



BerNews

Fall 2010 Volume 7, Issue 3

Bernese Mountain Dog Club of the Greater Twin Cities

The BMDCGTC was formed in 1988 to help promote the best possible breeding, training, health, and well-being of the purebred Bernese Mountain Dog.

Special Interest Articles:

- President's Letter
- BMDCGTC Halloween Draft Test
- September 11 Responsible Dog Owner Day -Washington County Fairgrounds
- Home for Good

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President's Letter

-Micky Trent (Merlin, Cammie & Viva)

I hope everyone is enjoying the hot and stormy summer! Maybe not ideal for our big black hairy dogs, but there is always a way to enjoy their company. Play Pals had a nice walk around Lake Como in June and just had a fun get together at the off leash dog park at Elm Creek Reserve. July events included a club meeting with our second B-level match for Conformation and a garage sale to help support our upcoming Draft Test in October. The B-match held at the Washington County Fairgrounds gave some new handlers and young dogs some experience in the ring and qualifies our club to take the next step toward AKC accreditation. We were able to raise over \$200 at our garage sale and came up with some great ideas for future events. We also met some new Berner owners and club supporters at both events. Many thanks to those of you who came and participated or volunteered time or garage sale items!

Late Summer and Fall will be a very busy time for BMDCGTC human and canine members. The Club's Regional Specialty is a feature in August, but there are many more activities of all types to keep your furry friends busy. I would love to see all of you at one or more of the events this Fall.

August Events:

- BMDCGTC Regional Specialty, August 27th – This event will be held at the Washington County Fair Grounds. Come see some of the best Bernese Mountain Dogs in the upper Midwest and join your club members for a banquet and a club meeting. We will also be holding a raffle to support the club. Volunteers needed and appreciated.
 - Contact Denise McCabe at mickster@baldwin-telecom.net if you would like to volunteer for the specialty or have questions about the event.
 - Contact Theresa Schwarten at info@littlebearbern timers.com if you would like to contribute items to or volunteer for the raffle.
 - Check the Club Web Site Events Page (<http://twincitiesbmd.org/events.php>) if you would like to sign up for the banquet. Banquet tickets are \$20 if you register before 8/20/10 and \$25 after 8/20/10. Contact Julie Latterell at jall@saintpaulfoundation.org if you have questions about the banquet.▶

President's Letter Continued...

- BMDCGTC Club Meeting, August 27th – We will be holding a Club meeting immediately after the specialty and before the banquet. Come for the show and stay for the Club meeting (approximately noon).

September Events:

- Drafting Intro and Practice, Monday, September 6th, 9am-1pm at 1696 Skillman Ave W. All breeds and levels welcome. If you want to learn about one of our breed's historical jobs, or just want to try it out, this is an opportunity for you. Please contact Micky Trent at trent001@umn.edu by 9/01 to indicate interest and level of training (brand new, some basic training, trained but need practice) so that appropriate levels can be scheduled together. Experienced dogs will probably go early and novices will go later.
- Responsible Dog Owner's Day (RDOD), September 11th at Washington County Fairgrounds. This is an all purpose dog event with something of interest to everyone. See the flyer and article in this newsletter for more details. The BMDCGTC Club will have a booth with information about our breed and will put on a drafting demonstration. Come and volunteer or just enjoy the event.
- AKC Herding Trial, September 11-12 in Pine City. Bernese Mtn Dogs have been accepted as an AKC herding breed as of July 1, 2010. Several of our club dogs will be entered in this trial, so if you would like to see Bernese in action as herding dogs or learn more about herding, this is a great opportunity. Contact Micky Trent at trent001@umn.edu for more information and directions.
- Play Pals, Sunday September 12th at 1:00 at the Staring Lake Dog Park, 13800 Pioneer Trail, Eden Prairie, MN. Contact Carolyn Anderson at kona55422@yahoo.com if you have questions.
- Drafting Practice at Draft Test Site at Hanson Park in New Brighton, September 25 or 26. This is an opportunity for handlers and dogs planning to participate in the club's Draft test in October to have a practice run and check out the site. All dogs that are trained to the cart and ready for a long haul are invited to participate. All club members and guests who would like to observe are also invited. Please contact Micky Trent, trent001@umn.edu, to indicate interest and availability. Final date and time will be determined based on interest.

October Events:

- Club Fun Day, October 3, Site and time to be determined. This will be a "fund-raising-free", fun and games day with a potluck picnic and an opportunity to meet your fellow club members and Berner enthusiasts. We are planning events now. If you have ideas or would like to help, please contact Micky Trent (trent001@umn.edu).
- BMDCGTC 2 Day Draft Test, October 30-31 – We will be holding our second 2-day draft test at a new site this year, Hanson Park in New Brighton. Volunteers needed and greatly appreciated. Contact Micky Trent (trent001@umn.edu) for more information.
- Herding Fun Day in Pine City, date to be determined – Want to see a herding demo or see if your dog has herding instinct? If there is enough interest, we will plan a fun day in October or November at Elysian Farms in Pine City with Kim Schneider, a herding trainer who has worked with many breeds of dogs including Berners. If you want to learn more, contact Micky Trent (trent001@umn.edu) or stay tuned for more information

I hope that I haven't missed anything, but if I have it will show up on the web site and email blasts. We could not offer the number of fun activities that we do without all of your help. Many thanks for all of our members who have participated so far this year and for those who haven't had a chance to lend a hand, there are still plenty of opportunities. Pick an activity that you would like to learn about and volunteer. You can contact any of the Committee Chairs or Board Members to ask about helping with an event. I hope to see you there.●

BMDCGTC HALLOWEEN DRAFT TEST

-Micky Trent (Merlin, Cammie & Viva)

Many people know that Bernese Mountain Dogs pull carts, but most don't know why or what that really means. The BMDCGTC 2-day Draft Test on Halloween weekend (October 30th and 31st) is a great opportunity to see exactly what Berners and other drafting breeds can do.

Bernese Mountain Dogs were traditionally used as all purpose farm dogs in Switzerland. One of their regular jobs was to pull the farm's milk down to the local refinery, often supervised by one or more of the children in the family. Since milk was a major part of the livelihood for many Swiss families, the dogs needed to be reliable and obedient. They also needed to be strong enough to pull heavy loads up and down hills, and agile enough to negotiate through gates and around natural obstacles.

The Draft Tests of today are designed to test the skills that our dogs' ancestors needed to perform their job. Draft tests are sanctioned by several national dog associations, including the Bernese Mountain Dog Association. Depending on the breed, tests may be referred to as drafting or carting tests. The Bernese Mountain Dog Association Test consists of 4 parts. Dogs that are competing for a Novice Title perform all parts of the test on a loose lead. Those competing for an Open Title perform all parts off lead. First, the dogs perform a basic obedience pattern without their carts that includes heeling, changes of speed, turning, a sit-stay and a recall. Next, dogs are harnessed to their cart for an in-ring maneuvering test. The handler and dog team must weave between and around obstacles, show changes in speed, stop for a load to be added to the cart, stop for an obstacle to be moved out of their path and replaced after they have moved past it, back up a specified distance, pass through a narrow area that is 12 inches wider than their cart's width, and ignore a visual and a sound distraction. The third part of the test is a 3-minute group stay in harness. Finally, groups of up to 6 dog-handler teams perform a "long haul" with a load in the cart over a ½ mile course that includes hills, obstacles, and different surfaces. Dogs testing for the Novice Title must pull 20 pounds for the long haul. Dogs testing for the Open Title must pull within 10 pounds under their body weight (a 95 pound dog would pull 90 pounds). Dogs may also test as a pair (brace). Brace teams must perform all parts of the test together. Novice Brace teams will pull 40 pounds on the long haul and Open Brace teams will pull within 10 pounds of their combined weight.

The BMDCGTC club has offered a draft test annually since 2006. This year will be our second offering of a two-day test and our first time at a new location – Hanson Park in New Brighton. If you are interested in seeing what a draft dog can do, please join us at the test. If you are interested in trying out a little drafting practice with one of your own dogs, join us for an introduction to drafting in Roseville on Saturday morning, September 6th. While dogs must be 2-years old to enter a draft test and should be at least 18 months before pulling a load, you can begin introducing dogs at any age to the harness and equipment. See the President's letter and the Events page for more information. We hope to see you at practice and at the test! •

Just a Reminder from Your Raffle Chair

-Theresa Swarten

We're now into August and the Regional Specialty is less than a month away! Where does the time go to?? ☺ I have received a number of VERY nice items, but more are still needed to have a super, successful Raffle. If you would like to add to our "stash", PLEASE let me know soon! Time is running out! You can call me at 651-408-0007, e-mail me at info@littlebearbern timers.com or ship your items to Theresa Swarten, 34570 Ivan Ave, Stacy, MN 55079. Your help is needed AND appreciated!! ☺ THANKS!!

BMD hugs to you all.....•

September 11 Responsible Dog Owner Day – Washington County Fairgrounds

-Julie Latterell, Public Education/Events Chair jal@saintpaulfoundation.org

On Saturday, September 11, the BMDCGTC is participating in the Responsible Dog Owner Day (RDOD) held at the Washington County Fairgrounds. This event is part of AKC sponsored, RDOD events being held all across the country. This is the second year our club has participated in the event, and this year promises to be even bigger and better than last year!

St. Croix Valley Kennel Club, the local club organizing the event, is bringing together 35 All-Breed, Group and Specialty Clubs representing over 80 dog breeds, for a day of learning, meeting dogs, and helping educate others about responsible dog ownership. The event will provide opportunities to:

- Participate in and learn about conformation, rally, obedience, agility (4-H), earthdog and drafting
- Learn grooming techniques to keep your pet healthy and happy
- Meet-the-breeds booths
- Low-cost microchip clinic
- CGC and Therapy Dog certification testing

The BMDCGTC will have a booth and educational materials for attendees about what it is like to live with a Bernese Mountain Dog and what types of things to look for when trying to find a BMD puppy from a responsible breeder.

The club will also hold a carting demonstration that will help highlight for attendees the working heritage of our breed. If you're thinking about giving drafting a try or are considering entering the clubs' 2-day fall draft test (see article on page 3), this would be a perfect opportunity to hone your skills!

To get more information about Responsible Dog Owner Day events across the country, please visit <http://www.akc.org/clubs/rdod/events/> .

To get more details about our local RDOD event, please visit our club website www.twincities.bmd.org/events.

If you are interested in volunteering at the BMDCGTC Meet-the-Breeds booth, or participating in the drafting demonstration, please contact Julie Latterell, Public Education/Events Chair jal@saintpaulfoundation.org •



35 All-Breed, Group, and Specialty Clubs representing 80 breeds have combined together to present the....

Minnesota Responsible Dog Ownership Day and AKC Canine Experience

September 11th, 2010

Washington County Fairgrounds

Lake Elmo, MN

- ◆ See demonstrations
- ◆ Participate in conformation, rally, obedience, agility (4-H), earthdog, carting
- ◆ Get tips on grooming
- ◆ Meet the breeds
- ◆ Sanctioned match for conformation, rally and obedience
- ◆ All AKC breeds, Miscellaneous and Foundation, Stock Service welcome

New exhibitors are encouraged to participate and free handling lessons will be provided prior to the match.

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- ◆ Low cost Microchip clinic for \$25.00 per dog including registration
 - ◆ (a \$5.00 donation for each chip will go to the Three Day Breast Cancer Walk)
 - ◆ CGC and Therapy Dog International testing will be available for minimal cost
 - ◆ Food available on site, net proceeds to the Animal Inn Junior Scholarship Fund
 - ◆ Well behaved dogs on leash with proof of vaccination are welcome on the site

Free Parking and Admission!

Home for Good

-Submitted by Coleen Carroll

This story was written by Bella's new owners. I want a special thank you to go out to John and Julie Somheil who fostered Bella beautifully for part of her stay with us. Thanks too to Lisa Fosdick who accompanied me on the pick up and Nancy Mayer for help finding her a new home.

Home, simply defined, is the place where one lives permanently, especially as a member of a family or household. Today, home is where Bella is and a family is what we are. Unfortunately, that wasn't always the case.

Bella's story began in June 2008, where she was born a full-breed Bernese Mountain Dog on a farm in Minnesota. Soon after, an enthusiastic new family adopted her. They welcomed her into their home and taught her everything she knows - to heel, sit, stay, come and shake hands.

But, in a flash, Bella's first year of life went from happy to miserable. The husband and wife divorced, and the meaning of home and family became a distant memory. Her care and sheer existence became nothing more than an inconvenience.

Crated for over 12 hours a day in a lonely room, her captor fed her unhealthy food and countless treats to keep her complacent. Bella quickly grew to be 30 lbs. overweight, tipping the scales at 145 lbs. Her hips suffered greatly due to lack of exercise, cramped conditions and the extra weight they were forced to bear. Her once silky fur became matted and tangled. Her ears contracted a bacteria and yeast infection, becoming so infected and so clogged she lost almost all hearing.

It was at this time her owner faced facts and contacted The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of the Greater Twin Cities for help. After consulting with Coleen Carroll of their Rescue Committee, he decided to give Bella up in the hopes she would find a good home.

After welcoming Bella into her own home, with her own Berners, Colleen took her to the vet for medical attention. Given the extreme condition of Bella's ears she was put on heavy antibiotics and eardrops. She was also put on a diet and exercise regime to combat her obesity. Next, she painstakingly groomed, removing mat after mat until her coat was returned to its original silky sheen.

Coleen also quickly discovered how starved for attention Bella was. Crying and howling unstopably when left alone or separated from her or her husband. This was the true crime committed against this beautiful dog.

While Bella was getting patched up in a suburb of St. Paul, Minn., 7 hours away my husband and I were looking at Bernese Mountain Dog breeders in the Western suburbs of Chicago.

Three years ago, we lost our 13-year-old Rottweiler to lymphoma. Devastated it took us over a year to even consider a new dog. It was about that same time, I became fascinated with Berners. I researched them extensively including talking to owners, ►

trainers and breeders. I concluded they were just Rottweilers with long hair and no bite. Sharing similar traits such as leaning and sitting on your feet, we knew this was the breed for us.

This past March, we firmly committed to getting a new dog and began actively seeking a Berner puppy from a reputable breeder. As we were about to put a deposit on a summer litter from Bright Eye Breeders in Barrington, Ill., I ran across this on the web: "There are 45 cats and dogs for every person born. Only 1 out of 10 dogs born ever get a home. Only 1 out of 12 cats born ever find a home. 800 dogs and cats are KILLED each HOUR in the U.S., because there are not enough homes for them."

Learning this, I knew I couldn't buy a puppy, too many animals already need homes. I became a woman on a mission and filled out applications with Bernese Mountain Dog rescue groups in all the surrounding states. My husband said he would go anywhere within 8 hours of our home and that was good enough for me.

Wisconsin was the first to reply with great support and suggestions, but no available dogs. Coleen was the next to reply. After talking numerous times on the phone, I knew Bella was the perfect fit. A week later, we drove the 7 hours to pick her up and take her home.

I'm aware Berner's are big sweeties, but truly Bella is the most loving dog I have ever met. She actually gives hugs -- any time, any place. While walking, she looks up at you, smiles and starts skipping. And the tummy rubs -- forget about it! She loves both our cats and is very gentle with our year-old niece. Her training is impeccable; I couldn't have done better myself. She loves everyone and everyone loves Bella. I can't imagine anyone abusing her or being able giving her up.

I'm happy to say Bella is cage free and the bacteria and yeast infections in her ears are gone. Unfortunately, the ear canals remain clogged and her hearing is still limited. We hope in time this will clear up. She has lost over 20 lbs. and, at the time this was written, has only 5 more to go.

Bella goes on two walks a day - 20 minutes in the morning and 40 mins.-2 hours in the early evening. She goes to our nephews' T-Ball games, Little League games and the local park. Next week we see if she's a swimmer.

This is not the end of Bella's story, it's only the beginning. In July, she will attend my family reunion in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, travel to Canada in August for a canoeing/hiking trip and in September hang out for a week with two great Labs named Jake and Marley in Boulder, Colo.

When we embarked on this remarkable journey, we weren't sure how it would turn out, but never once did we have any doubts. We haven't had Bella that long, but she has already threaded her way into our lives so seamlessly, it's like we've had her forever. And I wish we did.●



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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.twincitiesbmd.org



Picture submitted by Micky Trent of her puppy, Viva.

About BerNews

The content of BerNews represents the views and opinions of the authors, and not necessarily those of the BMDCGTC or its members, nor does publication constitute endorsement.

Articles written by members of the BMDCGTC on any subject that may be of interest to members are welcome. All works must be sited.

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