



# BerNews

Summer 2006 Volume 3, Issue 2

## **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:**

- Bloat – Know the Facts & Be Prepared
- 1<sup>st</sup> Annual BMDCGTC Awards Banquet
- Regional Club Council (RCC) & BMDCA News

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## **Letter from the Editor**

-Catherine Muenich (Chester)

**It's okay to eat cheesecake when you're in training for a draft test.** Other sports I've participated in include weightlifting, gymnastics, and karate. Cheesecake never seemed to be a kosher part of the regimen. I think I found the sport of my dreams!

**Thanks to Julie Latterell for hosting a day of draft practice at her country home in Spring Valley, WI.** It was a beautiful day, so it was a great opportunity for us to be outside and work on our skills. Shannon Cihlar was on hand to be our pretend judge. She was able to provide many helpful tips and information needed to be successful at the upcoming BMDCGTC draft test to be held in Crystal, MN on Saturday, June 17.

**I learned quickly that there are a lot of draft test exercises you and your dog need to master.** First, you and your dog need to be able to demonstrate **basic**

**control.** This is accomplished by showing that your dog can heel, properly respond to a recall, and relax for a 3 minute group stay. Second, you need to be able to **harness and hitch** your dog up to the draft cart. It seems like this would be an easy task, but those harnesses can be tricky.

Third, the team does some **practical draft work.** The judge directs the team to perform some basic commands (normal, slow, halt, and back). Have you ever tried to teach your Berner to backup for you? It's tough! Also, the team needs to show that they can work with distractions around them, load and unload items from their cart smoothly, and maneuver around obstacles.

Last but not least, the **distance freight haul** is traversed as a group. The outdoor trail is about ½ mile long and each team is required to carry some weight depending on their

ability. Watch out! The gate openings are not as wide as they appear, and I swear those trees will jump right out in front of you.

**So you may ask, "Why go to all the trouble?"** It is because that is what owning a Bernese Mountain Dog is kind of all about. Berners have been working dogs for generations in the Bernese Oberland of Switzerland. They hauled dairy products, such as milk and cream, from the farms to the dairy. As a working dog, the Berner literally pulled his/her own weight in contributing to the prosperity of the family. In other words, carting with your Bernese Mountain Dog is a way of upholding tradition.

Furthermore, if cheesecake becomes a tradition at draft practices, that makes the whole idea seem even better. Thanks again to Micky Trent, designated veterinarian for the BMDCGTC Draft Test, for bringing the dessert!●

## Pictures from the draft practice on May 20<sup>th</sup>.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Annual BMDCGTC Awards Banquet

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

*Photos courtesy of Brian Kittilson*

On February 4, 2006 club members gathered at Major's Sports Café in Golden Valley to recognize their 2005 accomplishments by hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual BMDCGTC Awards Banquet.

After a social hour, club members enjoyed a lovely meal and then moved onto the official honors, emceed by 2005 club president, Julie Latterell.

As part of the club's mission to encourage participation in dog-related events, club members were honored for the achievement of AKC or CKC titles or awards. In addition, a special ceremony honoring veteran dogs was held. All AKC/CKC title winners received a lovely rosette—in Berner colors of black, rust, and white of course! Those club members whose dogs achieved veteran status in 2005 received a handsome framed certificate.

We plan on this being an annual event and invite ALL club members to attend. It was a wonderful way to honor our work with our dogs, but also to socialize with other club members.

Additional photos from the event are on our club website [www.twincitiesbmd.org](http://www.twincitiesbmd.org) in the Photo Gallery.

Thank you goes out to the Awards Banquet Planning committee led by Shannon Cihlar with thanks also to other planning committee members, Susan Acklen, Peggy Bebeau, and Julie Latterell for making it such a memorable event.

Look for information in upcoming newsletters about how to submit awards banquet information for those 2006 award winners lurking out there!►

## World's Ugliest Dog Not a Bernese Mt. Dog

-Catherine Muenich (Chester)

It is no great surprise to report that the world's ugliest dog is **not** a Bernese Mountain Dog. BMDs tend to have a natural eye-catching beauty. Perhaps, that is why they're so often seen used in advertisements for all different kinds of dog-related products.

Instead, the winner goes to a 14-year old pedigreed Chinese crested named Sam. In June 2005, Sam won the "World's Ugliest Dog" title at the Sonoma-Marín County Fair contest for the **third** consecutive year.

The *Associated Press* described Sam as follows:

*"The tiny dog has no hair, if you don't count the yellowish-white tuft erupting from his head. His wrinkled brown skin is covered with splotches, a line of warts marches down his snout, his blind eyes are an alien, milky white, and a fleshy flap of skin hangs from his withered neck. And then there are the Austin Powers teeth that jut at odd angles."*

It is reported that the sight of Sam elicited a variety of responses ranging from



Sam – "World's Ugliest Dog"

uncontrollable laughter to stares of horror.

Unfortunately, Sam suffered from a number of age-related ailments and died in mid-November 2005. Sam's claim to fame had earned him some degree of stardom. He had been featured on several talk show sets and was even scheduled to be part of a Discovery Channel series covering the world's ugliest species.

However, Sam was probably best known through his owner, Susie Lockheed of Santa Barbara, California. She created a website in honor of Sam that highlights their wonderful and loving relationship. News of Sam's death spread fast, and emails poured in from around the world expressing condolences.

Sam was a rescue dog, and Lockheed explains on [www.samugliestdog.com](http://www.samugliestdog.com) that having set this example, more and more animals that had once been considered unadoptable are now being taken in and loved by families. Sam certainly conveyed an important message while on this earth that served his fellow creatures well.

As for our own Bernese Mountain Dog companions - They need not be perfect either, only special to us.

Sources:

[www.samugliestdog.com](http://www.samugliestdog.com)

[www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)

*The Scoop Newsletter for Alimagnet Dog Park*●

## 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.

### Jim & Sharon Millard

Stillwater, MN

Berners: Sawyer & Morgan  
Sponsors: Coleen Carroll & Denise McCabe

### Duane & Chris Shelley

Stillwater, MN

Berners: Dakota & Sammy  
Sponsors: Nancy Mayer & Julie Latterall

### Dean White & Renee Boyd

Hugo, MN

Berners: ?

Sponsors: Coleen Carroll & Rick Bryan●



## Sound the Swiss Alphorns!

We're invited back again this year to the 53<sup>rd</sup> annual Berne Swissfest in Berne, MN the weekend of August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. See the club events calendar for details.●

## Bloat – Know the Facts and Be Prepared

- Lisa & Steve Fosdick (Magnum & Mesa)

If you own a Berner, you no doubt have heard the term “bloat” or Gastric Dilatation Volvulus (GDV). Most will regard it with some fear and will have read about it when researching getting a puppy. But how much do you really know about it and if your Berner is older (or you are on your 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or 10<sup>th</sup> Berner) how much do you remember of what you learned early on? And what new research might have come along since then? And most importantly how prepared are you if it happens to your beloved dog?

Our first Berner, Magnum, experienced a life threatening bloat this last May 2005, and I’ll admit that we were very lucky to have saved him. I don’t ever want to rely on that much luck again, and now we are much better prepared in case it ever happens again. I want to share our story in case it helps another family to save a beloved Berner. My goal is not to educate you about bloat as much as it is to remind you to keep educated and to be prepared as you will need to react quickly. There is a wealth of information available via the internet (one great starting page with loads of helpful links is: <http://www.globalspan.net/bloat.htm>) and it is important for you to consult with your regular vet on the specifics regarding your dog. It is also critical for you to really know your dog and to act when they just “don’t seem right” to you.

Our story began at the end of a typical day when Steve took Magnum out for a final potty

before bed. Magnum got up and went down a short flight of stairs and outside looking perfectly normal. A few minutes later they came back in the house and Steve yelled for me because something “wasn’t right” with Magnum. I rushed to the entryway to see Magnum looking quite panicked and pacing. A few minutes later he was blowing large bubbles out of his mouth and having a bit of trouble walking. I called the emergency vet clinic (luckily we had the number right next to the phone – I still had to dial 3 times because I was so nervous) and they told me to get him in right away. We left the house within a couple of minutes and arrived at the clinic about 15 minutes later. Always call first – the clinic needs to be ready for you upon arrival.

At first Magnum was sitting in my lap in the backseat of the car and later he decided to lay down next to me with his head in my lap looking up at me with a look of “help me”. Somehow I was able to hold it together and not cry and pretend to be calm while I was talking to him and petting him. I think this is very important. If at all possible have 2 people take the dog to the clinic – 1 to drive and the other to sit with the dog and try to keep it calm. I truly believe that if the person who can be with the dog is the “alpha” in your “pack” your chances are much better of saving the dog.

The clinic was ready and waiting for us at the door and took him immediately to x-ray. The x-ray confirmed a bloat with a complete rotation of the

stomach. We were told we had about 5-10 minutes to either get him prepped for surgery or to put him down. We got a very quick yet professional description of the risks and possibilities of what else could go wrong or be found during the surgery and an estimate of the cost for the immediate care (\$3000) and a rough ballpark for further follow-up afterward (\$500). I mention these costs so you have something to think about before it happens – there is no time to consult with anyone on if you can afford this or not when it is happening.

We opted for surgery and gastroplexy (tacking the stomach to the abdominal wall) to prevent the torsion from happening again. Magnum recovered from the surgery quickly and was rapidly back to his usual self. Unfortunately we lost Magnum just 10 months later to hemangiosarcoma but we wouldn’t have given up those 10 months with him for anything.

I offer here a quick list of things to consider in order to be prepared in case of a bloat in your Berner. ►



## Bloat continued...

### **Bloat Preparedness Checklist**

#### **1. Educate yourself and talk with your regular vet and ask questions.**

The first thing is to talk with your regular vet about bloat and ask for their recommendations on feeding, timing of water, and if you have a female puppy that you will be having spayed ask how they feel about performing a gastroplexy at the time of spaying. This is a procedure where they sew the stomach to the wall of the abdomen – think of it as a bit of an insurance policy. The dog can still get bloated but the stomach cannot flip.

#### **2. Locate a good (and hopefully close) emergency vet clinic.**

Check with your regular vet to find out which emergency vet clinic they recommend. Ask other dog owners who live near you or others in the club. Many bloat cases seem to occur in the evening or night, so you will likely not be going to your usual clinic. Actually go and locate the clinic and write their phone number where you keep all your other emergency numbers.

#### **3. Make a “just in case” plan.**

If you have young kids at home, who will stay with them if you have to leave suddenly for the emergency vet? Is there someone who can stay calm

and sit with the pet during the car ride? How much can you afford to pay to save your dog?

#### **4. Consider some emergency supplies**

Again consult with your regular vet on these, but consider keeping a supply of GasX or Phazyme in the house. This is an over the counter human drug (simethicone) that can be given to dogs to alleviate some of the gas buildup and may buy you a bit more time. Also consider keeping a supply of Rescue Remedy which is an herbal liquid solution that will help calm a pet.

#### **5. Make sure others who watch your dog for you are educated and know what to do.**

There is a great 1 page reference guide for GVD that can be downloaded at: <http://www.jersey.net/~mountain dog/berner1/bloat.htm>

I would highly recommend printing it out, adding your emergency vets phone number and keeping it handy. Certainly I'd leave it with anyone who was watching my dog for me while I'm away along with the dogsitter information sheet found at: <http://www.globalspan.net/bloat dogsitter.htm>•

## **BRAGS**

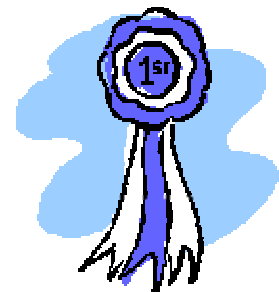
**CH Abbey Road's Day Tripper**, owned and bred by the Wilkins, took Best of Breed both days at Minnesota River Valley Kennel Club show on May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Northfork's Midnight Magic**, co-owned and bred by Karen Johnson, took Best of Winners both days at Minnesota River Valley Kennel Club show on May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. He earned 4 points over the weekend; he now has 11 points. He was first time owner/handled by Kathy Geragi.

**Star Magnolia RN**, owned by Pam and Pat Pudlik, earned her second leg in Rally Advanced at the St. Paul Dog Training Club trials on April 28<sup>th</sup> with a score of 93 in Rally Advanced A.

Other brags to be found at our club website:

<http://twincitiesbmd.org/NewsAwards.html>•



## Awards Banquet continued...

Please join me in congratulating all the 2005 Award winners noted below:

### AKC/CKC TITLES

#### Owners

Randy and Peggy Bebeau  
 Shannon Cihlar  
 Shannon Cihlar  
 Adam and Amy Conn  
 Brian and Julie Kittilson  
 Carol Manley  
 Pam and Pat Pudlick  
 Charles and Peggy Shaul  
 Carol Taylor  
 John, Deborah and Elizabeth Wilkins  
 John, Deborah and Elizabeth Wilkins  
 John, Deborah and Elizabeth Wilkins  
 Micky Trent

### VETERANS

#### Owners

Susan Acklen and Tim Staples  
 Randy and Peggy Bebeau  
 Coleen Carroll and Rick Bryan  
 Adam Conn  
 Steve and Lisa Fosdick  
 Bill and Lee Horn and Debby Wilkins  
 Bill and Lee Horn and Debby Wilkins  
 Karen and Jerry Johnson

John and Nancy Mayer  
 John, Deborah and Elizabeth Wilkins  
 John, Deborah and Elizabeth Wilkins

#### **Dogs Achieving Title**

CH Rustic Farm Catch the Wind  
 CH Chaska van't Stokerybos  
 Brielle van't Stokerybos RN, CD, NDD  
 CH Southwind TME Purple Majesty RN, TDI  
 Dou-Hil's Blue Eyed Daisy, CGC  
 Thistledown Sabrina V JN's, CD, CAP, RN  
 Bernergarden's Star Magnolia, CGC  
 Jasper, CGC  
 Sandusky's Stand in Awe, CGC  
 CH Abbey Road's Day Tripper  
 CH Abbey Road's Till There Was You  
 CH Abbey Road's Don't Pass Me By  
 Merlin the Magi, CGC, TDI

#### **Dogs Achieving Veteran Status**

Keke's Color Me Happy  
 Abbey Road's Duncan Thunderwood  
 CH Ravenswald LoverBoy  
 Nor-Ham's Quellen Panda Conn, CGC, TDI  
 J&N's Magnum  
 Abbey Road's Seargent Pepper, CD  
 Abbey Rd's Penny Lane  
 AKC/CKC CH Abbey Road RK Samson, CD,  
 CGC  
 AKC/CKC CH J&N's Phoenix Rising  
 CH Abbey Road's Golden Slumbers  
 CH Top Hat's Circe v. Abbey Road

*Author's Note:* A special thanks to club and board members who surprised me with a special presentation in my honor. Nancy Arndt gave a heartfelt speech; Coleen Carroll provided a lovely floral bouquet and Shannon Cihlar presented lovely gifts from the club to recognize my four years as president. Thank YOU all for making my 4 years at the helm such an enjoyable and rewarding one!!!!



## Regional Club Council (RCC) & BMDCA News

-RCC Representative, Julie Latterell & John Mayer

For those of you that do not know what the Regional Club Council (RCC) is, perhaps we should start off our column by explaining what the purpose of the position is. The purpose of the RCC committee is to “effect greater communication between the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America (BMDCA) Board and the BMDCA membership as well as between the Regional Clubs, thereby assisting the BMDCA Board to be more effectively responsive to the BMDCA members.”

The overall objectives are:

- ❑ To increase communication to and from the BMDCA membership and the board they elected to serve them through the Regional Club structure.
- ❑ To foster communication between the Regional Clubs; disseminating information and coordinating mutual interests and concerns.
- ❑ To promote the development of Regional BMD Clubs

What does that really mean in practice?

In a summary, the RCC representative is both our club's voice to the BMDCA and the conduit by which the BMDCA can speak directly to the regional club's membership about issues pertinent to the breed and to the club. Regional Club's RCC Representative (and their back-up) are nominated by the regional club's board. However, the BMDCA has no jurisdiction over the RCC group itself. The RCC representatives from each regional club across the country communicate about issues pertinent to their clubs via a yahoo group throughout the year.

Topics that have been covered in 2005 are:

- ❑ Different types of club membership levels regional clubs have (e.g. full membership, associate membership, etc. and the costs for each)
- ❑ Poll about whether club's publish the Treasurer's report for their club in their newsletter and how frequently it's published
- ❑ Discussion of club liability insurance
- ❑ Feedback about BMDCA dues notice publication
- ❑ How to handle payment of judges for shows that are cancelled due to weather (e.g. hurricane Katrina)?
- ❑ Cost of BMD puppies
- ❑ How do clubs prevent owners that are clearly not suitable homes for BMD's from getting a puppy and is that our role?
- ❑ Discussion of Dr. Breen's cancer study
- ❑ How many club's require meeting attendees to sign waivers at club-sponsored events
- ❑ Sharing of club fundraising ideas
- ❑ Poll regarding criteria for inclusion on breeder referral lists

In addition, RCC Representatives meet once a year during the National Specialty for an in-person meeting.

One of the main agenda items for the in-person meeting in Frankenmuth, MI will be club liability insurance. Some regional clubs membership base and budget are simply too small to allow them to afford insurance coverage. Many clubs liability coverage (including ours) does not cover rescue functions of the club. This is a huge area of concern and potential liability for regional clubs across the country. John and I will report back to you after the conclusion of the meeting in Michigan on the results of this very important discussion. ►

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## Club Officers

### President

Shannon Cihlar

320-283-5378

[President@TwinCitiesBMD.org](mailto:President@TwinCitiesBMD.org)

### Vice President

Coleen Carroll

651-407-8152

[VicePresident@TwinCitiesBMD.org](mailto:VicePresident@TwinCitiesBMD.org)

### Secretary

Jim Sheehan

612-701-4016

### Treasurer

Nancy Arndt

763-783-1996

### Board Members:

Julie Latterell

Peggy Bebeau

Darwin Missling

Adam Conn

Susan Acklen

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

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

## Regional Club Council continued...

If you have any concerns you would like to see expressed or if you would like more information about how membership in the BMDCA itself can be beneficial to you AND the breed, please contact your RCC representatives, Julie Latterell ([jal@saintpaulfoundation.org](mailto:jal@saintpaulfoundation.org)), or John Mayer ([jnbmd@hcinet.net](mailto:jnbmd@hcinet.net)) or visit [www.bmdca.org](http://www.bmdca.org) for more information about BMDCA membership.

It is our hope that through this column in each newsletter, we can provide you with a voice to the BMDCA board and in turn, keep you informed about BMDCA discussions that affect us and the breed. In addition, perhaps we can foster increased support of the BMDCA itself as the parent club for the Bernese Mountain Dog!●

## 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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