



BerNews

New Year 2008 Volume 5, Issue 1

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
- 2007 Club Member Survey
- BMD Breed Standard

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President's Letter

-Denise McCabe (Mick)

First and foremost, I'd like to thank the membership for putting your trust in me and allowing me to serve the Club as President for the next two years.

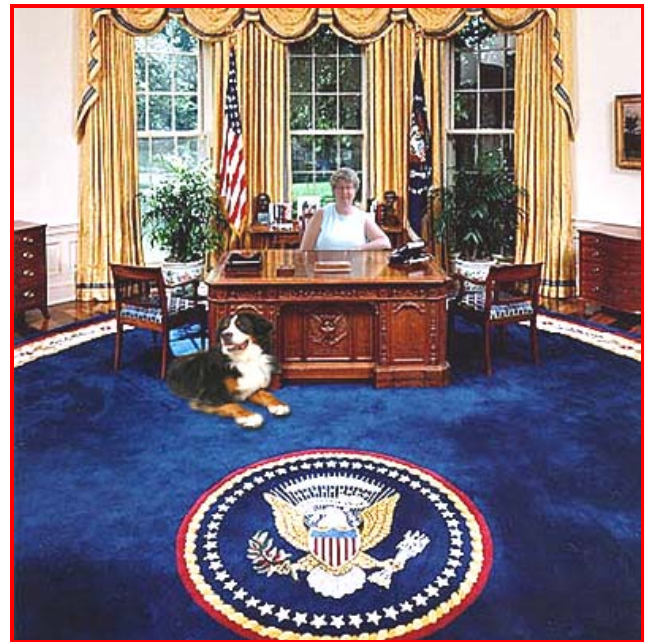
I'll start off with a little bit about myself. My husband Mike and I are first time Berner owners. We brought Mick into our lives in September, 2004. Our Golden Retriever, Sadie was 7 when we brought Mick into the family. She adjusted well and occasionally is seen at Berner events sitting patiently beside anyone that will pet her. She's now almost 11 and prefers staying at home on her cozy bed to romping with the Berners. We also have two aging cats that pretty much ignore the dogs. Oh, and I should not fail to mention, I have one human child, a wonderful daughter, Erin who was married last June to Aaron Zimmerman. Try to keep that combination straight!

Mick is the son of Doug Hildre's Cash. Cash is fresh off a stellar appearance at Westminster. Although he didn't win, he represented MN in fine fashion. His son is very proud of him.

Mick and I have recently started participating in Rally Obedience. It's a great sport for those who have not had previous experience with AKC events. We just earned our very first title, Rally Novice.

The club has some great events planned for this year. Here's just a few that are coming up soon:

- The annual Club Night Out will be held on Sat, March 8th



at JAX restaurant.

- PlayPals will continue as informal gatherings where you and your dogs can socialize with other club members and perspective Berner owners. The next PlayPals will be Sat, March 15th.
- The first official Club Meeting of 2008 will be held on Sat. April 12th at Stone Mountain Pet Lodge. In addition to a short meeting, the club will host a pot luck lunch followed by an opportunity for you to try your hand at Rally Obedience. The club's own Carol Manley will set up a course and give a brief overview of the sport.
- The Draft test will be held on May 17th.

Be sure to check the club's website at www.twincitiesbmd.org for all of the details!●

BMDCGTC 2007 Club Member Survey Results

The following is a recap of the responses to the eight survey questions distributed to members at both the November and December club meetings. A total of 27 completed surveys were received. In three of the questions, respondents were asked to provide information on their willingness to help in several areas:

- Organizing a club event
- Volunteering at a club event
- Hosting a club event
- Fostering a rescue
- Willingness to work on a committee
- Special skills club members would be willing to share with the club



Questions	Summary of Responses
<p>4. Please rank the top 3 reasons you belong to the club in the order of importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Socializing and camaraderie with other Berner owners ➤ Learning about dog-related AKC events (i.e. drafting, obedience, agility, conformation, etc.) ➤ Educational Events ➤ Fun Match/Obedience Matches ➤ PlayPals or informal dog walks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Socializing and camaraderie</u> had the highest number of #1 rankings and the highest combined total ranking ➤ <u>Educational Events</u> had the second highest number of total rankings (#1-#3) ➤ <u>Learning about AKC Events</u> had the third highest number of total rankings (#1-#3)
<p>2. Have you attended club-sponsored events held outside of club meetings in the past?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All respondents indicated they had
<p>3. If you responded no to question #2, why not? (please circle all that apply)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Question #3 was moot since all respondents to question #2 indicated they had attended outside club events in the past.▶



Questions	Summary of Responses
<p>4. What is the most convenient time and format for club sponsored events/seminars (please order your responses in terms of your preferences with 1 being the most preferred)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Very short seminars held in conjunction with club meetings ➤ Short seminars held on weekday nights ➤ Short seminars held on weekends ➤ Longer seminars where topics can be delved into in-depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Short seminars held in conjunction with club meetings</u> received the highest #1 rankings and the highest number of total rankings (#1-#3) ➤ <u>Short seminars held on weekends</u> received the second highest #1 rankings along with the 2nd highest number of total rankings (#1-#3) ➤ <u>Longer seminars where topics can be delved into in-depth</u> received the third highest number of total rankings (#1-#3).
<p>5. What type of events would you like to see the club offer in the future (please check all that apply)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More informal events for dogs and dog owners? ➤ Seminar about dog-related competition events? ➤ Seminar on Berner-related health issues? ➤ How to do pedigree research or how to do research when buying your next Berner? ➤ Responsible breeding practices? ➤ Information on nutrition or healthcare? ➤ Information on AKC breed standard? ➤ General training seminar? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More informal events for dogs and dog owners was the #1 vote-getter (23) 2. Seminars on Berner-related health issues was the #2 vote-getter (22) 3. Seminars about dog-related competition events and information on nutrition or healthcare were tied as the #3 vote-getters (16) 4. Responsible breeding practices and general training seminar were tied as the #4 vote-getter (12) 5. How to do pedigree research... was the #5 vote-getter (11) 6. Information about the AKC Breed Standard was the #6 vote-getter (10) ●

Dog shows, conformation, and companion dogs

How does the Breed Standard for the Bernese Mountain Dog apply to the Pet Berner and why it is important for all Berners?

-Sherri Venditti

Many people think that dog shows and a dog's conformation (which is what's evaluated in the breed ring) has nothing to do with companion dogs. In reality, conformation (the extent to which a dog "conforms" to the breed standard) plays a huge role in determining what life will be like with your dog throughout the years.

"The standard" is a written description of the ideal BMD; it's what each dog is evaluated against during dog show judging. The standard specifies desirable and undesirable characteristics and provides the blueprint responsible breeders are striving to fulfill to an ever greater degree in each litter. So what does the standard have to do with companion dogs? Let's take a look at exactly what's in it... and how it relates to the dog you live with.

BMD BREED STANDARD	WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO THE OWNER OF "JUST A PET"
<p>General Appearance The Bernese Mountain Dog is a striking tri-colored large dog. He is sturdy and balanced. He is intelligent, strong and agile enough to do the draft and droving work for which he was used in the mountainous regions of his origin.</p>	<p>Markings are probably one of the traits that drew you to initially investigate the breed and something we want to preserve, but not at the expense of all else. More importantly, this general description tells you to plan on a large but not plodding dog. Words like "intelligent", "strong" and "agile" denote a need for mental and physical exercise but also a dog that can focus and doesn't require non-stop action. These traits greatly impact the way in which you live with your dog and whether your lifestyle is compatible with the breed or not.</p>
<p>Size, Proportion, Substance "Measured at the withers dogs are 25 to 27-1/2 inches, bitches are 23 to 26 inches. Though appearing square, Bernese Mountain Dogs are slightly longer in body than they are tall. Sturdy bone is of great importance. The body is full."</p>	<p>Size matters. When it comes to the dog you're going to share your home, car, and finances with. The standard tells you to expect a large and substantial dog. By specifying a desirable size range, the standard keeps the breed from drifting ever larger or smaller at the whim of fashion and people's desire for the extreme.</p>
<p>Head "Expression is intelligent, animated and gentle. The eyes are dark brown and slightly oval in shape "</p>	<p>One of the traits that draws people to the breed is the meltingly warm look that seems to immediately connect with you on a very deep level. When the eyes are light colored or round rather than slightly oval that hallmark look is gone.</p>
<p>"... with close-fitting eyelids. Inverted or everted eyelids are serious faults."</p>	<p>In addition to changing the look of the dog, loose eyelids are prone to chronic irritation and▶</p>

	infection. Inverted & everted lids are deformities that can cause chronic irritation, ingrown hairs, and ulceration of the cornea. They often require corrective surgery to maintain the health of the eye so are of obvious concern to pet owners.
"Blue eye color is a disqualification."	In some breeds with patterned coats, blue eyes are associated with deafness so it was thought best to avoid the potential. In addition, blue eyes create a very different look than the warm dark brown.
"The ears are medium sized, set high, triangular in shape, gently rounded at the tip, and hang close to the head when in repose. When the Bernese Mountain Dog is alert, the ears are brought forward and raised at the base; the top of the ear is level with the top of the skull."	These aspects are components of that intelligent and soft look and keep the Bernese from looking like a tri-colored bloodhound. They are primarily cosmetic and are factored into breeding decisions accordingly. I don't know any responsible breeder that puts them at the top of their priority list in breeding considerations but they are part of the ideal we strive to for.
"The skull is flat on top and broad, with a slight furrow and a well-defined, but not exaggerated stop. The muzzle is strong and straight. "	It may not seem like it, but this is very important stuff for a pet owner. These parameters are what keep the BMD from drifting towards an ever shorter and rounder muzzle, which research indicates we humans are genetically hardwired to favor. Problem is that as muzzles get shorter, the jaws don't have enough room for the teeth and breathing is compromised (making heat and anesthesia more risky). One need look no further than Pugs, Pekes, and Bull Dogs to see how far our predilection for "baby faced" dogs can take us.
"... The lips are clean and, as the Bernese Mountain Dog is a dry-mouthed breed, the flews are only slightly developed. "	This promotes a dry mouthed dog, as opposed to the slime factor you can expect from a Newf or Saint Bernard. Certainly a factor for many owners.
"The teeth meet in a scissors bite. An overshot or undershot bite is a serious fault. Dentition is complete."	Bites can easily go to unhealthy extremes if not reined in by the standard. Undershot and overshot bites can require expensive surgery and/or orthodontics to keep the teeth from digging into cheeks and gums, not to mention allowing the dog proper use of its teeth and jaws. Many breeds that don't actively promote a scissors bite now have dental problems as the norm rather than the exception.
Neck, Topline, Body "The neck is strong, muscular and of medium length. The topline is level from the withers to the croup. The chest is deep and capacious with well-sprung but not barrel shaped ribs and brisket reaching at least to the elbows. The back is broad and firm. The loin is strong. The croup is broad and smoothly rounded to the tail insertion."	All of this defines the structure of the ideal Bernese. It adds up to a strong but agile dog with a center of gravity that provides stability with mobility and durability grounded in moderation. Simply put, the standard calls for all parts of the dog to be in balance with one another and with highly functional transitions from one part to another.▶

<p>Forequarters "The shoulders are moderately laid back, flat-lying, well muscled and never loose. The legs are straight and strong and the elbows are well under the shoulder when the dog is standing. The pasterns slope very slightly but are never weak. Dew claws may be removed. The feet are round and compact with well-arched toes".</p> <p>Hindquarters "The thighs are broad, strong and muscular. The stifles are moderately bent and taper smoothly into the hocks. The hocks are well let down and straight as viewed from the rear. Dew claws should be removed. feet are compact and turned neither in nor out."</p>	<p>Dogs that are extreme in one aspect are more prone to break down as a result of it. The long back of the Daschund predisposes them to severe neurological issues. The deep and narrow chest of the Great Dane is one of the reasons they have a 25% risk of bloating during their lifetime.</p> <p>Everything from the moderate and balanced angulation to the strong but slightly sloped pasterns contributes to a body designed for durability. The more closely a dog meets the ideal of our standard, the less likely it is to suffer undue wear and tear to its body, the more likely it is to stay comfortable and sound throughout its lifetime, and the better able it will be to compensate for issues that do come along.</p> <p>In other words, all this structure stuff has a very large impact on your dog's well being throughout the years.</p>
<p>Coat "The coat is thick, moderately long and slightly wavy or straight. It has a bright natural sheen. Extremely curly or extremely dull-looking coats are undesirable. The Bernese Mountain Dog is shown in natural coat and undue trimming is to be discouraged."</p>	<p>This not only lets you know that you can expect lots of fur around the house, it also bodes for a relatively low maintenance coat.</p>
<p>Color & Markings</p>	<p>I'm not going to include the description of markings because although these are a major contributor to the look of the Bernese, after so many years of markings being a very high priority in breeding considerations, most breeders now place markings pretty low on their breeding criteria hierarchy. Rather than markings being a make or break aspect, responsible breeders are looking first at temperament, soundness, health, type, and longevity. Good judges do likewise and won't hesitate to award the ribbons to a better dog with poor markings over a well marked dog that doesn't conform to the standard as well. As a matter of fact, we have had several national specialty winners that unknowledgeable breeders (read: back yard breeders and puppy producers) would have sold as "pets" because they were mis-marked.▶</p>

<p>Gait "The natural working gait of the Bernese Mountain Dog is a slow trot. However in keeping with his use in draft and droving work, he is capable of speed and agility. There is good reach in front. Powerful drive from the rear is transmitted through a level back. There is no wasted action. Front and rear legs on each side follow through in the same plane."</p>	<p>This again speaks to soundness, versatility, and durability. Wasted motion is indicative of structural flaws that tend to put excessive strain on some joints (or parts of the joint) and therefore makes the dog more prone to suffer from excessive wear and tear.</p>
<p>Temperament "The temperament is self-confident, alert and good natured, never sharp or shy. The Bernese Mountain Dog should stand steady, though may remain aloof to the attentions of strangers."</p>	<p>This is my Number 1 consideration when looking for a puppy, it's highly heritable! To me, everything else isn't worth a whole lot if the dog is unpleasant to live with. While training and skilled handling can get most dogs through the show ring experience, people who are knowledgeable about canine body language can usually see when a dog is unduly uncomfortable and not coping well. This would be a red flag to me and prompt me to learn more about the temperament of that family of dogs were I considering a puppy from that line. This is why going to shows is important, were I considering breeding to that dog or one of its relatives. IMO, good judges consider temperament as an important component of the standard and don't award blue ribbons to dogs that clearly deviate significantly from the standard in this regard.</p>
<p>All in all...it's human nature to drift towards our own preferences and to favor what we have in our own dogs. So the parameters established by the standard, combined with the commitment of responsible breeders to adhere to it and to submit their dogs for evaluation against it, are the sole reason that when you buy a responsibly bred BMD puppy you have a pretty good idea of what to expect. Remove the standard from the picture and you open the door for breeding for extremes that are detrimental to the dog's well being and eliminate the very reason you're paying the big bucks for a purebred dog, predictability.</p> <p>The challenge responsible breeders take up with every breeding decision is to put together a genetic combination that favors health, soundness, temperament, longevity, and type as embodied by the ideal set forth in the standard.</p> <p>It's no small challenge... but to the extent they're able to achieve this goal, we ALL (both owners and dogs) benefit. To the extent a breeder devalues any one aspect, we ALL pay the price.●</p>	

BMDCGTC Code of Conduct

-Approved by Membership Quorum in November 2007

The mission of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of the Greater Twin Cities is to preserve and protect the health, heritage, and type of the Bernese Mountain Dog.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide club members with guidelines for living with and breeding Bernese Mountain Dogs responsibly. Members should bear in mind that a Code of Conduct is more than a set of rules. It is a commitment to a high standard of practice in owning, exhibiting, and breeding Bernese Mountain Dogs. Adherence to the spirit of the Code of Conduct is as important as adherence to its specific guidelines.

In keeping with this mission,

Each Club Member agrees to:

1. Insure that all dogs in my care are provided with adequate food, shelter, human companionship, veterinary care, basic obedience training, and socialization.
2. Maintain control of my dogs in public.
3. Become more educated about the Bernese Mountain Dog and the fundamentals of dog ownership, support public education programs, and honestly represent the breed by sharing my knowledge with others to help to make informed decisions in choosing an appropriate pet for their family.
4. Take actions that are in accordance with the best interest of the club and the breed.
5. Display good sportsmanship and conduct myself in a manner as to reflect credit on the club and the breed.
6. Participate in dog-related events for the glory and benefit of the dog and the breed.
7. Actively support the club's activities and attend its meetings.
8. Make available any information that might aid in improving the breed by sharing health information (e.g. hip and elbow

screenings, medical conditions, etc.) through Berner-Garde Foundation's Open Database.

Each Club Member who breeds agrees to:

1. Strive to bring the Bernese Mountain Dog's natural qualities to perfection through breeding selection, using the standard of the breed as approved by The American Kennel Club as the only standard of excellence for the breed.
2. Become more knowledgeable regarding responsible breeding practices, canine genetics, and proper conformation and temperament of the breed.
3. Exhibit potential breeding dogs in AKC conformation events with the intended pursuit of AKC Championship titles.
4. Register all breeding dogs with the AKC and keep complete and accurate records of all matings, litters, and pedigrees.
5. Plan breedings to assure that a sufficient number of good homes are available for the resulting puppies, and be willing to accept the return of placements which do not work out for the owners or for the puppies.
6. Keep the health and well-being of the individual dog in mind when making decisions regarding breeding age and frequency.
7. Breed only physically and temperamentally sound dogs that have been evaluated for heritable disorders through recognized registries such as OFA and CERF.
8. Follow ethical practices in sales and breeding contracts and honor all agreements, whether written or oral.
9. Provide only truthful representation about the sire, dam, and siblings of both (as known) when selling or advertising any puppies/dogs and provide full disclosure regarding any health concerns.
10. Guarantee the health of the dog subject to a veterinarian's

examination within 72 hours of placement.

11. Maintain contact with the dogs and their owners to better evaluate the development of my breeding program and remain available for advice and mentoring.
12. Refuse to sell or consign puppies or dogs to any known retail, wholesale, or commercial dealers, or brokers, and will not knowingly supply dogs for raffles, contests, giveaway prizes or other such events, be it for charitable causes or otherwise.
13. Supply buyers with:
 - A four generation pedigree,
 - Copies of reports of health evaluations of sire and dam,
 - A written contract for all transactions including puppy sales and breeding agreements,
 - A copy of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of the Greater Twin Cities Code of Conduct.
14. Employ careful screening practices for potential puppy owners.
15. Sell any puppies not intended for breeding on an AKC limited registration and assure (to the extent possible) that these animals will be spayed or neutered.

NOTE: Although BMDCGTC members are subject to the new COC, they're not required to sign it. [New members will be required to sign it at the time of membership application](#)



Club Meeting Notice

CLUB MEETING AND PRESENTATION AT:

**STONE MOUNTAIN PET LODGE
9935 RADISSON ROAD NE
BLAINE, MN**

What: Club meeting and potluck lunch followed by Introduction to Rally by Carol Manley

Date: Saturday, April 12, 2008

Time: 11:00am – 3:00 pm●

New Member Applicants

-Lisa Fosdick (Mesa & Lexi)

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 12.

Erick & Mary Jensen

Eden Prairie, MN

Berners: Argus & Barkley (chocolate lab)

Sponsors: Theresa Schwarten & Lisa Fosdick

Scott & Lisa Byrnes

Maple Grove, MN

Berners: Bull Valley's Sire Charles Callebout (Charlie)

Sponsors: Coleen Carroll & Adam Conn

Michael & Tanya Altimari

Ramsey, MN

Berners: BernerGardens Bentley Classic (Bentley)

Sponsors: Coleen Carroll & Denise McCabe●

Peanut Butter Cheerio Balls

-Lisa Fosdick (Mesa & Lexi)

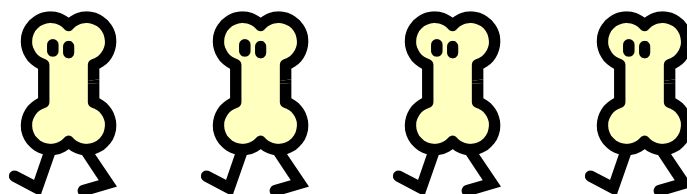
When we went to pick up our newest puppy, Lexi, the breeder was treating her with Cheerios and Lexi loved them. Both our girls also love peanut butter. These are easy treats to make but can be slightly crumbly (trust me, the dogs don't mind that part!). This recipe should make about 40 to 50 bite-sized treats. You can use any kind of flour – I tend to use brown rice or oat flour as I try to avoid wheat with our dogs. You can easily make your own oat flour by putting some oatmeal in the blender or food processor. Enjoy!

¼ cup natural peanut butter (smooth or chunky)
2 cups Cheerios
1 cup flour
½ cup vegetable oil
2 large eggs

1. Preheat oven to 350.
2. Warm the peanut butter in microwave for about 1 minute.
3. Add rest of ingredients and mix gently.
4. Form rounded teaspoons of dough and squeeze each ball gently to prevent crumbling.
5. Place on greased baking sheet.
6. Bake 8 to 10 minutes until bottoms are golden brown.
7. Let cool completely and then store in airtight container.●



Boating Berner Bella in Fall 2007
Photo submitted by: Chad Dayton



Club Officers

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Treasurer

Julie Latterell

Board Members:

Susan Acklen
Micky Trent, DVM
Randy Bebeau
Lisa Fosdick
Nancy Arndt

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.twincitiesbmd.org

March Playpal Event

Where:

Alimagnet Dog Park
1200 Alimagnet Pkwy.
Burnsville, MN

What:

In honor of Chester's 5th
birthday

Date:

Saturday
March 15, 2008

Time:

11:00am – 3:00pm.●



Chester reading/eating a club newsletter.

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.

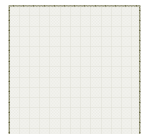
Articles written by members of the BMDCGTC on any subject that may be of interest to members are welcome. All works must be sited.

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