# Sherwood Dog Training Club

***AKC License Club***

# November 2026 Newsletter

The Sherwood Dog Training Club (SDTC) was formed in 2003, with official status as a non-profit corporation established in 2006. We also have Tax Exempt status with the IRS as a 501(c)4. We received our notice that we have become an AKC Licensed Club in August of 2008.

**Sherwood Dog Training Club**
**President**: Danielle Silverstein
**Vice President**: Linda Ruedy
**Secretary**: Robin Murphy
**Treasurer**: Jill Faulmann
**Board**: Darlene Brushwein
**Board**: Jan Lewis
**Board**: Helen Hamilton

**Newsletter**: Darlene Brushwein

**Website:**
**https://www.sherwooddtc.org/**




**Sherwood Dog Training Club is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

**Join Zoom Meeting / November 4th at 7:00pm**

**https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2517890074?pwd=VGdKeGhtM3I0T3FOdnJoVEUxRjZoQT09&omn=87934920612**

**Meeting ID: 251 789 0074**
**Passcode: 0Avc7r**

**Hello Club Members,**

**At the October General SDTC Meeting, it was announced, and posted in the meeting minutes that a Nominating committee was need for upcoming elections in December.**

**No SDTC member took advantage of doing this job.**

**At the October 28th, 2026 SDTC Board Meeting, all current officers and Board Members have agreed to continue on for 2027.**
**This will then be the slate for the December elections.**

**Nominations can STILL be taken from the floor if one wishes to do so at the December meeting during the election process.**

**Danielle Silverstein, President, Sherwood Dog Training Club**




## Dates for 2027 events at Cash Arena on Sherwood, OR

**<u>April 2027</u>**
**Match April 18**
**Trial Dates April 24 & 25**

**<u>June 2027</u>**
**Match May 23**
**Trial Dates June 5 & 6**

**<u>October 2027</u>**
**Match October 10**
**Trial Dates October 16 & 17**




**I would like to thank everyone who worked on the October Obedience Trial.**

You all did your jobs and the trial went smoothly. I appreciate you all it made my job easy. It was fun to watch everyone compete and have fun which is the point of playing with our dogs.
Again, thank you so much for your work. CJ, Trial Chair

For a complete Look at all AKC upcoming Events

**Events:** https://webapps.akc.org/event-search/#/search

## Upcoming UKC Shows / www.ukcdogs.com

**Oregon**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Nov. 13-15 | Canine Action Pack, Cornelius, OR | **Obedience & Rally** |
| Jan 29-31 | Canine Action Pack, Cornelius, OR | **Obedience & Rally** |
| Apr 30-May 2 | Canine Action Pack, Cornelius, OR | **Obedience & Rally** |

**California**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Jan 30 | Santa Lucia Open Dog Obedience Group, Atascadero, CA | **Nose Work** |

**Colorado**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Nov 20-22 | High Plains KC, Castle Rock, CO | **Obedience & Rally** |

**Details at ukcdogs.com**
United Kennel Club (UKC) is an international dog registry celebrating bonds, rewarding ability, and preserving the value of a pedigree. http://www.ukcdogs.com/

- **Dates: Show dates:** January 21 -24, 2027
- **Closing date:** January 6, 2027

- **Obedience/Rally status at RCC:**
  For several years we have weighed the pros and cons of discontinuing obedience and Rally at RCC.

  Obedience / Rally entries have declined everywhere and have never been high at RCC. One of the reasons that Obedience / Rally are not as popular as they should be at RCC is because of the impact on Obedience and Rally caused by the huge number of spectators who attend RCC.

  In addition, we have not had another place to put Obedience / Rally that we could afford. Long story short, we have worked with Expo to create a special place for Obedience / Rally that is off the beaten path. It is not entirely cut off from the public but should reduce traffic and noise by somewhere over 90% and offer exhibitors a nice space.

  Please relay this information to your friends in Obedience / Rally.
  Many of you know that we've been going back and forth on this issue for several years.

- **Meet the Breeds:**
  Meet The Breeds was an overwhelming success at RCC this year.
  We received letters from some of the participating clubs saying how successful it was for them and we even received a couple of thank you letters from spectators, saying how great it was to get to meet "preservation breeders" and see their beautiful dogs.

  As a result of the feedback we received from several clubs and the public, we have decided to make Meet the Breeds a bigger part of RCC in 2027.

  As always, we are going to give our specialties and supported entries first choice when the event is open to clubs.

  We are also going to call on you for input as we begin to decorate and expand our current footprint.

  We are very excited about developing this part of our show!

Patti Strand, Rose City Classic
503-756-0826

# Training Opportunities
# Obedience Run Through Class in Sandy, OR
# Laurie Rubin

A monthly Obedience Run Through Class takes place at Penny Harvey's training building in Sandy, Oregon. Dog and handler teams run through the exercises offered at obedience trials. The time can be used for any level of obedience and/or for problem solving specific exercises. Handler choice whether to ask for feedback or simply have the exercises called as in a trial. This class is run by Laurie Rubin.

**This month's class Sunday, November 15.**
**$15 via PayPal for each slot of up to 15 minutes or $16 via mailed check.**
**Two slots left as of October 26, 2026.**

Time slots can be reserved by clicking on the following link to fill out your entry information on a Google Form https://forms.gle/MPtu8AybkYn8Gvpy6 *AND* sending $15/time slot via PayPal https://www.paypal.com/ to Laurie Rubin. After logging in to PayPal and clicking "Send," search for Laurie Rubin or earthlaurie@sonic.net. My link has a photo of a red merle Aussie. In the box that asks "What's this For?, please type "November 2026 Run Through Class." Zelle and Venmo $15 payments accepted, too. If you prefer to mail a check for $16/time slot, be sure to also fill out your entry information on the Google Form linked above. Payments are non-refundable unless the class fills before I receive your entry. In that case, I will notify you and refund your payment.

Entries are non-transferable. These classes have been filling. Both your payment and Google Form must be received for your entry to count.

The Thursday before the class, the schedule and driving directions will be e-mailed to those who have reserved a slot.

**Next class Sunday, December 13**.
$15 via PayPal for each slot of up to 15 minutes or $16 via mailed check.

Time slots can be reserved by clicking on the following link to fill out your entry information on a Google Form https://forms.gle/DcdcUNSZc7ZTP18p7 *AND* sending $15/time slot via PayPal https://www.paypal.com/ to Laurie Rubin. After logging in to PayPal and clicking "Send," search for Laurie Rubin or earthlaurie@sonic.net. My link has a photo of a red merle Aussie. In the box that asks "What's this For?, please type "December 2026 Run Through Class." Zelle and Venmo $15 payments accepted, too. If you prefer to mail a check for $16/time slot, be sure to also fill out your entry information on the Google Form linked above. Payments are non-refundable unless the class fills before I receive your entry. In that case, I will notify you and refund your payment.

Entries are non-transferable. These classes have been filling. Both your payment and Google Form must be received for your entry to count.

The Thursday before the class, the schedule and driving directions will be e-mailed to those who have reserved a slot.

**Future class date: January 17.**

Laurie Rubin
9618 Silver Star Ave.
Vancouver, WA 98664
707-890-2491 cell
earthlaurie@sonic.net




**PDOC will be holding a tracking test**

(TD and TDX) on Dec. 27, 2026.

We need tracklayers.

Contact Joan Armstrong: joana@zoiedog.com



# Bragging Rights



Dylan and I had a wonderful time at the SDTC Trial.

We earned our first UDX leg and a first place in Utility.

Thanks to all the great workers who made the trial such an enjoyable weekend.

Dylan also finished his ASCA OTCH title. He is such a fun boy even when things don't go as planned.

Happy training!  Joan Hughes and Dylan

# Training Opportunities
# Dog Days Obedience Run Through Class
# Laurie Rubin

A monthly half day Obedience Run Through Class is starting at Dog Days Dog Training in Vancouver, Washington, on the fourth Wednesday morning of the month. Dog and handler teams run through the exercises offered at obedience trials. The time can be used for any level of obedience and/or for problem solving specific exercises. Handler choice whether to ask for feedback or simply have the exercises called as in a trial.

**This month. Wednesday, November 25.**
**$15 via PayPal or Zelle or $17 via mailed check.**

Time slots can be reserved by clicking on the following link to fill out your entry information on a Google https://forms.gle/yAqhsCjaFxYnn4gA7 ***AND*** sending $15/time slot via PayPal https://www.paypal.com/ to Laurie Rubin. After logging in to PayPal and clicking "**Send,**" search for Laurie Rubin or earthlaurie@sonic.net. My link has a photo of a red merle Aussie. In the box that asks "What's this For?", please type "Dog Days November 25, 2026 Run Through Class." Zelle and Venmo $15 payments accepted, too. Checks made out to Laurie Rubin for $17/time slot are OK.

Both your payment and Google Form must be received for your entry to count. Payments are non-refundable unless the class fills before I receive your entry. In that case, I will notify you and refund your payment. Entries are non-transferable. The schedule will be e-mailed to those who have reserved a slot by the day before the class.

**Next class. Wednesday, December 23.**
**$15 via PayPal or Zelle or $17 via mailed check.**
Time slots can be reserved by clicking on the following link to fill out your entry information on a Google https://forms.gle/WYdUywXi8bhf6XKG9 ***AND*** sending $15/time slot via PayPal https://www.paypal.com/ to Laurie Rubin. After logging in to PayPal and clicking "**Send,**" search for Laurie Rubin or earthlaurie@sonic.net. My link has a photo of a red merle Aussie. In the box that asks "What's this For?", please type "Dog Days December 25, 2026 Run Through Class." Zelle and Venmo $15 payments accepted, too. Checks made out to Laurie Rubin for $17/time slot are OK.

Both your payment and Google Form must be received for your entry to count. Payments are non-refundable unless the class fills before I receive your entry. In that case, I will notify you and refund your payment. Entries are non-transferable. The schedule will be e-mailed to those who have reserved a slot by the day before the class.

**Future class date: Wednesday, January 27.**

Laurie Rubin
9618 Silver Star Ave.
Vancouver, WA 98664
707-890-2491 cell
earthlaurie@sonic.net



TRAINERS to the RESCUE LLC

32400 SW Unger Rd, Cornelius, OR 97113

**Visit the website for trainers and other information**
**https://www.trainerstotherescue.net/affiliatetrainers**

## BUILDING RENTAL

Practice your skills on your own in our facility with our equipment.

## OPEN TRAINING

Our training building with competition obedience equipment is open on Fridays 2-8pm (last call 7:30pm) to those working towards their individual goals. Bring one dog or seven, stay for one hour or six, $10 for current students, and $20 for non-students.

**Trainers to the Rescue has a few openings for students.**

**With Sally**
**Group class** / Thursday Rally 7:15 pm
**Private Lesson** / Tuesday and Thursday (check for availability)
Also looking to put together a Thursday evening open / utility class if there is interest.

**With Cindy**
**Ring Prep** / Saturday morning Ring (90+ minute group class)
**Online classes** / Attention and Marking

**Cost**
$80 hour private
$210 6-week group
Check for Ring Prep cost of class

**We are unavailable until after Oct 6th**

Contact Sally for more information.
Sallyw61@yahoo.com
503 869 0961

# Bragging Rights






Emma and I traveled to Topeka, KS for the Doberman National Dog Show, late September/early October.

Travel there and back was long and challenging, we drove.

While there, Emma and I participated in Rally, doing three trials, Choice thru Advanced. We qualified in all levels, all three trials. The last trial turned out the best earning placements and RACH points. Emma also earned her Rally Choice 2 title the last day.

Submitted by: Vello Koiv



## Training Opportunities

Who: Michael Montgomery, CSCC GDMI

Where: Urban Pawsibilites in SE Portland - 3737 SE 21st Ave, Portland, OR 97202

When: Next round starts Sunday July 19th for 5 weeks.

What: Currently only serving novice through advance. The facility only has so much time to rent to me! Higher levels hopefully in the future.

Current openings: 2 openings in Novice competition prep on Sundays at 4:30pm

How to register: Call/text 503-413-0782. Email: Michael@elusivecsc.com. DM on social media, @elusivecsc on Facebook and Instagram.






I am so proud of my Mylo aka Ragus Pearl Diver

He got his third qualification at the SDTC Dog Show a couple weeks ago.

He now has three titles. This one was Beginner Novice A ❤️

Submitted by: Margo Hepner-Hart

Attention All Obedience & Rally Participants
By AKC Companion Events Department on October 7, 2026

## Civility Isn't a Suggestion: Restoring Respect in the Obedience and Rally Rings

Disagreeing with a judge's score is nothing new in our sport; it has existed for as long as obedience trials have been held. What's changed isn't the disagreement itself, but how it plays out. With alarming frequency, these disputes occur publicly and loudly, with the apparent goal of making a judge back down rather than receiving an honest explanation.

The scenario is becoming familiar to anyone who spends time ringside. What starts as a reasonable question as to why that deduction was taken or what the judge saw turns into a flat refusal to accept the answer given. The exchange escalates, draws in stewards, other exhibitors, and spectators, and often becomes a public spectacle. Whether the judge holds their ground or the exhibitor walks off loudly declaring the judge doesn't know what they're doing, the score has stopped being the point. The point has become getting the last word.

That puts judges in a difficult spot. They can't walk back a score mid-conversation, and defending a decision at length starts to look like litigating the score in front of an audience, which tends to make things worse. What's left is a one-sided, exhausting exchange that wears the judge down in front of everyone ringside. It's a bad look for the sport, and a particularly discouraging one for anyone new who's trying to decide whether this activity is for them.

The disagreement doesn't necessarily end when the trial ends for the day, either. It often continues in dog-sport Facebook groups, replayed for an audience far larger than the original ringside. Sometimes it comes with a video clip, a screenshot, or a post tagging the judge outright. Comment threads tend to reward whoever tells the most aggrieved version of the story, and people who weren't even there weigh in as if they had been. Judges are expected to stay above that kind of exchange rather than engage with it directly, which leaves them with even less room to respond online than they have in the ring. A single disagreement at a trial can follow a judge indefinitely, with nothing on the other side to correct the record.

The AKC Code of Sportsmanship and Civility should be taken seriously. It isn't a loose set of suggestions; it spells out what's expected of everyone who steps into a ring. All participants are asked to treat exhibitors, judges, officials, and volunteers with dignity and courtesy, regardless of how they feel about a given decision. The Code is clear that strong competition and civility must coexist, not one at the expense of the other. It extends those same expectations online as well: courtesy doesn't stop applying just because people are off the show grounds and back on their phones.

None of this is solved by adding another regulation, since it was never really a regulation problem. Peer accountability still does more work than people realize. A quiet word from someone a person respects lands harder than any policy ever will. Trial Chairpersons have a role in stepping in early. For conduct serious enough to warrant it, individuals can still make a formal complaint to an Event Committee. That process is reserved for real misconduct rather than everyday ringside friction. Most of what shows up ringside doesn't need a hearing. It needs someone willing to say something in the moment, long before it gets that far. Respect, in and out of the ring, isn't optional. Respect is why people keep showing up for the sport.

# Bragging Rights




Docker earned his CDX at the last Sherwood shows taking first place on both Saturday and Sunday.

Submitted By: Marti Park

kamalfernandezonlinetraining.com

Website




🚗 HEELWORK: YOU CAN'T DRIVE A CAR WITHOUT FUEL! ⛽

Imagine you've just bought yourself a beautiful new car. It's got all the bells and whistles, a fantastic engine, the latest technology and everything you could possibly want. You're excited to take it out for a drive, so you jump in, turn the key and... nothing happens!

You try again, perhaps a little more enthusiastically this time, but still nothing. You start fiddling with the controls, checking everything, wondering what on earth is going wrong. Eventually, you discover that the car has absolutely no fuel in the tank, or perhaps the tyres are completely flat!

It doesn't matter how sophisticated the car is, how fantastic the engine might be or how desperately you want to get moving. Without fuel, you're simply not going anywhere!

And this, for me, is the perfect analogy for one of the biggest mistakes I see people making when teaching heelwork.

They're trying to teach the mechanics of heelwork before they've created the motivation to actually DO heelwork!

We can spend hours obsessing over position, head carriage, shoulder alignment, straightness, footwork and all the intricate little details that make heelwork so beautiful to watch, but if the dog doesn't actually WANT to participate, we're fighting an uphill battle from the outset.

And here's something that I think is really important to understand. For the vast majority of dogs, heelwork isn't inherently reinforcing. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that very few dogs naturally find the actual process of heelwork rewarding.

Why would they?

Think about what we're asking them to do. We're expecting a dog to maintain an incredibly precise position in relation to our body, make countless tiny adjustments as we move, coordinate its movement with ours, respond to subtle changes in direction and pace, and sustain that level of concentration for increasingly long periods of time.

And somehow, we're expecting them to think this is the best thing since sliced bread!

The reality is that most dogs couldn't care less about whether their shoulder is perfectly aligned with your leg or whether they've executed a beautifully precise left turn. Those things matter to US, but they don't automatically have any value to the dog.

And that's where our job as trainers really begins.

We have to SELL heelwork to our dogs!

We have to make those tiny movements, adjustments and moments of precision worth something. We have to create an experience where the dog begins to associate the process of heelwork with all the things it already finds exciting, enjoyable and reinforcing.

This is what I mean when I talk about the transfer of value from the reinforcement into the behaviour itself.

Initially, the dog might absolutely love chasing a toy, grabbing a tug or earning a piece of food. Those things already have value, and they're often the reason the dog is willing to engage with us in the first place. But rather than simply using those rewards to persuade the dog to perform a behaviour, I want to use them to build value in the behaviour itself.

Over time, I want the dog to develop such a positive association with the process of heelwork that the work becomes exciting in its own right. The anticipation of reinforcement, the enjoyment of the interaction and the satisfaction of participating all start to become part of the experience.

And that's a very different proposition from a dog that's simply following a piece of food around!

Which brings me to another point…

One of the most common ways people initially teach heelwork is through luring, and there's absolutely nothing inherently wrong with that. Luring can be a useful way of helping a dog understand where we want it to be and how we want it to move.

However, I think we have to be really careful that we don't confuse a dog being motivated by the lure with a dog being motivated to perform heelwork.

Because they're not necessarily the same thing!

I've seen countless examples of dogs that look absolutely fantastic when there's a piece of food in front of their nose or a toy tucked under someone's arm. They're animated, focused, enthusiastic and seemingly completely committed to the task. But the moment that lure disappears, the whole picture starts to unravel.

Suddenly the position deteriorates, the enthusiasm drops and the dog starts looking around for something more interesting to do.

Now, there are certainly dogs that are so incredibly driven and focused on reinforcement that you can obscure the lure, hide it or even convince them that it's still present for quite some time. Some dogs are less inclined to question the arrangement, and you can get away with this approach for longer than you might expect.

But ultimately, dogs are incredibly good at recognizing patterns and working out what predicts reinforcement. If the only thing that has been maintaining their enthusiasm is the presence of something they want, then removing that thing without having established value in the work itself can leave you with a rather different dog!

And I think that's a really important distinction.

Just because a dog loves the reward doesn't necessarily mean it loves the behaviour that precedes it.

For me, a far more effective and ultimately more sustainable approach is to build heelwork through a series of simple, fun and engaging games.

And when I say games, I don't mean anything particularly complicated or elaborate. In fact, quite the opposite!

I'm talking about little exercises that encourage the dog to experiment with movement, offer behaviours, engage with us and discover that all those tiny components of heelwork can lead to something wonderful happening.

A simple game that encourages a dog to find heel position, a little exercise that develops rear-end awareness, a playful movement that teaches the dog to drive into position or an interaction that builds enthusiasm for staying connected with us can all contribute to creating a dog that genuinely enjoys the process.

The beauty of this approach is that we're not simply teaching the dog where to put its body. We're building an emotional response to the work at the same time.

We're creating anticipation, enthusiasm and a desire to participate, while gradually developing the physical skills and understanding that will eventually produce beautiful, accurate heelwork.

And I think that's where the real magic happens.

Instead of constantly trying to persuade the dog to stay with us, we're developing a dog that actively WANTS to be there. A dog that's engaged in the process, enjoying the interaction and looking forward to what might happen next.

Once you've established that foundation, you can start refining the details, increasing the duration and developing the precision that competitive heelwork demands.

But importantly, you're building those things on a foundation of genuine enthusiasm rather than simply trying to maintain a behaviour through the promise of reinforcement.

Of course, reinforcement remains an essential part of the process. I'm certainly not suggesting that we stop rewarding our dogs or that heelwork somehow becomes so enjoyable that reinforcement is no longer necessary!

Far from it.

What I'm suggesting is that we become much more thoughtful about HOW we use reinforcement and, perhaps more importantly, what we're actually teaching our dogs to value.

Because there's a world of difference between a dog that's simply working to access a reward and a dog that's learned that participating in the work is itself an exciting opportunity.

I often think that as trainers, particularly those of us involved in competitive obedience, we can become so consumed by what heelwork should LOOK like that we sometimes forget to consider how it should FEEL to the dog.

We're looking at the position of the head, the alignment of the shoulders, the accuracy of the turns and the consistency of the movement. And of course, all those things matter. They're what ultimately contribute to the beautiful picture we're trying to create.

But none of those things should come at the expense of the dog's enthusiasm.

For me, great heelwork isn't simply about a dog performing a series of technically correct movements. It's about watching a dog that's completely invested in what it's doing, a dog that moves with purpose, confidence and enthusiasm, and one that looks as though there's nowhere else in the world it would rather be.

That's the picture I want to create.

And that's why, when I'm teaching heelwork, motivation will ALWAYS come before precision.

Because if I've got a dog that's enthusiastic, engaged and desperate to participate, I can work on developing the technical details. I can shape the movements, refine the position and gradually build the accuracy and consistency I'm looking for.

But if I've got a dog that's simply going through the motions, or one that needs constant encouragement and persuasion just to participate, then all the technical knowledge in the world isn't going to create the picture I want.

I need to go back and fill the tank!

And perhaps that's something worth thinking about the next time you train your dog.

Before you start worrying about whether your dog's shoulder is perfectly aligned with your leg, whether its head is in exactly the right position or whether your turns are sufficiently precise, ask yourself a much simpler question.

Does my dog actually LOVE doing this?

Because if the answer is yes, you've got something incredibly valuable to build upon.

And if the answer is no, perhaps the solution isn't another technical exercise, another repetition or another attempt to correct the position.

Perhaps the answer is to make the whole experience a little more enjoyable!

After all, we have the ability to take something that has very little inherent meaning to a dog and turn it into an activity that they absolutely LOVE.

And I think that's one of the most exciting things about dog training.

We don't just teach dogs what to do. We can teach them to LOVE doing it! ❤️🐾

So, here's my question for you…

ARE YOU CREATIVE WITH YOUR HEELWORK TRAINING?

Do you regularly incorporate little games and playful interactions into your training, or do you sometimes find yourself getting so caught up in the technical details that you forget about the motivation behind the movement?

And more importantly, if you asked your dog whether heelwork was one of their favourite things to do, what do you think they'd say?!

I'd love to hear your thoughts, and if you've got a favourite little heelwork game that your dog absolutely loves, share it in the comments!

Let's get creative and make heelwork something our dogs genuinely WANT to do! 🐾



**Petra Ford** is with **Laurie Winter Strimavicius**.




What do we do when a dog makes a mistake? Well, that depends....on why. How do we analyze that? Do we always jump in? Or sometimes do we stand back? Because that is almost just as important...giving the dog an opportunity to solve the problem. Do we give our dogs enough credit? As intelligent, thinking, problem solving beings?

In this week's episode we talk about scent articles. But the content is relevant to all "exercises/behaviors". How do we teach. How do we solve problems. How do we handle errors. How do we analyze why it happened. THAT in essence is dog training.

And it's a great follow-up to our two-part episode on Reading Dogs... Available on all podcast platforms. Episode 44: Challenges Build resilience
https://www.youtube.com/@canineconnectionpod
https://open.spotify.com/episode/6zmcDWQbGEyCQiEgcat4is







Iain Welch
Art & design
iainwelch.co.uk

J&J DOG SUPPLIES

# Scent Articles Demystified: Selection, Care, and Training Tips

May 6th 2025



As competitive obedience handlers know well, scent discrimination is one of the most challenging and fascinating exercises in dog competitions. The magic of watching a dog confidently select their handler's scent article from among identical objects appears almost supernatural to spectators. Behind this impressive skill lies a combination of proper equipment selection, meticulous article care, and strategic training approaches.

At J&J Dog Supplies, we've been supporting successful scent training for over five decades. Today, we're sharing our expertise to help you master this complex skill with your canine partner.

## What Are Scent Articles?

Scent articles are standardized objects used in competitive obedience exercises where the dog must identify and retrieve an article carrying their handler's scent from among several identical, unscented articles.

In AKC Utility competitions, handlers present two sets of articles, chosen from three types:

- A set of metal articles
- A set of leather articles
- A set of wood articles

Each set contains 5-8 identical articles, with one article from each set used as the "scented" article during competition.

**Selecting Quality Scent Articles**

**Metal Articles**
When choosing metal utility articles, look for smooth welds without sharp edges that might cut your dog's mouth. Ensure the bar diameter is appropriate for your dog's mouth size, and don't forget to consider the weight—heavier articles may be challenging for smaller breeds.

**Leather Articles**
When it comes to leather utility articles, you'll want to make sure there is even thickness throughout all articles in a set. There should also be consistent color and texture across the set so that there isn't a different way to differentiate them. They should be made with a proper tanning process that doesn't involve chemicals that might mask human scent.

**Wood Articles**
When selecting wood utility articles, choose those made from solid, unfinished wood with a smooth, sanded surface free of splinters or rough edges that could irritate your dog's mouth. All articles in the set should be uniform in size, shape, and weight to prevent any visual or tactile clues. Avoid articles treated with varnish, strong stains, or scented finishes, as these can mask or alter the handler's scent and make discrimination more difficult for your dog.

**Proper Care and Maintenance**
The integrity of your scent discrimination training depends heavily on how you maintain your articles. Contamination can confuse your dog and hinder progress.

**Cleaning Protocol**
When you first receive new articles, they require thorough cleaning to remove manufacturing residues and handling scents.

For metal articles, wash with mild dishwashing soap, rinse thoroughly with hot water, and allow to air dry completely.

For leather articles, wipe gently with a damp cloth and allow them to air dry naturally away from direct heat. Consider conditioning with a neutral, unscented leather conditioner if the leather feels stiff.

For wood articles, gently wipe each piece with a clean, damp cloth to remove any dust or surface residue, taking care not to soak the wood or use harsh cleaners that could leave lingering odors. Allow the articles to air dry completely in a well-ventilated area, away from direct heat or sunlight, to prevent warping or cracking. After each use, inspect for rough spots or splinters and lightly sand if needed, always ensuring the articles are clean and dry before storage.

After each use, clean articles with an unscented soap solution, rinse thoroughly to remove all soap residue, and air dry completely before storage. Handle only with clean hands or tongs.

**Storage Solutions**
Proper storage prevents cross-contamination and preserves the integrity of your articles:

- Separate sets: Keep metal and leather articles in separate storage containers
- Temperature control: Store in a cool, dry place away from extreme temperatures
- Scent isolation: Keep articles away from strong odors (cleaning supplies, perfumes, other dogs)

**Training Methodology: Building Success Step by Step**
Successful scent discrimination training follows a progressive approach that builds your dog's understanding and confidence.

**Foundation Skills**
Before introducing formal scent discrimination, ensure your dog has mastered:

1. Reliable retrieve: The dog should eagerly retrieve objects and deliver them to hand
2. Item discrimination: Ability to select between visibly different objects
3. Nose awareness: Basic scent detection games like "find it" with treats or toys
4. Focus and impulse control: Waiting for permission before moving toward articles

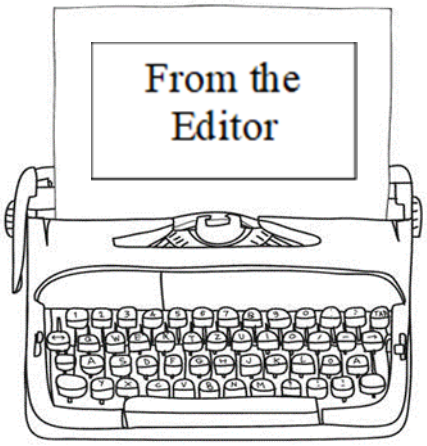
**Competition Preparation**
**Pre-Trial Article Management**
Proper article management in the days leading up to competition can make a significant difference in your performance. Begin by thoroughly cleaning all articles approximately 3-4 days before the trial, allowing time for any cleaning scents to dissipate while maintaining your articles in pristine condition. Once cleaned, handle your articles minimally and always with meticulously clean hands to prevent unintentional scent contamination.

Store them in clean, scent-free containers that protect them from environmental odors and other potential contaminants. When you arrive at the trial venue, keep your articles securely stored in their containers until it's your turn to compete, minimizing exposure to the myriad of distracting scents present at dog events.

**Day-of Strategy**
On competition day, set your team up for success by warming up your dog with simple retrieves and focus exercises that reinforce your connection without overtaxing their mental energy. Throughout preparation and competition, consciously maintain your own calm demeanor, as dogs can detect anxiety through scent and may become confused when your competition scent differs from training sessions.

When it's time to scent your article, follow the exact same consistent scenting routines that you've established during training, creating a familiar pattern that gives your dog confidence. Perhaps most importantly, trust your dog's remarkable olfactory abilities during the exercise—avoid the common handler mistake of watching your dog too intensely or inadvertently telegraphing which article is correct, and allow them to work independently using the skills you've so carefully developed together.

**The Journey to Mastery**
Scent training represents one of the most impressive demonstrations of the human-canine partnership. The dog's natural scenting ability combined with methodical training results in what appears to be an almost telepathic connection between handler and dog.
Whether you're just beginning your scent article training or looking to troubleshoot a specific issue, remember that consistency, patience, and attention to detail are your greatest allies.




## SDTC Newsletter Advertising Policy

- **Advertisements for rehoming k9 equipment, etc. are always welcome.**
- **Training programs and classes offered by members will be posted with a link to a website for members only [possibly under a column specifically designated for that purpose].**
- **Advertising of puppies/litters will not be accepted**

## We are looking for articles from our membership.

- Do you have a brag or accomplishment?
- Have you written an article that the membership could benefit from?
- Know of an upcoming event? Example: Obedience trial, Scent trial, Specialty, Health clinic……. etc.




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**Please be safe.**
**There are phishing emails using my name. Darlene Brushwein**

**Check where emails come from.**

**Never open links from emails you do not recognize or seem weird.**