



BerNews

Spring 2005 Volume 2, Issue 2

Bernese Mountain Dog Club of the Greater Twin Cities

The BMDCGTC was formed in 1992 to help promote the best possible breeding, training, health, and well-being of the purebred Bernese Mountain Dog.

Special Interest Articles:

- Tracking Fever
- Swiss Fun Match
- Anticipation Over 2006 Nationals
- BMDCA Survey & Berner-Garde Database
- The Lucy Fund

Canine Quote:

We give dogs time we can spare, space we can spare and love we can spare. And in return, dogs give us their all. It's the best deal man has ever made.

-M. Facklam

Tracking Fever!

-Julie Latterall (Cooper, Dutch, Owen, & Watson)

FINDING THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD

At my house each of my 4 Berners has their place in the world. Cooper, the oldest at 5+ is the undisputed alpha dog. Despite being hampered by cruciate injuries, he still enjoys keeping the other 3 dogs in line, going for leisurely swims in the river behind our house and attempting to keep all of our cats out of HIS space. He is also the antithesis of what all the dog books say about the breed—willing to please, easy to train, food motivated—NOT! With 4 separate obedience classes under his belt, on top of the obligatory Puppy Kindergarten class, he is the most stubborn, willful, Berner you have ever met. Just let this be a lesson that obedience classes do not make an obedient dog!

Watson, at nearly 2 years of age, may be a candidate for agility and his daily antics in the yard show me that at every turn. Watson's brother, Dutch, is just beginning his conformation career and is also proving that he may well be a candidate for the obedience ring as well. That leaves Owen—he had a very brief show-ring career. Yes, 4 shows with no points does make a VERY brief show ring career. At 4 years of age, Owen is ripe to find his place in the world. It is my goal to find a job for him....

FINDING A JOB FOR OWEN

Owen is the epitome of what the dog books say about the breed—willing to please, people oriented and easily trainable. I was doing some internet surfing and found on our club events link on our website www.twincitiesbmd.org, a listing for a weekend tracking seminar in close proximity to home. Tracking wasn't an AKC event that I knew a good deal about, so I went on the AKC's website (www.akc.org) to find out more information. What I learned sounded exciting! I quickly signed up for the tracking event, hosted by the Fox River Field Spaniel Club in Wisconsin.

TRACKING...WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

We all know that dogs have a keen sense of smell, but did you know that a dog's sense of smell is 100,000 times stronger than humans? Tracking uses the dog's innate sense of smell and turns it into a team sport that both canine and owner can enjoy together. AKC tracking is a canine sport that demonstrates a dog's innate ability to recognize and follow a scent. It is the foundation of canine search and rescue work. Unlike obedience and agility trials where dogs respond to the owners commands, in tracking a dog is completely in charge, for only he knows how to use his nose to find and follow a track.

THE TRACKING PLAYERS

The sport of tracking utilizes a tracklayer and a judge. The tracklayer is responsible for laying a track, or a designated "path" that the dog must follow. The tracklayer also places articles along the track that the dog must indicate or identify along the way. Each track is "aged" for a certain period of time for each type of tracking test. Aging is the time ►

NEW MEMBER APPLICANTS

-Nancy Arndt (Cassie, Crash, & Rocky)

The following people have applied for club membership. They have attended at least one meeting and are eligible to be voted into the club at the next meeting, April 30.

Robb & Gail Simpson

Lakeland, MN
Berners: Dually
Sponsors: Coleen Carroll & Rick Bryan

Laurie & George Rose

Lake Elmo, MN
Berners: Windy
Sponsors: Kathy Pruno & Nancy Arndt

Laura Krozser

Minneapolis, MN
Berners: Maddie
Sponsors: Doug Hildre & Coleen Carroll

Laurie & Jim Coleman

Richfield, MN
Berners: Buddy
Sponsors: Darwin Missling & Amber Loshbough



Berner Rainbow Bridge

Nor-Ham's Quellen
Panda Conn
(Panda) 1996-2005
Adam & Amy Conn

Continued Tracking

between when the track is laid and when the dog begins to follow the track. The tracking test is complete once the dog and owner have successfully navigated their way along the pre-determined track and indicated each article along the way. The role of the judge is to design the track that the tracklayer lays and approve the articles used in the tracking test. The judges also determine the start time for each dog and evaluate the dog's performance.

In tracking, the dog must closely follow the path the tracklayer has walked and find the articles dropped along the track. The judges follow the dog and handler to determine if the dog is on or off the track. If the dog is off the track and the judges determine that the dog cannot return, one judge will blow the whistle to indicate that the dog has failed. There is no time limit in tracking as long as the judge feels the dog is still "working".

Tracking itself requires very little equipment—you simply need a harness, a 20-40 foot lead, a few flags to mark your track and an open grassy area free of obstacles, such as roads, ditches or woods.

TRACKING TITLES

Dogs may earn 3 different tracking titles; the TD (Tracking Dog) title, the TDX (the Tracking Dog Excellent) title and the VST (Variable Surface Tracker) title. A Championship Tracker (CT) title is awarded to those dogs that have earned all three tracking titles.

In a **Tracking Dog (TD) test**, the track is from 440-500 yards long, with 3-5 turns along the way. The track is aged from a half-hour to two hours. A dog must indicate a glove or a wallet placed at the end of the track. Tracks are plotted in an open field with uniform cover. There are no obstacles such as roads, ditches or woods. The start of the track will be marked with a flag. A second flag is placed 30 yards from the start flag to indicate the direction of the first leg of the track. There are no other flags in the field.

The **Tracking Dog Excellent (TDX) test** is 800-1000 yards long, with 5-7 turns and is aged from 3-5 hours. The track also has two sets of cross (diversionary) tracks and has some obstacles, such as roads, ditches or woods to navigate. The start is marked with a single flag and the dog must determine the direction of the first leg. There are four dissimilar articles for each track, one at the start and three more along the track.

Variable Surface Tracking is from 600-800 yards long, with 4-8 turns and is aged from 3-5 hours. The articles must be one each of leather, cloth, plastic and metal. The VST track must also contain three different surfaces with one turn on a non-vegetated surface such as concrete. This test demonstrates the utility of the tracking dog to work in an urban environment.

BACK TO OWEN

After my weekend-long tracking seminar in Wisconsin with a bevy of Field Spaniels, a Belgian Sheepdog, a Golden Retriever, a Doberman Pinscher, and several Newfoundland's, it was apparent to me that there are different styles of tracking dogs, but all dogs possess an innate tracking ability. Berner's tracking style has been described this way to me...."they appear to be tracking like they are looking for their long-lost friend or their favorite food."

Since people and food are two of Owen's favorite things, I think he may have a bright future in Tracking and we might just have found Owen's place in the world! I for one can't wait to get out in a field and see what we can do together—we've both got a little bit of Tracking Fever!●

Letter from the Editor

-Catherine Johnson (Chester)

BMDs, GSMDs, Appenzellers, and Entlebuchers—Oh My!!!

On Saturday, April 30th, the BMDCGTC will be hosting its second annual “Swiss Fun Match” at Animal Inn in Lake Elmo, Minnesota.

This is a great opportunity for club members and visitors to become more familiar with all four Swiss Sennenhund breeds.

The following is a quick overview of these tri-colored companions:

Mountain Dogs Are Family Dogs

- Mountain dogs have a peaceful temperament.
- A well-trained mountain dog is a responsible member of the family.
- Mountain dogs love children.
- Mountain dogs don't hunt.
- Mountain dogs live in peace with other animals.
- Mountain dogs bond strongly to house and grounds, so they're rarely found astray.

Bernese Mountain Dogs

The Bernese is a striking, tricolored, large dog that is sturdy and balanced. It is intelligent, strong, and agile.

Entlebucher

The Entlebucher is the smallest of the Swiss mountain dogs. They're becoming more popular as people discover they're compact in size and easy to care for.

Greater Swiss Mountain Dog

The Greater Swiss is a large, powerful, alert, short-coated dog of sturdy appearance.

Appenzeller

The barely medium-sized dog has a muscular body with a short, curled tail. It is a very keen and has an inherited urge to act independently.

Source: *The Bernese and Other Mountain Dogs* by Gerd Ludwig
Drawings by Gyorgy Jankovics

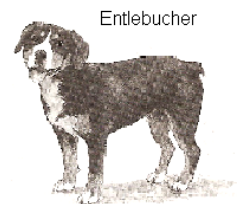
Bernese Mountain Dog



Greater Swiss Mountain Dog



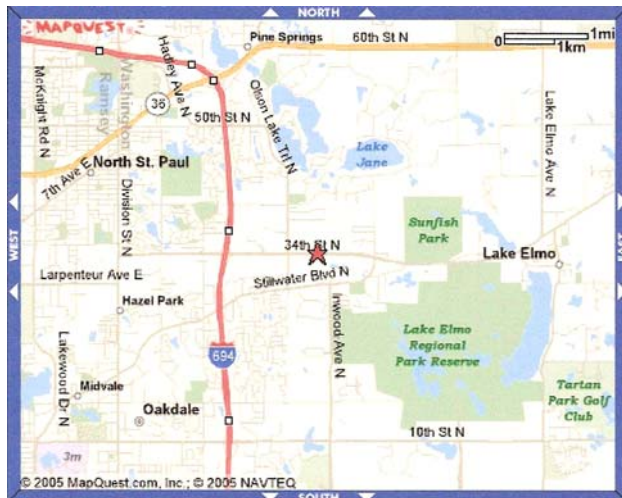
Appenzeller



Entlebucher

Swiss Fun Match Information

- Meeting Date/Time:** Saturday, April 30, 2005
Registration begins at 8:30am
- Meeting Place:** Animal Inn Training School
8633 N 34th St.
Lake Elmo, MN
651-777-2317
- Directions:** From I-694
Take the 34th St. N/MN-5 E exit
Go east 1.2 miles to Animal Inn
- Order of Events:** Obedience
Lunch
Meeting
Auction



Providing Health Information Entitles Club Members to Discounts and Pats on the Back

-Catherine Johnson (Chester)

Recently, BMDCGTC club members have been requested to provide health information about their Bernese Mountain Dogs. There are two tasks at hand: The BMDCA would like a general health survey form filled out, AND the Berner-Garde Foundation would like us to submit information to their ongoing database.

If you haven't submitted your survey(s) yet, do it now! The deadline is April 30th, 2005. The survey can be done online at:

<http://intercom.virginia.edu/SurveySuite/Surveys/BMDCA2005HealthSurvey/index2.html>

Also, please take the opportunity to see if your dog is included in the Berner-Garde database by going to:

<http://BernerGarde.org>

If your dog is not included, please bring a copy of their AKC registration and pedigree to the Swiss Fun Match on April 30th. You'll receive a discount on fun match entry fees for doing so. If your dog IS already in the database, print out the record and receive the same discount on your entry.

Personally, I'm going to do the general health survey and print out Chester's Berner-Garde database record just as soon as I'm done with this newsletter. And yes, I expect a pat on the back at the Swiss Fun Match!●

Committee Formed to Make Banners for 2005 National Specialty

-Catherine Johnson (Chester)

A committee including Shannon Cihlar, Julie Latterell, and I was formed at the last BMDCGTC board meeting in February. The goal of the committee is to create two banners for the 2005 BMDCA National Specialty. The banners will measure 2x3 feet. One banner will be for display and be passed on to each subsequent national specialty, and the other banner will be auctioned off. It has been requested that each regional club participate in this fundraising activity.

One of the original designs was brought to the table by me. Then Julie and Shannon spent an entire weekend day actually making the banners. Word has it that they are almost finished and will be available for viewing at the Swiss Fun Match just before they are shipped off to Gettysburg, PA.

A special thank you goes to Julie and Shannon for all their hard work. What a great way to represent the club at the 2005 National Specialty!●

One of the Original Banner Designs



Much Anticipation for the 2006 Nationals

-Adam Conn (Bison & Pockets)

After the Swiss Fun Match on April 30th, a large contingent from the club will be heading east to Gettysburg, PA, for a weeklong celebration of the breed. The 2005 BMDCA National Specialty will feature numerous events on each day, with tons of educational and fun events and competitions in tracking, obedience, agility, rally, herding, drafting, and the prize jewel of the show year, the Best in Specialty conformation match. An amazing 706 entries have been made for Best in Specialty alone, including 155 champions of record. Plenty of long days are in store for our group, as I believe the club will have at least one dog entered on each day of the competition. If you've never been to a

national specialty, you'd be amazed at how magical it is. You get to see how versatile this all-around farm dog is, how beautiful, and even graceful this breed can be. And nothing compares to the shopping at the nationals, with numerous vendors selling anything and everything Berner-related! Plus, it's an amazing social event, where you can meet folks you've only known through online resources, such as the Berner-L, and perhaps meet the breeder of your next BMD!

The next national specialty will be close to home in Frankenmuth, Michigan, hosted by the Heart of Michigan BMD Club. Frankenmuth is a quaint Bavarian theme town near

Saginaw. BMDCGTC will be offering its support for this National, already assisting with the catalogs and the specialty newsletter. Plenty of opportunities to help are available, and would be greatly appreciated. Helpers get good seats for the activities! More information on the 2005 National Specialty can be found at <http://www.bmdca.org/specialty/2005/>

Author note: Adam will be competing with Bison in Novice Rally Obedience, Novice Agility (Standard Preferred and Jumpers with Weaves Preferred), and Conformation (American-Bred Dog).●

The Lucy Fund

-Shelley Strohm & Steve Boda (Bella)

The Lucy Fund was recently established for Bernese Mountain dogs who are facing extraordinary and unexpected medical care, and the bills that accompany it. This fund was established to help Club members financially, but more importantly, emotionally.

We established this fund in honor of our girl Lucy, who died of cancer in September 2004.

We adopted Lucy when she was 10 weeks old. It was the first time we had adopted a dog together, so needless to say, we were both excited and apprehensive.

And then we met her...and her extended family. I knew there was no turning back when Lucy's uncle swaggered into the room, sat beside Steve and clubbed him for attention. Fifteen minutes later, we were driving away in a terrible thunder storm. Poor little "pink collar" kept crying, so we kept stopping and saying "Go potty, go potty?" After several stops, we realized that she had just left the only family she knew, and was now in a car with complete strangers who kept dragging her into the rain to do something she didn't need to do.

We were leaving town that weekend, so I suggested that Lucy stay with the Hildres until Sunday. But that wasn't an option for Steve. Instead, we snuck her into the hotel in a baby blanket. She was a perfect guest, and that began a long life of traveling with us. She once attended a formal charity ball in Santa Fe. We entered the lobby of our hotel, and suddenly she was swarmed by people. The next thing we knew, she was wandering around the party socializing while we sat at the bar. Furthermore, we will never forget the time a woman saw her across a lobby and exclaimed loudly, "Look at the head on the bitch!" Needless to say, she got some looks until she ran over to Lucy and started scratching Lucy's ears.

We truly knew that Lucy was a Mountain Dog when we lived in Colorado. Watching her go up a mountain was remarkable. She could climb vertically with no effort and loved every minute of it. She was not, however, fond of chair lifts or open stairs, as we learned the hard way. On one occasion we needed to go up a flight of backless steel steps. She wouldn't budge. Finally, Steve just leaned over and in some adrenaline rush, picked her up and carried her. I don't

know who was more surprised; Lucy, Steve, me, or the poor hotel maid who bumped into them at the top of the stairs.

Back in Minnesota, she loved going to the lake. She spent a good portion of her youth hanging out with a golden retriever and a crazy black lab. I always assumed all dogs could swim so was surprised when we realized that Lucy was not swimming but was walking on the bottom of the lake. Steve always claimed that she just didn't want to get her hair wet. One time, she showed up completely soaked. When I was marveling at this change, our friend whispered that she had fallen off the dock.

Lucy was also a "working" dog in another sense. I've had the luxury of taking her to work with me in several of my jobs, and she loved it. She had wonderful elevator etiquette and usually became the lobby greeter. We just try to forget the time she took a big dump in the lobby when the owner of the building entered with his financial backer.

Finally, one of my favorite Lucy stories involved a friend who helped us ►

Braggs and Accomplishments

Thistledown Sabrina V JN's, owned by Carol Manley and Nancy Mayer qualified in Novice Rally Obedience at the Fargo-Moorhead KC show, on April 9th & 10th. She qualified Saturday with a 96 out of 100 and qualified again Sunday with a perfect 100. She placed 1st in the Novice B rally class.

CONGRATULATIONS!

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Adam Conn
Susan Acklen

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.twincitiesbmd.org

The Lucy Fund Continued...

out when we were both working late. I found out that my friend doesn't like dogs, and I was so surprised. I asked her why she was always so fond of Lucy. She cocked her head and said, "Oh...I never thought of Lucy as a DOG."

Lucy was such a huge part of our lives and losing her was devastating. She was just a magnificent dog, and her beauty, charm, and sense of humor will never be replicated. She was also the only dog I've ever met who WILLINGLY wore hats, could be aloof, and

scared stiff all at the same time.

When we found out that Lucy had cancer we decided to fight it. We truly thought we were going to lose her. The night before we planned to euthanize her, she stood up in the ICU, pulled out her feeding tube and headed to the door while dragging two machines behind her. After snapping at the vet tech and eating two hotdogs, she made it clear that she was coming home. And she was at home for 9 more months. She put up a brave fight, but at the end, we knew it was time

to help her go. It was one of the most difficult decisions we have ever made. However, we both felt at peace with her passing.

We hope that the Lucy Fund will help other club members know that there is love and support for them during the bad times.

For applications and application guidelines, visit the BMDCGTC website and go to the link <http://www.twincitiesbmd.org/LucyFund.php>•

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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