

Tanana Valley Kennel Club

2017 Winter Newsletter

The Holiday Season is over and now we need to figure out how to get through the rest of our lengthy winter. Our dogs are so full of energy and the weather is cold. How do we keep them entertained and exercised? Also, how do we get those booties to stay on?

All items in this newsletter are a result of member interest and contributions. I facilitate the creation of this member newsletter – so please send me your comments, brags, dog

health interests and all other dog and club related information and I will do my best to get it into print. Remember that items of interest that are not original to you must be reproducible based on copyright permissions. I can assist in getting permission, but only you know what interests you! Be sure to let me know!!

TVKC announces a Behavior Adjustment Seminar (BAT) with Grisha Stewart on February 24-25, 2017. <http://grishastewart.com/>

Details of place, time and cost will come!

Tanana Valley Kennel Club classes will be starting in March and are scheduled for eight weeks on Saturdays. Stay tuned for exact class dates, topics- and times!

Contact Elizabeth Pollen, eapollen@hotmail.com.

Local Special Events of Interest to Our Dog Community

*All Good Dogs Training Center – ACT 1 and ACT 2 Trial
<http://www.akc.org/events/agility/act-program/>*

January 15, 2017



Tracking ABC's

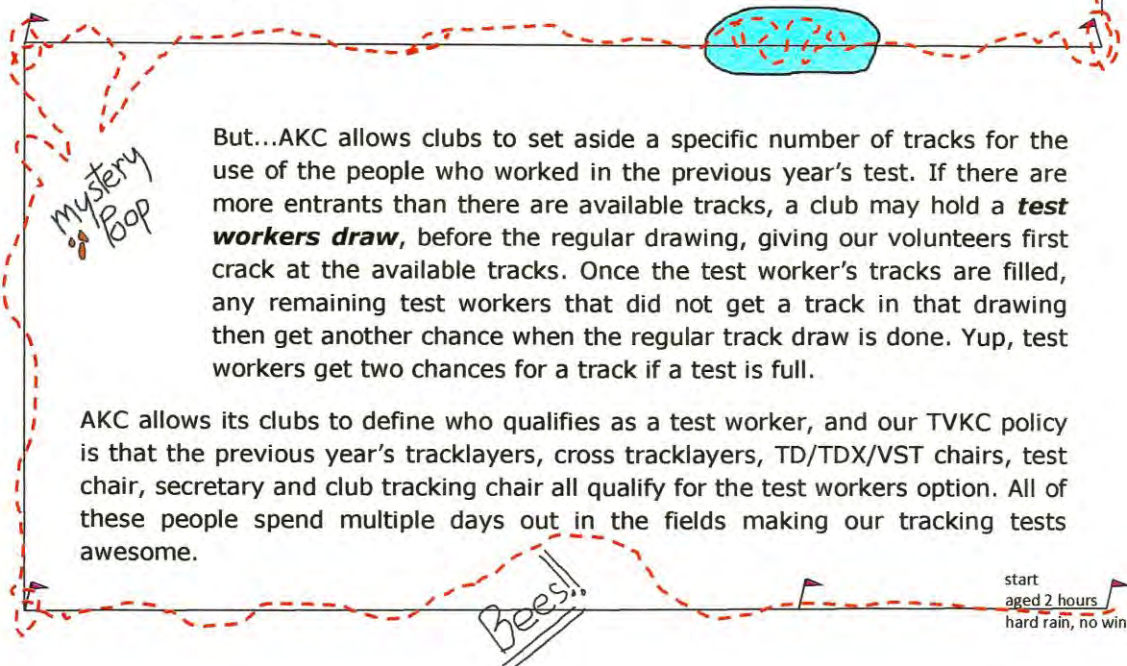
Volunteering and the Test Worker's Option
Lee A. Wood

All of our club's volunteers are special, but the folks that work the tracking tests are a cut above all others. TVKC holds 3 tests in August each year and it takes 2 days to hold any one test; a day of laying the initial tracks with the judges, and then re-laying the tracks the day of the actual test. Rain or shine, our volunteers are often out in the fields before the crack of dawn.

Because of the hard work involved, our volunteers get an extra bonus towards the next year's test, they get first crack at the available tracks. Why is this important? It's important because the number of tracks AKC allows for each test is limited. Laying tracks is physically demanding and AKC caps the number of testing tracks a judge may lay in a day. If we have 2 judges, they are limited to laying 12 TD, 6 TDX or 8 VST tracks in a day. Since there are only a limited number of tracks in a test, when you enter there is not a guarantee that you will get a track. If there are more entries than available tracks, a random draw is held to fill the number of tracks available; everybody else is placed on a waiting list in case someone drops out.

But...AKC allows clubs to set aside a specific number of tracks for the use of the people who worked in the previous year's test. If there are more entrants than there are available tracks, a club may hold a **test workers draw**, before the regular drawing, giving our volunteers first crack at the available tracks. Once the test worker's tracks are filled, any remaining test workers that did not get a track in that drawing then get another chance when the regular track draw is done. Yup, test workers get two chances for a track if a test is full.

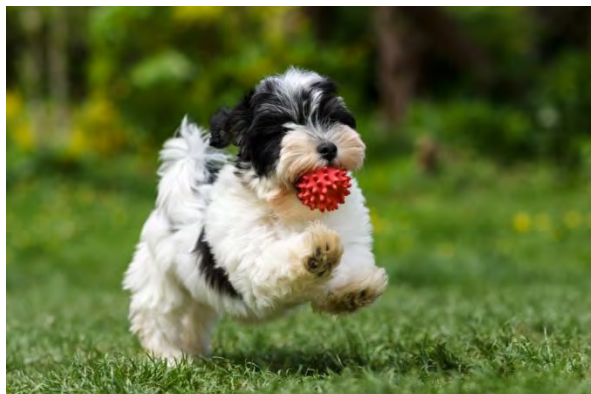
AKC allows its clubs to define who qualifies as a test worker, and our TVKC policy is that the previous year's tracklayers, cross tracklayers, TD/TDX/VST chairs, test chair, secretary and club tracking chair all qualify for the test workers option. All of these people spend multiple days out in the fields making our tracking tests awesome.



AKC Dog Training Tricks

Fun, Cognitive Training Games For Dogs

Penny Leigh | June 24, 2016



Training your dog should be fun and include skill building and relationship building, in addition to teaching basic obedience commands. There are many educational, but also entertaining games that you can play with your dogs to enhance their "IQ" potential. Here are three fun ones that work on attention, communication and reasoning from the AKC GoodDog!

Attention:



Teach your dog to give you eye contact. Hold a treat to your forehead or by your eye and ask

your dog to look at you. Gradually fade the food to use a hand signal and a verbal command to ask your dog to look at you. Not only does this basic behavior help you get your dog's attention when he is distracted, but eye contact also triggers a release of oxytocin in both you and your dog. Oxytocin is the hormone for attachment between parent and child. Scientists call these "eye hugs."

Communication:



The "Hot & Cold" game uses verbal communication and vocal tone to help your dog find a hidden treat or toy. Hide a treat when your dog is not looking. Use a calm tone for colder if your dog moves away from the hidden treat. Use a more excited tone for "hotter" as your dog gets closer to the hidden treat. This game increases listening skills. It also helps build the special "language" shared by you and your dog.

Reasoning:**Treat On A String**

Let your dog figure out how to pull a string to get a treat. Tie a ribbon or small rope to a treat and hide it under a small platform or piece of furniture, far enough back he cannot reach the treat with his mouth or paw. Encourage your dog to investigate and see how long it takes for him to tug on the string to retrieve the treat. Reasoning skills are essential for developing puppies and older dogs alike. Successful problem solving is also a big confidence booster.

Nesting Bowls Of Treats

Use plastic storage bowls that nest inside each other, either ones that are the same size or ones that go from large to smaller. Place a treat in the bottom container, then place the second container on top. Continue layering treats and containers. Include one treat in the top, open container to get your dog started. Be sure to do this under supervision so your dog does not try to eat the plastic containers. You can work up in level to make this more difficult, by adding more containers as your dog figures out each level.

Treats-In-A-Bottle

For this game, use plastic soda bottles, a metal rod, and a wooden base to create treats-in-a-bottle. Put three soda bottles through the metal rod and secure in the wooden base. Put treats in two of the bottles and watch your dog try to get the treats from the bottles.

(<http://www.akc.org/content/dog-training/articles/fun-cognitive-training-games-for-dogs/>)

The Alaska Skijoring & Pulk Association (ASPA)

was founded in 1987 as a non-profit organization to "*Promote the sport of skijoring in Alaska; Coordinate recreation activities involving skijoring; Provide ongoing training and education on skijoring and Nordic-style dog mushing; Conduct skijoring and pulk races; Promote responsible dog ownership and the humane treatment of dogs.*"

Each season, the club organizes 10- 20 events in the Alaskan Interior, including how-to clinics, fun races, competitive races, recreational tours, and the occasional social gathering. The club is run by a volunteer board of directors, and all events are coordinated by volunteers.

In addition, the club grooms approximately 4 miles of trails on The North Star Golf Course and approximately 3.5 miles of trails at Creamers' Field. All grooming work is done by volunteers but the club does accept donations to cover the costs of maintaining the grooming equipment & gasoline.

The club also encourages event participants & those who want to support skijoring activities to become club members by paying annual membership dues (\$20/person or \$30/family). There are usually 100-150 current members each season. ASPA also accepts sponsorship donations from local business, often goods that business sells, which are then used as prizes for races.

The club produces a monthly newsletter with entertaining trivia, training tips, race results, photos and other information.



Sara Elzey with Dylan, Faero and Kate. Photo by Bud Marschner

With a low key fun atmosphere Fun Races are usually at Creamer's or North Star trails, with distances from 1/2 to 10 miles depending on trail conditions & participant interest. Races are allowed 1, 2 or 3 dogs. At Fun Races, prizes are passed out by random drawings rather than for placing, although race times are tracked & reported.

Competitive races still offer a fun atmosphere, but prizes are awarded by place and points may be calculated for National Championship rankings and standardized rules that govern these types of competitions are followed.

Trail tours can be on any trail in the greater Fairbanks area. They are lead by someone familiar with that trail and allow folks to explore trails they may not otherwise know about or find.

Training clinics differ in scope depending on the time of year & the instructor, but can be simple passing practice, waxing or equipment tips, full-on "how-to info" for beginners or skiing instruction. To find out the next scheduled event checkout the website www.alaskaskijoring.org, or call the recorded hotline 907-457-5456, or become a member and join the email list. Also, trail grooming reports are usually sent to the email list.



Sara Elzey with Dylan, Faero and Kate. Photo by Bud Marschner

I am proud to have been an ASPA member since around 1994 or 1995. I have found it to be a warm & welcoming group of people who come together for fun & competition throughout the winter season, brought together by their love of

the great Alaskan outdoors & their dogs. I encourage new comers to the sport of skijoring and those who have done for years but never come to an event to check us out!

I look forward to seeing you on the trails!

Sara Elzey
Dylan, Faero, Kate, Daria, and Katrina

Sharing Sara's Personal Story

FROM SKIJORING TO AGILITY AND BACK AGAIN by Sara Elzey

I started skijoring over 20 years ago because I had adopted an Alaskan Husky from the shelter and I could not teach him not to pull on the leash. So I dusted off my skis from high school and went to the Alaska Skijoring & Pulk Association's annual Beginners' Clinic. WOW! It was as if Shadow had been skijoring his whole life, he was a natural & loved it, and I was hooked. I had always disliked skiing because it was so much effort for so little progress, but a dog made all the difference! We could go much farther, much faster, and I always had enthusiastic company!

I tried my first race and we got 3rd place, a week later 1st place. But I noticed that many of the other skijorers had 2 or 3 dogs which looked like even more fun. It took some persuading, but I convinced my husband (who doesn't ski) to take on two more huskies, Myst & Ayla. We had so much fun together! Skijoring in the winter, running & hiking in the summer, it was bliss.

But, as all dog owners know, time runs by quickly, and all too soon, Shadow & Myst were ready for retirement. Ayla was much younger, so for a few years I shared dogs with two musher friends and continued to skijor with them and their dogs. When it came time for me to get a new dog, I decided to try a German Pointer/Husky mix (better for spring racing) named Dylan. She was skinny & muscular and SUPER fast loose running and well-behaved in the house. I thought we were set. But when winter came, Dylan decided that she really wasn't all that keen on skijoring - she would quit on me & literally refuse to go. This was very stressful for any dog that I ran with her (except maybe Ayla). I didn't know what to do.

When I adopt a dog, they become mine for life, but what was I going to do with a dog that wouldn't skijor!?!

I struggled through the winter and when spring came, a friend of mine suggested I go to a "socialization" class with Dylan. I had never taken a dog class & quite frankly was very skeptical, but I was willing to try anything. So Dylan & Ayla & I went. Ayla HATED it. But Dylan loved it! Her favorite part was when we got to climb on stuff. Hmmm.

Another friend suggested I try agility. We joined a class & Dylan really loved it! And she was pretty good at it too. Nothing scared her & she really focused & concentrated on what I was asking her to do. In fact, she enjoyed it far more than I did. I actually found it rather boring! But I made a pact with her - if I would go to agility class with her every week then she had to skijor with me. It worked. She never quit on me again! And I teamed up with a new musher friend to share dogs and started racing again. At one point I was racing & training 12 dogs! But the most amazing part was that my main/top racing team included Dylan and two other dogs. What a transformation!

And, I started to really enjoy agility too. So I figured why not try it with my other dogs? Soon Faero & Kate joined Dylan at classes & then Daria & Katrina. Kate who was SUPER shy & neurotic when she came to me (having had at least 6 different owners in the first 4 years of her life) totally blossomed! It took patience & time but she loves agility too! Faero would rather socialize and Daria is still very uncertain but both of them have greatly benefited from taking agility classes too. In fact this last summer & fall I had all 4 of them in the TVKC agility trials. Our progress is slow & probably none of them will live long enough to earn a title in Excellent, but we are all having so much fun & learning new things. Katrina still thinks that agility is stressful when there are other people or dogs around, but she enjoys learning new things in a quieter environment, so maybe her time will still come. And as retirement looms for this group of dogs, I find myself thinking about how my next dog should be on that can do agility AND skijor.



Essential Alaska Gear – Dog Booties by Magali Philip and Wendy Uzzell

Over the years dog owners could probably buy a new car for the price of the booties their dogs have lost! Magali Philip took a few minutes to demonstrate the proper way to fit a bootie to your dog – AND – keep it on. Magali has over twenty years of dog mushing experience and offers these helpful hints as a courtesy. Always use care and common sense when gearing up your dog for winter footwear.

Booties come in three basic sizes, small, medium and large. There is usually a color coding to the bootie sizes, one brand may have colored Velcro, and another brand coding is in the color of the material used. Make sure you understand the sizing information when you decide to purchase. Also, some folk don't realize that the hind feet are usually smaller than the front feet. This means you might need to buy different sizes so be sure to check.

Here is how to fit your dog correctly – and you should be able to bring the dogs into the local stores with you to perform these steps to get a good fit.

1.

Sizing booties under your dog's foot.



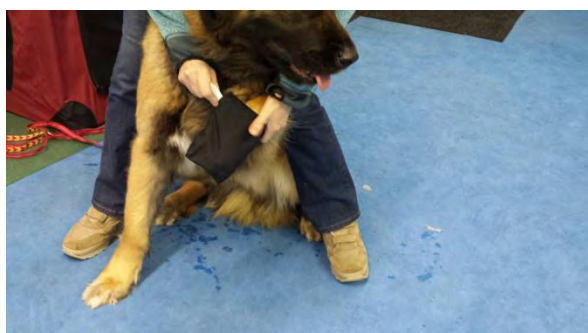
2.



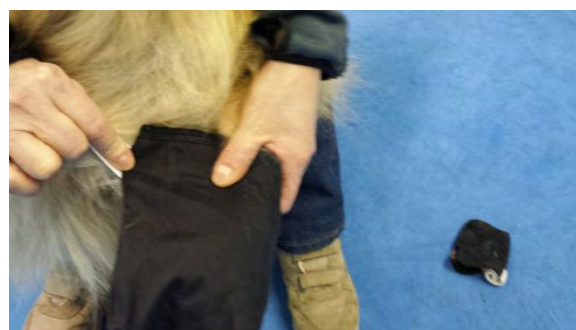
The bootie should be just slightly bigger than your dog's paw.

3.

Place bootie over the foot until the dog's toes touch the bottom end of the bootie.



4.



Hold the dog's paw under the wrist. The same hand holds the bootie, and use the thumb to help fold bootie. With your other hand, hold on to Velcro and pull tight.

5. Make a nice clean fold and attach Velcro around dog's wrist. Keep it tight. Do not worry that you will have it too tight, you have your thumb in there to guarantee blood flow.



6.



Closer look on how to place the thumb.

7.

If booties are too big (a common mistake) it will create rubbing. When it is cold and used for a long time it will remove fur and leave bare skin.



Magali Phillips cannot be held responsible for any injuries or losses of gear based on this tutorial. Please use common sense and keep safety in mind.



SKIJORING WITH A NON-HUSKY – BASIC KNOWLEDGE TO KNOW

Magali Philip

Well it can be challenging but can be done so you and your furry friend enjoy winter.

With my Leonberger, the essential thing to teach her (to a husky too) is to stay in front and not come around and get tangled in the skis and the poles.



Lot of patience and encouragement is needed, especially when your dog is in front and moving forward. Huskies have it in their genes to pull,

but other breeds may pull for a while then stop, or they won't pull at all. So, if they go at your speed in front of you, just learn to ski while your dog does not really pull.

Get a harness in a local pet/mushing store and a skijor line or leash with a bungee. A skijor belt is great if you get serious at it otherwise just tie the skijor line or leash with bungee around your waist with another regular belt.

My Leonberger does not really pull except if the huskies are in front of her then she is in "chase" mode. But we still go together when there is no husky to chase and have lots of fun

Enjoy winter

Magali

