Creek Dixieland Jazz** (Dixie), was RWB! Dixie was bred by and is loved by Cecilie Drege, Cougar Creek Labradors.

The Bouncing Black Rocket is on a roll. **Harbortop Death By Chocolate WC CanCD**, (Bailee) earned the first leg of her AKC CD at the Peninsula Dog Fanciers show in Bremerton on March 21. Bailee is spoiled and owned by Heide Savidge. Bailee also earned her Canadian CD in three shows at Cloverdale on February 27, 28 and 29 at the age of 16 months.

Dusti, Intl CH Ms T's Dusti Winds Over Char-Don CGC, and her co-owner Jennifer Schmitke, took BJH both days at the SDLRC specialty from Open Junior. Dusti (CH Kai Den's Black Tie Affair WC x SR Ms T's Desert Wind Over Char-Don JH) also earned her Intl CH at the IABCA shows in Tucson in February, taking BOB one show and BOB BBE all three shows with one group 2 BBE and two group 3s BBE, shown for Terry McFadden by co-breeder/co-owner Janet Schoonover.

Rocking "M" Emily AX AXJ EAC EJC OGC NTC PI CGC Pet Partner completed her AXJ on February 8 and then had three first place Qs in Novice Preferred on February 28 and 29.

Rachel Elana AX MXJ EAC EAC-V EJC EJC-V-Outstanding NTC PI CGC Pet Partner earned her fourth MX leg on February 8 and another Excellent Jumpers leg on February 29. Rachel and Emily's teammates are Kate Schottman and Phyllis Miller.

Can. CH. Himoon Takes Twota Tango was WB, BOW, BOB at the PVDF show on March 20. Tango is trained, handled, and loved by Cecilie Drege, Cougar Creek Labradors.

At the March 14 San Joaquin Valley Lab Retriever Club Specialty in Turlock, California, **CH Blackwaters Nipntuck Cheerleader** was BOS under judge Michael Woods. At the same show, **Nipntuck Miss American Pie** was Best in Sweepstakes under judge Judy Davis. Both "Rah Rah" and "Apple" are owned by Becky Jack.

Linda Maffett's **Sunnydaze Supernatural**, (Smooth), was second in Open Black Bitch at SJVLRRC under judge Wendy McNaughton.

A junior brag from Jessica Harris. Jessica showed **Austlyn's Catchpen Jackpot** to WD and BOW for his second major under judge Houston Clark at the Bremerton shows. "Kicker" is the sire of her new Australian Cattle Dog puppy and is owned by the people that she co-owns her girl with. The exciting part of this win is that not only are these Jessica's first points in the states (a major!) but she and Kicker had just met that morning and she was sick with a fever over 101° at the time.



We give dogs time we can spare, space we can spare and love we can spare. And in return, dogs give us their all. It's the best deal man has ever made. —M. Acklam

Tripper Tracking Tales

by Lee Foote

Tracking is a leftover venue. I can't think of a single Labrador enthusiast who exclusively tracks with their dogs. It is also a unique venue. Unlike all the other areas in which we compete with our Labradors, in tracking the dog is truly the leader. The handler has to have a level of trust and sensitivity uncalled for in other activities. By asking the dog to take charge of the team and focusing on one of our dog's true talents, we are afforded a unique view of their scent-dominated world.

For all those who say that they don't have time for tracking, I can sympathize, but I would like to tell the tale of prepping Tripper for the PSLRA tracking test last year and hope that I can inspire at least one person to find the discipline to get their capable dog out and give it a job both human and dog will find exciting and enjoyable.

Tracking is an especially good venue for young dogs. Puppies are considered to gain great confidence from the experience of tracking even from a very young age. Because I am usually training alone, I start my own dogs from about the time that they can hold a sit stay for a minute, usually at about four or five months, while I lay a short track. All that is needed to begin tracking is a relatively clean field, an old leather glove, some stakes and some dedication.

My daughter Clarissa was born in August 2002, which means that when my Labrador puppy was seven months old, Tripper and the rest of the dogs in the household basically got shelved for a month while I adjusted to my new role as Mom. In the fall, when I started to get the dogs out to do field work, I made a point of finding a few extra minutes to lay beginning tracks for Tripper. Fortunately, most tracking training can actually be accomplished on one's own, so my

already very indulgent training partners didn't have to make any special effort to accommodate the early stages of her training. I trained just once or twice a week, but we made steady progress, and by December we were ready to consider getting certified (a formal okay from a tracking judge that says you aren't just



Lee Foote, her daughter Clarissa and Tessa all enjoy training.

going to waste space in a TD test). In January, I arranged to meet Dick Ashby out at High Bridge to give us the official thumbs up. Because I couldn't leave the baby, Clarissa came along on all our tracking sessions. I remember her dangling from the front carrier while Tripper and I worked the certification track. The three of us accomplished the track together with no difficulty. I was only to find out later that the experience prompted a little discussion among the local tracking judges. Would they allow such a passenger on an actual track? Was this double handling?

With our certification in hand, we were free to enter any of the upcoming spring tests. I knew the dog was ready to run a TD level track, so I immediately started to train for the next highest level. If I could get into a TD before May, I would have the possibility of having two candidates ready for the Labradors Preferred PSLRA TDX (Tracking Dog Excellent). Drawing into an all-breed TDX is notoriously

difficult because space requirements limit the number of tracks available. There are often four candidates for every TDX track offered. Simply getting into a test is almost half the battle.

At this point in the training program I was to be very fortunate. One of my field

training partners was interested in getting a TD on her Irish Water Spaniel. She needed me to motivate her to practice with her dog, and I really needed her as well. Eventually one needs to have someone else lay blind tracks—tracks that the handler doesn't know where they go. Christine had already laid more than her share of TDX tracks for me in training another dog, but she gamely laid longer and older tracks for Tripper.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to enter any of the local TD tests. Motivated as I was to maximize the opportunity

offered by PSLRA, I searched the AKC Events schedule to see if there was another test we might consider. We ended up packing Tripper in the car and taking her on a visit to family in California with the hope of getting lucky and drawing into a test the first week in April. It took some extra effort to fit everyone in the car, but we were fortunate to be the third drawn out of fourteen entries for three TD tracks.

We found conditions ideal when we got to the tracking test—cool, knee high, fog-dampened grass. Tripper was the last of the TD dogs to go, so we watched two steady, deliberate German Shepherds from San Diego pass and then were directed off down the road to show the Californians how sporting dogs work. (Tripper was the only non-herding dog in the 3TD/3TDX test.)

Speed is not necessarily favored in tracking. A steady, deliberate dog that misses nothing is preferred over a dog

Tracking continued on page 6

Tracking continued from page 5

that thrashes about with such speed as to skip articles or over run turns. Still, as in retrieving, it is difficult to deny that a dog that is “applying itself enthusiastically” to the task at hand is an assist. If the glove can be “rescued” sooner than later with equal accuracy, then it is difficult not to be impressed. Discouraging speed, either for accuracy reasons or simply for the well being of the handler can be tricky. High drive dogs often find heavy restraint on the line to be a form of discipline and some can get quite discouraged if they think they aren’t doing what you want. What is more, there are times when one really needs the dog to insist in no uncertain terms that the team is to go in one direction or another. A dog that has been actively discouraged from pulling might be reluctant to be assertive when it really has to take matters “into its own paws” and help the handler through a tough spot.

I was a little surprised at the dog that got out of the car to tackle our TD track—she didn’t seem the Tripper I was used to tracking. Because I always had the baby along, I had never run with Tripper on a track. As far as she knew tracking was done at a careful, non-baby jarring pace. Tripper was a tracking maniac that morning. She picked up the tracklayer’s scent on the gravel pad of the parking lot and dragged me to the start flag. I was faced with a real problem as the line whipped through my hands when I let her go. (I don’t even recall if I gave her the command to “go find”!) Was I going to slow down and risk discouraging her, or run with this wild thing? On that first leg it was clear Tripper was right on track, so I opted to go with her at her pace. Between the pregnancy and the new baby, I hadn’t run much of anywhere for the last year and I was genuinely hurting while we celebrated the speedy rescue of the poor lost glove. I think the judges were still standing back on the second leg when we found our prize. I don’t know exactly where they were, because I was sucking air into under worked lungs as fast as I could. The tracklayer was as delighted as could be at our competence. He reported with relief that he had flushed a deer just a half hour ago while at the first turn and it had run straight down the 110 yards of



Lee shown with Clarissa, Tripper and judges after completing the PSLRA TDX test last year.

the second leg and then continued on—as appealing a distraction as most dogs could encounter on a track. Fortunately, although Tripper did cast around at that turn more than any other, she never gave anyone any reason to doubt that she knew exactly what she was doing and where she was going. Even though they were quite a distance away, the spectators back at the headquarters could tell that all was well and that we had worked the TD with style. Not only with style, but with more than a little speed! Our official time for the nearly quarter mile track was two minutes. We left the tracking test early as we had other commitments, but I was later to hear that April day proved to be a true rarity in tracking. All six dogs, three TDs and three TDXs, passed!

With our TD in hand, we were free to enter the PSLRA TDX. With just over a month before the test, we didn’t have many opportunities to practice, but my tracking buddy continued to do her part to prep us for the big event. When Tripper was able to draw into the TDX, I had even more incentive to get in some special effort to get out just tracking, but a few days before the test Dick Ashby graciously offered to give us a final prep. It turned out to be the classic terrible dress rehearsal. In Tripper’s defense I will say that conditions were just awful. The wind was really blowing and effectively aged the track beyond its clock time. The two of us struggled to find much at all. I was more than a little embarrassed at the

thought of taking our show public. I went home feeling a little guilty for taking up a TDX slot with such a green dog.

The day of the test conditions were quite different from those for our “disasto” dress rehearsal. Once again, we were looking at tall, green, fog-dampened grass. With our last track still firm in my mind, however, I was feeling rather fatalistic and quite

insecure about our chances of passing. My resignation to our fate made it possible for me to enjoy the efforts of the TD dogs. Then the first TDX dog ran. When we spectators realized the team had taken a cross track and was going too far down it to save themselves, I had a sinking feeling. I had never really proofed Tripper on cross tracks. She had seen a few cross tracks in the course of our training, but since Tripper had shown very little interest in them, I was assuming that we were going to be all right on that challenge. There wasn’t too much I could do about that shortcoming, except to do my best not to encourage Tripper down any suspicious area. I was just going to have to try to keep my wits about me, keep up my end of the partnership and let the dog manage the scenting.

We were the last team of the day. Up to that point only one other Labrador had passed. The other sporting dogs present were threatening to outnumber the Labs at the victory picture! The start flag proved to be our biggest challenge. The judges sent us off towards the stake. I stopped shortly before the start stake and attempted to put on Tripper’s harness without taking her off leash. This is a maneuver I never practice as usually Tripper is off leash as we approach the start. Obviously, I should have practiced some, as it took me so long that the judges started to get worried as to why we had disappeared into the very tall grass and weren’t moving forward. My fumbling was aggravated by the fear that

my “very willing” dog was going to get loose on the track and we would be disqualified before we really started! We finally moved off into the sea of very tall grass and I picked up the scarf (article number one) that was waiting for us at the starting flag. Unlike the flash of her TD, Tripper worked her TDX track at a regular medium walk with a steady, confident pull. This was a much more appropriate pace for three-hour-old scent on a day that was starting to get warm now that the fog had burned off. TDX tracks are very demanding on a dog and require quite a bit of endurance and perseverance. It is considered wise to take water with you on the track so the team can take a break along the way. Of course, with every turn I feared that we might be taking a cross track, but Tripper just kept steadily tugging me along and I really didn’t have a choice but to go with her. We came across our second article (a check book cover) and I started to feel a little better. We marched through the edge of a swampy area that was more mud than grass and passed through a wire fence. Tripper plunged down towards a dike, and I was very grateful when she didn’t stop for a long swim, but just took a quick dip and then she informed me the track didn’t go that way (I didn’t have to leap the ditch) and we should be following the road to the right. The grass on the road was sparse, but Tripper continued to guide me down it. We had a scary moment when I feared we may have missed an article in some tall grass and I sweated a bit with some extra casting to decide what to do at a turn. Shortly thereafter, however, Tripper brought me a sock—our third article. Now all the intermediate articles were in hand and we were still going strong. It was only then that I started entertaining that we might actually pass this thing! The next two turns offered Tripper no difficulties and we moved confidently along. Twelve minutes after we had started with nearly a half mile of three-hour-old track behind us, Tripper stopped and started towards me with the coveted glove (article number four) in her mouth! The judges were beaming and asking to see all the articles so they could mark them as “present” before we risked losing them in our

celebration. Later I found out that we had been challenged with the cross tracks on the last two legs of our track. Tripper had given the first set just the slightest of nods and had completely ignored the second crossing of our track. Good Girl, Tripper!

Tripper proved to the world that she was, indeed, an excellent tracking dog and I had been blessed with a number of very happy coincidences that allowed us to achieve the two titles with what would be considered a very minimal investment in training. We were very, very fortunate that the stars (and a good many supportive friends and family including one very easy baby) all lined up for us to achieve this difficult title. While ours was a relatively unique accomplishment, our experience hopefully exemplifies how tracking can be effectively sandwiched in with other training and even while caring for a very young baby. There are always excuses for not taking five to 10 minutes here or there, but that is really all the dedication one needs to get started and enjoy some success in tracking. I find the activity some of the most stimulating and satisfying leftovers I have indulged in.

The Clutch Chronicles



March 20 was the PSLRA fun training day, and it was the most fun Clutch has had in all his eight months. Never before had he realized that there could be an entire day devoted to retrieving birds. Clutch enjoys training and it is easy to tap into his youthful enthusiasm. He knows that the phrase “let’s go dog training” means to run to the car. When he hears the word *bumper* his eyes light up and he dances impatiently in front of the bumper bag. Occasionally he has been lucky enough to get a *birdie*. However, now he knows that there are duck days. Though he got a sampling of birds from chukars, pigeons, pheasants and ducks, the ducks retrieved from the water were his favorite.

At the training day, he got to be the test dog to determine if the water mark was appropriate for a junior level dog. It was. He got some experience as a pick up dog, retrieving the bird if there was a youngster having difficulty with the water retrieve. He liked retrieving the ducks so much that I noticed he was becoming reluctant to come to heel with his bird. After all, if he brought the bird to me, I would take it from him. Thank goodness for his understanding of the whistle sit command. One blast from my whistle and he sat immediately allowing me to walk up and take the bird.

This training opportunity also gave Clutch his first experience with a live flyer. His first flyer flew away. This was a *no bird*. Not understanding that this bird was to be shot for him to retrieve, Clutch did not give me and the gunners the impatient glance and frustrated whine that I have come to expect from my more experienced dogs in this situation. The second bird was thrown low and shot. Clutch was released on his name. He charged out and abruptly stopped near the gun station but short of his mark. He had been caught in a pool of scent from previously shot birds. He searched frantically in this area, then widened his hunt. When he had circled to the wrong side of the gun station, I asked the gunners to help him. With expert help from the gun station, Clutch picked up his bird and brought it carefully back. I wondered if he had learned to trust his marking so I bought him another bird. This time he by passed the pool of scent and went straight to the bird. Good dog!

By the end of the day Clutch was ready to mark at any sound that indicated that a bird would be thrown. A duck call in the distance, the setting of a winger, the click of a gun was all that was needed for him to sit himself at my side and gaze off in the distance. Late that evening back at home the older dogs were curled up resting. They were content with their day’s work. Clutch was restless. He pressed his nose to the window staring out into the darkness, perhaps wondering if daylight would bring another duck day.

training thoughts

Beginning Weave Pole Training

by Franna Pitt

So, you've got a Master Agility Champion hopeful, or maybe just want to get a Novice Agility title on your Labrador couch potato. One of the obstacles that takes the most time to train, and is the least intuitive to dogs, is the Weave Poles. While agility competition has very specific performance standards for weaving, it is a skill that can be extended to weaving around trees, bushes, chairs, people, etc. Amaze your friends and family with how smart your dog is by weaving between your legs as you walk (don't fall!). This article covers different ways to begin training the competition style of weaving.

What are weave poles and how does a dog perform them? In AKC agility trials, the weave poles are a set of 6 to 12 upright poles mounted to a base. The poles are one to one and one quarter inches in diameter, at least 36 inches tall, and are spaced 20 to 24 inches apart. They are somewhat flexible, but not so flexible that a dog can plow straight through without noticeably weaving. The dog must begin by entering the space between pole one and two from the right, and pass pole two on the left, three on the right, etc.

In the AKC Novice Agility classes, there will be one set of six weave poles. Most weaving mistakes aren't counted in Novice, as long as the dog weaves properly through all six, doesn't back weave (minus 5), and doesn't make contact with the handler (minus 10 and NQ).

Where to start?

There are almost as many methods to train weaving as there are trainers. Recently, a whole issue of *Clean Run Magazine* (Vol. 9, No. 9, September, 2003) was devoted to discussing many different methods of weave pole training. Even if one of your goals is to be competitive at top levels of agility, any one of the methods will probably work fine for you and your dog.

Most of the methods can be divided into two different styles: 1) modifying the poles so that it is easy for the dog to go between them,



Clover races through the weave poles.



Figure 1—Penny in the channel, wide spaced on the left, narrower on the right.



Figure 2 – Kiss coming through the vee. Notice how she's single stepping between poles.

then gradually moving the poles into proper position or 2) blocking the dog's path so that it must weave correctly and ultimately removing the blockade. I've recently been very happy with a third style—clicker training—and will discuss that method next month.

Modifying the poles

These methods usually require special equipment, although, if you're just beginning, I recommend stick-in-the-ground poles, which are the most versatile and least expensive (PVC electric fence posts at the Feed Store, about \$2 each) but also take the most time to set up and often have to be reset during a training session. Also, be aware that most parks have such a hard base under the grass that it is difficult to stick the spike end in the ground!

In the *Channel* method, shown in Figure 1, two sets of poles (one with odd numbered poles, one with even numbered poles) are set up parallel to each other, wide enough apart that the dog can easily pass between them without weaving at all. It is easiest to start with two people, one at each end, both with treats. One holds the dog at

the entrance to the channel, the other calls the dog through and rewards for correct performance. As the dog gets confident running through the channel, the width of the channel is gradually narrowed until the dog has to start moving just a little

to get past the poles. Continue to narrow the channel more and more, gradually transitioning to a single set of poles. This method has the advantage of keeping the poles upright while the dog maintains speed. The disadvantages of this method are needing two people to start and additional equipment, as well as the ease with which the dog can leave the channel. Also, it is sometimes difficult for the dog to make the transition to the weaving motion.

With the *Vee* or *Weave-O-Matic* method, shown in Figure 2, a set of poles that can be adjusted to multiple angles from vertical is used. To start, the poles are set up to make a wide vee channel for the dog to run through, sometimes even laying flat

on the ground on opposite sides of the base. Otherwise, the method is very similar to the upright channel method. It is often difficult to get the dog started through the vee, since they have to negotiate the poles at the base with their feet, but they usually start learning the weaving motion earlier than with a straight channel and can be taught to single step through the poles early on. Then there are some dogs that learn to leap through the upper part of the vee instead of weaving (Clover!)—oh, well. Of course, you can combine the channel and vee methods, in many different ways, especially if you have stick in the ground poles.

Blocking the Dog

Blocking can be done with very little extra equipment. Blocking ranges from using a leash to guide the dog through the poles—usually with a treat in the leading hand—to using guide wires or pieces of fencing to define the dog's path through the poles. In Figure 3, Lonie demonstrates going between the poles and an X-Pen blockade. These methods were among the first used by trainers and are still quite useful. However, many dogs seem to regard the “naked” poles as an entirely different obstacle once the guides are removed. As with all the other methods, dogs are encouraged and rewarded for correct performances and mistakes are ignored. Always (!) end on a success for the dog.



Figure 3 – Lonie starts in the blocked poles. The X-Pen blocks her path out of the poles and guides her to the proper opening. The near side blocking has been removed for photo clarity.

In the next issue, we'll discuss clicker training. If you have questions about the methods we've already covered, feel free to email (preferred) or call. Good luck and have fun weaving!

Franna Pitt - frannap@everranch.com with help from:

Dave Lawniczak

Dave's Pretty Penny, CDX, JH, OA, OAJ, AJP, MXP, NAC, WC, CGC

Normandy Four Leaf Clover, CD, OA, AXJ, OAP, OJP, CGC, PP

Dave's Chocolate Kisses, CD, NAJ, CGC

Lonie, CD, CGC

For further information I recommend *Clean Run Magazine*, www.cleanrun.com, especially Vol. 9, No. 9 (September, 2003), and Vol. 9, No. 4 (April, 2003); and www.agilityability.com/weave_poles.htm, just one of many sites on the internet.

MEMBERSHIP

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PSLRA Newsletter Input: LIST OF LITTERS BORN OR EXPECTED AS OF 4/5/04 that conform to the P.S.L.R.A. Code of Ethics. Information is as submitted by owners and provided as a service to the public. Listings of litters are in no way an endorsement by P.S.L.R.A. of any litter or any one litter over another. Litters are removed from the list after 3 mos.

To publish **LITTER LISTINGS** in the newsletter, the following information **must be available**

- Elbows and hips must be certified on both the sire and dam. Dogs and bitches whelped before 5/1/87 are exempt from elbow clearance requirements and will be marked OFEL N/A. Prelims are not acceptable! The board has recently agreed to accept PennHip clearances that score in the 50th percentile or higher, passing Wind-Morgan clearances, and clearances from the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) in Canada. Female Labradors (bitches) with a Wind-Morgan, Penn Hip, or OVC clearance must not be bred before the age of 20 months, or 24 months with an OFA clearance. Male Labradors (dogs) with a Wind-Morgan, Penn Hip or OVC clearance must not be bred before the age of 12 months, or 24 months with an OFA clearance.
 - Eye clearances on both parents annually. After the dog's examination at age 10, annual examinations are no longer necessary.
 - Heart clearances will be included in the listing at the discretion of the breeder
 - A PSLRA member must own either the sire or the dam and must submit the listing for a non-member.
 - **Please contact Marlys Swanson if you need a Litter Listing form, to be used for ALL litters.**
 - All Breeders must update their litters each week with Marlys Swanson via email (marlyss982@aol.com) as to the sex and color of puppies you have sold. The listing will be deleted after 3 months from the first litter listing date unless she hears from you.
1. Mail the completed form and a check for \$10 (operating expenses for Breeder Listing and Puppy Referral Programs) to: **Marlys Swanson, 3512 – 93rd Place NE, Marysville, WA 98270.**
 2. Your litter notice will appear in the next PSLRA newsletter **if** it conforms to the Code of Ethics.
 3. If you know that the Litter Listing and the Puppy Referral programs have helped you sell your puppies, **please send a donation to PSLRA** (c/o Marlys Swanson) to show your appreciation. These donations will all be used for Lab Rescue.

Litter Born 12/01/03 1BF Available)

Sire: Lor-Al's Direct From Tantara
OFA 24G, OFEL 25, CERF 6/13/03
Dam: Blackwaters Bella Donna
OFA 24G, OFEL 24, ACVO 11/15/03
Litter: 1Ym, 1BM, 2YF, 1BF
Contact: Laura Steward DVM (360) 876-6199
Email: cimarronlabs@earthlinknet
(Listed 2/5/04;3/5) Port Orchard, WA

Litter Born 2/02/04 (2BM Available)

Sire: CH Langshotts Gale Force from Kim Valley
OFA 27G, OFEL 25, CERF 9/13/03
Dam: Orions Star Over Blackthorn
OFA 25F, OFEL 25, ACVO 8/07/03
Litter: All Blacks Expected
Contact: Vicky Hoskinson (360) 856-0649
Email: cameolabs@comcast.net
(Listed 2/4/03;3/5) Sedro Woolley, WA

Litter Born 2/14/04 (1YM Available)

Sire: CH Lubberline Martingale
OFA 25G, OFEL 25, ACVO 6/21/03
Dam: Int.CH Cameo's West Side Story
OFA 24G, OFEL 24, ACVO 8/07/03
Heart Cleared 10/06/02
Litter: All Yellows Expected
Contact: Vicky Hoskinson (360) 856-0649
Email: cameolabs@comcast.net
(Listed 2/4/03;3/5) Sedro Woolley, WA

Litter Expected 4/19/04

Sire: Am/CanCH Sharay's Jeremiah CD
OFA 24G, OFEL 24, CERF 10/19/03
Dam: CanCH Himoon Poet Laureate CGC
OFA 24G, OFEL 24, ACVO 1/24/04
Contact: Cecilie Drege (360) 435-0456
Email: cougarcreeklabs@peoplepc.com
Listed 3/5/04 Arlington, WA

Y & B Expected

Litter Born 2/01/04

Sire: Int'l CH Hiltonhall's Rainbow Warrior
OFA 24E, OFEL 24, CERF 10/19/03
Dam: Willowmarsh Autumns Gold Kya
OFA 27G, OFEL 27, AVCO 2/16/04
Litter: 4YM
Contact: Bruce & Laura Sines (360)966-5242 or
(360)527-7029 (Pager)
Email: thesines@juno.com
(Listed 3/07/04, 3/20/04) Everson, WA

(2YM Available)

Litter Born 2/20/04

Sire: Interlochen High Ho Silver
OFA 24G, OFEL 28, CERF 4/28/03
Dam: Sisco Systems
OFA 24E, OFEL 24, ACVO 10/2/03
Litter: 6 YM, 5 YF
Contact: Angela Ernsdorff
Email: aslan19@msn.com
Listed 3/21/04

(4 YM, 1 YF Available)

Litter Due: 5/1/04 (Y & B Expected)

Sire: FC AFC Sun Valley Nugget
OFA 26G, OFEL 59, CERF 11/21/03
Dam: Rociing "M" Diamante Jaune
OFA 27G, OFEL 27, AVCO 2/15/04
Litter: Yellows and Blacks expected
Contact: Cindy & Bryant Meyer
Email: rockingmlabs@qwest.net
(Listed 3/21/04) Spanaway, WA

Litter Due: 4/7/04 (Y & B Expected)

Sire: Int'l CH Harbortop Lord of the Seas WC JH
OFA 24G, OFEL 24, CERF 10/19/03
Heart cleared 2/24/01
Dam: Redwick Cat Dancer at Snoline WC
OFA 24G, OFEL 24, AVCO 2/5/03
Litter: Yellows and Blacks expected
Contact: Brandy Burton-Tarantino
Email: snoline@eskimo.com
(Listed 3/23/04) Arlington, WA



**OTHER DOGS THAT A BREEDER HAS
DECIDED TO PLACE**

(Note) Owners of all dogs that are listed here have filled out and signed a PSLRA "Listing Form" disclosing to perspective buyers any known health and/or temperament issues and are on file with the Breeder Listing Chairperson.

These dogs are usually well socialized, frequently have some training, and are very desirable as companions. These dogs may not meet either owner's requirements for show or field performance or the code of ethics for breeding. Prospective buyers are encouraged to ask whether these older dogs have acceptable clearances on eyes, hips, and elbows and the reason why the dog is being placed. The listing of other dogs in no way constitutes an endorsement by P.S.L.R.A. Price will vary.

14 Month Black Female (intact)

Chelons Sleepless Knight X Chelons Morning Mist

She is very active, will make a great agility, obedience or hunting companion. She is crate trained. She loves to be around people, have had her hunting and does a really nice job. She has some obedience training. Contact: Vicki Barnhart (360)263-3232 or email vbarnhart@TDS.net.

Listed 04/05/04

LaCenter, WA

Training Day Report

The March 20 training day at Greenleaf's Farm was attended by approximately 50 PSLRA members. The weather was perfect, sunny and warm. Approximately 60 live birds, chukars and pigeons, were used. The grounds was divided into several training stations. A ring was set up for the conformation practice. An area was available for introducing dogs to birds, wingers were set up for water marks and a flyer station was placed in the open field. Though a little slow to get started, things quickly kicked into action once the birds arrived.

We had three gunners and some terrific bird tossers out at the flyer station. The dogs approached the line from a holding blind. This gave both dogs and handlers practice for one of the most difficult skills needed in a hunt test, control going to the line and patience waiting for a turn. A marshall kept the line to the flyer going smoothly and helped insure that everyone

got their turn. Many thanks to Doug Gallucci, Mike Carsley and Lief Carlson for devoting the day to gunning. Special thanks to Chris Carlson and Mark Levine for their bird tossing skills.

Liz Skillingstad made the long drive north to bring the equipment from the field trailer for the club use. She also devoted her entire day to keeping the wingers running and helping to introduce new members to job opportunities available at a hunt event. She was indispensable to making the day a success. Ron Perry gave a gun safety talk in his introduction to popper guns. He also helped with winger instruction and made sure enough birds were available. Nina Mann helped guide members through the process of introducing their dogs to birds.

Thank you to Sharon Edwards, Becky Jack, Sirinda Krueger and Lucy Logan-Isaacson for the conformation ring

instruction. The ring was filled with members picking up handling suggestions and practicing with their dogs. Apparently the gun shots and duck calls kept these young dogs alert and looking sharp in the ring!

As is always the case, lessons have been learned to help the next fun day run even better. Ideally, knowledgeable volunteers would be placed at each training station to help guide the new members when training challenges appeared. More dead ducks would be preferable for introducing the dogs to birds and for water retrieves. Each person who signed up for a bird should also then be signed up to work a position such as a winger station. Training days are about helping each other train. Thank you to all of those who jumped in and both trained and worked to make the day a success. We all had a great time!



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Hunt Test--May 1 & 2 at Carlson's Farm, Fall City

