



# BerNews

Winter 2010 Volume 7, Issue 4

## Special Interest Articles:

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- To Draft or Not to Draft
- 2011 Play Pals
- Berner Rehome Program to the Rescue
- What you can do for better Berner health

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## **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.*

## **President's Letter**

*-Micky Trent (Merlin, Cammie & Viva)*

Minnesota has definitely given us a beautiful Fall! I hope that you and your Berner friends have been able to make use of the wonderful weather. The season started with a fun PlayPals in Elm Creek Park Reserve in Maple Grove in the first week of August. The BMDCGTC Regional Specialty brought up the end of August. We had good weather, very good entries, and a very nice banquet. In September we started gearing up for the Halloween Draft Test with a practice session for new dogs, followed by a practice run for more experienced dogs at our new test site in New Brighton. PlayPals held an event at Staring Lake Dog Park in Eden Prairie. The "Fun Club Meeting" at Julie Laterell's home just over the border in Wisconsin truly turned out to be Fun! Who knew that we had so many talented egg-in-spoon racing, Simon Says playing, hot dog carrying owner-dog teams? The club's 2-day draft test on Halloween weekend was our last event for the Fall. We were again blessed with great weather, good entries, and fun judges. See the Draft Test article for more information. ▶



"Fun Judges"

## President's Letter Continued...

The weather may be changing and the days getting shorter, but there will still be plenty of opportunities for fun with your dogs this winter. Some of the opportunities are listed below. Check out the Events Calendar in this Newsletter and the Events Page on the club web site for more information.

### November Events:

- November 20-21st – Minneapolis Kennel Club at Canterbury Downs in Shakopee.

### December Events:

- December 11-12 – Granite City Kennel Club Dog Show in St. Cloud.
- December 18 – Don't miss the Winterfest Club meeting, Officer elections, and a really good time at Coleen Carroll's home in Mahtomedi! Bring your dogs for a romp around the campfire and some socializing.

### January Events:

- January 7-9, 2011 – Northstar Working Group and Land O' Lakes Kennel Club Dog Show at the River Center in St. Paul. This is one of the two largest dog shows in Minnesota. Don't miss it.
- January 8, 2011 – BMDCGTC Obedience B Match following regular classes at the Land O' Lakes Kennel Club Dog Show. This is a great opportunity to get a feel for obedience classes or to do a dry run before entering a regular trial.

I hope that you all find many ways to enjoy your Berners this winter and I hope to see you at our club events this winter. Enjoy the snow – it is coming!●



**CLUB FUN DAY IN SPRING VALLEY, WI**  
*Photos by Sarah Tennessen*



## To Draft or Not to Draft

*-Micky Trent (Merlin, Cammie & Viva)*

The BMDCGTC held its 5th draft test and its 2nd 2-day draft test on Halloween weekend, October 30 and 31st at our new site, Hansen Park in New Brighton. Scheduling an outdoor event at the end of October in Minnesota is a bit daring. Last year we shivered through a rainy/snowy cold weekend, but this year both dogs and humans were happy with the cool but sunny weather. The new site provided a beautiful setting and a nice indoor facility for food, cider and coffee to help us warm up from the morning chill. Shannon Cihlar once again did the club proud with her seasonally appropriate obstacles for the maneuvering portion of the test, including a grim reaper, a pumpkin headed farmer, some tombstones, a hay stack, faux-wrought iron narrows, a big creepy rubber rat for the visual distraction and a howling spider for the sound distraction. Our judges, Larry Bohlig from California and Linda Thomas from Illinois, got into character (and costume) for the walk through on Sunday morning.

Ten teams were entered on Saturday and 14 were entered on Sunday, with entries coming from as far away as Seattle. Berners were the main breed represented, but we also had Rottweilers, a German Shepherd, and a Belgian Sheep dog in the mix. The open dogs started us off with a bang each morning. Open dogs must perform all four parts of the test (obedience, maneuvering, 3-minute stay, and ½ mile long-haul) without a leash. As additional challenges, open dogs must do their 3 minute stay with handlers out of sight, and carry more weight (to the closest 10 pounds under their body weight) on the long haul than the dogs competing in the Novice test. Carol Manley with Rumble and Kathy Berg with Olive were our open dogs on Saturday. They set a blistering pace on the long haul and may have set a land speed record for a ½ mile walk! The open test was followed each day by the Novice teams, including one brace pair (Micky Trent with Merlin and Cammie). Novice teams perform the same 4 parts of the test as do open dogs, but with leash attached. The handlers are in site for the 3-minute stay, and the teams pull 20 pounds/dog for the long haul. Brace teams perform the 4 parts using a coupler between the two dogs with one leash attached to the coupler.

The pass rate was low on Saturday, but our club was well represented. Carol Manley with her speed demon, Rumble, and Shannon Cihlar with her somewhat more sedate Chaska were the two successful teams. Carol and Rumble obtained their Open Draft Title, while Shannon and Chaska got their Novice Draft Title. The stars were better aligned for day two, and 5 teams were successful. Carol Manley and Rumble picked up the second leg on the way to a Master Draft Dog Title. Kathy Berg and Olive received their Open Draft Title. ►



## To Draft or Not Continued...

Micky Trent with Merlin and Cammie obtained their 3rd leg on the way to their Advanced Novice Draft Title. Shannon Cihlar and Brie picked up their 5th and final leg for the Advanced Novice Draft Title. Kathy Max and Sage, our guests from Seattle, also obtained a leg on the way to their Advanced Novice Draft Title.

I cannot thank our volunteer help enough for putting on such a wonderful trial! Nancy Mayer once again did a great job as the trial secretary and kept us on track and running smoothly. Darwin Missling and Craig Schwarten split the chief steward duties and took turns outrunning our speedy open teams. Club members who weren't showing (and some who were) filled in as stewards when needed. I was most pleased to see some new faces with an interest in drafting who came to help and to learn about drafting. I am looking forward to seeing them join us next year with their dogs in practice sessions and in the fall test. When you see these dogs in harness smiling and wagging their tails, you can understand how connected this breed is with drafting. So the question is not, "To draft or not to draft?" It is, "When can I start?" I am looking forward to seeing everyone in harness and wagging their tails next spring!●



### Club Calendar of Events

#### 2010

**November 20 – 21** Minneapolis KC Show  
Canterbury Downs, Shakopee, MN

#### **December 18**

Winterfest  
Coleen Carroll and Rick Bryan's house

#### **December 21 – 22**

Granite City KC show  
St. Cloud, MN

NOTE: Beginning in 2011, **Berner PlayPals** will move to a monthly format. PlayPals events will occur the **second Saturday or Sunday of EVERY month!!!!** Check out the newsletter article to read all about the new format!!!!

#### 2011

#### **January 7 –9**

Northstar Wordking Group & Land 'O Lakes  
Kennel Club Show,  
RiverCentre, St. Paul, MN

#### **January 8**

BMDCGTC  
Plan B-OB Match (Obedience only),  
RiverCentre, St. Paul, MN

#### **January**

Berner PlayPals  
Date/time/location TBD

#### **February 12** (tentative date)

BMDCGTC Club Banquet

#### **February**

Berner PlayPals  
Date/time/location TBD

#### **March 4 – 5**

BMDCSEW B2B  
Regional Specialty Show

**NOTE:** 2011 club meetings and Berner PlayPals dates have not been set as of this newsletter publication date.

For the most update to date info on upcoming club events check out the club events calendar at [www.twincitiesbmd.org](http://www.twincitiesbmd.org)●

## 2011 Berner Play Pals

-Marilynn Blake

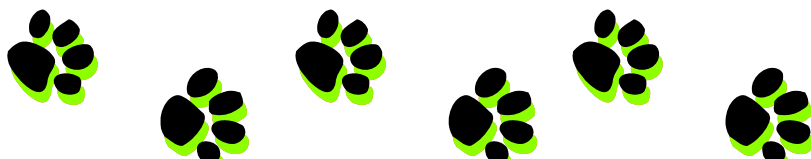
There are going to be some exciting changes to Berner Play Pals come January 2011 so I am hoping everyone will want to check out the Events page on the club website often and join in on all the fun!

First we will be moving to a monthly gathering that is going to occur on the second weekend of each month. The location, time of day and which day of the weekend will continue to change so we will be able to include as many people as possible. And, should this weekend happen to coincide with another club function then the location and timing of Berner Play Pals will allow interested people to easily do both without giving up an additional day or traveling a great distance between the 2 locations. You can count on an enjoyable time with Owners, Club Members and other interested people.

The second big change coming to Berner Play Pals will be the addition of half hour "mini clinics". So just what is a mini clinic and why have them you may be asking? A lot of the Berner Play Pal attendees are non-owners that are interested in learning more about the breed, or they may be new to the breed, or they are club members that are companion owners so these will be optional sessions that have an informal format of question & answer, here is a hand-out with ways to learn more about the topic situations that will be held right before Berner Play Pals. There will be a wide variety of topics such as "do I care about health testing if I am just a companion owner?", "What questions can I expect a reputable breeder to answer?" and things we can do with our dogs, for enjoyment or competition, like backpacking or drafting. These mini clinics are not going to extensively cover any topic but will be geared towards generating an interest in learning more and giving individuals a starting point. When it make sense the topic will be timed to proceed other club events by a month or two so that, for example, the "do I care about health testing if I am just a companion owner?" mini clinic will not only give a starting point for learning more but also allow interested owners the opportunity of doing so at Health and Wellness Day if they choose. How can you help make Berner Play Pals a success?

1. Come and enjoy Berner Play Pals.
2. Suggest topics you would like to see covered at mini clinics.
3. Volunteer - We need anyone with information and the willingness to share it at a mini clinic.
  - a. Are you willing to bring a cart and your dog so people can see them and ask questions?
  - b. Are you good at trimming feet and willing to explain how it's done?
  - c. Have other ideas?
4. Offer suggestions on locations.
5. Contact Marilynn at [mblake1595@cs.com](mailto:mblake1595@cs.com) to offer your assistance and ideas.

Hugs and belly rubs to all four legged fur kids! We look forward to seeing you at Berner Play Pals!●



## Calling All New Title Holders

It's that time of year again. If you have earned an AKC title, drafting or herding title, CGC or therapy dog title in 2010, please let me know. If your dog is a veteran (7 and older), let me know that too. Watch for more details on the club afternoon out coming soon.

Please send the appropriate information to:

Shannon Cihlar  
1748 Co. Rd. 88 SW  
Alexandria, MN 56308  
Tel: 320-283-5378  
E-mail: kscope@runestone.net

**DEADLINE: December 13, 2010**

**Name of owner(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

*If dog is co-owned it must live in the household of member receiving award*

**Phone Number/E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

Registered Name of dog \_\_\_\_\_

Call Name of dog: \_\_\_\_\_

Title Rec'd \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title Rec'd \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Title Rec'd** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

The following titles are eligible for awards: AKC, CKC, or BMDCA

Champion

Agility Titles

Drafting Titles

Tracking Titles

Therapy Dog

Obedience Titles

Canine Good Citizen (CGC)

Herding Titles

Rally Obedience Titles

We will also be honoring all veterans. If you have a veteran (7 years or older) in your household, please let us know.

Name of dog(s) and date of birth:

\_\_\_\_\_ ●

## Berner Rehome Program to the Rescue

*-John Somheil, BMDCGTC Rescue and Rehome Committee*

Dog rescuers are cruel, soul sucking parasites targeting upon my humanity. They victimize me for my good fortune and comforts with brutally effective manipulations that would make the most corrupt and conniving telemarketer blush. That was my first impression of animal rescue. Ya see, my rescue story begins the same as most, I was ambushed. It happened when I was looking at dogs on some website or another and I followed a link. Don't follow the links people; links are their bread crumbs. Especially avoid the ones entitled 'urgent.' That was my mistake, I clicked an innocuous little button labeled 'Urgent' or something like that; it's all kind of a blur. I do clearly remember being assaulted with pictures of cute little pups and fluff balls with headlines like "My Days are Numbered," "Save My Life" and "My End Is Nigh".

We weren't in a position to adopt, but my wife and I decided we could foster a dog until it finds a forever home. So we filled out the app, went through a few interviews and a home inspection then \*poof\*, we were a certified foster home for Midwest Animal Rescue and Services, or MARS. Within two weeks of clicking the 'Urgent' button we had a foster dog that didn't seem urgent at all.

Actually, our first experience with animal rescues was two year before the 'Urgent' button. We applied to adopt from the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of the Greater Twin Cities. It took more than eight months before we were matched with a dog. The worst part wasn't the wait, it was the half-dozen dogs that came into the rescue and went to other homes because they weren't a good match for us. Finally, we got our dog Barry, a perfect match.

Later we fostered a Bernese for the club named Bella. Bella was a beast, grossly overweight, near deaf from untreated ear infections and always, always panting. If Bella had to go potty in the middle of the night she'd pant on my face, nose to nose. If she wanted to be petted, she would pant on my hand. If she was hungry ... actually she was always hungry. Always.

Bella ended up with an active family near Chicago and has trimmed down to a healthy weight. As awkward and goofy as Bella was, we missed her and decided to foster more dogs. Unfortunately (actually it's a good thing), there weren't always Berners going through the club's Rescue and Rehome Program, and for gaps of time there weren't any dogs to foster.

MARS, on the other hand is never short on dogs. Last Saturday alone they received 34 new dogs that need homes. Last month they found homes for more than 100 dogs. The operation is huge with hundreds of volunteers and they operate their own vet clinic just for their foster animals, it's always busy.

Our defining experience came when we got Anya, a pitiful Saint Bernard. Poor Anya was emaciated and half bald. She had infections in her eyes, ears, chest and feet. Her heart had a murmur, her hip bones and ribs showed through the skin. Anya was almost a year old, but her growth was stunted. The only part of her body that had grown to full size was her tongue, so it didn't fit in her mouth. ►

## Rescue Continued...

We quickly realized that our Berner, Barry, was the biggest influence in Anya's rehabilitation. While we gave Anya a daily cocktail of pills, drops and dietary supplements Barry taught her to romp, play and be a dog again.



*Anya the day she was discovered by MARS in an Indiana shelter.*



*Barry the Bernese Mountain Dog became a big brother to Anya. He taught her to play, set the good example in training and brought out the fun-loving dog she is.*

After Anya, I became a Placement Coordinator for MARS. As a foster parent, I just took care of the dog until I got a call saying it was going to be adopted. Now I screen applicants and decide who gets to adopt.

The one request I had when offered the Placement Coordinator position was to also be the breed representative for Bernese Mountain Dogs. That way any Bernese that comes into the rescue would be under my supervision. My one mistake was mentioning this to Coleen.

As the Rescue Committee head honcho for the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of the Greater Twin Cities, I knew Coleen would be a great resource if and when I ever had a Berner that needed a home. By the end of the phone call, I was joining the rescue board and screening all adoption applicants. I thought aloud, "Shouldn't I join the club first?" It was only a seven minute call. (I got ambushed, again).

### **BMDCGTC Rescue and Rehome Program**

The Bernese club's Rescue and Rehome program is run by a committee of four, Coleen Carol, Lisa Fosdick, Nancy Mayer and myself. I only officially joined the committee a few weeks ago. Last year we successfully placed 13 Berners but could easily handle twice that number as our program has no shortage of qualified potential adopters. At the moment we have 17 active applications from families wanting to adopt one of our ►

## Rescue Continued...

rescued Berners. Having so many applicants means we will not have to resort to gut wrenching headlines or a link labeled 'Urgent.'

Most of our work is spent screening applicants and deciding which are the best match for a given dog. Screening is a tedious and very time consuming process. Before anyone can foster or adopt from the Rescue and Rehome Program we review their application and conduct a phone interview, then contact their references and speak with their veterinarian. If the adopter passes those checks we'll go to their home to interview the entire family in person. We inspect the house and assess any pets they already own. Only after a would-be adopter passes all those checks and inspections is when they can actually meet a dog. This has to happen for every dog we place.

The dogs we rescue are normally surrendered by their owners. The reasons vary but we get a lot of dogs because of a divorce or health problems. Lately, more are coming in because the owners fell on hard times and simply can't afford their Berner anymore. Of course, we don't always hear the real reasons: that the dog isn't a cute little puppy anymore, the dog is too big, it sheds, it drools, the kids are bored with it... Whatever the real reason doesn't really matter, we'll take the Berner and find him a better home.

The philosophy of the Rescue and Rehome Committee is that we should be responsible for our dogs for the rest of their lives. If someone adopts a Berner from us but can't keep it for any reason they have to return the dog to us. It doesn't matter if they have to give the dog up days or years after adopting. We insist on this, we preach this and we spell it out in the adoption agreement.

October has been by far our busiest month this year. The club had two dogs that needed homes: Bella (a different Bella not to be confused with overweight Bella mentioned above) and Rosey. Both dogs were surrendered to the club and both already have new homes lined up. Thanks to a lot of preparation and prescreening we were able to find Bella a forever home before the owners formally surrendered her.

In addition to our own rescues, we also help to find homes for other Berners in the region held by other rescue organizations. This month we're helping Bear, a purebred Bernese in Wisconsin. Bear had a troubled past fraught with dominance issues but has spent the last few months in rehab. Hopefully, he is a changed dog, relaxed and hump-free. Because we maintain so many active applications to adopt we are able to identify people that not only want to adopt a Berner but also can fulfill Bear's unique needs. If Bear does find a home, this month we'll have three placements for October. Good numbers but we can always do more!●



*A thinner, happier Bella just a few months after being rehomed. When Bella first entered the Rescue and Rehome Program, she was so heavy she limped.*

## What you can do for better Berner health!

-Julie Latterell, BMDCA Health Liaison for the BMDCGTC, [jal@saintpaulfoundation.org](mailto:jal@saintpaulfoundation.org)

Long before the 2010 National Specialty started, individuals were thinking about a grassroots effort to help improve the health of the breed.

There are many health studies being done currently that are aimed at learning more about diseases that affect dogs and in some cases Berners specifically. The goal of this research is to advance the understanding of health conditions, disease processes and the heritability factors for diseases that affect dogs. By learning more about these diseases, researchers can help find ways to identify them through simple tests and hopefully lead to more effective treatment options. This information in turns helps breeders make more informed breeding decisions. Selectively breeding dogs that do not have defective genes has long been regarded as a means to improve health and function in breeding populations. By using genetic testing tools developed by health researchers, breeders can minimize the number of dogs stricken by devastating illnesses.

But in order for the health studies to move forward, the researchers need information about dogs and families of dogs that have these diseases. Part of the challenge of this work is getting the word out to owners of dogs affected by some of the diseases being studied to let them know their Berner can part of the solution to better breed health. Flash back to the grassroots effort hatched before the 2010 BMDCA National Specialty...

The grassroots idea was to have a liaison within each regional club be the local go-to person for the most current information about all the health studies. This involves:

- Keeping local owners informed about current health research efforts through communications and club newsletters
- Helping owners understand the sample submission process for each health study

If you are in the unfortunate situation where your dog has been diagnosed with a devastating illness, you have our sympathy, but know you're not alone. You or your vet can go to [www.bernergarde.org/home/healthstudies.aspx](http://www.bernergarde.org/home/healthstudies.aspx) for the most current listing of health research being done to see if there is a way your dogs' illness can make a contribution to better canine health, or you can contact me as the club's health liaison and I can help you directly.

Often participating in research studies can be done by simply providing data you already have or by providing simple lab tests performed or collected by your veterinarian.

Please note, that **researchers need information about healthy dogs too!** Some research projects also need samples and information from healthy Berners.

A brief listing of current research projects is noted below\*: ►

## Better Berner Health Continued...

### Cancers

- Malignant Histiocytosis (healthy Berners needed)
- Mast Cell Tumors or Osteosarcoma
- Lymphosarcomas – Hemangiosarcoma – Osteosarcomas (Researcher: Dr. Breen)
- B-Cell Lymphoma - Mammary Melanoma – Hemangiosarcoma (Researcher: Dr. Lindblad – Toh)
- T-Cell Lymphoma – Osteosarcoma – Certain Melanomas – Hemangiosarcoma (Researcher: Dr. Modiano)

### Neurological – Spinal

- Degenerative Myelopathy
- Rear-end Paralysis

### Other Research Studies

- Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA)
- Liver Shunt
- Epilepsy

### DNA Bank

- BMD DNA repository (healthy Berners needed)

The BMDCGTC also offers other ways to aid in Berner health. Participating in health screenings and updating your dogs information on Berner-Garde at our annual **Health and Wellness Day** is a great way to make sure your Berner is doing all they can for the future of the breed!●

\*current as of September 1, 2010

## **New Book Available: The Bernese Mountain Dog – Yesterday and Today**

*-Joye Neff*

I am so very excited to be able to announce that I am now taking orders for the fantastic new 336 page hardback Berner book, The Bernese Mountain Dog - Yesterday and Today, which will be printed in the next few weeks. I am sure that this new book is at the top of every breeder's, judge's and Berner lover's "Wish List". Silvana Vogel Tedeschi is the author of the book, with English text by Lindy Kunz.

Here is the information from the back cover of the book:

The Bernese Mountain Dog  
Yesterday and Today

by Silvana Vogel Tedeschi  
English text by Lindy Kunz ►

## New Book Continued...

This new book gives English-speaking readers the first opportunity to have access to important facts about the breed which have only been available in other languages. The interesting history of the breed is described in great detail. With words and informative illustrations, it is shown how the Standard is to be interpreted, and how the individual traits should be considered in the show ring and in breeding. Particular attention is paid to the distinctive features of the temperament and behaviour of these former farm dogs, showing how their history has molded their character and behavior. The following chapters explain how a puppy develops mentally and physically with good advice on raising and general management, as well as life with the adult Berner today. The last chapter contains information about problems involved in the growth of the skeleton and how these can be influenced by nutrition and proper care of the puppy. The inclusion as an appendix, of the first complete translation of Professor Albert Heim's text, "Die Schweizer Sennenhunde" published in 1914, makes this book particularly valuable. It will be the standard work on Bernese Mountain Dogs for many years to come.

For more information about The Bernese Mountain Dog - Yesterday and Today by Silvana Vogel Tedeschi go to: <http://bernese.biz/bernerbook.htm>  
Here is how you can order your book:

If you live in the US, mail your check for \$39.90 plus \$3.16 shipping (\$43.06) made payable to Joye M. Neff and mail to: Joye Neff, 1182 Firwood Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15243-1881

To order using PayPal or credit card, you may order through Brenda Broome's website. A fee of \$1.30 will be added to pay the fees to those companies. Here is her website so you can order using PayPal/Credit Card:

[http://standsbyriver.zoovy.com/category/books\\_dvd\\_s\\_cds.books\\_on\\_pets\\_animals/](http://standsbyriver.zoovy.com/category/books_dvd_s_cds.books_on_pets_animals/)

I can't wait to get my copy of the book and to start shipping them to everyone once I get my shipment of books!

Remember, you also try to win a personally inscribed copy of this fantastic book by making a donation to the BARC Fundraiser - check it out - it is item #L in the fundraiser:

<http://bernese.biz/2010BARCFundraiserB.htm>

Please feel free to post this to other Berner lists, your club lists and all of your Berner friends! ●



## Club Officers

### President

Micky Trent  
651-639-0483  
[President@TwinCitiesBMD.org](mailto:President@TwinCitiesBMD.org)

### Vice President

Shannon Cihlar  
320-283-5378  
[VicePresident@TwinCitiesBMD.org](mailto:VicePresident@TwinCitiesBMD.org)

### Secretary

Karen Johnson

### Treasurer

Denise McCabe

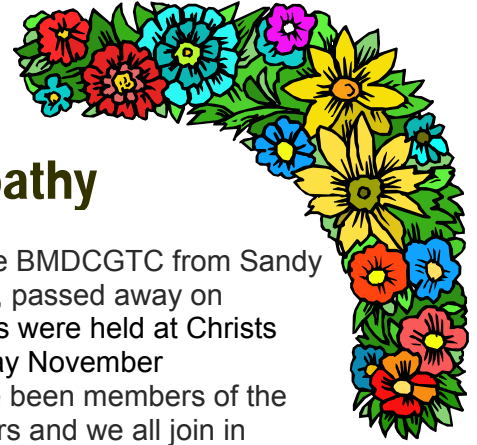
### Board Members:

Coleen Carroll  
Micky Trent  
Darwin Missling  
Debra Wilkins  
Sarah Tennesen

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.twincitiesbmd.org](http://www.twincitiesbmd.org)



## With Deepest Sympathy

Information was forwarded to the BMDCGTC from Sandy Horne that her father, Bill Horne, passed away on Sunday November 7th. Services were held at Christs Church in Otsego, MN on Sunday November 14th. Sandy and her family have been members of the Berner community for many years and we all join in sympathy for her loss.●

## 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.

Send to:

Catherine Muenich  
15520 Eagle Shore Dr.  
Apple Valley, MN 55124  
[imveryserious@live.com](mailto:imveryserious@live.com)●

### BMDCGTC

C/O CATHERINE MUENICH  
15520 Eagle Shore Dr.  
Apple Valley, MN 55124



COMPANY NAME  
STREET ADDRESS  
CITY, STATE 00000