



THE Bernerblatt

The Newsletter of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Nashoba Valley



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September 23, 2023
Fall Fun Day
4-H Fairgrounds
Westford, MA

September 30, 2023
Draft Workshop
Timberlost Farm
Ashburnham, MA

New Date:
October 8, 2023
Berners & Brews
The Mystic Meadows,
Trolley 27 and Tavern 27
Laconia, NH

October 21 & 22, 2023
BMDCA Draft Tests
Laurel Springs Farm
Sterling, MA

October 28, 2023
Howl-o-ween Walk
Portland Head Light
Cape Elizabeth, ME

November 11, 2023
Two AKC Rally Trials
Warner Brook
Training Center
Pittsford, VT

March 2, 2024
Regional Specialty & Sweepstakes
Eastern States Exposition
West Springfield, MA

March 3, 2024
Supported Entry & Sweepstakes
Eastern States Exposition
West Springfield, MA

Watch Our Working Dogs Work!



Photo: Barbie Beck-Wilczek

BMDCA Draft Tests

October 21 & 22

Laurel Springs Farm + 34 Ford Road + Sterling, MA 01564

**Stewards needed—
no experience necessary!**

Contact Allison Harding: director_harding@bmdcnv.org

These dedicated club members provide essential services to our membership.

Please feel free to contact them with your questions, concerns, suggestions, requests for help, or offers of help.

Our mission is to provide the best for Berners and their families.

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On the Cover:

Trailbound's More Than Words TKA ORT NW1 RA "Lyra"
BG# 191109

Owned by Linda & Nancy Bates

The masthead & newsletter design is by Nancy Hoyt.

President's Message

Dear BMDCNV Members,

Are you enjoying your new Membership Directory? And doesn't Fletcher look magnificent? The BMDCNV Board has decided to rotate the cover photo amongst Conformation, Draft, other Working Events, and Rescue from year to year. Thank you to Beth and Phil Atkinson for sharing their handsome and accomplished fellow with us.

Speaking of the new Membership Directory, please check your own entry and send any changes along to Membership Chair Elizabeth Malcolmson (memberchair@bmdcnv.org). We are now able to include email addresses and phone numbers for the individual members of a household, so we probably need to update quite a few outdated entries. Thank you to Elizabeth Malcolmson and Julie Mott for their heroic efforts to get this Membership Directory ready and mailed out.

You may want to know that we post copies of our Board Meeting Minutes in the members' section of our website. To see them, visit [bmdcnv.org/Files/Board Members and Documents/Minutes](http://bmdcnv.org/Files/Board%20Members%20and%20Documents/Minutes). We love feedback and we want to be transparent, so the Minutes are your chance to follow the doings and discussions of the BMDCNV Board. The Board has regretfully accepted Adam Conn's resignation as our representative to the BMDCA Regional Club Council. Thank you, Adam, for so much that you have accomplished for the BMDCNV!

And a big thank-you to Nadine Thomas for volunteering to take on our Vertical Response mailings! These are the emails that you receive from time to time with club news, upcoming events, and so forth. Nadine is currently training with Webmaster Mimi Englander to learn all the ins and outs of this process, and we are so grateful for her willingness and skill.

Fall is a busy time for our club. Be sure to check the Events listing (here in the Bernerblatt and on our website) and join the fun whenever you can. Among other things, we have our third Draft Workshop in late September and our two-day Draft Test on October 21 and 22. Draft is a very special activity for the Nashoba Valley club—did you know that the BMDCA's draft test regulations were first developed by a Nashoba Valley team? Watch, volunteer, and participate however you can—it's always better when you are part of it, and a great way to learn more.

Please remember that I'm here for you and we are all here for the dogs we so love. My overriding goal is to treasure, protect, and celebrate the Bernese Mountain Dog. I know you'll join me in this.

All the best,

Mary Durham

Are you a New Member?

Tell us about yourself in our
New Member Showcase.

Click or copy this link, complete the summary,
upload a pic, click submit, and that's it!

bmdcnv.org/new-member-showcase



Welcome New Members!

We invite all to join the members-only bmdcnv.org group. Follow the instructions at <https://www.bmdcnv.org/become-a-site-member>

Leianne Messina
Warren, ME

Kimberly Bacher
Bow, NH

Laurie & Lynne
Bejoian
Littleton, MA

Kathleen Walsh
Middleboro, MA



Marge Bumen

We deeply mourn the loss of our dear friend and former club president Marge Bumen who passed away in August. A future issue of the Bernerblatt will contain a tribute to our dynamic friend who was considered by many to be the heartbeat of the club.



BMDCNV Draft Workshop



June 2023 Workshop

The draft workshop on June 10th was yet another great Nashoba event! The weather was warm and there was a feeling of camaraderie in the air as everyone worked to help new and more experienced handlers alike. The morning was spent fitting harnesses and getting dogs and their humans used to the ins and outs of drafting. Our midday break included lunch as well as playtime in the pond for some of our furry friends. Then in the afternoon, Phil Atkinson briefly talked about things to think about while drafting, especially reminding people to “work on both sides of your dog.” Teams were allowed to do a maneuvering course, participate in the group exercise, and do a mini freight haul. There was lots of learning and lots of fun.

Many thanks to our wonderful instructors who shared their talents and experience: Phil Atkinson, Beth Atkinson, Alison Jaskiewicz, Tom Jaskiewicz, Mary Durham, Paul Emerson, Buffy Bell, Celeste O’Malley, Allison Harding, Ray Harding, and Elizabeth

Malcolmson. Having so many experienced handlers allowed a lot of one-on-one time with each team, from novice handlers to those who have achieved draft titles with prior dogs.

At the end of the day, every participant left with a smile and a sense of satisfaction that they had significantly improved their drafting skills and had a great time doing it!

Special thanks to Candy Wright for giving us the use of her gorgeous farm and sharing her puppy, Lancy, with us. Thanks also to Sue Mahan for providing a fabulous spread to keep us all sustained and happy throughout the day, despite Mother Nature’s attempt to rain out the cooking process.

To attend the final workshop on September 30th go to <https://bmdcnv.bigcartel.com/product/draft-workshop>

—Anya Wittenborg, Event Coordinator





Participating teams:

Tricia Sullivan & Prancer

Lee Isdell & Hudson

Rita Trojanoski & Marcepan

Abby Patrizio & Liza

Michelle Larson & Heather

Kimberly Bacher & Jewell

Mary Benson & Baschi

Martha McCormack & Levon

Nancy Bard & Henry

Iris Ahn, Alex Guerra & Orso

Jessica Moore & Violet

Rachel Prentki & Bazel

Linda Vo & Mousse

Missy Liebermann & Summer



Puppy Evaluation with Martha Phelps

My plan was to go and take pictures for the Bernerblatt. Instead, I found myself signed up to learn about evaluating puppies with homework to do. I did my homework and went to the class feeling way out of my league. Am I glad that I went!

On Sunday, June 18th, Martha Phelps and her litter of 10 cuties put us through the steps of what it means to evaluate a puppy using Pat Hastings' methods. She talked to us about the importance of structural soundness in the breed and how it is the responsibility of every breeder to pay close attention to this as they develop their breeding program. Martha emphasized utilizing the wealth of health data in the Berner-Garde database. Then she demonstrated the process of evaluating, looking at the entire puppy as well as all parts of the puppy and how important it is to see with your hands and fingers together with your eyes. Martha made it seem easy as she flowed through it with her puppy. It was not.

We split into groups and got puppies to evaluate. We first checked their temperament by securely holding the puppy on its back in our arms – like holding a baby. Did the puppy settle quickly, refuse to, look fearful, or seem insecure? Did it meet your eyes or look away? After that, it was time to get down to the business

of structure. Is there good muzzle width and depth? Do the teeth meet in a scissor bite? Are those pasterns straight? Does the chest meet the elbows? How many fingers fit between the shoulder blades compared to between the front legs? Are the hocks stable? There are so many parts to check, to see if a puppy is structured according to our breed standard. Luckily

the puppies were pretty cooperative (the cheese helped) and plenty of experienced people were there to help us, as we worked our way through the evaluation sheets and all the puppies. And then it was puppy playtime!

I walked away with a deeper respect for the work a responsible breeder puts into their breeding program and a whole lot more knowledge about the importance of structural soundness and what it looks like. What I didn't walk away with was a puppy (though it was mighty tempting).

Many thanks to Martha Phelps and her crew of experienced volunteers (Steve Grega, Dianne Baldwin, Ann Skinner, Judy Sellman, Jean Downin, Heidi Henderson, and Celeste O'Malley) for putting on this wonderfully informative and fun workshop.

—Cindy Buhner



Recommended reading and viewing:

- *The Forever Dog: Surprising New Science to Help Your Canine Companion Live Younger, Healthier, and Longer* by Rodney Habib and Karen Shaw Becker (available on Amazon)
- *Puppy Socialization: What It Is and How to Do It* by Marge Rogers and Eileen Anderson (available on dogwise.com and Amazon)

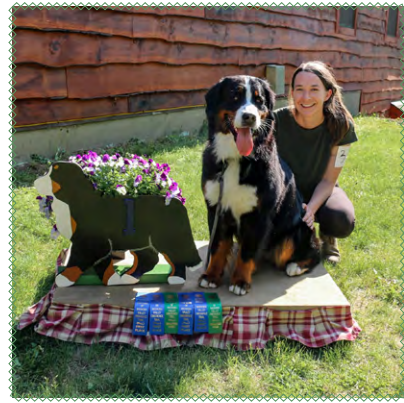
The Pat Hastings video, "Puppy Puzzle", can be found on YouTube. The quality isn't great, but the info is excellent.

AKC Obedience Trials

The AKC Obedience Trials on May 27 at Warner Brook Training Center in Pittsford, VT were well attended with Berners and a variety of other breeds. Judge Lori Moffa cheerfully kept the day running on time as she worked through the classes. The weather cooperated and the event proceeded without disturbance. Nashoba club members Pamela Eldredge, Heidi Henderson, and Ann Davis helped the day go smoothly.

The morning started out with Alison Jaskiewicz's Kiri finishing her Utility title and earning her first UDX leg. Beth Atkinson's Kelyn went on to High in Trial Bernese in Trial #1 out of Open B and Alison and Kiri were the winners in Trial #2, also out of Open B. Buffy Bell was thrilled that her home-bred bitch Rain finished her CDX title out of Open A. And Jessica Moore's Violet earned her first 2 CD legs out of Novice A at her first obedience trials.

—Mie Kingsley



GCHB PACH Kaibab's Jigsaw Puzzle "Kiri" UD MXP3 MJP3
Owner: Alison Jaskiewicz & Mary-Ann Bowman (far left)

Tennescott Green Mtns Summer Rain "Rain" CDX RM
Owner: Wynanda Bell (center right)

GCH CT Backcountry's Xcelsior "Kelyn" UD RN TKA
Owner: Beth Atkinson & Wendy Bennett (center left)

Oleka's Zingy Beautiful Violet "Violet" RI CGC TKA
Owner: Jessica Moore & Jordan Fortier (far right)

Berners & Brews

New Date: Sunday, October 8th, 2023 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

The Mystic Meadows

**Home of Trolley 27, Tavern 27, Dancing Rabbit Distillery & Jade Trace Golf
2075 B Parade Road, Laconia, NH 03246**

Local brews, craft sodas, organic coffee, smoothies, homemade gluten-free waffles and waffle sandwiches, salads, and a full bar with craft cocktails are available for purchase from Trolley 27. ✨ We will have an informal draft demonstration with lots of opportunities to ask questions. ✨ Shop for some cool Berner stuff from the Nashoba Club's Paws 'N' Shop pop-up! ✨ Raffle! Score more cool Berner stuff! ✨ We will offer an opportunity to register your Berner with Berner-Garde. ✨ Enjoy waffles and beverages while your Berner practices his best sit-stay on the patio. And maybe get in a round of golf! Berners are allowed on Jade Trace Nine-hole Par 3 golf and disc golf course.

Bring your family, your friends, & your Berners!

Contact Melissa at melg818@gmail.com with questions



Spring Fun Day

Neither rain nor wind nor muddy ground could deter more than 90 Berners and their people, together with other Berner enthusiasts, from gathering on May 20th at the 4-H Fairgrounds in Westford, Massachusetts for the 2023 Spring Fun Day. Dogs and people all enjoyed greeting old friends and making new ones.

Neither rain nor wind nor muddy ground could deter more than 90 Berners and their people from gathering on May 20th...

The rain held off long enough for the Berner Games which included a Cheese Ball Toss and Catch, a Ball and Spoon Relay Race (imagine balancing a ball on a spoon while putting on a pair of boxing shorts as your dog sits quietly by your side (or not) and then walking it all over to your relay partner), and Tic-Tac-Down. Caleigh Brown did a fabulous job running these games. There was also Berner Quest, a

meet-and-greet activity to encourage folks to mingle and meet other Berner owners. These were followed by the informal Title Holders' Parade, announced by Kim Gates. We saw some distinguished champions, beloved veterans, and a few fun titles such as "Biggest Mischief Maker" and "Champion Mud Puddle Diver". At least one Berner's owners announced their dog had no interest in competing for anything. All received warm applause.

A new feature at this Fun Day was the Salad Bar Lunch, organized by Tina Sircio and Sue Mahan, which offered an all-you-can-eat selection of delicious salads prepared by volunteers. Doggie desserts for people and dogs were available in the auction ably run by Adam Conn. The raffle, chaired by Cathy Sullivan-Neves and Erin Spanos, offered many great items that lucky winners claimed. It was supplemented by a dollar table with many Berner-themed bargains. Ways and Means, under the leadership of Stephanie and Bill Freeman, sold attractive Berner merchandise (my husband is now wearing a smart Berner baseball hat). All proceeds will be used for future club activities and events.

There were more opportunities to learn about Berners, including a therapy dog discussion





(Sam Sirico), Rally (Tressy Manning), Trick Dog (Allison Harding), Obedience (Melissa George), and Scent Work (Michelle Larson).

Special thanks to Candy Wright and Allison Harding, who organized the event, and the many volunteers, including salad makers and dessert bakers, who made sure that it truly was a Fun Day.

—Christine Navez



with George Brown and a session for potential puppy owners coordinated by Diane Smith. We had a great set of mini-sessions to demonstrate the many different capabilities of our wonderful Berners: Agility (Mary Durham), Draft



Celebrating Our Berners!

Birthdays!



Acadia

Wintergreen's Experience Acadia

07/13/18 BG# 152026

A very happy 5th birthday to our special boy, Acadia! You make us very proud, and we could not love you more.

*Regina & Larry Helfer,
Freeport, ME*



Daphne

*Glenmegan's Xcitement Abounds
CGC*

08/29/18 BG# 153266

Happy 5th Birthday to our sweet girl Daphne! She thinks blueberry pie and ice cream beat a cake, but perhaps not a cheeseburger!

*Rob & Mari Higgins,
Pawlet, VT*



Luna

*Four Seasons Luna
Love You to the Moon*

06/11/20 BG# 188618

Happy 3rd Birthday to our Luna!
Gina & Ed Zalewski, Cohasset, MA



Lyric

Thorncreeks Bellissima Farfalla

08/07/22 BG# 210726

Happy 1st Birthday, Lyric! Can't wait to celebrate with ice cream and toys to add to your hoard.

Erin & Karen Spanos, Preston, CT



Tristan

*GCH PACH Kaibab's Invitation To
The Dance UD TD MXP9 MJP7 PAX
T2BP GMDD*

06/25/13 BG# 100429

Tristan is 10!!! He greets each day eager and boisterous, embracing every moment with vigor and enthusiasm. Tristan is so fortunate and so are we!

Alison & Tom Jaskiewicz, Mason, NH



Khione

Backcountry's Xtant Andronicus

04/11/17 BG# 142383

Lymphoma is no match for Khione (middle)! And her brothers, Boreas (l) and Kepler (r) have her back! So pleased to have our little girl living life large!

The Malcolmsons, Rockport, MA

The **Bernerblatt** is your newsletter, and we love your submissions! Share birthdays, brags, remembrances, a new furry friend, or anything you think is interesting to the members. Get your favorite high-resolution jpeg photo of your pup, click on <https://www.bmdcnv.org/celebrating-berners>, and fill out the form. It's that easy.



Kiri

GCHB PACH Kaibab's Jigsaw Puzzle
UD MXP3 MJP3 PAX

12/20/16 BG# 136972

Kiri completed her Utility Dog (UD) obedience title at the end of May at the Nashoba Valley trials in Vermont. So very proud of our Kiri Wiggle.

Alison & Tom Jaskiewicz, Mason, NH



Lyra

Trailbound's More Than Words
TKA ORT NW1 RA

02/08/21 BG# 191109

Lyra finished her Rally Advanced title. On to Excellent!

Nancy & Linda Bates,
Old Orchard Beach, ME



Nor'easter

Snowpaw's Gale Force Wind

02/18/21 BG# 192410

Nor'easter has completed the requirements and evaluations to become a registered therapy dog through Alliance of Therapy Dogs! He can now join in his brothers and sisters' paw prints as he starts his new career! So very proud of you!

Regina & Larry Helfer, Freeport, ME

Braggs!



Trinity

Betruf Celtic Trinity CGC

Therapy Dog RN SEA SIA SCA NW3 Elite
CGCA FDC TKP

06/21/14 BG# 111947

Trinity rocked the runway at her first pet fashion show at Congress Square Park in Portland, ME on May 13. Her girl-power-inspired, pretty-in-pink ensemble was even featured in the Portland Press Herald.

Barbie's got nothing on this girl!

Nancy & Linda Bates,
Old Orchard Beach, ME



Trinity

Betruf Celtic Trinity CGC

Therapy Dog RN SEA SIA SCA NW3
Elite CGCA FDC TKP

06/21/14 BG# 111947

It rained on our parade, but Trin still won best-dressed dog in the Pine Point July 4th parade!

Nancy & Linda Bates,
Old Orchard Beach, ME



Weber

GCh. Spellbound's Grillin' & Chillin'

11/23/19 BG# 166686

New Grand Champion! After five Bests of Breed, a Working Group 4th, 2 BOS and 2 SD, 5 OHBOB, OH Group 3rd & 1st, Weber has completed the requirements for his Grand Champion - our first at Spellbound!

Dayna & Scott Mellow, Dover, NH

Celebrating Our Berners!



Edison

Snowpaw's Light'n Up the World
08/14/20 - 05/25/22

Happy Heavenly Birthday, Edison! Hope you're "Light'n up the Heavens" with your bright and beautiful personality. Sending hugs and kisses over the rainbow.

*Nancy Hoyt, Torrington, CT
& John Osthoff, Becket, MA*

Remembering

...



McKinley

Glenmegan's McKinley
On Top of the World CGC
08/11/13 - 06/29/23

We are heartbroken that our best boy, McKinley, has departed for the Rainbow Bridge. Almost 10 and loved by all who met him, "Mr. Pickles" made us laugh every single day. He will forever be loved, missed, and remembered.

Carl & Liz Bohlin,
Sagamore Beach, MA

Welcome!



Grace

Birch Haven's Soul Companion Grace
04/17/23 BG# 214473

Welcome to our family Grace - you are amazing. Thank you, Laurie Brown, for entrusting Grace to us. We are so happy to have this amazing pup in our lives!

Mary Labato & Paul Gentile,
Shrewsbury, MA



Sassafras

01/18/23

Sassy joined our family in March and is living up to her name. She is pictured here with big "Sister" Maisy (age 5).

Michaelynn & Frank Levesque,
Hanson, MA



Watson

Tybern's Clever, My Dear Watson
04/21/23

A truly special boy and half-brother to our dear Edison. Watson came into our lives at just the right time and replaced our broken hearts with profound joy and happiness.

*Nancy Hoyt, Torrington, CT
& John Osthoff, Becket, MA*

WHERE'S BOOMER NOW?

By Barry Berthaume

BERNER INC



EDUCATION & RESCUE
Dedicated to the Well-being and Safety
of New England Berners

It was October 19, 2018, when Boomer—a 10-month-old Bernese Mountain dog with four prior placements and significant medical issues—came to his forever home with us, through BERNER, Inc. (and specifically the good work of Amy Matthieu and Linda DeCelles).



His start with us, training and adjustment, and excellent medical outcomes—all with significant support from BERNER Inc.—were detailed in the Fall 2020 issue of the Bernerblatt. His placement was a significant inflection point, both in his life and in ours. Here we update you on “the rest of the story,” and what has happened once the transition and re-homing were successfully completed.

In the roughly four and a half years that he’s been with us, Boomer has seen us through retirement, hip replacement surgeries, and, most importantly, the birth of seven grandchildren (yes, that’s seven grandchildren in four years). He is a gentle companion who is always by my side, and due to his trustworthiness, requires no leash on our property in rural Massachusetts.

Boomer, while an extraordinary companion to my wife and myself, has taken to “baby duties” with aplomb. He herds parents carrying crying infants back to the group, trots next to toddlers to make sure they don’t get into mischief outside, and is a loving presence who allows all manner of toddler affection. While he does not exactly fetch, he loves a good game of keep-away and will bring toys to the grandchildren in an attempt to engage them. Most importantly, he is a gentle presence who is with us all throughout the week’s babysitting and an integral member of our family.

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

BERNER, Inc. depends on donations to care for our rescues. Please go to our website to donate: www.bernerinc.org. You can make donations on purchases at iGive by registering on their website. You need to use the legal name for our non-profit: Bernese Education and Rescue – Northeast Region, Inc.

Health



Uncommon Signs of Bloat

Reprinted with permission from Lisa Kaufman and The Alpenhorn (Fall 2022 issue)

Gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV) is a life-threatening condition most commonly seen in large, deep-chested dogs (although any dog may be affected). In its early stage, the stomach fills with gas causing a gastric dilatation or “bloat.” Sometimes the condition progresses no further than bloat. Sometimes the stomach twists (volvulus) which is a potentially deadly condition requiring immediate medical intervention.

The chart linked here should be on hand for all Berner owners. It categorizes the most common signs of bloat. https://www.bmdca.org/_files/ugd/8cca93_d522f595a34e43b3bd9c0fd44cddcf7.pdf

There are some dogs, however, who do not present in a typical manner. The BMDCA Health Committee first became aware of these uncommon situations from posts on social media. We then asked the Berner community for their experiences with bloat; specifically, those that were outside of the norm—the uncommon signs or symptoms of GDV. Many people said that the bloat came out of nowhere and that none of the typical signs were there. While the common symptoms are still clear indicators of bloat, please keep in mind that bloat may not present in the classic way. Regardless, one must immediately get the dog to a veterinarian or local emergency clinic. This is a medical emergency. If you do not act quickly, your dog may not survive.

Below is a summary of some of the heartbreaking, and frightening, atypical experiences with GDV:

- Tumors can be the precursor, and bloat secondary, which leads to less typical signs.
- Rawhides or other foreign bodies may be associated with the onset of bloat. In these cases, they have not yet caused an obstruction but may have caused the stomach to flip.
- It can occur at any age. While increased age is a risk factor, it can occur even in younger dogs. There are many examples of young dogs, or even puppies, that have bloated.
- Many cases seemed to occur early in the morning with none of the common symptoms other than the dog acting oddly. Vets have mentioned that they treat more bloat cases in the morning but are not sure why.
- No large or tight distended stomach, and no evidence of pain. The dogs seemed relatively normal but just acted oddly.
- Gulps, which typically lead to anxiety or stress, may proceed to bloat. This was brought up time and time again. Gulps often occur without bloat but should be watched extremely carefully.
- Bloat occurred when the dog drank too much water too quickly. The water was thrown up, but no other signs were evident.
- The dogs showed no typical signs at all, just acted ‘off’ and were taken to the vet’s office.

- There were many stories of veterinarians not suspecting bloat because the typical signs were not there. These dogs were sent home or left at the clinic for observation; none with good outcomes. There have even been veterinarian dog owners who didn’t consider bloat because there were none of the typical signs. If you even mildly suspect it may be bloat, request an x-ray, and don’t leave without one!

An article titled “Bloat in Dogs is Deadly” from the May 2022 issue of The Whole Dog Journal is well-written and recommended reading (<https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/health/bloat-in-dogs-is-deadly/>). It is current and may offer a few other thoughts not considered here. In that article, Eileen Fatcheric, DVM, makes some important points. She notes that while nobody knows exactly what causes bloat or why it happens in some dogs and not others, there are certain things that have been linked to an increased risk of the condition, including:

- History of bloat in a particular breed line (hints to a possible genetic predisposition)
- Dogs who eat too fast (ingest excess air with the meal)
- Using elevated feeding bowls (promotes ingestion of excess air with the meal)
- Feeding dry food with heavy fat/oil content
- Feeding a large meal vs. multiple smaller meals
- Exercising on a full stomach
- Drinking excessive amounts of water at one time

She goes on to say that really any dog (or cat) can bloat, but it is far more likely in large-breed, deep-chested dogs. Any large dog (over 90 pounds) should be considered at risk, and this risk increases with age.

Clearly, this is a situation you are better off preventing if possible. The list of simple things to do to avoid bloat includes:

- Make sure there is no history of bloat in your potential puppy’s line.
- Avoid using elevated feeding bowls. These were once thought to help prevent bloat, but studies show they increase its incidence instead.
- Add canned food to dry kibble meals; this has been shown to lessen the risk of bloat.
- Feed at least twice a day so meals are smaller.
- There should be no exercise before or after a meal. Do not feed after exercise until breathing is normal and relaxed. Promote rest for several hours after a meal.
- Consider a prophylactic gastropexy, especially for higher-risk dogs. Even if prevention is not possible, the most important thing is to be aware of the signs of bloat and be ready to respond quickly.

The bottom line is to always be aware. Videotape your dog if they have the gulps and show your vet. Many vets are not aware of the gulps and may be unable to diagnose the condition. The gulps may be a precursor to bloat, or at least an indicator of severe gastric distress that needs attention. Work as a team and show your vet what you mean. While much of this may be considered anecdotal, it is still good information to keep in mind. Keep a journal if you see your dog repeatedly gulping, licking the air, showing anxiety and other odd behaviors. Advise your veterinarian. Take the journal with you to the vet. There was one example of an owner taking her Berner to the emergency clinic because her boy didn't wag his tail when she hugged him goodnight. Four vets who understandably thought the owner was crazy examined her dog and found no symptoms consistent with bloat. She repeatedly asked for an x-ray and didn't feel too sorry for the vet who had to come back to tell her that the dog was being whisked into surgery because his stomach was in full torsion. Ask for an x-ray before you leave the clinic if you suspect bloat. By the time you get home then turn around to go back, it may be too late for your dog.

The classic signs are still important, and the chart on the most common signs of bloat referenced at the beginning of this article should be posted in the house, given to pet sitters, and provided to kennels where dogs are boarded. Include it in your puppy packets and give copies to other owners, too.

There are many myths promoted about GDV that are incorrect or have proven ineffective. In my research over the past few months, I joined a bloat awareness Facebook group and have been in a Bernese Mountain Dog group of 30,000+ members for a couple of years. The amount of misinformation out there is frightening. As we have found, narrowing your thoughts on what causes bloat to only those listed on the chart may not be in the best interest of your dog. I have seen people state erroneously:

- Because this is a giant breed issue and our breed is not a giant breed, Berners do not bloat.
- My vet told me Berners do not bloat.
- It is a United States problem.
- Only 3% of Berners bloat, so you do not need to worry about it. I see that number repeatedly.

After talking with veterinarians who are familiar with bloat and understand it, I asked why many pet owners claim that their vets are not aware of it, misdiagnose it, or minimize it. The conclusion is that it is not widely taught in vet school and if the vet hasn't worked in an emergency clinic, they may truly have no experience with it. Therefore, it needs to be discussed with your vet prior to an emergency. There is nothing wrong with talking with your vet in a respectful manner and letting them know your concerns. Hopefully, you will have a vet who is open and willing to listen to you. Give the vet a copy of the bloat chart! Keep the chart handy, understand that there are signs and symptoms not shown on the chart, and have an emergency plan in place. Trust yourself. If your dog seems off, get it to the vet.

Finally, as always (and we cannot stress this enough) please enter all your dog's health information in Berner-Garde. When searching Berner-Garde for this article, only 782 entries were found under bloat, though the 2005 breed health survey had it as the fifth leading cause of death. Please, record your BMD's health information on the site. Every little thing matters. Truly, every single thing. 🐾

About the author

Lisa Kaufman has been involved in the BMDs for 20 years, loving six Berners during that time. She has a keen interest in the health of the breed, recently joined the BMDCA Health Committee, is a BMDCA Breed Ambassador, and works with Berner-Garde.

The Berner-Garde Foundation was established to assist in efforts to improve the health of Bernese Mountain Dogs. The Foundation maintains the most extensive collection of BMD health and pedigree information available in a computerized database. Every BMD entered into the system is given a unique identifier (BG#). The Foundation seeks information on as many Berners as possible to benefit genetic health research, so if your dog isn't entered, please consider doing so. To learn more, go to <http://bernergarde.org/home/>.



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Our club is full of wonderful, fun, talented people ... YOU! From time to time, we need to ask for help with specific things.

Here are a few ways that you could join in the fun up close. Please contact Mary Durham, BMDCNV President, or any Board member with your questions and your interest. Thank you!

Historian - If you are a history lover and you have a Berner sleeping at your feet, this could be the perfect role for you. Our club has a long and interesting history, and we want to be sure it is captured and available for everyone to know about.

RCC Representative - The Regional Club Council Representative serves as the BMDCNV liaison to BMDCA and other regional clubs, acting as the conduit for information to and from the BMDCA and regional clubs.

For more information, see <https://www.bmdcnv.org/volunteer-opportunities>

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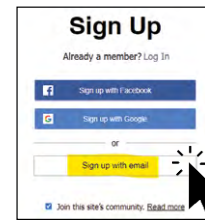
- You'll have access to all sorts of great information, such as the current and back issues of the Bernerblatt (even if you didn't get an email notice), our By-Laws, Board meeting minutes, and more. These are all available in the FILES section at <https://www.bmdcnv.org/file-share>.
- You'll also be added to the BMDCNV Members Group, which serves as a message board and forum where you can exchange posts, and upload photos and videos to share with other members.

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