

DALMATIANS IN OBEDIENCE

by Cathy Murphy

Tracking had eight entries. Four entries were absent. The four Dalmatians taking part in the Tracking Test all passed. Mt. Bryton's Jaunty Ms. Marnie, owned by Stacy & Jerry Gies and W.J. Smith ran the track very nicely, earning her TD title at the tender age of six months and one week! That's about as young as you can do it, as the minimum age of six months is mandatory to enter any AKC event. Obviously this was her first attempt to pass Tracking. Many, many dogs do not make it the first time. Congratulations to a new Dalmatian TD! The other three Dals running successful tracks were Heiloh's Comely Cricket UDT, Prudence Sturh, owner, Hopi Kachina Tsu Ku TD, owned by Susan Olson, and Disney's Conscience Guides UDTX, owner Phil Gallagher.

With unused tracks available, Phil Gallagher asked to have his five mos. old Dalmatian puppy, Duquesne's Gros Ventre certified for Tracking. And she passed the certification Track very nicely. Looks like Phil will soon have another TD in the family. Way to go, Phil!

Another DCA Specialty is over. Too soon, it seemed. If you have been there you know how very SPECIAL it was. If you haven't been to your DCA Specialty yet, by all means try to attend one. That's the only way you'll really know how very SPECIAL your National Specialty is.

BITS AND PIECES: Carolyn Krause, owner/trainer of Cee Kay's Becky Thatcher UDTX writes she has a new puppy, a bitch named Paisley Poppycock. On August 7, 1989, she passed her tracking certification test at the age of TWELVE weeks!

Becky began her tracking training at the age of eight weeks and she had nineteen training sessions before her certification. Her certification track was 489 yards long with four turns. The track was forty minutes old. Becky says she's a bright little thing with a VERY good nose.

Becky explains for those readers who may not be familiar with tracking a certification track is exactly the same as a track in a TD test. Every TD entry must be accompanied by an AKC tracking judge's statement of certification. A dog must be six months old to enter a TD test but there is no such requirement for certification. She got her last Dal pup certified at seventeen weeks of age. Carolyn says she hopes that Poppy's certification at twelve weeks of age sets a new record for ANY breed.

I wouldn't be surprised if it did, but I can't say for all breeds. For Dals as far as I know that is definitely a record early age for tracking certification.

We know a puppy's brain is "hooked up" at seven weeks of age, and at that time a puppy is able to learn and retain what they learn. The ability to run a track for the TD successfully with only five weeks training certainly shows that puppy has an excellent nose and a talent for tracking, and also has a very good trainer.

Times have really changed with much new knowledge of the dog's mind. Years ago many people believed training should not begin until the dog was one year old! Then the age came down to six months! And there are still a few classes out there which won't take a dog until it's six months old. Too bad! Even the usual four-month age rule for starting a dog in a regular basic obedience class does not always hold. If you can find a puppy kindergarden class, that's great! But if you can't find such a class, by all means get that dog going at four months of age! And with some dogs, under four months doesn't hurt at all, depending on the dog and the instructor. Tracking is individual work, where a puppy can be worked very nicely at a very young age, therefore Tracking can be started almost as soon as a puppy can walk.