



BerNews

Summer 2008 Volume 5, Issue 3

Special Interest Articles:

- President's Letter
- Lucy Fund Wine Tasting
- The OFA and the Role of Canine Health Databases

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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

-Denise McCabe (Mick)

As they say, the dog days of summer are upon us; it's hot and humid; not exactly the kind of weather our Berners are fond of, but they have lots to look forward to as we approach the beginning of fall.

But before we leap forward to all of our Fall and Winter events, I'd like to share a bit from our June Club meeting for those of you who weren't able to attend.

Lin Gelbmann, the coordinator and primary practitioner at the University of Minnesota Rehab Center presented a short seminar on "Conditioning of the Sporting/Performance Dog". The seminar covered the following topics:

- Purpose of conditioning
- Basic anatomy and physiology
- Common sports injuries
- Event warm-up
- Conditioning basics
- Specific exercises
- Post-event cool down
- Massage techniques

She also gave each dog owner in attendance an opportunity to work briefly with her, one on one, to assess the condition of their dog/puppy. We hope to have Lin back in the future, so more of you can take advantage of this great learning opportunity.

The notes from Lin's presentation are available if you are interested; just send your request to

president@twincitiesbmd.org.

Looking ahead, we've got several great events (see the articles in this issue for more details):

- Canine Structure and Movement Seminar – 9/20
- Health and Wellness Day – 10/19

Also coming up in October is the nomination of candidates for the following Board positions for 2009/2010:

- Vice President
- Secretary
- 4 Board Members at Large

Experience is not required; enthusiasm and a commitment to the Club's mission are the keys to moving the Club forward. Please contact me or any Board member if you are interested in getting more involved with the Club and we'll work with you to find the right fit.

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.

I hope some of you will take my challenge, and put your name on the ballot for 2009!•





Lucy Fund Wine Tasting is a Smashing Success

-Written by Gwyneth Boda

At our house, we believe that a party is not really a party until the first wine glass is broken, and last year Moxie helped us out early in the evening. This year however, the first glass was not broken until late in the evening, and yet, the Lucy Fund Wine Tasting was still a smashing success.

True to form, Shelley and Steve scheduled the event for the earliest night in February with temperatures dipping into the low 30's. You know it's bad when even Bella won't stay outside and personally, I cannot believe that S&S haven't created an inside potty area for B and me. (Note to Colleen and Rick - can you PLEASE do something about this? I am literally freezing my pretty little tail off.) Sorry, I digress.

Anyway, people arrived all bundled up and frosty looking, but as soon as the bubbly started flowing they seemed fine. Steve served up a number of wines, including one named "Diva" (wow - I'm waiting for "Gwyneth" next year.) Our honorary club member Lori and her Haveneese Michon, served tons of lasagna and salad and bread, and everyone ate and drank and ate and drank. When the tasting was done, the silent auction began, and oh boy, talk about action. There's nothing like a bunch of passionate BMD people and a silent auction. I don't know which is more impressive: the items people brought, or the price they paid for them! As usual, Alice and Craig kept the momentum going and everyone seemed to get even more jazzed up. Maybe it was just because it was SO COLD. Or maybe people just love working for a good cause. Or maybe it was the wine.

It was probably all three. But what really matters is that we raised a RECORD BREAKING \$1700+ for the Lucy Fund!!!!!! "Rats runreal", said Bella (who talks like Astro in case you're wondering why everything starts with an R - too many episodes of the Jetsons in her developmental years). But as usual, Bella's right. That IS unreal and I was so excited I chased my tail and jumped sideways all day on Sunday.

Next year will be the 5th Anniversary of the Lucy Fundraiser, and Shelley and Steve are already starting to think about it. They promise they'll announce a date earlier so you can plan around it (ha) and no one will have to miss it.

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all of the wonderful people who made this such a smashing success. I'd lick each and every one of your faces, but Shelley and Steve would probably make me quit.

Here's to healthy Berners!●

Moxie, the Kayaking Queen, Enjoying the Summer on the St. Croix River



Photos by Rick Bryan●



The OFA and the Role of Canine Health Databases

by Eddie Dziuk, OFA, reprinted with permission from the OFA website www.offa.org

The decision to breed dogs brings with it a host of responsibilities. Responsible dog breeders properly house, feed, and care for their dogs. They provide proper socialization for their puppies, and go to great lengths to screen prospective buyers, and place their puppies in good homes. Responsible dog breeders do not allow their dogs to end up in rescue organizations, they maintain a lifelong commitment to the animal. The list goes on, these are but a few of the responsibilities that separate the serious, responsible dog breeder from "backyard" breeders and commercial operations.

Another area of responsibility assumed by the dedicated breeder is a commitment to health issues. This commitment to overall canine health goes beyond providing puppies with their first shots. It goes beyond a concern of keeping the puppy well until the warranty after the sale has expired. While no one, commercial breeders included, wants to produce puppies that are deaf, go blind, seize, or are lame, the actions taken up front to minimize inherited diseases help define what makes a person a serious, dedicated, and responsible breeder.

Conformation traits, working ability, and temperament are routinely factored into the selection criteria leading to a particular breeding. Health concerns need to play a similar role in these decisions. The prioritization and balance of these selection criteria contribute to making dog breeding an art, not a science. However, even as an art form, there is a scientific component. Often, the most successful breeders are those who have been working with a long line of particular dogs. They have personal knowledge of generations of dogs within the pedigree. They have experienced first hand the dominant traits, both positive and negative, which certain dogs carry. In short, they have data; information, which allows them to make more informed breeding decisions.

The role of canine health databases is to apply the same concept of knowledge to health related issues. They capture health information on individual animals and allow breeders to make more informed breeding decisions by including health concerns in their mix of selection criteria.

In recent years, a number of DNA tests for specific diseases have been developed. These tests remain the "gold standard" since actual genotypic information is derived. Test results, their submission into a health database, and the applied use of the database can have significant results in reducing the prevalence of a disease. PRA in Irish Setters is an outstanding example. For years the Irish Setter Genetic Registry maintained statistics on test matings in order to identify carriers of the disease and eliminate them from the breeding pool. Their data assisted researchers in identifying the actual disease causing mutation and ultimately led to the development of a DNA test for PRA in the breed. As a result, testing along with applied use ►

of the database has greatly improved the health of the breed.

Unfortunately, most inherited traits, including inherited diseases, are probably polygenic. They have a complex mode of inheritance influenced by multiple gene pairs. To date, no DNA tests have been developed to identify the specific combination of mutant genes responsible for any polygenic disorders. Therefore, decisions regarding a dog's suitability for breeding purposes rely on phenotypic evaluations. The complexity of polygenic traits results in a wide range of expression, from least to most desirable. It is the reason why two dogs of ideal conformation may produce offspring less than ideal, and the reason why the mating of two dogs that are phenotypically normal for a disease may produce affected offspring.

When dealing with genetic unknowns, it is difficult to control the incidence of a polygenic disease. Phenotypic evaluations allow us to make assumptions on the dog's genetic makeup. However, too often, breeding decisions are based purely on the potential sire and dam's traits. Although progress towards a desired outcome can be achieved in this method, it will almost certainly be slow and result in surprises along the way. This is where health databases can play a significant role. As the database is populated, incorporating information not only on the parent's phenotype into the breeding decision, but phenotypic information from close relatives such as siblings, half siblings, aunts, uncles, grand-sires, and grand-dams becomes possible. This allows breeders to make a more accurate assumption regarding the potential sire and dam's genotype, and allows them to apply greater selective pressure to produce desired and avoid undesirable traits.

At the heart of the OFA's quest to assist breeders in lowering the incidence of genetic diseases are the OFA databases. When the OFA was formed in 1966, one of its main objectives was to "advise, encourage, and establish control programs to lower the incidence of orthopedic and genetic diseases". This objective remains firmly in place today. The databases of the OFA give breeders access to the health screening results of hundreds of thousands of dogs, allowing them to increase the selective pressure to produce healthy dogs free of inherited diseases.

The OFA's original interest was hip dysplasia. This continues to be a major focus of the organization today. However, in recent years, scientific advances and the enhanced ability to diagnose heritable diseases have led to the development of several additional databases. These include databases for elbow dysplasia, congenital cardiac disease, autoimmune thyroiditis, patellar luxation, a number of databases based on breed specific DNA tests, and the most recent additions, legg-calve-perthes (LCP) and sebaceous adenitis (SA).

The hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, and legg-calve-perthes databases are based on radiographic evaluations. Since radiographic interpretation and application of diagnostic criteria can differ among veterinarians, the OFA offers a solution by providing experienced, consistently applied, specialist interpretation. The OFA maintains a pool of approximately twenty-five independent, consulting radiologists. Each is a board-certified Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Radiology. For hips and elbows, three randomly selected radiologists from the pool evaluate►

each radiograph. Hip joint conformation is assigned one of seven phenotypes: Excellent, Good, Fair, Borderline, Mild, Moderate, and Severe. Elbow conformation is graded as Normal, or Grade I, II, or III Dysplasia. The final OFA grade is based on a consensus of the three independent opinions.

The remaining OFA databases differ in that the actual evaluation is performed by a source outside the OFA. For the patellar luxation and congenital cardiac databases, an attending veterinarian performs the evaluation. The veterinarian must have the advanced training necessary to perform an accurate diagnosis, and the OFA highly recommends that board certified specialists perform these examinations. For the thyroid database, the evaluation is based on laboratory assay performed at one of seven approved OFA labs. The SA database is based on skin punch biopsies evaluated by approved dermapathologists. And finally, the DNA databases are based on results from specific laboratories licensed to perform the tests. The OFA's function with these soft tissue databases is to develop consistent diagnostic test protocols with veterinary experts, and offer breeders the databases in which to register the test results.

The common thread among all the databases remains the OFA's original objective to establish control programs to lower the incidence of genetic diseases. However, to be a useful tool, breeders and owners must acknowledge the value of such

databases, and embrace the submission of data. With over 800,000 studies on file, the OFA has the world's largest data bank on canine hip evaluations. Most breeders who

contribute to the data and use the database in their selection criteria have seen improvements in the health of their dogs. Although some information is better than none, for the newer databases breeders and owners must remember that it may take years for the database to become populated with enough information to allow the type of in depth pedigree research that is the goal of the databases.

The last few years have seen a great deal of focus and criticism on the practices of commercial breeders. Within the fancy we are quick to differentiate ourselves, calling ourselves responsible breeders striving to preserve and improve the breed. However, the term responsible breeder is one that is earned, not assigned based on number of litters bred, or mere participation in AKC events. Complacency over health issues, especially when in pursuit of the blue ribbon, equates to irresponsibility. As responsible breeders, we must recognize health issues where they exist, educate ourselves on the issues, and incorporate health issues into our breeding selection criteria with a specific goal of reducing inherited disease. In addition to the OFA, canine health databases are maintained by CERF, PennHIP, parent clubs, and by several leading research institutions and universities. All breeders are urged to breed responsibly and use these tools for the improved genetic health of our purebred dogs.●



Please Help to Find Bentley!

MISSING BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG:

On Aug 8th in the area of Baugh St. NW and 178th St. in Ramsey

1 Yr Old Male ~ 100 lbs.

BLK W/BRN and WHT has a Blue-green nylon collar
VERY Friendly! Has a Medical Condition!

PLEASE Call w/any info.

763-441-6454 REWARD!!!



It's believed that Bentley may have been stolen due to the fact that over 500 posters were distributed, and there was not a single sighting. Please watch out for a new berner in your neighborhood. If seen, try to get any information possible about where the dog is from. He is easily identifiable as he has bowed front legs.●

Club Meeting Notice

Details:

Stone Mountain Pet Lodge
9935 Radisson Road NE
Blaine, MN

Saturday, September 20, 2008

9:00 to Noon – Canine Structure & Movement
Seminar presented by Margie Reho, Dallybeck
Bernese Mountain Dogs

Noon to 1:00 – Lunch

1:00 to 2:00 – Club Meeting

Please check the events page on the Club's website
for directions to the lodge:

<http://www.twincitiesbmd.org/Events.html>•

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, September 20.

Sherry and Shane Gydesen

Stillwater, MN

Berners: Wynsome's Titan the Belt, Wynsome's Priceless Ellie, Kodi (Shih Tzu)

Sponsors: Shannon Cihlar and Mary Pearson

Katy Stangl and Andy Thieman

Edina, MN

Berners: Harriet, Harley (Golden Retriever)

Sponsors: Lisa Fosdick and Coleen Carroll•

Club Members with Marketing/Sales Experience



Wanted:

The BMDCGTC Board is looking for club members with sales/marketing experience to join the Ways & Means Committee. It is also seeking to find a Ways & Means committee chair person.

Why is this so important?

It is through the marketing and sales of club merchandise that we are able to offer educational and fun events free of charge to members of the club.

What's involved:

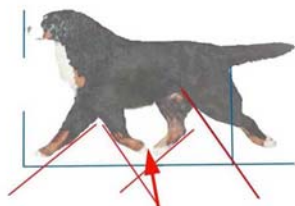
- Research new items for sale/design new items
- Work with our vendor, CaféPress, to implement new club merchandise for sale
- Market the new designs to club members and other Berner lovers through other regional clubs, online berner lists, etc...
- Set up Ways & Means at club events•

Canine Structure and Movement Seminar

September 20th will bring long-time Bernese Mountain Dog Breeder Marjorie Reho, Dallybeck Bernese Mountain Dogs, to Blaine, Minnesota. The club has invited Margie to help Berner fanciers and club members gain a better understanding about what is often difficult to identify – what is proper structure and movement in the breed? It should also help answer the question what are judges seeing and looking for when they watch dogs in the show ring??

Margie will walk seminar attendees through a brief outline of how to recognize proper structure and movement. She will then spend time going over individual dogs and asking you to help put what you've learned to use to help identify what you see.

We encourage attendees to bring dogs for evaluation!!!



Canine Structure and Movement Seminar

Saturday, September 20, 2008

Stone Mountain Pet Lodge

9:00 – 12:00 Seminar

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 2:00 Club Meeting

FREE to Club Members who bring item for potluck lunch!!!!!!

The BMDCGTC and its club members will provide a potluck lunch for all participants.

For more details, or so sign up for the event, please visit the club website

www.twincitiesbmd.org





CANINE HEALTH AND WELLNESS DAY

Learn more about how to keep your Canine healthy and happy! This is open to all dogs and their people.

▪ Health and Identity services offered

- OFA Cardiac Screening Dr. Chris Stauthammer, DVM, DACVIM
- Microchipping Dr. Micky Trent, DVM, DACVS
- Von Willebrand's (on a pre-registered basis only)

▪ Speakers on:

- Basic Nutrition for your Berner: Dr. Julie Churchill, DVM, PhD
Feeding to Meet the Breed Needs
- Hip Dysplasia Dr. Liz Lafond, DVM, DACVS

Date/Time: Sunday, October 19, 8:00 – 2:00, registration at 8:00

Place: Stone Mountain Pet Lodge

Cost per person: \$15 (BMDCGTC Members) / \$20 (Non-members)
Additional fees charged for health and identity services

FREE lunch included with registration

Please go to www.twincitiesbmd.org to pre-register and find out more details about the event!●

Club Officers

President

Denise McCabe

715-531-0344

President@TwinCitiesBMD.org

Vice President

Coleen Carroll

763-208-6278

VicePresident@TwinCitiesBMD.org

Secretary

(Open)

Treasurer

Julie Latterell

Board Members:

Susan Acklen

Micky Trent

Sarah Tennessen

Lisa Fosdick

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.twincitiesbmd.org

Club Calendar of Events

September 20 - Canine Structure and Movement Seminar
Club Meeting & Potluck

September 27 - Rescue Day at Chuck & Don's

October 1 - Nominations for Board Members

October 9 - Board and Committee Chair Meeting

October 19 - All -Breed Canine Health and Wellness Day

November 1 - Ballots for Board membership mailed

December 11 - Board and Committee Chair Meeting

December 13 - Winterfest
- New Board members announced

For detailed info on upcoming events check out the club events calendar!●

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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