

# THE LONG SIT

Louisiana Capital City Obedience Club

## Tracey Roth – A Versatile Companion



Tracey & Kamikaze pose in Lake Charles, with Judge Christie Bowers on the occasion of Kazez's (and Tracey's) 1<sup>st</sup> MACH

Most of us know Tracey as the club member who trains the most dogs in the most venues at the same time. Since joining LCCOC in 2002, she has put titles on 14 of the 15 dogs she has trained, the most recent being her first MACH ever, earned with 4.8 year old Kamikaze, the youngest Siberian Husky in America to have both her USDAA and AKC agility championships.

Tracey can be seen year-round in the ring at numerous regional obedience and agility trials competing with up to 5 dogs in a single weekend, plus handling other people's dogs for them (as a favor, not professionally). She's out many Thursday nights at Obedience, is a familiar face at our agility field, and is up at the crack of dawn on most of her free weekends teaching her dogs to track, and laying track for others interested in this sport.

**GOALS:** Tracey is one of the few LCCOC club members who has set a goal of obtaining AKC's Versatile Companion Dog titles on several of her canines.

So what is a VCD? AKC offers this title to signify "a well-rounded dog" versatile in agility, obedience, and tracking. A prestigious award, these 5 VCD titles can be earned by accumulating all the titles listed after them:

- Versatile Companion Dog 1 (VCD1) - CD, NA, NAJ, TD
- Versatile Companion Dog 2 (VCD2) - CDX, OA, OAJ, TD
- Versatile Companion Dog 3 (VCD3) - UD, AX, AXJ, TDX
- Versatile Companion Dog 4 (VCD4) - UDX, MX, MXJ, VST
- Versatile Companion Champion: - OTCH, MACH and CT

*(For those who don't know what these letters mean, see Page 4).* So far, Tracey has put VCD2 on Kamikaze, Lego, and Xanadu, and VCD1 on Spirit. Club members John Runnels and Kay Watson also have earned VCD titles.

An active club member, Tracey is a frequent Obedience and Agility instructor at Beginners and Intermediate levels, and participates in our matches and public demos with enthusiasm. She served as Vice President in 2008, Obedience Trial Chairman in 2009, and as Tracking Trial Secretary in 2012. She is also in charge of ordering our Awards at year-end. Her other dog activities



Tracey and Kamikaze Tracking



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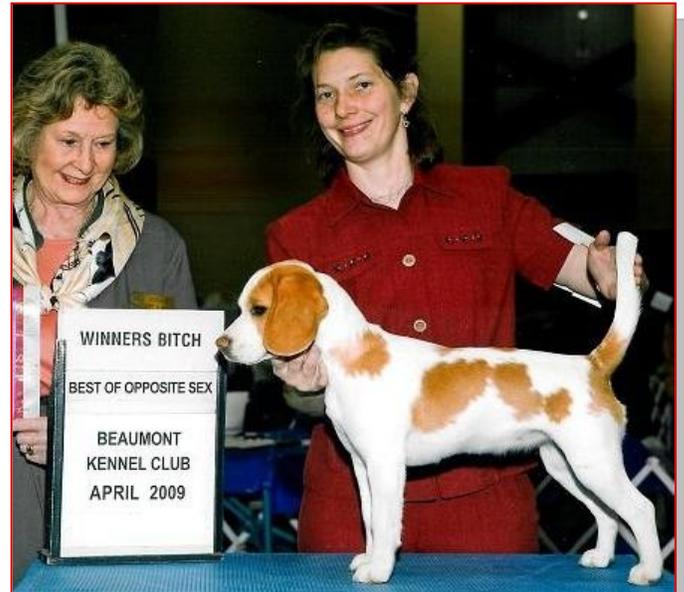
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include Conformation with her 4 pedigreed dogs (Kamikaze, Xanadu, Spirit and Kayak), Pet Therapy as time permits (thru CAAWS), earth-dog, and tracking.

So where does Tracey get all this energy, all the while working full time as a computer programmer? First, youth (she's only 38). Second, she is a natural athlete, having competed in sports all through Jr. High and High School, including basketball, softball, volleyball, and track. Since then, she has played on various BREC soccer teams requiring frequent practice and up to 2 games per week all summer. Since soccer games lasts about 90 minutes with just a few breaks from running between plays, sprinting 10 agility courses per day for 45-60 seconds apiece is hardly an effort for Tracey.

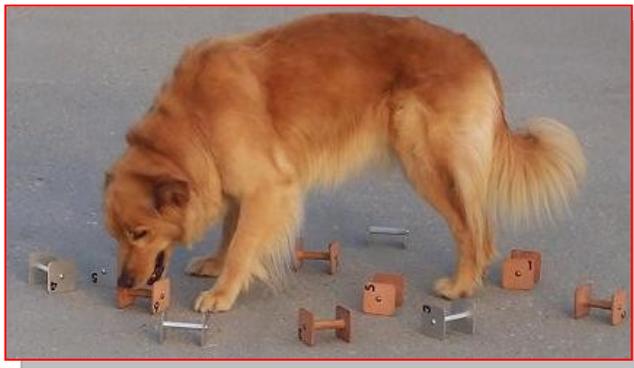
That is, until she tore her ACL in 2011, had to have knee surgery, and was instructed to sit out for 6 months. But no, she was still seen hobbling thru runs at agility trials on crutches, or participating in our Vet School agility demo wearing her giant knee brace. Is this evidence of insanity, an indomitable spirit, extreme dedication, or total addiction? "No", says Tracey. "It's just fun."

Of the 18 dogs Tracey has owned, only 4 have been acquired for conformation and possible breeding. She has taken numerous conformation classes with Netta DuPlanti, and put 19 conformation points on 4 dogs. The rest have been rescues. In total she has owned 5 beagles, 4 siberian huskies, 2 mixed cattle dogs, 2 mixed terriers, 1 german shepherd mix, 1 walker hound mix, 1 sheltie mix, 1 golden retriever, and her latest, a wire haired daschund named Sprigs. Even with rescues, Tracey recommends you know your breed's characteristics before committing to them. What do you want them for? First and foremost, Tracey chooses dogs as family pets and personal companions, never specifically in hopes of finding her next champion. What if they aren't? All the training and competing she offers them are for "socialization, bonding with me, to allow them to be the best they can be, and to have fun. Pursuing titles adds structure to our activities, but the titles are secondary." Tracey says "I learned while sitting at home for 6 months with my torn ACL, my dogs are perfectly content to stay home, chase rabbits, and curl up on the couch with me and Rich."



Conformation with Xanadu

She also learned that agility skills aren't lost with a break from training, but not so with Obedience. Comparing the two, Tracey says "Obedience is by far the hardest to perfect and maintain. It's a bigger time investment. It's requires greater precision. Dogs have to concentrate more. If you don't train consistently, your scores will drop. In agility, so long as the dog completes the course in the time allotted without missing obstacles, they can wobble around a bit, sniff or lose focus for a second, you can re-direct, whoop, yell, jump around and call their name to regain their attention and encourage them, and still score.



Shelby doing Obedience Scent Articles

Kamikaze's MACH (Master Agility Champion) took 3.75 years to achieve, her first competition at 15 months old. They trialed

a lot. "This was a thrill, and Kazee is a natural. She's an independent thinker who will work ahead of me and make decisions on her own. She has beautiful jumping form. She is my highest scoring Obedience dog as well, having earned her CD and CDX by just over age 2 and is currently showing in Utility.

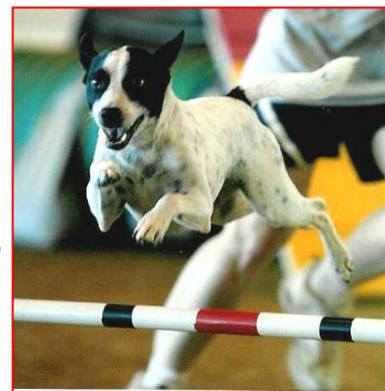


Lego and Tracey QQ #3

“But an even greater thrill was to bring 10 year old Lego (my stubborn beagle mix), up from Novice to Open Agility, which took 5 years! Then from Open to Excellent in only 1 year! And now that he finally ‘gets it’, he’s moving up the ladder towards MACH with 4 QQ’s and 250 MACH points through March 2012.” Tracey celebrated Lego’s 10<sup>th</sup> birthday on June 1<sup>st</sup> with this quote on her blog: *“Oh the things I have learned from this boy! I figured he may never be great at anything, but he could learn to do the basics of everything. So he was my first VCD dog. He’s the reason I got into competitive tracking, and now every dog after him learns to track. I hope he stays healthy enough to run agility long enough to finish his MACH. It will be one of my proudest moments given the struggles we’ve conquered together.”*

Indeed, Lego provided Tracey with her most embarrassing moment in the Obedience Open ring where he went wild running around and around and taking jumps, upsetting the activity in the two adjacent rings while Tracey did everything she could think of to gain control, until finally the Judge said “drop him”, she hollered for him to drop, and Lego skidded into a down!

Tracey’s most embarrassing moment in the agility ring was years ago with her terrier mix, Jedi, who went off chasing pigeons completely out of the ring, through the horse stalls, outside the arena, then circled back in again before Tracey did a football tackle to catch him. He’s now 13, deaf, and retired, but he had his brilliant moments and attained AAD, JCH, RM and SCH-bronze (USDAA titles, as mixes couldn’t play AKC back then). “What keeps me stoked is those ‘moments of brilliance’ that each of my dogs seems to summon up once in awhile. It’s exhilarating.”



Jedi, competing in USDAA

Tracey began competing in 2002, the same year she joined LCCOC. Her living room is a museum hung with dozens of framed titles and dog photos, and there are boxes and boxes and boxes of ribbons. After obtaining her BA in Math at Harding University (where she met her husband, Rich), they moved to Denham Springs in 1996 to develop Rich’s chiropractic career, and began rescuing dogs as personal companions. What got her started along this path? Growing up in Memphis, TN, her parents owned several beagles and neighbors a few miles away, who owned Siberians, introduced her to dog shows. But it wasn’t until Jedi that she went hunting for agility classes. He needed a job to focus on! They currently own 11 dogs – and keep them well-behaved and in very good order on their 6 acre spread in Denham Springs.



Addressing the issue of keeping so many animals, Tracey reported that “going from 1 dog to 2 was an adjustment. From 2-5 wasn’t much difference. Introducing the 6<sup>th</sup> dog changed the dynamic and I had to manage them differently. So far, we’ve got 3 fenced yards, 3 kennels, a puppy run, a fenced agility field, and now there’s a fenced pasture for her newest acquisition -- a 5 year old feisty gray mustang named Windy. Asked why train a horse, and why so many animals, Tracey says “Like most kids, I always wanted a horse. I got my chance this year. My animals are all my children, with different personalities. I enjoy interacting with and learning about them all. Plus, I much prefer animals to people. They are more honest.”

You can keep up with Tracey’s adventures on her [Pebblemist](#) blog, which she’s kept up since 2005, where she posts many photos and videos of her training/trialing experiences, and where she shares hopeful stories on her many challenges, achievements, and disappointments in the dog training world.