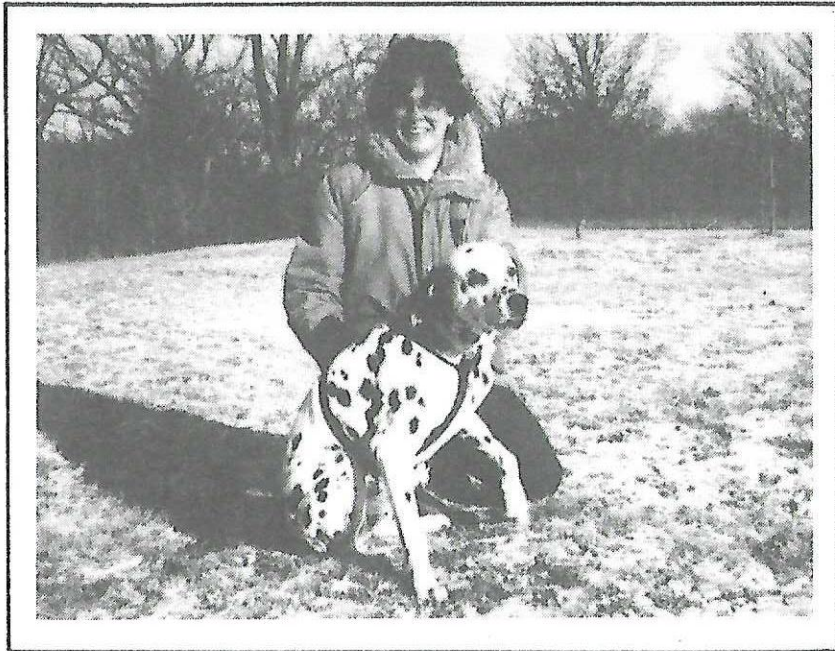


DALMATIANS IN OBEDIENCE

By Cathy Murphy

Five Tracking Titles (four TD's and one TDX) for Dalmatians have been published by the Gazette so far this year. Although that doesn't sound like many titles in this area for our breed, that is really a respectable number for Dalmatians, compared to the number of TD's and TDX's acquired by all breeds. According to Front and Finish, from June through December only 36 TDX's were realized for all breeds. It does take time and effort to accomplish the Tracking Titles. The glowing reports we are receiving from those Dal fanciers working in Tracking should encourage others to see what their Dals can do in this area.

Darlene Chirloas sent in the following article on her experiences with Forever Embers, CD, TDX. As you know, at 11 years of age, Em acquired both the TD and TDX titles. Darlene's experiences with Em are interesting and may be of aid to others working in Tracking. **So here's Darlene!**



Em is my first show dog, so I've learned a lot from her. We did a bit of conformation showing and did get her pointed, regardless of my inept handling.

In working Embers for the obedience ring, I had a problem that I'm sure a lot of Dal handlers have encountered (as I have with some of my younger Dals) and that is they learn quickly and enjoy the learning experience, but get bored and therefore mischievous. Em is trained through most of the Utility exercises, but we quit the Obedience ring with one leg on the CDX. She loved going to class and to shows, but always invented extra parts to the exercises.

I hated to stop working with her, so at the age of 9.5 years we took up tracking. She loved it. She was in "control." After the first few weeks, I no longer knew "exactly" where the track layer stepped, so it was up to her. She loved being in the lead, and each track was a NEW puzzle. Not the repetition of the Obedience ring! We had a few problems once she found out she was in control. She tried taking me for a few extra walks while on the track,

often to check out field mice, or birds in the brush. We solved that! If dog no track human, we go home! We did that twice, pulling her off the track right then and there. Off came the harness and on came the collar, and back to the car and home.

She learned fast that I was not going to be "had" this time. I did compromise at one level. While the track was aging, we would go off to another area where she got a 10-15 minute free run. That helped a lot; without the free run, she often "casted" the first leg of the track, just playing around, knowing where the track was, but getting her "run" in.

We used food for some of the beginning track work, but the food was not that important for long. Once a dog gets the idea of tracking, they are motivated by the track itself. They are very proud of doing it. We tracked all kinds of terrain from the beginning, starting with straight tracks, but varying the conditions: short grass, long grass, planted field, harvested fields, plowed fields, rainy days, windy days, snow, etc. We usually went out early in the morning, around 6 a.m. Cooler in summer, and before too many people were out jogging. We probably overtrained for the TD, but that certainly helped get us to the TDX faster!

Having someone to work with makes the whole procedure much easier, but it is possible to do it yourself. I do not recommend anyone work by themselves on the first dog they train for tracking work. Having another person watch what you are doing, and lay track, is more valuable than can be expressed. If you've got the time to work every day, that is fantastic, but most of us do not. I tried to get out at least twice a week, and in different areas.

It is a great feeling seeing the dog do things only a dog can do. Their noses are fantastic tools. We can't teach them to track, they do that all by themselves. What we do is ask them to track what we want, when we want it done. Very much like Obedience exercises, but with the dog doing something we can not do!

BITS AND PIECES

Pat Mullin's Ch. The Warlord's Solitaire UDT finished her Championship by going Winners Bitch at the DCA Diamond Jubilee National Specialty in 1980. "Banner" is the only UD titled Dalmatian which is a NATIONAL Specialty winner at this time, according to our records. However, Pat Sayles and Kathy Nogar's Ch. Hopi Kachina Indian Summer CDX, TDX may increase that group of one to a group of two in the near future. "Summer" was Best in Futurity, also at the 1980 National Specialty, and, at this point in time, has one Utility leg score published in the Gazette. Two Dalmatians had Regional Specialty wins, and went on to UD titles. Ch. Spotted Dapper-Dal UDT, Can. CD, and Ch. Touchstone's Yosemite Sam UD, TT at this time are the only other Dals who had Specialty wins, then went on to acquire the Utility title, so far as we know. The number of Specialty winners is, of course, limited, and from that limited number, those Dalmatians going on to advanced obedience work would be even smaller. Plus, to add frosting to their cake, Summer has a TDX, and Banner and Dan have TD's! Only the dimmest possibility exists that Yosemite Sam will go for a TD as his owner (your editor) is such a klutz, having broken or sprained ankles from time to time, the OWNER might not be able to run the track!

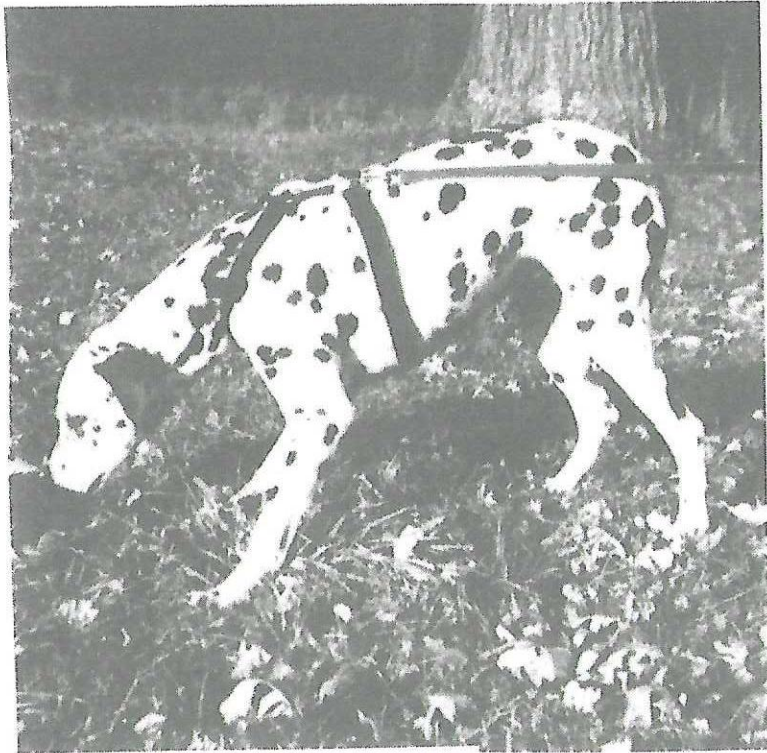
There are several very good books on Tracking. These can be a valuable aid to anyone thinking of working their Dal in this area. One fact is apparent in reading Tracking books and in hearing from people who have done it. It IS like obedience in that you advance one small step at a time. Most any Dal can do it if the owner is willing to invest the time and effort. So here's to seeing more TD's and TDX's on Dalmatians in the future.

Please remember to contact Mrs. Patricia Sayles, 10524 Toltec NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87111, if you are at all interested in having a Tracking Test in conjunction with the 1987 National Specialty in Ft. Collins, CO. More Parent Clubs are adding the Tracking Test to their Specialty each year, and such a Test would be a very nice addition at our Specialty for our Spotted Wonders!

The statistics for 1985 are close to being finalized, through the January Gazette. 1985 averages are back to their normal high. The 1984 top average, even with scores not yet tabulated, would not make the top ten individual Dalmatians for 1985! Watch for your summer SPOTTER, 1985 has seen some very nice accomplishments for Dalmatians in Obedience!

T D X

FOREVER EMBERS, C.D., T.D.X.



In the Summer '85 SPOTTER we told you about Embers getting her TD at age 11 plus years. Well, she is still going strong and tracking hard, so on Nov. 10 we took a shot at the TDX and passed! Embers was 11 years and 7 months old. It (the day) was 36 degrees F and raining and blowing and basically a miserable day, but when you love to track, (Embers does more than me) you forget the hardships of the day and go for it!

HONEYLANE Dalmatians

Darlene Chirolas

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Summer puppies out of Embers' daughter, Lava CDX (10 pt)