



Mountain Dog MESSENGER

— NEWSLETTER OF THE BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG CLUB OF THE ROCKIES —

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Canine Cancer Vaccine, Studies and Side Effects (As posted on the Berner-L)

Clinical trials of the tumor vaccine are now being conducted in dogs with melanoma or hemangiosarcoma. A similar study is also being conducted in dogs with unresectable soft tissue sarcoma. Too, osteosarcoma, but, off-protocol. If your dog fits the criteria for entry into a funded clinical trial, then much of the cost of the treatment will be supported by an NCI grant. If your dog is not eligible for entry into a funded study but you still wish to pursue treatment with the vaccine, then there is the possibility of being enrolled in a vaccine trial on an "off-protocol" basis; this decision should be made in consultation with the dog's oncologist and the CSU laboratory. Since these are very early studies, it is not possible to predict at this point which patients may benefit from the vaccine.

Most dogs do not develop noticeable side-effects. The most common side-effects in those animals that do develop them are fever, malaise and decreased appetite, which generally lasts for a day or less. One dog developed enlarged lymph nodes and inappetance following the third vaccine that lasted for three days. Preliminary studies indicate that the

vaccine is safe to administer concurrently with one type of chemotherapy (adriamycin), though too few animals have been treated to be certain of this.

Dogs that are enrolled in the study will receive a series of eight vaccinations over a twenty two week period (my understanding is that, for Moses, vaccines will be given every two weeks and he will have chemotherapy every three weeks, some with carboplatin; not sure for how long regarding the chemo., they are preparing a schedule for me). The first five immunizations are given at two week intervals over a ten week period. About 24 to 48 hours prior to the first vaccine, the oncologist may give a single dose of a chemotherapy drug called Cytoxan or cyclophosphamide (Moses had this, no side-effects). Giving this chemotherapy drug is thought to boost the immune response to the vaccines. The vaccine may or may not be administered concurrently with adriamycin chemotherapy, depending on the treatment course elected by you and your pet's oncologist. After the first five vaccines, the next three are administered at one month
Continued on page 7

Letter from the President

Spring is almost here, it's my favorite time of the year; just think we can all start to practice Draft with our dogs and get ready for our fall test.

I want to thank Valerie Horney & Dottie Schulte for their hard work in putting together our annual awards banquet, what great food and the awards are always a special event, we all learn who have been working so hard the past year to get those titles on their dog. This year Bob & Lou Tucker received the Cathy Roth award, thanks Bob & Lou for all your help in the past for our club.

For anyone who attended the Denver shows in February I hope you were able to view the clubs new display boards, they look great and a lot of hard work was put into this new display. A big thanks to Karen Baru & Linda Ansfield for their hard work with public education.

Some of our members will be off to the National Specialty in Mesquite, Texas March 28 to April 3, 2004, I am sure the people who attend will have a lot of great stories to tell when they arrive back home.

Hope to see all of you at the next club meeting

Patti Morgan

Letter from the Editors

After severe computer problems (things that people all the way in India couldn't fix!) we finally have the March/April issue ready.

Hopefully it's worth the wait. We have several great articles and wait until you see what Bernice is talking about this time . . .

Nadja & Jeanne

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Show News Reporter
Valerie Horney 303-367-5059

Ways & Means
Patti Morgan 719-494-0148
Dottie Schulte 970-392-1806

– Any member is welcome to join in any of the above committees.
Just contact the respective chair and express your interest. –

Submit All Membership Applications To:

Stacy Temples
PO Box 2490
Fort Collins, CO
80522-2490

BMDCR Breed Contact Information Line:

Karen Baru
303-841-9262

In Memory

Reggie - Marcia Eckhardt and Christina Ohlsen

Ready - Valerie Horney

Mia - Christina Ohlsen

“Shaking the excess water from my boots, hat and mittens, I smile in fond memory of Biscuit, and of future memories with Ruby, knowing there is no better game than tag on a snowy day with a dog.”

Ruby's Snow, Sarah Pascarella, printed in Bark, Winter 2003, page 86.

Columbines L Heidi Kay

April 26, 1990 - December 13, 2003

Columbines L Heidi Kay died December 13, 2003 of a probable heart attack. She ate her breakfast and went out to check the neighborhood. When she came back she laid down and was obviously suffering. We called the vet and he wanted us to drive her in to Ogallala. We carried her to the van and she died on the way to the veterinarian.

Heidi was born in the Denver area, April 26, 1990. She joined our family that June, and we have loved her ever since. I think I learned more from her than she did from me. She was such a dear friend and I miss her so much.

I saved her hair for years and finally found someone to spin it. Anne Copeland spun the yarn for me and I finished the sweater last March. I've had a lot of fun wearing it. It's a great sweater and I get lots of comments on it and I shall treasure it forever.

We just wanted Heidi's friends to know that she passed on peacefully and is terribly missed.

Sincerely,
Maxine Wendell



Heidi and Maxine in her Berner sweater.

Show News

— Valerie Horney —

Council Bluffs Kennel Club

November 15, 2003

WB/BW/BB

Summit's Milagro De Paz

owned by Ann & Bill Dailey & Sandy Dunaway

WD

Summit's Star Gazer

owned by Sandy Dunaway & Rick Redmond

NEW CHAMPION

Nebraska Kennel Club

November 22, 2003

WB/BW/BOS Summit's Fur Elise, "Liesel"

owned by Sharon Keefer, Sandy & Breanne Dunaway

Eukanuba National

December 3, 2003

AOM

CH Classique's Rhinestone Cowboy, "Cody"

owned by Ann Dailey and Bill Dailey

Long Beach

December 5 & 6, 2003

WD

Summit's as Wild as the Wind, "Drifter"

owned by Sandy Dunaway

Clovis Portales Kennel Club

December 6 & 7, 2003

WB/BW/BB

Summit's Milagro De Paz

owned by Ann & Bill Dailey & Sandy Dunaway

Land O Lakes Kennel Club

January 3, 2004

BB

CH Classique's Rhinestone Cowboy, "Cody"

owned by Ann Dailey and Bill Dailey

GROUP 3

WB/BW/BOS

Summit's Milagro De Paz

owned by Ann & Bill Dailey & Sandy Dunaway

NEW CHAMPION

Plum Creek Kennel Club

February 13, 2003

WD/BW

Prairiefires Charismatic v Ay

owned by S Johnson, K Englert, N Aldrich



RWD

Wagontale's Great Gray Wizard, "Gandalf"

owned by Stacy Temples, Pam & Barry Solomon

WB

Prairiefire's Time to Shine

owned by Sharon Johnson, Patty and Frank Jakos

RWB

Prairiefire's Legend Semper Fi

owned by Robin Dorn, Amy Fitzgerald, Sharon Johnson

BB

Prairiefire's Bedtime Story, "PJ"

owned by Sharon Johnson

BOS

Summit's Milagro De Paz

owned by Ann & Bill Dailey & Sandy Dunaway

New Companion Dog

CH Blue Moon's Brigette Bardough owned by Christine

and Michael Mann

NEW BMDCA VERSATILITY DOG

February 14, 2004

WD

Valentine's Built to Last V Bev's

owned by Rae Valentine

RWD

Prairiefires Charismatic v Ay

owned by S Johnson, K Englert, N Aldrich

WB

Northwoods Dee O Gee

owned by Mary Richards & Travis Clark & Jessica Jay

NEW CHAMPION

RWB

Wagontale's Mirabelle, "Mira"

owned by Stacy Temples and Howard Ramsdell

BB

CH Classique's Rhinestone Cowboy "Cody"

owned by Ann Dailey and Bill Dailey

BOS

Summit's Milagro De Paz owned by Ann & Bill Dailey &

Sandy Dunaway

2nd Leg CD
CH Ahquabi's Bank On It, "Teller"
owned by Valerie Horney

Colorado Kennel Club
February 15, 2003

WD
Nevada of Flying Horse
owned by Douglas Knox

RWD
Prairiefires Charismatic v Ay
owned by S Johnson, K Englert, N Aldrich

WB/BW
L-Sin's Mountainair Navy Blue, "Navy"
owned by Darcy Babb

RWB
Prairiefire's time to Shine
owned by Sharon Johnson, Patty and Frank Jakos

BB
Prairiefire's Bedtime Story, "PJ"
owned by Sharon Johnson

BOS
Summit's Milagro De Paz
owned by Ann & Bill Dailey & Sandy Dunaway

February 16, 2004

WD
Ebnet's Yaro, "Yaro"
owned by Sean and Lisa Ebnet

RWD
Blumoon's Broadway Joe, "Joe"
owned by Jeanne Stanwood & Christine Mann

WB/BW/BOS
L-Sin's Mountainair Navy Blue, "Navy"
owned by Darcy Babb

BB
CH Classique's Rhinestone Cowboy, "Cody"
owned by Ann Dailey and Bill Dailey

**Deadline for submissions for
the next newsletter is April 20!**

**Please send photos, stories,
etc. to Jeanne at
stanwood@earthlink.net**

– volunteers needed –

St. Patrick's Day Parade in Colorado Springs (Old Colorado City) on March 13. Parade will start at 12:00 Noon, it's a great parade will about 90 entries. So dress up the dogs bring out the carts and have a great time. We will need people with dogs and people with dogs & carts.

Also on March 20 - 21 in Greeley, CO there is an International Dog Show and volunteers are needed.

If you are interested please contact me for more information.

Patti Morgan
719-494-0148
Davieau@aol.com

– more volunteers - berner fiesta –

If you are interested in hosting this terrific doggy event, please contact Patti Morgan, 719-494-0148 ASAP.

– meeting –

Next meeting is March 21, 2004, will be held at Laura Hauptenthal & Alvin Beers's house , 5614 Ivy Ct., Greenwood Village.

Guest speaker will be Kate Solisti-Mattelon, a Behavior & Nutrition Counselor, author of The Holistic Animal Handbook.

Board Meeting	11:30 A.M.
Guest Speaker	1:00 P.M.
General Meeting	2:00 P.M.

Directions:

From I-25 take the Orchard Rd. exit heading west. You will pass the following streets in this order: Greenwood Plaza Blvd, Quebec, Monaco. After Monaco start looking for Orchard Dr. on the right (midway between Monaco and Holly – if you get to Holly you've gone too far). Orchard Dr. veers off of Monaco at an angle. Continue on Orchard Dr. to Ivy (there is a sign that says "no outlet", but disregard) and turn right on Ivy. Continue up the hill to the cul-de-sac. 5614 Ivy Ct. is the gold brick house.

Hank & Lily, Bernese Therapy Dogs — Jeanne Schoech —

Both our Berners, Hank and Lily are now involved in doing therapy work here in Salida, Colorado. We are registered therapy teams with Therapy Dogs, Inc. and I have found this volunteer endeavor one of the most fulfilling aspects of living with a Berner.

Our journey toward therapy work began with a visit to the Broadmoor Alzheimer Unit in Colorado Springs to observe a visit by a therapy dog group to that facility. It was one of those forks in the road that made all the difference. I watched in awe as this group of dogs worked their magic with the residents and knew it was a path Hank & I must travel. At the time, even attaining a CGC seemed daunting, but given time and training that goal was accomplished as well as acceptance as a therapy dog team with TD, Inc.

Hank has become the “official” the resident therapy dogs at Salida Middle School where we go to work daily in the Special Education Departments program for students with emotional disorders. We also visit the local nursing home with a group of therapy dogs. However, it is with the children where Hank weaves his Berner magic and has come to make the most difference. He adores the time with them; these kids who have unspeakable needs, who have been shoved from one house to another, who have known physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, these kids who doubt love (and often are quite unlovable), who know trust as only a word. He sits with them, lays with them, and plays with them. He knows not “disordered” and gives them respect, love, and trust.

We have begun a dog training day once a week called “dog days.” Through hands-on dog training the students take on the role of teacher and in doing so learn that kindness, respect, and gentleness are the best tools for building a relationship; not

only with a dog, but with their peers. Over & over, I have been privileged to be part of the healing process with these kids -because of a Berner.

Not so long ago, we had a crisis with a student with anger management difficulties. To this young man, the world had caused all his problems and this day, even after attacking another student, it was not his fault. I could not get this child to calm down, to deal with his anger and frustration so I finally told him to just sit a moment while I brought Hank in from the next room. After introducing them with a “shake” command, this child, saying nothing, leaned over Hank and began just petting and massaging Hank’s shoulders. Long minutes of this silent petting passed. Then tears began and he looked up at me and said, “I guess I can say I’m sorry.” Never before had I heard these words from this child. Thus we had a beginning. No, it didn’t solve all this child’s problems, but for one moment, with a Berner, this child’s world held hope .

Lily began coming to school last spring and now I alternate taking the dogs on any of our therapy visits. Her personality is very different from Hank’s, as is their interaction with the students, but each, in their own way, have found their unique touch in doing therapy work. Our “sunshine days” are the days we participate in the elementary school library’s reading program, Paws For Reading. After seeing national news coverage about the Utah program, R.E.A.D., I approached our elementary school librarian about Hank & I visiting library time to listen to children read. She was as enthusiastic a I as was school administration. We began visiting the school library time for second graders January of 2001. Since that time the

program has grown to include 14 dogs and 13 handlers visiting the second grade library time 4 days a week. We developed an application, guidelines, and administer a behavior/temperament test to all incoming dogs & handlers. The program also hosts an annual recognition assembly where the children receive a reading certificate. Through grant monies each child is presented with a new book at the assembly. This last year 256 volunteer hours were spent by the Paws For

Berners have a special sensitivity to human need that makes them so gifted at therapy work.

Reading dogs (there are 3 Berners involved) and their handlers listening to children improve their reading skills. Reading is the focus, but there is more: a dog’s presence has soothed the great sadness of a child whose mother had recently died, been a comfort for a child wounded from a recess battle, and lessons of empathy and kindness for another being are ongoing.

After being introduced to our 2 year old Berner, Lily, (who was making her first visit as part of the program), one boy remained with her the entire hour. When reminded he could get a book to read to the dog, his reply was, “Oh no. I’m taking care of the dog today. This is her first time here and I must help her be happy here.”

Soon Hank and Lily will begin participating in an elementary school mentoring program, Book Buddies. Another therapy dog owner/friend and I wrote the proposal which has been accepted by the school. In January, one child with one dog will be reading, socializing, and interacting for 30 minutes a week for the remainder of the school.

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It is fair to say, "we" can hardly wait! For every one therapy dog there is another... and another... and another, each touching lives in remarkable ways. It is a growing chain of understanding and love reaching out to others. That I am a part of this with our Bernese Mt. Dogs is a privilege and a gift. I truly believe Berners have a special sensitivity to human need that makes them so gifted at therapy work. These big, gentle dogs who always seem to have a smile and a secret... These large canines without airs, without pretense, with humor and dignity remind us all to be humble and grateful... to look to this day. I am reminded of these words: "You have done all this without a word, a touch, or a deed. You have done this by being yourself."

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intervals. If the patient has a measurable tumor and a tumor response has been observed during the vaccine trial, provisions will be made to continue the vaccines at a longer interval for the remainder of the year.

At this point, they are unable to make accurate predictions as to whether or not your dog will respond to the vaccine. In general, the smaller the tumor and the less widespread, the greater the likelihood of a response. Some tumors also appear to be inherently more responsive to tumor vaccines, particularly melanoma. In other cases, especially with very advanced cancer, cessation of growth of the tumor may be a more realistic outcome, rather than actual tumor regression.

Litter Box

Puppies Expected beginning of April.

Breeders:

Wagontale Bernese, Fort Collins, CO
Stacy Temples & Howard Ramsdell
970-493-3714
satemples@aol.com

SIRE: *BISS CH Pinnacles Evans En Route* CD (Evans)
WP79093701, Born: July 4, 1997

GDC14644 hips 22 Good, EL22N, OFA5115Hips Good, EL 1971, Cardiac Normal, CERF 1007/2002, PennHIP (0.3/0.3), vWD Clear by parentage

DAM: *CH Wagontale's Inside Edge* (Christie) WR051697/03,
Born: November 21, 2001,

OFA 10860 Good Hips, OFA 3544 EL, BMD-CA 323/14F/C-PI, Cardiac Normal, CERF 2169/2003, Thyroid Normal (12/03 MSU), vWD Clear by parentage

High Tail it to King Soopers Furry Scurry® to Benefit the Dumb Friends League!

Get ready to fetch your sneakers and your furry friend for the King Soopers Furry Scurry, a two-mile walk and fun run for dogs and their human companions on Saturday, May 1, 2004, at 9 a.m. in Denver's Washington Park. All proceeds from the event will benefit the Dumb Friends League and the animals in our care. Participants will receive a Furry Scurry T-shirt and a gift for their dog. In addition, participants who raise more than \$150 in pledges will receive a limited edition Furry Scurry sweatshirt.

In addition to individual participation, corporations and community organizations are encouraged to request team participation information. Furry Scurry corporate teams will save money on registration fees, and they will have their own corporate team area on event day. For more information on corporate teams, please call 720-241-7082.

Online registration for the King Soopers Furry Scurry is now available at no additional charge by visiting www.ddfl.org/furryscurry.htm.

Beginning March 20, participants may register by mail or in person at various registration sites throughout the community.

For further de-"tails," visit the League's website www.ddfl.org/furryscurry.htm, or call 303-696-4941, ext. 1378.

Membership

— Stacy Temples —

These people still have not renewed. Please send in your dues and renewal forms immediately, as I would like to publish the directory and mail it out right after the National Specialty. The renewal forms were mailed with the November 2003 newsletter. Please contact me if you need another form.

2004 Late Renewals

Robert Anema, Jason & Stacey Bearden, Karen Becker & Michael Reddin, Suzanne Brown, Judy Butenas, Valorie Campbell, Stacy & Ami Clay, Jane Cole, Kristin Crow, Laurie Dehring, Terri Dittmer, Heidi & Dane Elliott, Linda Ferre, Nancy Fuselier, Kimberly Garrett, Cheryl Gillpatrick, Karen Guzik, Vicky Hall, Craig Harrison, Haley Hayes, Patricia Hughes, Meris Lerner, Christine Mann, Susan Merriman, Keena Metcalf, Chris & Jennifer McManus, Lydia McNeese, Sharon Montville, Gretchen & Lindsey Nygaard, Christina Ohlsen, Elizabeth Owen-Russell, Malcolm Packer, Noah Pene, Rona Pfannenstern, Ted & Beth Shaw Randolph, Ken & Melissa Rice, Lynne & Rick Robinson, Jeffrey Rubeck, Jeanne Schoech, Dottie Schulte, Phillip Shaffer, Jeni Shelton, Jean Smith, Jane Sorrick & Tobey Pitchford, Gail Todaro, Jane Trexler, Marne Tutt, Lynette Weaver, Patricia Wellinger, Maxine Wendell, Vicky Whitney, Esther Wilson.

This month we have the following new (and previous) applicants. Their applications will be voted on at the next club meeting.

As Sustaining members:

Alice Warino
121 Sweet Clover Ct.
Loveland, CO, 80537
970-593-1552
jwarino@wcox.com

The Warinos own Lorien Dell's Sleeping Beauty, Lexus (F, 11/7/02) from Lynn Wood. They have been training her in obedience and showing in conformation for the past year. She is interested in health issues and therapy work also. They want to

join the club to meet other owners and to learn more about the breed. She can help with club activities.

Stacie Bianco & Douglas Foster
14322 Craftsman Way
Broomfield, CO 80020
303-439-9268
milosophie@copper.net

They would like to get to know area breeders to learn more about the breed and to choose a companion puppy. They would also like to learn about breeding and showing in the future. They can attend meetings and volunteer for group activities. Stacie is a veterinary technician who has been involved in AKC sponsored studies of cancer research in dogs. She has owned a mixed breed in the past and Douglas has owned a Keeshond.

Paul & Sonia Chizzo
15716 El Dorado Way
Larkspur, Colorado 80118
303-663-7996
paul@chiz.net & sonia@chiz.net

Paul & Sonia are looking for a puppy and they are interested in obedience, drafting & backpacking. They have had several dogs before. They attended the Berner Fiesta and want to join the club to participate in social events & as a source of information.

Tyler G. Irwin
3811 Lisbon Ct.
Denver, CO 80249
303-574-0069,
TJIRWIN_CO@msn.com

Tyler wants to join the club to learn about the breed and is interested in a family pet, obedience, backpacking and search and rescue. He owns 2 Australian Shepherd females.

Lynn M. Lindeman
7741 S. Hickory Place
Littleton, CO, 80120
303-797-3462
linded@earthlink.net

Lynn is interested in a family pet, health issues, obedience and drafting. She wants to join the club to learn more about the breed and to find a qualified breeder and to learn about training a puppy. She can help with e-mails, phone calls and mailings. She currently owns a Miniature Schnauzer and has had a GSD and a Golden in the past.

Mary Anne Persons
795 Summit Dr.
Dillon, CO 80435-8328
970- 262-6646

Mary Anne recently married Robert Persons, also a sustaining member. They own Marben's Tuckernuck Belle, (F,6/16/01) from Tiggie Gerli; and Bogo, (F, 3/28/02). She is interested in conformation, health issues, breeding, draft, obedience, conformation and therapy work. She wants to join the club because she is committed to helping improve the health and protection of Bernese. She is willing to be a foster home for rescue, and to help with public education. She has also owned an Aussie, a Cattle dog, and a Husky. She just started showing in conformation.

Also these people have applied as sustaining members. Their informations are in the previous newsletter. Jody Caporaso, Rick Strasle & Marie France St. Pierre & Michael Witowski.

Voting Membership:

Cathy Davis
5390 Three Sisters Circle
Evergreen, CO 80435

Owens Hiska Vom Obwaldnerhof (F,7/14/2000) & Calix Vom Scheimatthof, (M, 12/31/2001), both imports. Cathy currently is a sustaining member and she wants to breed her dog so has decided to change to a voting member. Her dog was shown in conformation for the past year. Her interests are also health issues & drafting. Her sponsors are Karen Baru & Mary Richards.

New e-mail address for Marne Tutt
mhtutt@comcast.net

Ask Bernice



The Berner Advice Column

*Dear Bernice,
I am a 14-week-old puppy .
Lately, I've noticed that
things scare me - things that
probably shouldn't scare me.
Bushes, fire hydrants, loud
people, Chihuahuas, ugly
sweaters. Am I crazy?
Paranoid Pup*

Dear Paranoid Pup,
You're not crazy. Ugly
sweaters scare everybody. As
for the other things, you
should keep in mind you're
going through a critical
period of your young life.
Until you're about 20-weeks
old, it's important for your
owner to expose you to as
many different experiences
as possible, and do it in a
positive way. This is called
socialization. Of course,
socialization continues for
the rest of your life, but it is
especially important at this
age. You should get used to
everything from firetrucks
and bicycles to bearded
people and pizza deliverers
(Note: Sometimes you can
find a bearded pizza deliverer
on a bike. That's what is
called a socialization
jackpot.)
Bernice

Poisonous Plastics for Dogs — Tracy Werner —

They squeak, they squish, they chew and ingest soft vinyl toys for hours at a time throughout their entire lives.

They come in all shapes and colours, from T-bone steaks to squeaky porcupines. Your dogs play with them, chew on them, and love them to pieces (literally). What you might not know is that they could cause cancer and liver damage. Vinyl and plastic dog toys contain a chemical compound that is currently under investigation by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) due to possible cancer risks to humans.

The chemical in question is DINP (diisononyl phthalate), used to make hard PVC plastic soft and pliable. In 1998 Health Canada issued an advisory warning about the dangers of mouthing soft plastic toys by small children, and some countries, such as Sweden, Germany, and Italy, have already started phasing out DINP for use in children's toys. But no one is talking about the effects DINP may have on dogs' health. Over the past decade, scientific research has shown that DINP can be toxic to lab animals, causing liver and kidney damage and at higher levels of exposure, increased cancer incidence. These findings were important enough to prompt further review of exposures to children due to mouthing soft plastic toys.

The studies focused on small children who generally only mouth toys for brief periods during a small fraction of their lifespan. Dogs, in contrast, many

The U.S. CPSC concluded that phthalates can leach out of plastics and that a child mouthing or sucking a soft plastic toy may ingest more than the acceptable daily intake. Their 1998 report, *The Risk of Chronic Toxicity Associated with Exposure to Diisononyl Phthalate (DINP) in Children's Products*, states that "Animal studies show that DINP causes chronic toxic effects to the liver and other organs." and that "the magnitude of the risk is directly related to the amount of DINP released from mouthing and the amount of time children mouth the products."

Then what about our dogs? According to [vinylfacts.com](http://www.vinylfacts.com), "almost all soft plastic toys contain PVC," so avoid these types of toys if you're concerned about the health risks mentioned above. Natural rubber or latex soft toys provide a non-toxic and environmentally friendly alternative.

Tracy Werner is the owner of Natural Pet Market, a company focused on healthy alternatives for companion animals.

See <http://www.naturalpetmarket.com>
Her recent loss of one of her dogs to cancer prompted her to research the issues she discusses here.

References:

<http://www.vinylfacts.com>

- PVC in Toys USCPSC - *The Risk of Chronic Toxicity Associated with Exposure to Diisononyl Phthalate (DINP) in Children's Products 1998*

What is GDV?

Gastric Dilation and Volvulus (GDV) is a life-threatening condition that occurs in medium to giant breeds of dogs. The cause of GDV is unknown, although many factors may contribute to the development of the condition such as stress (i.e., boarding, or medical/surgical procedures), aging changes to the supporting ligaments to the stomach, excessive activity before or after meals, and an underlying motility disorder of the stomach. Accumulation of gas in the stomach leads to dilation and rotation or twisting of the stomach. The result is the condition referred to as GDV.

What signs may signal GDV?

Signs of GDV include abdominal distention, retching or vomiting, restlessness and collapse. The signs are typically progressive and can become immediately life threatening.

Why is GDV such a serious problem?

GDV becomes life threatening when the stomach rotates and cuts off the blood supply to the stomach. This leads to necrosis (death of tissue) of the stomach which is fatal if untreated.

How is GDV treated?

GDV is an emergency!! Treatments include cardiovascular support, decompression of the stomach, and surgery to reposition of the stomach. Many patients pose significant anesthetic risks when presented for emergency surgery. During surgery, the stomach is re-positioned to a normal position and sutured to the body wall (a procedure called a gastropexy) to prevent rotation of the stomach in the future. At times, a portion of the stomach or the spleen may need to be removed because of damage sustained from the rotation of the stomach.

How successful is GDV treatment?

Even with aggressive treatment, GDV has a mortality rate of 30 to 50%. Dogs that have necrosis of the stomach or damage to the spleen, or heart experience the highest risk of mortality. Early aggressive treatment is important to reposition the stomach and correct cardiovascular changes before severe damage to the stomach, spleen or heart occurs.

Can GDV be prevented?

Feeding smaller, more frequent meals and avoiding excessive activity around mealtime may help to reduce the risk of GDV in dogs. Performing a prophylactic gastropexy can also prevent the life-threatening rotation of the stomach. In the past, this procedure has been discouraged due to the invasiveness of the procedure. Major exposure of the abdominal viscera is required to effectively complete the procedure. More recently, a minimally invasive prophylactic gastropexy has been developed utilizing laparoscopic surgery. The surgical procedure is performed with specialized instruments through very small incisions, thus minimizing the impact associated with conventional open procedures. The prophylactic laparoscopic-assisted gastropexy can effectively prevent displacement and rotation of the stomach and eliminate the need for emergency surgery. Additionally, the laparoscopic-assisted gastropexy substantially reduces the pain associated with the procedure. Most patients are fully recovered immediately after the procedure without the risk associated with emergency surgery. Laparoscopic -assisted gastropexy can be combined with a laparoscopic OHE, conventional castration, or other procedures requiring general anesthesia.

How is a Laparoscopic-assisted Gastropexy Performed?

A laparoscopic-assisted gastropexy is performed under general anesthesia. The dog's abdominal cavity is clipped and prepared in the same way it would be prepared for conventional surgery. Rather than exposing the abdominal organs with a large incision, the abdomen is distended with CO₂ gas and two small incisions are made to allow placement a telescope called a laparoscope to visualize the structures in the abdominal cavity. The greater curvature of the stomach is identified, grasped, and exteriorized through the second incision. The stomach is secured to the body wall. The major advantage of a laparoscopic-assisted gastropexy is the significant reduction in pain associated and duration of with the procedure compared to the open approach. Disadvantages of the procedure include the difficulty in

mastering laparoscopic techniques, potential anesthetic problems created with laparoscopic surgery, and the expense associated with the equipment required.

As a dog owner, how does one know if a Laparoscopic-assisted Gastropexy is right for my dog?

Unfortunately, there is no "right or wrong" answer. Every individual dog at risk does not necessarily experience a GDV event, however some dogs at risk benefit more than others. It is important to understand that a gastropexy is intended to prevent rotation and life-threatening damage to the stomach during a bloat event. Currently, long-term information regarding the incidence of gastric dilation (bloat) following a prophylactic laparoscopic-assisted gastropexy is not available. Many dog guardians consider a prophylactic laparoscopic-assisted gastropexy under the following circumstances:

1. Your dog has had an episode of bloat without torsion (volvulus) of the stomach that was managed conservatively; a prophylactic laparoscopic-assisted gastropexy can be easily justified. The likelihood of another bloat event is extremely high (80% risk of a second GDV episode requiring surgery).
2. A history of GDV exists in your dog's family, for example a sibling or individual in your dogs lineage has experienced a GDV, a prophylactic laparoscopic-assisted gastropexy can be easily justified.
3. You live in an area that has limited access to emergency facilities, a prophylactic laparoscopic-assisted gastropexy can be justified in a breed at risk.
4. Your dog has numerous stress events in its life, such as frequent boarding while you are traveling or another surgery, you may be able to justify a prophylactic gastropexy in a breed at risk.





Legend Solomon enjoying the snow at home in Evergreen.

BMDCR Club Information

Meetings

The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of the Rockies holds regular meetings on the fourth Sunday of January, March, September and November, unless members are otherwise notified. There is an educational program followed by a business meeting. All programs begin at 2:00 p.m., and the business meeting about an hour later. Location of meetings will be announced each newsletter. Do not bring dogs to these meetings.

In the even-numbered months we will offer a club activity that includes dogs – e.g. the Bernerfiesta, Berner hike, draft clinic, herding instinct certification test, Berner Noel, etc. The starting times and locations of these events will vary, depending on the activity. Please mark your calendars to reserve these dates for 2002. There may also be additional events – club-sponsored fun matches, club fund-raising activities, our supported entry or regional specialty, breeders showcases, or other all-breed events open to Berners – held at other times during the course of the year. You will be notified of these events through the newsletter.

Newsletter/Subscriptions

We welcome articles written by members on any topic of interest to Berner fanciers. We also reprint uncopyrighted articles from other publications – such as the Alpenhorn, other regional club newsletters, the AKC Gazette, and other dog club newsletters – as space permits.

The newsletter is sent free of charge to all BMDCR members in good standing and to other regional Berner clubs that send us their newsletters. Newsletter subscriptions are available to non-members for \$25.00 per year. Checks should be made payable to BMDCR and sent to Stacy Temples, PO Box 2490, Ft. Collins, CO 80522-2490. Club members' name and/or mailing address changes should also be submitted to Stacy.

Litter Box Policy

BMDCR voting members who have paid the annual \$5.00 Breeder Referral Service fee will be entitled to free Litter Box advertising (for one or more litters) for the entire calendar year. Sustaining members may participate in the BR program if they are sponsored by 2 voting members who also have paid the Breeder Referral fee.

Rules for Listing a Litter

Litter must come from a member breeder or stud owner in good standing with the BMDCR who has paid the designated fee. The litter must be registrable with the AKC. Litter parents must have had hips and elbows x-rayed and submitted to the OFA, GDC, OVC or other recognized registry. Dams must be over 18 months of age. Litter owner must provide a 4-generation pedigree to buyers. Puppies must be sold with a health guarantee subject to veterinary exam within 48 hours of sale. Litter owner must have a complete entry in Berner-Garde by the time the litter is 12 months old.

At the September 22, 1991 general meeting, our club voted to follow the format used by the BMDCA for all Litter Box advertising in our newsletter. All ads must be limited to the following information: Sire, Dam, Whelping Date, and Breeder's name, address, and telephone number. In addition, "The only acceptable reference to joint conformation in Litter Box announcements are GDC, OFA, OVC numbers for hips and elbows, including the letter rating and age in months at evaluation. The statement, 'elbows negative for dysplasia,' appearing on OFA certificates issued before institution of the OFA elbow registry, may be used." (October 1991 Alpenhorn) BMDCR Breeder Referral guidelines were modified by vote of the General members on November 18, 2001.

Classified Advertising/Display Advertising

The BMDCR newsletter accepts classified ads. This is the perfect opportunity to get rid of that used dog equipment cluttering up your garage, publicize dog-related services, or sell Berner arts and crafts items. Classified advertising should be sent to the newsletter editor. There will be a charge of 10 cents per word. A check for the required amount, payable to BMDCR, should be included with your ad copy. Display advertising will be handled by the editor. All display ads should be sent directly to the editor. Rates are as follows: Full Page: \$25, Half Page: \$15 (these include use of one photo; additional photos will cost \$10 each), 1/4 Page: \$10, Business Card: \$5 (these are no-photo ads). Camera ready ads subtract 25%. Include a check payable to BMDCR with your ad copy.

Submission Deadlines for Publication

The BMDCR newsletter is published bi-monthly. All articles, reports, and ads must be received by the editor as follows: the 20th day of February, April, June, August, and December for the next months issue.

BMDCR
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