



BerNews

Summer 2005 Volume 2, 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 Shines at Nat'l Specialty 2005
- Berner PlayPal Coordinator Position Filled

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President's Letter

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

Cruciate Injuries

My first Berner, Cooper obviously has a special place in my heart—he is my first dog and my first Berner. Unfortunately, he has two partial tears of his cruciate ligaments—one in each leg. This has been a life altering injury for him and one that has forced me to learn what I can about the various treatment options available. Sadly, this injury is fairly common in our breed and in large breed dogs in general. This article is my attempt to share what I have learned along the way about this injury and the various treatment options available. Hopefully you will never have to know these things for your own dogs. However, it is always good to be aware of the health issues associated with the breed we all love!

Understanding the Injury

Damaged or torn anterior cruciate ligaments are common in people engaged in athletic activities. Many football players have had their season ended when this

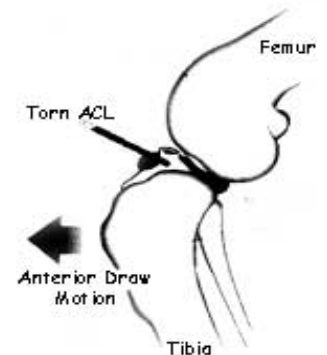
ligament is torn during a game. This same knee injury is common in our pets as well.

The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is one of two ligaments that provide structure inside the knee joint (see illustration).

The ligament prevents the tibia (lower leg bone) from moving forward. Injury to the ACL usually occurs when the leg is planted on the ground and then a torquing or twisting of the knee occurs. Damage to the ligament results in a sudden profound lameness. The pet usually is holding the injured rear leg off the ground. When examined the joint will often elicit an "anterior drawer motion." This means that the tibia can be slid forward.

If the injury is not corrected, degenerative changes develop in the injured knee. Muscle atrophy, thickening of the joint capsule and bone spurs can develop over time. Instability of the stifle joint can also result in damage to the meniscus.

Corrective measures are aimed at recreating stability of the knee. This can be accomplished in several different ways. The type of correction depends on several factors. The weight and age of the pet as well as their activity level are considered when determining the best option for treatment. It is not uncommon for the ACL of the other leg to rupture in time. It is thought that these animals may be more predisposed to cruciate injury due to genetics and/or life style. Reports indicate that up to 40% of animals will rupture the other ligament within 18 months of surgery. ▶



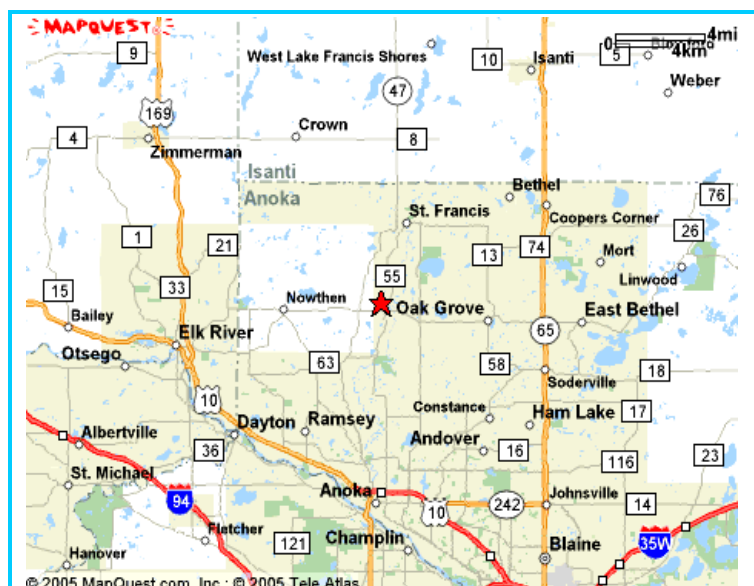
Club Meeting and BBQ/Potluck

Meeting Date/Time: Saturday, July 16, 2005
 Club Meeting 12:00pm
 Board Meeting 10:30am

Meeting Place: Doug & Debbie Hildre
 4600 199th Lane NW
 Anoka, MN 55303
 765-753-8819

Directions: Take Hwy 10 east at Anoka.
 Take 7th Ave. Exit.
 Head north approximately 10 miles to
 Co. Rd. 22.
 Go west (Rt.) 1 block to Kiowa St.
 Turn north (Rt.)
 Go 2 blocks to 199th Lane NW.
 Turn west (Lt.)
 Go to end of cul-de-sac.
 It is the last house.

*Brats, hotdogs, and buns will be provided.
 There is also a walking trail behind the house
 (about 1.5 miles long). Dogs may be taken on leash.●



BMDCGTC Shines at National Specialty 2005

-Shannon Cihlar (Eli, Brielle, & Chaska)

The place was Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, May 9 through May 14, and it was wonderful! There were over 900 Berners on the show grounds. I have never seen so many Berners in one place in my life. It was a great time. The weather was picture-perfect, warm (too warm sometimes) and sunny every day. There was something for everyone with conformation, agility, obedience, rally obedience, herding, tracking, and drafting. Berner University, where you could attend classes on almost anything you can imagine pertaining to Berners, was open to all. Daily social gatherings, LOTS of items for sale at different booths, flags from every club, state, and many countries, Sieger evaluations, health clinics, and daily ceremonies including different countries and civil war times, rounded out the entertainment.

Our club was well represented and many members did very well. In conformation there was Sandra Horn and her girl Lucy, Dou-Hil's A Lucious Dream, co-owned by Lee Horn, who took first place in the 9 to 12 month class and was in contention for winner's bitch. There was also Ch. Abbey Road Don't Pass Me By, who won an award of merit in the best of breed class, owned by Deborah, John, and Elizabeth Wilkins and bred by Karen Stromgren. In Rally, Adam Conn and Bison (Southwind TME Purple Majesty), qualified, and they were also in agility and conformation. Brielle van 't Stokerybos, owned by Shannon Cihlar, qualified in novice obedience, completing her companion dog title. She also passed the novice draft test and earned her novice draft dog title,

and qualified in rally. Completing these three requirements qualified her for the Badge of Honor award given at this year's specialty, and she did it all in one day! Other club members showing at the specialty were Darwin Missling and Dreyfus, Karen Stromgren with Samson and Kiley, John and Debby Wilkins with Miles and Ch. Abbey Road's Golden Slumbers, CD, Randy and Peggy Bebeau with Duncan, Tru, and Winslow, and Doug and Debbie Hildre with Gina and Cash.

The National Specialty is held in a different part of the country every year and has something for everyone. Next year it will be held in Frankenmuth, Michigan, May 1 through May 6. Hope to see you there!●

Alimagnet Dog Park Wins Prize Money

-Catherine Johnson (Chester)

Recently, Dog Fancy Magazine/Novartis ran a contest to identify the best dog parks in America. Thousands of nominations were sent, including one for Alimagnet Dog Park. Taking into consideration all of the large, well-funded parks there are across the nation, Alimagnet's chances seemed slim. However, in late March, a call was received announcing that Alimagnet Dog Park came in third place and won a \$10,000 grant!

The PACK board (People of Alimagnet Caring for K9s) decided how the money would be spent. Then on June 25, 2005, Dog Fancy/Novartis hosted a community event at the park to celebrate. It was a beautiful day, and many people showed up to volunteer their services. PACK members were recruited to spread new wood chips, landscape around the front entrance, and install a new fence. In addition, a separate area was created for arthritic dogs to get their exercise.

It was an exciting event,

and even a local radio station was there to cover the story. A representative from Dog Fancy/Novartis was there to present the \$10,000 check in ceremonial fashion to Burnsville's Recreation Advisor and PACK Board of Directors. Free food, work gloves, and T-shirts were given to everyone that was willing to lend a helping hand.

How did Alimagnet beat thousands of other dog parks, you ask?

Nominees were required to answer a number of questions about their park, and most of the PACK's answers ended up being about the park's community of users, not the park itself. That appears to be what made the difference.

For example, does Alimagnet have a special doggie water fountain? No, dog park users bring and share water. Does Alimagnet have a shelter? Yes, PACK volunteers raised funds and built it with their own hands, tools, and time. Does Alimagnet have special

events at the park? Yes – all planned and hosted by PACK volunteers. Park users regularly throw doggie birthday parties at the park often complete with hot coffee, donuts, and custom canine birthday cakes.

BMDCGTC has contributed to the success of the park by getting permission and hosting an annual Berner PlayPal event each March. At the same time, we celebrate Chester's birthday by bringing balloons and treats. This works well, because Alimagnet is Chester's biggest hangout, and just about everybody there knows him.

The next time you're at Alimagnet, you can congratulate PACK members and friends on having one of the best dog parks in America. Most importantly, enjoy the new improvements! A full story of the park and the improvements should be available in the June issue of Dog Fancy magazine. •

Source: Summer 2005
PACK Newsletter



Dog Fancy/Novartis was there to present the \$10,000 check.

HAIR OF THE DAWG



Berner PlayPals Coordinator Position Filled

-Catherine Johnson (Chester)

A special thank you goes to Coleen Carroll and Shelley Strohm for taking on the shared role as Berner PlayPals Coordinator. The last Berner PlayPal event at Otter Lake (White Bear Township) on Wednesday, June 29 was a rain-defying success.

In case you didn't know, the Berner PlayPals program promotes frequent, informal gatherings for club members with opportunities for exercising and socializing our dogs – and us. It is also designed to give training assistance, networking opportunities, and support to current and prospective club members.

The first PlayPals event occurred in early May 2003 when several Berners gathered together for the Animal Humane Society (AHS) walk. Since then, events have been held in various parks and private homes throughout the Twin Cities area. In 2004, PlayPals visited the Berne, MN Swissfest to the delight of

the organizers and crowd! (The Swissfest event is scheduled again for this year, August 6 & 7).

Some goals for the program include:

- Organize on- and off-leash activities suitable primarily for Berners (but allows for non-Berners)
- Make sure that play does not become too rough and that participants are acting as good ambassadors for the breed
- Smaller and more frequent gatherings
- Hikes and more motion-oriented events
- Continued presence at Swissfest, AHS, and other prominent area dog events
- Find suitable locations and hosts for PlayPals events

Finding new locations is perhaps the most challenging goal of all. This program is dependent upon volunteers to scout locations, lead walks, and make themselves available as a resource. We would like to find locations with existing trails or interesting (but safe!) terrain. You may already have a favorite spot or regular walking time – please share it with us!

Remember, PlayPals events should be free to attend. Parks that require permits, parking fees, etc. should be rare or not considered appropriate venues.

Contact Coleen Carroll, VicePresident@TwinCitiesBMD.org, with your ideas.●

Sources:
<http://twincitiesbmd.org/BernerPlaypals.html>

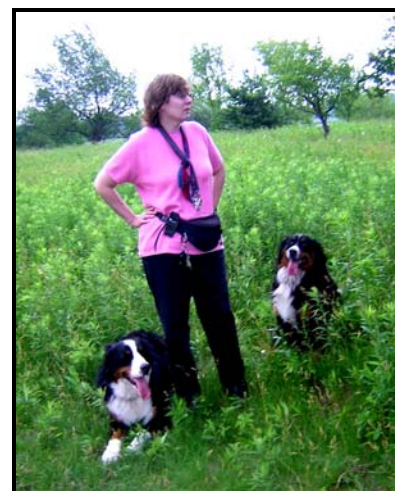
*Berner PlayPals
Coordinator Position
Announcement*

Summertime Playpals

Checklist of Things to Bring

- ❖ Water
- ❖ Plastic bags
- ❖ Bug spray
- ❖ Allergy Meds
- ❖ Sunscreen
- ❖ Camera
- ❖ Towel
- ❖ Summer hat
- ❖ Snacks
- ❖ Cell phone
- ❖ Collar w/ ID
- ❖ Rabies tag
- ❖ Leash
- ❖ Your dog!

Marilyn Blake & her Berners, Chance & Star, enjoy the breeze at Otter Lake Dog Park. Marilyn has Berners that came from BARC (Bernese Auction Rescue Coalition).
<http://www.barcinc.net>



Continued Cruciate Injuries...

TRADITIONAL SURGICAL REPAIR

The traditional surgical repair can be divided into intracapsular and extracapsular techniques. Intracapsular techniques involve using a portion of the patellar ligament to replace the damaged ligament. This type of correction isn't used much any more as it has been found that the stability of the stifle joint is often better with the extracapsular procedure. The extracapsular technique involves using synthetic sutures placed around the outside of the joint. This suture, often nylon, is positioned so that it approximates the anatomical location of the anterior cruciate ligament, thus providing additional needed stability for the joint.

Points to Consider:

- Recovery is a bit slower than with TPLO repair. Usually you see toe-touching within the first week.
- Since it is a procedure that has been used longer, some feel there is more of a history to determine the long-term success of this procedure.
- Less invasive than TPLO.
- May not be the best option for very active dogs or those participating in

performance events, or large-breed dogs.

- Procedure relies on scar tissue and the 'false' ligament that is implemented via suture material so it doesn't necessarily alter the mechanics for the better but it does keep with the original design of the knee—may be a pro or a con depending on whether you feel the injury is due to a structural problem in the knee or is something that is a genetic predisposition.

TPLO REPAIR

Tibial plateau leveling osteotomy (TPLO) is a third surgical option. This procedure involves changing the angle of the stifle joint through cutting and plating the tibia.

The first part of the surgery involves removing the torn ends of the cruciate ligament and examining the medial and lateral meniscus cartilages. If a tear of either meniscus is found, the damaged part of the meniscus is removed. The second portion of the surgery actually is the "leveling" of the two joints or the tibial plateau and involves making a curved cut in the top of the tibia bone itself. The tibial

plateau is then rotated in order to level the slope of the joint. A plate and screws are used to hold the tibial plateau in place so that the bone can heal well.

Points to consider:

- Recovery is generally thought to be faster although recovery time is still 4-6 months, during which time activity is strictly limited.
- Surgery is more costly than traditional repair – generally around \$2,500.
- The surgery is thought by some to be the best solution for active or large-breed dogs who will put more pressure and strain on the affected joint.
- Considered the more invasive surgery and requires careful research to ensure the surgery is done by a surgeon certified in this procedure. It would be best to have the surgery performed by someone who has done the procedure before successfully with BMD's.

OTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS:

For some people, surgery is the last option to consider. There are risks inherent in any surgical procedure—anesthesia is always a risk in addition to the risks outlined above. For some, those risks are simply too great to take. There are a number of people who have used alternative forms of treatment such as homeopathy and chiropractic care combined with supplements to treat cruciate injuries. As with any form of treatment, the success of these alternatives includes success and failures.

It is important to be aware of all risks before proceeding with any treatment option or any other surgical procedure. Regardless of the treatment method you choose, it is always best to be fully informed of your options and consult with your own veterinarian and an orthopedic veterinary specialist before deciding on the best option for you and your dog!

Sources:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orthodogs>

Orthodogs is dedicated to providing support, information and advice to owners who are facing any orthopedic challenge with their canine friends. •

Club Officers

President

Julie Latterell
715-772-3121
President@TwinCitiesBMD.org

Vice President

Coleen Carroll
651-407-8152
VicePresident@TwinCitiesBMD.org

Secretary

Jim Sheehan
612-701-4016

Treasurer

Nancy Arndt
763-783-1996

Board Members:

Shannon Cihlar
Peggy Bebeau
Darwin Missling
Adam Conn
Susan Acklen

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.twincitiesbmd.org

New Member Applicants

-Denise McCabe (Mick)

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, July 16.

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

Susan Bacig

Saint Paul, MN
Berners: Wolfgang
Other Dogs: Bruckner & Kate
Sponsors: Nancy Mayer & Adam Conn

Shyan Fitzgerald & Jason Mikunda

Minnetonka, MN
Berners: ?
Sponsors: Nancy Arndt & Darwin Missling●

Susan Bacig's Wolfgang at the March PlayPal Event



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 Johnson
14764 Hallmark Dr.
Apple Valley, MN 55124
munch904@aol.com

COMPANY NAME

Address Line 1
Address Line 2
City, ST 11111



COMPANY NAME
STREET ADDRESS
CITY, STATE 00000