

# DALMATIANS IN OBEDIENCE

By Cathy Murphy

There are eight new Tracking Dogs for 1990. Tracking seems to be growing in popularity every year. Those who participate in this activity are extremely enthusiastic. This is one activity where the dog really has to do it, and there seems to be a very special pride in seeing your Dalmatian accomplish this title.

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Here's news on TDX (Tracking Dog Excellent). Darlene Chirolas writes she has lost count of how many TDX tests she entered Honeylane's Lava Spatter CDXTD in. Lava always ended up 6th or 12th or 16th on the alternate list. Most TDX tests only have 3 or 5 or 6 entries. (It does take a lot of ground to lay a TDX track, Ed.) In the ten years AKC has authorized TDX events about 737 dogs have gotten the title, and that breaks down to about 73 dogs per year, all breeds. Lava actually got into one test last year, she was third alternate and three withdrew giving her a chance. She did a good job but did not pass. At twelve and a half years her body has aged greatly and she just can't hack a TDX track anymore, though she will still track.

Darlene entered Honeylane's Mt. Fuji CDTD in his first TDX. Fuji is alternate No. 12. An so it goes. Yes, Darlene is trying for another TDX if she can get her dog into a test. Even Embers CDXTDX was third alternate at the test she finally got into and did pass. One dog had passed, so withdrew, another got sick (lame), and the third (sadly) had just died. What a way to get in! A friend of Darlene's has finally gotten her dog into a TDX test, the 25th she has tried to get into. Here's hoping that dog does it!

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Actually since the TDX came into being about 10 years ago, Dalmatians have earned 8 TDX's as of 1990. They are: Beautysweet Cindi UDTX, Sneak Preview UDTX, White Spirit of Ghostown CDXTDX, Ch. Hopi Kachina Mosairu II CDXTDX, Forever Embers CDXTDX, Cee Kay Becky Thatcher UDTX, Disneys Conscience Guides UDTX, and Ch. Hopi Kachina Indian Summer UDTX.

And now in 1991 we have ANOTHER Dalmatian TDX. And not just a TDX, though that is a really tough achievement. We now have the SECOND Dalmatian to be a breed Champion, a Utility titled Dalmatian, AND a Tracking Dog Excellent! Karen McDonnell and her Ch. Forrest Jillia O'Brogan UDTX passed the TDX in California this Spring. Karen tells us about it:

For the past seven years I had been dreaming about that day, the day Jill (Ch. Forrest Jilia O'Brogan UDTX) would pass at a TDX test and earn that elusive title. Many times I doubted whether the Lord would grant this desire; other times I wondered if Jill (as well as I) would be able to put everything together on the same track (in a test).

AND THEN SHE DID!

The Lord made us wait for a very special day when our friends in the San Francisco Bay Area could be present and involved in the test. The day was warm, in the low 70's, quite unusual for late February, even in California! This of course brought out the hikers, bird-watchers, dog-walkers (on-leash, please), and equestrians in large numbers.

We drew the fifth track and settled down for a long wait. About an hour or so before our track would be ready I started to walk my younger Dals (Jill's daughters). I was just dawdling along with the second one when the Test Secretary approached with the news that they were ready for me to start to the track. However, I was far from ready and hurriedly got everything together so we could set off. The park used for the test is quite hilly and steep in some parts and as the club had permission to have vehicles only in certain areas of the park, Jill and I had to walk quite a distance to the start of our track.

When we reached the judges (two are required to judge all tracking events) they allowed me to catch my breath. I had brought extra water for Jill and wet her down with nearly a gallon to try to keep her comfortable while she was working the track. When we were ready the judges pointed out the starting flag (at the top of another hill), wished us luck, and off we went. Jill started nicely and we headed down the first leg at a fast walk.

The cross-tracks were on the third and fifth legs of the track. Jill ignored the first set and checked out the second set and then came back to the original track and resumed tracking, which I was overjoyed to see as the cross-tracks had been the sole cause of her failures at the previous two tests this season. The second article (the first was at the starting flag as per the Regulations) was on the fourth leg. Jill retrieves the articles; actually she usually stops, looks at the article, then looks at me, and then retrieves it.

The first five legs of the track (more than half) were in fairly open, hilly grassland with two of the turns being at or under large oak (?) trees. The fifth turn was in the middle of a fallen oak tree. Jill took her time here, checking out the tree and all around it. She circled back to the in-coming leg and tracked into this obstacle again, picked up the next leg (I think she knew where it went all along but just wanted to do some checking and exploring). She then hopped up onto and over the trunk of the tree and proceeded with the next leg, leaving me to untangle the tracking line from all the twigs and branches (poor handling on my part). The next leg went down a very steep hill and then part way up the other side. Jill has leaned to wait for me, on command, in steep terrain so I do't lose my balance and fall. She may not like this intrusion but she always picks up the track again right away.

The next to last corner was just across a seldom-used dirt/gravel road in the grass along the road. Jill handled this well but I think she was fringe tracking (going from one edge of the scent pool to the other) on this leg. This caused her to initially miss the third article. I noticed it about the same time Jill broke off tracking and started to circle back to me. When she came to the article again she picked it up and brought it to me. She didn't seem to restart with her usual determination which caused me some concern until she made a bend in the track, crossed an equestrian path, and headed up an embankment to the main road

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(a very busy road). This caused me some mild panic as I thought she was tracking the tracklayer's exit route and had therefore missed the final article, which would be grounds for failure. She made the last turn, paralleling both the trail and the road, between them, She seemed to have problems on this leg as well, spending a few minutes circling around at one particular spot. While she was doing this, three or four equestrians suddenly appeared at a trail junction just ahead of us. They stopped and waited very patiently for Jill to finish her problem-solving and move on. Needless to say, I said a very heartfelt "Thank you" when I passed them. Fortunately Jill did not seem bothered or upset by their presence only a few yards away; I think she glanced at them and went on.

And then she stopped, lowered her head, and picked up the glove. I ran up to her and gave her a big hug. The judges and officials shouted for joy (which fortunately did not spook the horses) and they all ran up and congratulated us.

This track was 874 yards long and it took us 20 minutes to negotiate it. Jill was tired at the end but not exhausted. She really enjoys tracking and will still get to track for fun whenever possible. Looking back, it doesn't seem like so much work until I realize I have Jackie and Twinkle, and they haven't even started yet.....

Thank you Karen for the tale of Jill's Tracking Test. Tracking is growing by leaps and bounds, and from all reports those who become involved in tracking their Dals are extremely enthusiastic. We already have another Tracking Title for 1991 to report as well. Jeannine Navratil and her older Dal, Crossroads Salty Cinders UDTD earned her Tracking Title at Capitol Canine Training Club of Springfield, IL. Last March 10th. This was this Club's first Tracking Test, and they were so pleased they had a really good Test, out of eight dogs, only two failed to pass. Jeannine is now seriously considering going for the TDX with her younger Dalmatian, Rocky CDTD.

**TRACKING DOG (TD) TITLES**

DASH 'N DOTS FORREST EMBER TD (B)NT562122 .....	P. & C. Verzeano
BENJAMIN FRNAKLIN ADAIR CDXTD (D)NS772479 .....	E. & J. Dodson
CH. HONEYLANE'S TWINKLING LAVA CDXTD .....	S. A. Mazzella & D. Chirolas
(B)NS836214	
LIBBY'S FIREPLACE POPCORN CDXTD (B)NT172971 .....	E. Simendinger
TOUCHSTONE'S WINNING COLORS CDTD (B)NT362612 .....	J. Navratil
CENTURION CIERRA TD (B)NT536652 .....	E. Dodson & E.A. Lindhorst
HONEYLANE'S MT. FUJI CDTD (D)NS610492 .....	W. & J. Chirolas
DAISYDOT PURRFECT FOR PAISLEY TD (B)NT651498 .....	J. MacMillan & C. Krause