

On Sunday, April 3rd, SSCNC members enjoyed an introduction workshop to the new sport called “K9 Nose Work”. K9 Nose Work was designed to enhance the dogs’ natural ability to sniff out odor and find prey. It was designed around the training methods used for Narcotics or Arson dog training, but is not intended to give you certified law enforcement dog; but rather, a great sport to get involved with as it grows in popularity and structure.

Unlike law enforcement dogs, there is no danger in K9 Nose Work that your dog will injure itself. You are hunting for three distinct scents – Birch, Anise and Clove. These scents were chosen because of their unique properties and also because they are unique enough not to be in everyone’s household or to have been used negatively (e.g. citronella is found in many correction collars). Even if you have Birch floors or enjoy anise cookies, the oil scent is unique enough for the dogs that they do not confuse the cookies with their scent work “prey”.

The event was hosted at the Meadowlark Fields in Livermore, CA.

Meadowlark is a private airfield and olive estate owned by giant schnauzer fanciers who many of the local SSCNC members have known for years. The owners, Mark and Kate Mullen, graciously share their family estate with many community groups, including Falconers who train there regularly.



The instructor for this event was certified NACSW instructor, Michelle Garlick from El Cerrito, California. She began the day with an introduction to this exciting sport, its history, various trial levels and training criteria and then the dogs ran through a compact version of the first day in an Introduction to Nose Work class.

The Standard schnauzers ranged in age from just over one year to over 10 years, and we even had SSCNC honorary member, “Big B”, join in. Big B is a poodle (aka curly coated Schnauzer).



What makes Standard Schnauzers so quick to catch on to this sport is their legendary olfactory skills, a high love of food in general and their hardwired desire to hunt.

In the beginning, the prey is tasty snack hidden in boxes . As training progresses through class environments, the dogs are introduced to the various odors, starting with Birch, and the scent is paired with the treats so that the prey is switched from hotdogs or liver treats to the scent.



The first rounds, as expected, were rough as the dogs learned the concept – stick your head in the box with the food and get rewarded. That exploring around boxes in search of food was OKAY. The dogs were put in crates or back in their cars to think about this lesson and then reintroduced to the “game” a bit later.

While the dogs “thought” about their first round, Michelle continued the lecture with scent work in general and how the environment changes odor. She shared her class handouts to take home as ways to continue to practice what they learned this day.

TIME FOR ROUND TWO and all the dogs took to the “hunt” immediately upon seeing food and boxes “paired” together. Several dogs progressed so quickly that they ran the second round of searches off lead and stuck to the training area to hunt even with 60 acres of field, squirrels, and fun just outside of the training area that they could have bolted to enjoy. Some folks were shocked that the boxes and food out trumped the wide open pasture land.



For the human end of the team, there is a lot to learn as well: reading your dog when it has found the odor, deciding wind directions, learning common trial / training traps, reading your dog when he or she is on scent in a 100 yard field or when sniffing scent on a vehicle (from a car to a horse trailer to a big rig in size), or inside a small room or two.

It is, however, a great sport for any age dog or human who wishes to give it a try and can be done in any weather and is open to shy dogs, big and small dogs, blue blooded and St. Francis dogs (mixed breeds). Even if you never want to trial your dog in the sport, it is a great skill to learn for a fun activity on rainy days.

On a personal note, two of my three Standards have been involved in this sport for about a year and have LOVED it from the beginning. "Tank" has passed his Birch recognition test and will try for Anise and Clove certification in mid May. We are working to be ready to run at the Trail One level at the end of 2011. "Irene" is going to be tested on Birch in mid-May and I hope she (and I) will be ready for Trial 1 the end of 2011 as well. What has been wonderful about working Irene in the sport is that her usual "reserved" approach to life goes out the window at the sight of boxes. She is ready to hunt!



The common comments from the SSCNC members who participated in this Introduction workshop were "what fun", "where do we go to take lessons" and "I could

not believe how tired my dog was when we got home and it didn't seem like we worked that hard."

What is not to love about all that?

For more information on K9 Nose Work visit < <http://www.k9NoseWork.com>> or the National Club's website at <http://www.nacsw.net/home.html> (National Association of Canine Scent Work)

Sadly, the sport is very new and there are not a lot of classes or trials or tests available in all states, but it is worth going to watch a training session or trial if one is available in your area. It is a wonderful sport for the urban dog owner and a great way to bond with your schnauzer while engaging their ever active mind and body.

Some more reading on the sport and some video of training are also available on line at: t

<http://www.dogstardaily.com/blogs/getting-started-nose-work>

<http://www.thebark.com/content/k9-nose-work-train-your-dogs-scenting-abilities>