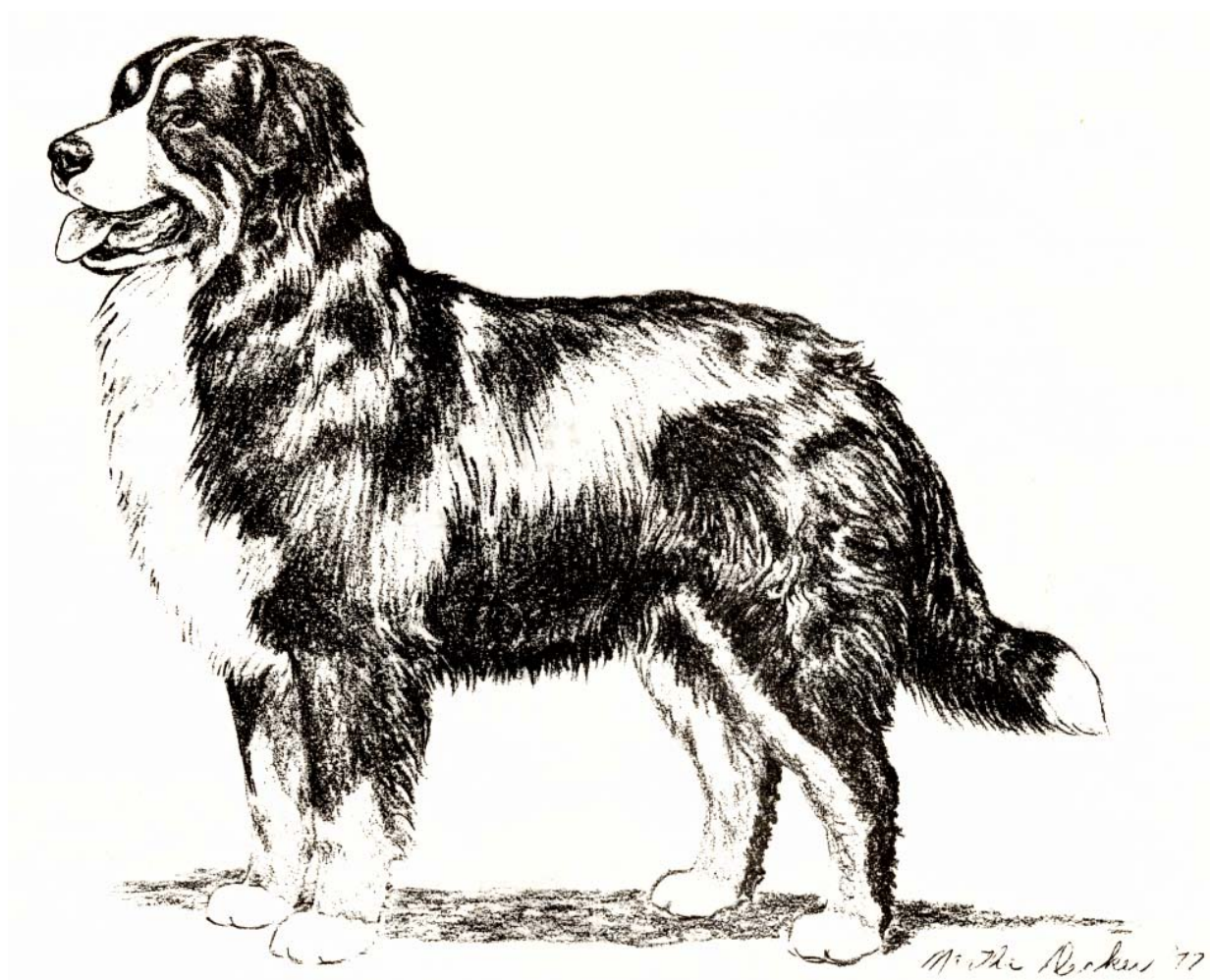


1 January 2010

Creation of the 1980 Bernese Mountain Dog Breed Standard



A breed standard revision process was undertaken by the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America from 1977 -1980.

The BMDCA Standard Committee Reports, originally published in the BMDCA Newsletter explore Bernese Mountain Dog traits described in the Breed Standard.

Many of the insightful illustrations are the work of Martha Decker.

Years of work lead up to creation of the final version of the 1980 Bernese Mountain Dog Breed Standard which was approved by the AKC on July 8, 1980. The current Breed Standard is remarkably similar.

This document by no means represents all materials published in the Newsletter or unpublished documentation and discussions pertaining to the BMDCA Standard Committee's, the BMDCA Board of Directors' or club member's contributions to Breed Standard revisions.

Breed fanciers who became involved since that timeframe are encouraged to review this material.

The BMDCA Newsletter, February 1978

REPORT FROM THE STANDARD COMMITTEE

By Sylvia Howison

The proposed Standard that was drawn up in November by Sylvia Howison and Esther Mueller, with Mary Alice Horstick acting as clerk, was sent to the American Kennel Club. (Members will note the Club did not fund the expenses of this meeting.) Suggestions made by Mr. Mark Mooty, Secretary of the AKC, were incorporated and a copy of this correspondence and the original proposal was mailed to all Board Members and Standard Committeemen on December 28, 1977. The corrected proposal was mailed to all Members on January 10, 1978. IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED YOUR COPY, please contact the Secretary, Jane McGovern, 921 Lakeshore Rd., Grafton, Wis. 53024. She has additional copies available. Please remember to keep your copy for future reference! As of January 17, the Committee has received three responses from Martha Decker, Arnold Woolf and Gwen Russell.

The single most difficult task in working with a breed Standard is to keep the entire Standard in proportion and in harmony. It is very easy to accidentally allow too strong an emphasis to be laid on one area (such as head, size, color, etc.) resulting in the breed being judged with that area as the prime criteria of quality. Surely, we need not point out the possible disastrous effects this could have on what should be a good all-round working dog. Therefore, please weigh your feelings on any one section of the Standard against the body of the Standard as a whole to be sure you have not lost the necessary perspective. Then SEND IN YOUR COMMENTS. We need them!!!

Correspondence received will be acknowledged. When relevant, summaries of correspondence will be included in the Newsletter. However, further revisions will not be made a section at a time. Rather, the entire proposed revision will be reviewed when Parent Club status becomes imminent and a complete final draft will be prepared at that time. It is our hope that this will be no more than two years away. We will need to be ready. Do not fail to do your part.

Respectfully submitted, Sylvia Howison

P.S. TO STANDARD COMM. REPORT
from Mary Alice Horstick

We are really anxious and eager to hear comments re proposed Standard; it is best to put it into writing so we do not misunderstand or misquote. We like both positive and negative comments. If possible, send both Sylvia and me copies and mark so that I don't have to Xerox copy for her. THANKS!
M.A.

The BMDCA Newsletter, April 1978

REPORT FROM THE BREED STANDARD COMMITTEE

By Sylvia Howison

This month we begin a series of articles intended to give an in-depth explanation of the proposed breed standard. We would hope that the reader will have available his copy of the standards - existing, Swiss and revised— with the attached bibliography. Those with sufficient interest may want to take the time to research the references and read them in their entirety.

A few words might properly be said about standards in general. The novice, and sometimes even the more experienced fancier, usually feel that a breed standard should draw a word picture so accurate that nearly anyone could immediately form a mental image of the breed. Not only is this virtually impossible, it is not really the purpose of standards. A standard is a guide to be used in the judging of a breed. Judges, presumably, have the knowledge and experience necessary to recognize certain basics common to all dogs and certain qualities peculiar to the various breeds they are judging. To help the judge in his task, a standard must be positive in tone and brief enough to be easily committed to memory. Lengthy lists of what the breed should not be are confusing as they are difficult to remember in entirety. Therefore only faults which are a problem specific to the breed are mentioned. We would hope that some time in the future an expanded explanation of the standard might be made available to novices and other interested parties. Such forms are in use by several breed clubs and may properly include drawings, photos, etc.

Each article in this series will deal with one section of the proposed revision of the standard. The section under discussion will appear followed by a vocabulary, followed by comments received about that section from the membership.

April, 1978

REPORT FROM THE BREED STANDARD COMMITTEE

(Continued)

and concluded with the rationale used by the committee in arriving at the particular 'wording of that section, We would hope that comments will continue to come in from the membership as new points are brought to Light. Each and every one is taken note of and remains on file. Your interest and co-operation have been greatly appreciated.

GENERAL APPEARANCE. A sturdy-well-balanced large dog, possessed of strong bone, and having an appearance of strength and agility suiting it to draft and droving work in mountainous regions. Dogs appear masculine, while bitches are distinctly feminine.

VOCABULARY Unless otherwise indicated, definitions are from Funk and Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary as included in The Readers Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1966, - 1968, The Readers Digest Association, Inc.

Sturdy - Possessing rugged health and strength; hardy; vigorous.

Balanced - A consistent whole; symmetrical; typically proportioned as a whole or as regards its separate parts. (The Complete Dog Book).

Bone -The relative size (girth) of a dog's leg bones • Substance. (The Complete Dog Book).

Agility-Quickness and readiness in movement; nimbleness.

Draft -The pulling or drawing of something, as a loaded wagon.

Droving-To drive (cows, etc.) for some distance.

Mountainous -Full of mountains.

Region-An indefinite portion of territory or spice, usually of considerable extent; a country or district,

COMMENTS

M. Dawson, Pennsylvania

A sturdy well balanced dog of striking appearance having the strength and mobility suiting it for draft and droving work over rough terrain. Dogs appear masculine, bitches feminine without being weak or dainty. The above incorporates my suggested changes; they are partially itemized below.

1. Delete "large" which is specifically covered by size.

2. Delete "possessed of strong bone" not for its pedantic wording but also because bone is a tissue of the body that is characteristically strong, whether or not the animal is sturdily built. If "well boned" or some such term is needed, it would be better than "strong".

3. "Agility" is used twice in this proposal under general appearance and gait. I used agility myself in early drafts but it bothers me now in re-reading. "Agility" according to Webster, is "Quick and easy of movement, The word brings to mind a Whippet, Doberman, Poodle, not a steady droving and draft dog, know our dogs are agile, especially when your and playing, but I do not think that this is the thing that does or should show to a judge. I suggest that the needed term is "mobility" (readily movable).

4. Delete "mountainous regions". See Arthur Hesser's discussion of the name of our breed in the Anniversary Book. These dogs are from the Swiss middleland, rolling farm country, not from the mountains."

R. Smith, Ontario

"General Appearance" - your wording 'dogs appear masculine while bitches are distinctly feminine' leaves everything to someone's opinion or imagination as there is nothing in the standard to distinguish males from females. Try some words around 'sufficient expression of sex'.

H. M. Cresap, Connecticut

"A sturdy, well-balanced, medium sized dog, possessed of heavy bone and substance, etc." instead of as written.

COMMITTEE RATIONALE

The committee felt that in this section the origin and purpose of the breed should be de fined. The Bernese is a draft dog, intended to pull relatively heavy loads in inhospitable climates at high or low elevations. The Swiss Army used the Bernese as a draft dog in World War II (Raber, p. 70-71). Anatomically he is well equipped for draft work or back-packing his efficiency depending in part on the quality of the equipment he is expected to use (Raber p, 71). The Bernese herds as a drover, that is one that gathers the herd and moves them from place to place, rather than as the sole attendant of large herds or flocks on open ranges. He is highly intelligent, a good watch dog, knows surrounding areas, can find lost livestock (Raber, p. 45) and is capable of working by himself (Raber, p.44). The Bernese the national house and companion dog but is rural in character (60th Anniversary, p. 68). In considering the purpose one must consider

April 1978
REPORT FROM THE BREED STANDARD COMMITTEE
 (Continued)

the distinct geography of Switzerland. The dog is expected to do steady farm 'work or steady draft work, but will hardly be required to run rapidly for long distances as an open plains herder might.

I believe that there is no difference of opinion until we come to the use of the word "large". Here the intent was to generally describe the size of the dog. While there is no written ruling, I believe that, generally speaking, *medium" can be taken to refer to Golden Retriever, Boxer, Dalmatian., Standard Poodle size, while the very large dogs are customarily referred to as giant breeds -- Newfs, Saints, Wolfhounds, etc. Bernese would, therefore, seem to fall into the 'large' category.

Mountainous region was only intended to be a very general description of the topography of the country of origin and not intended to indicate that the dogs work in the high Alps. We might similarly describe Illinois as flat farmland, or Maryland as marsh, though most certainly not every section of those regions would fit that description.

The reference to sex definition is one that would be generally understood by those quite conversant with dogs and dog shows. Actually it could have been worded in several ways, but it seemed that this way could be easily understood. In any case, sufficient expression of sex, to borrow a phrase from Ron Smith, is a difficult thing to define. We do have it very dominantly in our breed in bitches. Very few of them are mistaken for males at first glance. Unfortunately we still have a few "bitchy dogs" (to use another rather worn out phrase) around. Hopefully, especially in light of the recommended adjustments in size, this will begin to take care of itself.

The existing American standard is, I am sure we all agree, woefully inadequate. Aside from the description of color and markings, nearly any breed might fill the qualifications. The Swiss standard is much better, but in some areas it seems awkward when translated from German to English. One cannot always make literal translations, from one language to another without losing something and this is especially true when a third almost language (dogese) is involved. Therefore liberties have been taken with specific wording from time to time to better express what the committee felt was the obvious intent. We had before us at all times an official Swiss standard, un-translated, and had the enormous advantage of having Esther Mueller, who is thoroughly conversant in German, English and "dogese", I hope that this series of articles will clear up any misunderstandings that our members may have. I will gladly answer questions, either via the newsletter or in person. Feel free to call upon me at any time.

Sylvia Howison

The BMDCA Newsletter, May 1978

Know your BMD

The following article with illustrations appeared in the official publication of the German Kennel Club "Unser Rassehund". We translated it, and are publishing it with the permission of the VDH.

THE BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG - A LITTLE STUDY IN ANATOMY FOR EVERYONE

International and local dog shows are necessary to obtain an overall view of the status of the breed, and to point the way in breeding better dogs. Often great expectations are destroyed and exhibitors return disappointed and determined never to attend a show again.

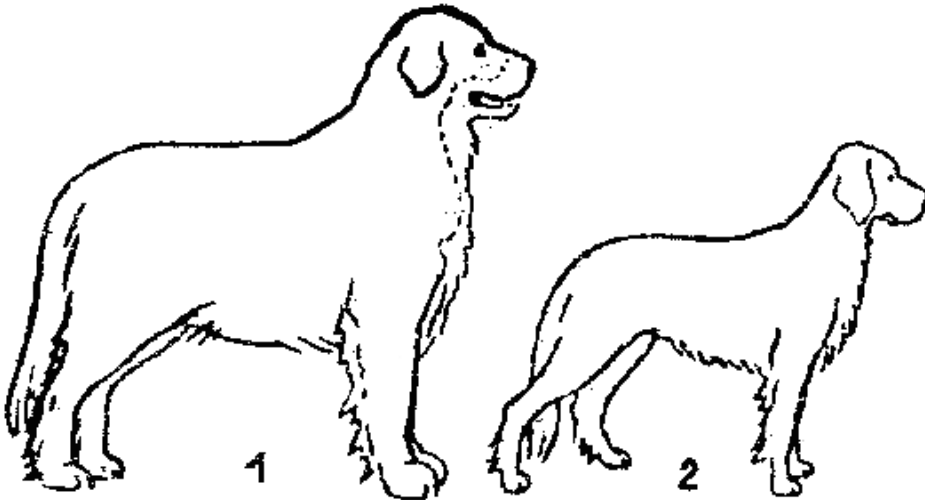
The following article should help you to judge your Bernese Mountain Dog yourself.

If you recognize possible faults in your dog after studying the illustrations, you will never be disappointed again in a dog show. You will then know yourself that your dog does not conform in all parts to the perfect standard (shown in all illustrations marked #1). You will understand the judge's decision, because he will see even more, and he is above all able to judge the quality of movement, which we are unable to show in pictures. Also remember that in addition to conformation, temperament is very important. What good is a structurally excellent dog, if his temperament is not stable and he is shy and frightened? A dog with sound temperament and only minor faults may be a much better breeding foundation than the so called "show dog" with the qualification "excellent". Structure and temperament

should be given equal consideration, together with other excellent breeding qualities as consistency of type and ability to pass on good qualities.

Now you yourself will be able to judge competition in the ring. You will be happy about the judgment and you will recognize that a "good" qualification belongs to a good dog and that a "very good" justifies pride by the owner.

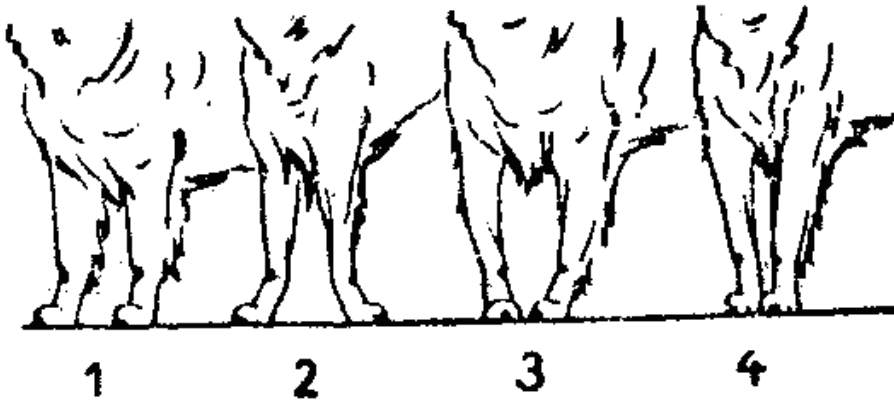
a) General appearance



#1: body typical, short with deep brisket and strong stifles, good bone.

#2: Wrong: atypical, long, dog resembling a Setter, light body, small bone.

b) Front (legs and chest) Legs straight and strong, well angulated hocks paws round and closed, chest wide and deep

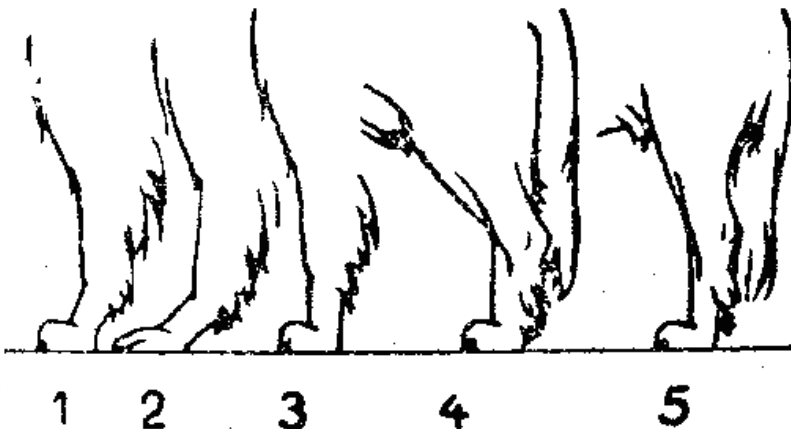


#2: Wrong: turned-in elbows, weak hocks, turned out (French) stance, chest narrow and without depth, bottom line too steep.

#3: Wrong: out at the elbows, "o" shaped legs, chest good.

#4: Wrong: narrow, steep stance, no angulation in hock, chest narrow without depth.

c) Legs seen from the side (#1-3 front, 4 and 5 - rear)



#1: correct, well angulated hocks and round, closed paw.

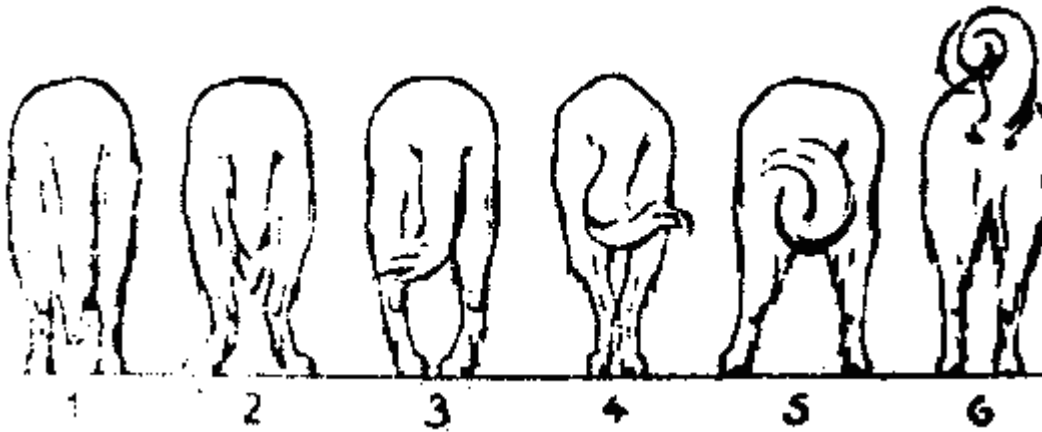
#2: Wrong, weak hock, hare feet.

#3: Wrong: too steep

#4: correct position of rear legs

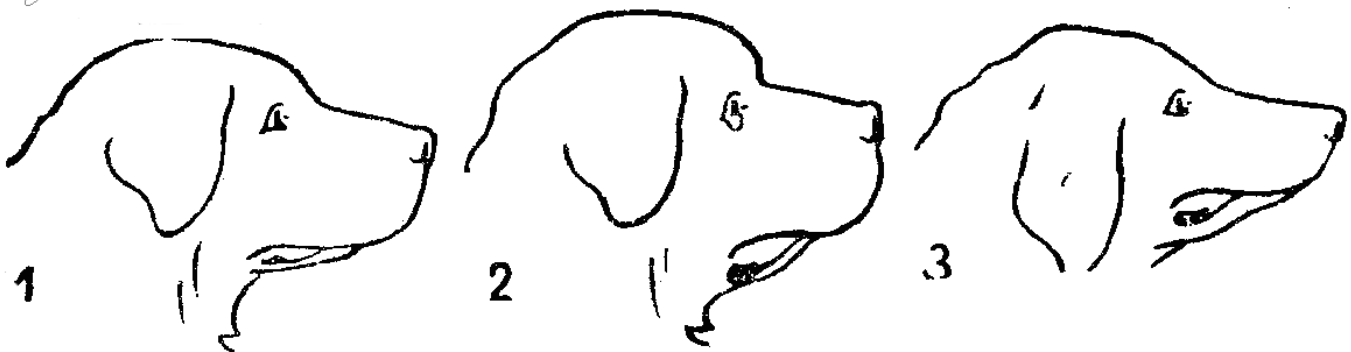
#5: Wrong: too steep, no angulation

d) Rear view



- #1: correct, good stance, good form of body, 6. correct carriage of tail and normal tail length.
 #2: Wrong: cow-hocked, good form of rear end, tail too short.
 #3: Wrong: "barrel" shaped legs, good form of body, tail turning out.
 #4: Wrong: narrow position, turned-out knees, body too flat on sides, "hook tail".
 #5: Wrong: too wide and steep stance, body too wide, "ring tail".
 #6: Wrong: tail carried over back, otherwise correct.

e) The head



- #1: Top flat, slight stop, strong muzzle. Dewlaps hardly developed. Ears set high, short and triangular, when dog is resting, flat against the head.
 #2: Wrong: plump, heavy head, round top, open eye, dewlaps developed.
 #3: Wrong: light, pointed muzzle, hound-type ears, set too low.

After you have looked at your dog comparing him to the pictures, you will notice much less serious deviations from the desirable standard than shown. You should not be disappointed that your dog has some faults. You will nevertheless have many happy hours with your companion. Remember that the ideal dog is very rare in any breed. Nearly every dog has faults. It is however our task to fight these faults by planned breeding, sacrifice and work.

The BMDCA Newsletter, September 1978

REPORT ON THE NEW STANDARD

by Alice Horstick

The following article is a continuation of a series discussing the proposed Standard. Among other things, the purpose of this series is to pique your interest and probe your thoughts about the Standard. The Committee urges you to take the time to read the proposal and the discussion and let us know what we are doing with which you agree or disagree. Copies of the proposal are available from the Club Secretary. Copies of Newsletter articles referred to in this section are available from me (please send self-addressed, stamped envelope).

HEAD: Skull flat, with a slight furrow and a well-defined, but not exaggerated, stop. Muzzle strong and straight. Dewlaps slightly developed. Flews not pendulous. Teeth strong, meeting in a scissors bite, complete dentition. Serious fault: overshot or undershot bite. Ears v-shaped, set on high, short and gently rounded at the tip, hanging close to the head when in repose, brought forward and raised at the base when alert. Eyes dark brown in color, slightly oval in shape with close-fitting eyelids; expression intelligent, animated and gentle. Faults: round or protruding eyes, which detract from expression. Serious fault: ectropion. Disqualifications: entropion, blue eye color.

VOCABULARY: definitions are taken from Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass. 1961. G.&C. Merriam.) or The Complete Dog Book, (N.Y. 1975, Howell Book House).

Skull: The bony framework of the head, enclosing the brain and supporting the face. (Webster)

Stop: The step up from the muzzle to skull; indentation between the eyes where the nasal bone and skull meet. (CDB)

Muzzle: The head in front of the eyes - nasal bone, nostrils and jaws. Foreface. (CDB)

Dewlaps: Loose, pendulous skin under the throat. (CDB)

Flews: Upper lips pendulous, particularly at their inner corners. (CDB)

Scissors bite: A bite in which the outer side of the lower incisors touches the inner side of the upper incisors. (CDB)

Overshot: The front teeth (incisors) of the upper jaw overlap and do not touch the front teeth of the lower jaw when the mouth is closed. (CDB)

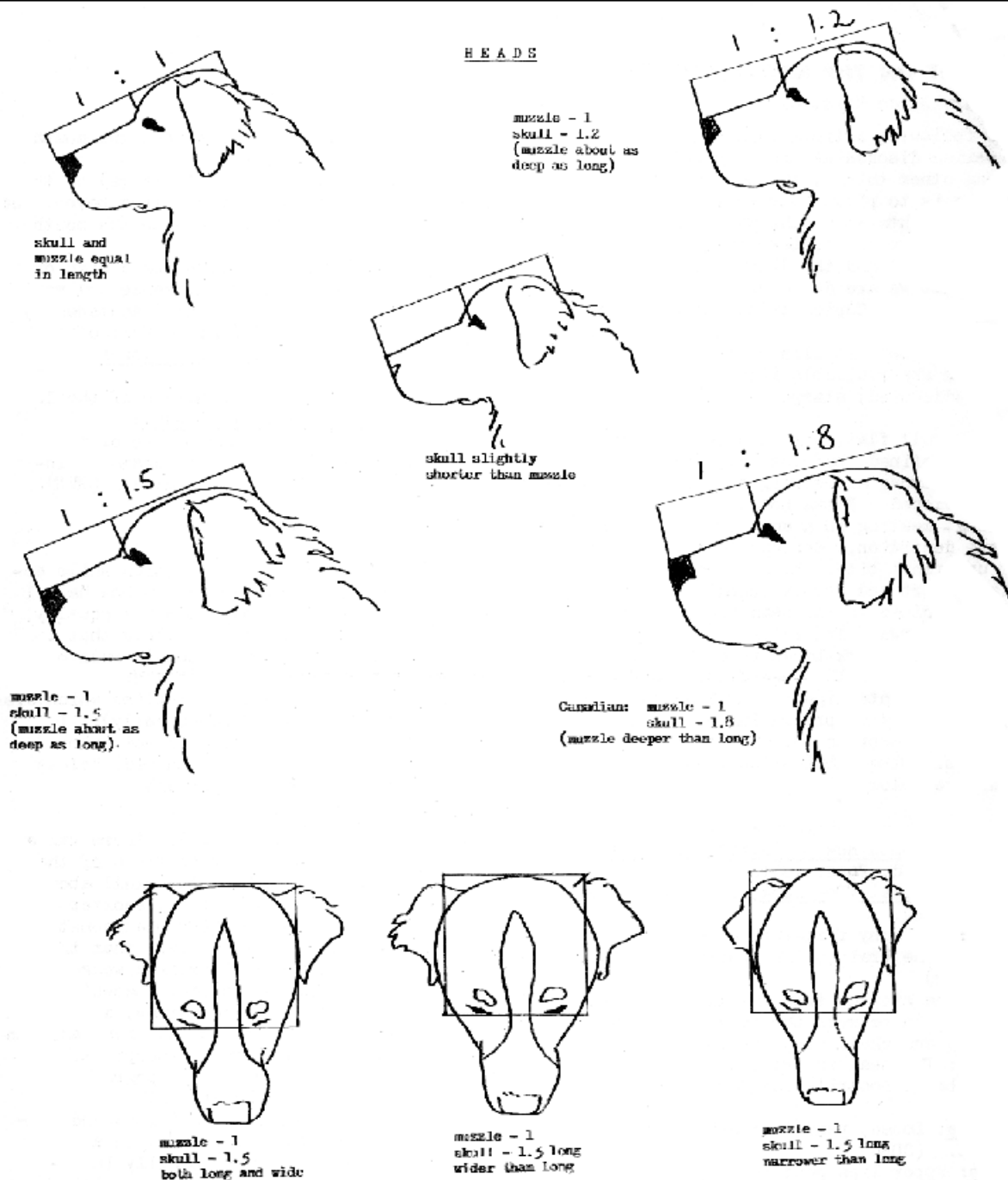
Undershot: The front teeth (incisors) of the lower jaw overlapping or projecting beyond the front teeth of the upper jaw when the mouth is closed. (CDB)

Intelligent: Having or indicating a high or satisfactory degree of intelligence and mental capacity. (Intelligence: mental acuteness.)

Animated: la) alive, living; b) full of movement and activity; c) full of vigor and spirit (Webster)

Ectropion: Eversion of the margin of the lower eyelid. (Merck Veterinary Manual)

Entropion: Inversion of the margin of the eyelids. The lower lids are most commonly involved unilaterally or bilaterally. (MVM)



COMMENTS:

Jane McGovern, Wisconsin

Why is entropion a disqualification while ectropion only a serious fault? On one hand I feel that each should fault the dog equally, but on the other hand, I don't know that I feel that the average judge should rule on a medical problem (e.g. we don't mention HD or PRA as disqualifying---also problems which disqualify a dog from breeding--ideally). I don't think either entropion or ectropion should be mentioned in the standard; "close fitting eyelids" should be enough.

Mary Dawson, Pennsylvania

1) In the draft of May 22, 1977, there was an added line giving simple proportions of the skull ("length and width of the skull about equal; length of muzzle slightly shorter than length of skull"). I do think that something like that, or mention of the fact that the skull is broad, the head forming a wedge in shape, is important to include. Recently I have seen several BMDs with narrow, slab-sided skulls. There is nothing in the proposed standard to indicate that this is incorrect,

2) "Handing" is, I presume, a typographical error for "hanging." (Note: YES!)

3) Expression: Intelligent, animated and gentlehow does intelligence show in a dog-- surely in behavior, not necessarily in expression. I suggest "alert" for intelligent; "lively" for animated. As I mentioned at the May (1977) meeting, I disagree with the "gentle", having known a number of excellent BMDs with expression alert, mischievous, lively, but not necessarily gentle. Also, I think it would be tough finding an expression looking intelligent, animated and gentle all at one time!

Martha Reisinger, Pennsylvania

I feel that either under faults or disqualifications should be light or yellow eyes. I own a light-eyed dog and he has produced light eyes, at least one a litter. If light eyes continue, won't they soon be yellow not brown?

Sharon Kullman Massachusetts

I think "light" or "yellow" eyes are enough of a problem in our breed to warrant listing "light or yellow eyes" as a fault in addition to stating eyes should be "dark brown".

I feel strongly that ectropion should be at most labeled a "fault" as opposed to a "serious fault". Referring back to the article "Entropion/Ectropion in the Bernese Mountain Dog" in the April, 1977 BMD NL, Dr. Seth Koch President of the Foundation for Veterinary Ophthalmology, Inc. made statements implying that a minimal amount of ectropion is probably "normal in the Berner with the head conformation called for by the breed standard and considered desirable by most knowledgeable fanciers." He described minimal ectropion as present when the dog is completely relaxed, (From my experience, the dog who exhibits some ectropion when relaxed also exhibits some when extremely alert, e.g. when looking at a squeak toy thrown by a dog show photographer). In all "in between" states, the ectropion is not seen. Dr. Koch does state that dogs who exhibit ectropion under all conditions should not be bred. What I would like to see in the standard is, either: Fault: Ectropion or Serious Fault: Marked (or extreme) ectropion. Actually, I don't feel even either of these listing of faults is totally necessary after stating "close fitting eyelids". But, if the desire is to keep as close to the Swiss standard as possible, then my above suggestions could be used. In conclusion, it seems to me that nearly every top Berner male in the country at this time has some ectropion in the relaxed or very alert posture. Do we want to label all these dogs as possessing a "serious fault" and if so, what do we breed from and what head type will we end up with if we breed only totally ectropion-free dogs? On the subject of entropion, I feel that listing it as a disqualification would be like listing PRA or HD as a disqualification. Unless I'm mistaken, veterinary diagnosis would be necessary, not diagnosis by a judge.

Ron Smith, Ontario

Under faults, you describe "round or protruding eyes, which detract from expression". Does this mean that some round or protruding eyes don't detract from expression? What do you mean?

You classify entropion as a disqualification. This is a very common occurrence in our breed which occurs in varying degrees ranging from

a mild eye irritation to causing severe cornea: damage. To classify it so generally is like being a little bit pregnant. Severe entropion should be a disqualification, while a mild condition is a far less serious fault than a dog who bites people.

Gail Palmer, Pennsylvania

Under the section HEAD -- Disqualifications: entropion; I don't think a judge will be able to see the condition unless the dog is in very bad shape with runny, sore eyes.

Beverly Barney, Massachusetts

Ectropion - this should be kept to a minimum. However, don't most large males have it to some degree? If so, shouldn't it be a fault or "no visible ectropion when dog is alert"?

Further discussion of entropion was published in the March, 1978 issue of the BFA NL: from Dora Gruber, New York, page 8; from Guenther (Dutch) Mueller, New Jersey, page 9.

COMMITTEE RATIONALE: Perhaps in this section, more than in any other, the Committee felt bound by the advice of the American Kennel Club to describe the dog in positive terms rather than faults and to be as concise as possible. Other breeds are known to be "head breeds" because their Standards overemphasize the characteristics of the head, either by excessive description or by listing many faults, and this has been to the detriment of the breed. The faults listed in the proposal were felt to be problems nationally (and internationally), not just regionally or in one line. They are problems which are appearing more and more, and are harder to breed out than other problems not mentioned.

As Mary Dawson points out, the Committee originally discussed specific proportion in describing the head. In actuality, what is considered a proper head by most of us is when the skull is slightly longer than the muzzle. In the final draft of this proposal, we elected not to include these specifics because we do not want to overemphasize head

structure thereby throwing the whole dog out of balance. Also, proportions are difficult to judge in this breed (short of pulling out a tape measure) because of the marked influence of the white facial markings. We do concede that an overall impression of the head may be lacking.

The description of the head is for the most part a composite of the current U.S. Standard and the Swiss Standard. On the one hand, we attempted to get away from wishy-washy terms found in the phrase "not too" and on the other hand, we hoped to improve some awkward language. The description of the teeth was the most accurate way of including all that the Swiss have to say in the "Orders for Judges and Breeding Commission", though we elected not to make undershot and overshot bites disqualifications.

"Dark brown in color" was chosen as a very precise way of describing the desired color of the eye. Dark brown is dark brown and any judge who does not fault a light or yellow eye is not going according to the Standard. The Committee strongly feels that, though this may be a problem in certain lines, it is not one of the greater problems of the breed.

Originally, "almond-shaped" was used to describe the eye as we followed the Swiss Standard. In the U.S., however, this term is used to describe the eye of the Collie, and so we chose "slightly oval in shape..." In our opinion, all round and/or protruding eyes detract from the expression of the BMD.

Expression is one of those nebulous characteristics open to subjective judgment. We feel that a dog's eyes can and does reflect intelligence; the term is used frequently in describing the expression of many of the working and terrier breeds. "Intelligent", "animated" and "gentle" are not necessarily opposing terms. In describing the expression, the difference between "lively" and "animated" is minor. Webster's definition of "lively" is "animated" (!) Lively suggests briskness, alertness, or energy; animated applies to what is spirited active and sparkling". "Gentle" implies that the dog does not have a vicious or frightened look. The term is meant in the sense of "not harsh, stern or violent (Webster). There are any number of dogs that have intelligent and animated expressions that can also be fearsome, whether called for in their breed Standards or not.

The problems of ectropion/entropion and how to handle them have probably received the most attention from the Committee. First of all, they are very prevalent and serious problems,. not only because they detract from the appearance of the dog, but also because they cause physical damage to the eye, Secondly, we are putting entropion into the category of disqualification, which the AKC has asked us to keep to an absolute minimum, In May, 1977, the Committee originally considered making ectropion a disqualification. (Both entropion and ectropion are disqualifications in the Swiss Standard.) However, as ectropion can be confused with a droopy eye, as the condition is not as debilitating to the dog's health as entropion, and as we are trying to stay away from disqualifications, we elected to make it a serious fault. Entropion, on the other hand, is much more damaging to the dog's health, is more difficult to breed out and is wider spread throughout the breed; we felt it warranted being a disqualification. We agree with Mr. Smith that the condition is like "being a little bit pregnant". In the event that the condition is congenital, the dog's genetic ability to pass on entropion, mild or severe, is a threat to the breed's future. If the condition is not congenital, but is caused by injury to the eye, an exhibitor would have the sense and kindness to withhold or forfeit entries to a show until such time as the problem is corrected Those who are reluctant to allow a judge "medical diagnosis" are not aware that the AKC has already invested such power to these people when they require judges to dismiss limping dogs from the ring, and to disqualify automatically blind dogs. No dog with entropion should be granted the honor of champion points or should be considered for breeding purposes. We do not care to trust to the discretion of the owners!

The Committee does not agree with the theory that the head structure of the BMD desired by the fancy also calls for a certain amount of ectropion. There are certainly a number of dogs with beautiful, correct head structure with correct eyes, and even a number with entropion. Further, we do not agree that "nearly every top Berner male in the country at this time has some ectropion". If it is indeed true, then we should all take the condition more seriously. Existence of a condition does not mean that it is correct or that we should condone it!!!

Please feel free to write me your comments on this discussion or on any section you have questions about. The next section to be discussed will be Neck and Body.

Mary Alice Horstick, 93F N. Griffith Rd.,
Oconomowoc, Wis. 53066 (414-965-2943).

The BMDCA Newsletter, December 1978

REPORT ON PROPOSED STANDARD

by Mary Alice Horstick

Here we are again, trying to talk about the Standard. At this point, I feel as though I am talking to a blank wall. One can hardly believe that there is such a lack of feeling over something as lovely and inspiring as the BMD head, but the truth of the matter is that I received only one comment back from the last article. If you don't let us know where we are unclear, confusing or downright wrong, we cannot and will not change those sections! I have heard the comment, "Why write? The Committee isn't willing to change the proposal anyway." Try us!

To backtrack a bit, Mrs. Dora Gruber of White Plains, N.Y. brought up a point which others may have missed as well. She wrote in part, concerning the head: "The proposed standard doesn't say anything about the broad skull, and if you look at the general description, it could just as well apply to a Golden Retriever." "We would not overemphasize the head if we gave the judge a clue as to the desirable proportions of the head."

First of all, as pointed out in the last article, the Committee agrees that something is lacking in this section with regard to overall impression. The Swiss Standard begins the section with "Strong". We use the term "strong muzzle", but this is not adequate. Mrs. Gruber's complaint seems to be against the narrow or weak-headed dogs, where we feel she has a point. However, is the term we want to use "broad"? (Interestingly enough, "the Golden Retriever Standard begins the head description with "Broad in skull...") Neither the U.S. Standard or Swiss Standard use the term "broad". In fact, both Standards list the faults "too massive in head" and "too heavy head" respectively, perhaps in an effort to discourage a Saint Bernard- type head. With the number of Saint breeders, whether or not still faithful to that lovely breed, we too should be aware of this tendency to favor the heavier head. Remember that along with the heavy head come other possible problems: droopy eyes, loose flews which may permit drooling, undershot bites, heavy ears. Breadth of skull is an important characteristic, but there are any number of other possible descriptions that we could have included to describe what we feel is an ideal head and which we have omitted: positioning of the eyes, level of the planes of (text continued after illustrations)

A straight line is 180 degrees
 A right angle is 90 degrees; any corner of a square; a corner of a sheet of paper would be a right angle.
 A 45 degree angle is half of 90 degrees. To visualize these, use a clock face. Half way between 1 & 2 o'clock is 45 degrees.
 I suspect most dogs shoulder blades slope nearer to 30 degrees (1 o'clock position on clock face)

FIG. 1

An obtuse angle is any angle exceeding 90 degrees, but less than 180.
 An acute angle is less than 90 degrees.
 An oblique angle is one that is not 90 degrees; therefore can be either acute or obtuse. I do not understand its use in some literature on horses and dogs.

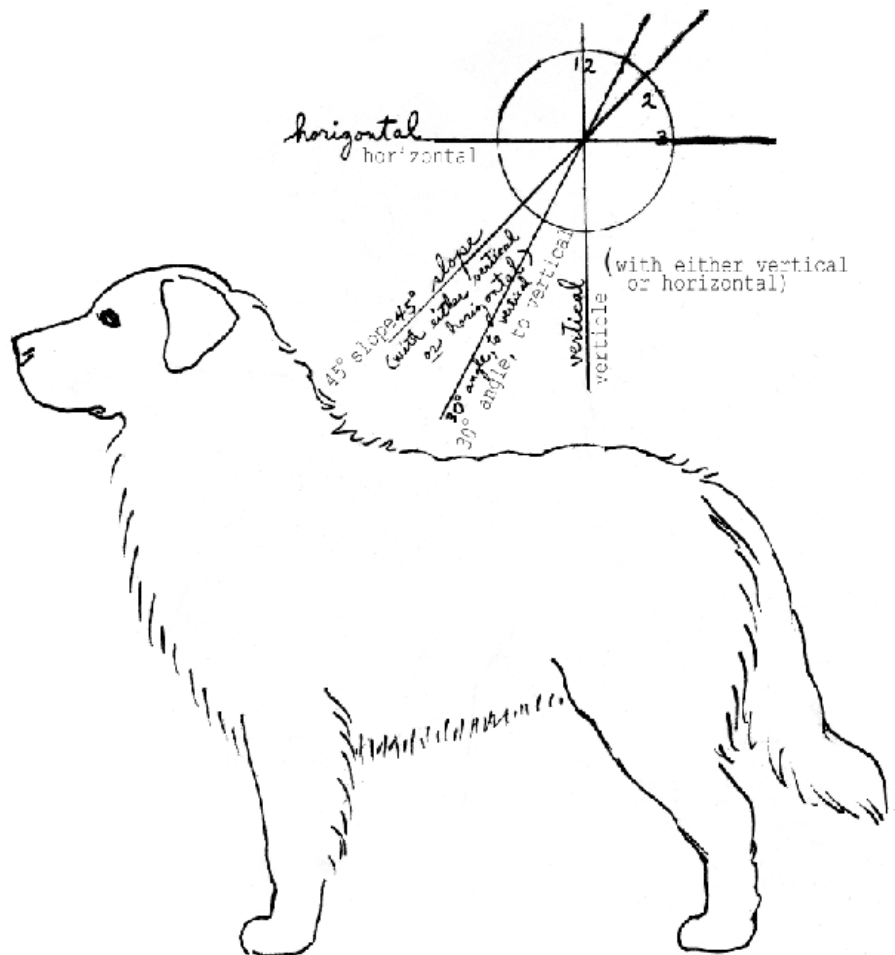


Fig. 1A

This dog has a body ratio of 9:10 with shoulder sloping 45 degrees and upper arm at 90 degrees angle with shoulder blade. Chest a little below elbow. Head ratio 1:1.5. Head length about same as distance from ground-to floor of chest. See

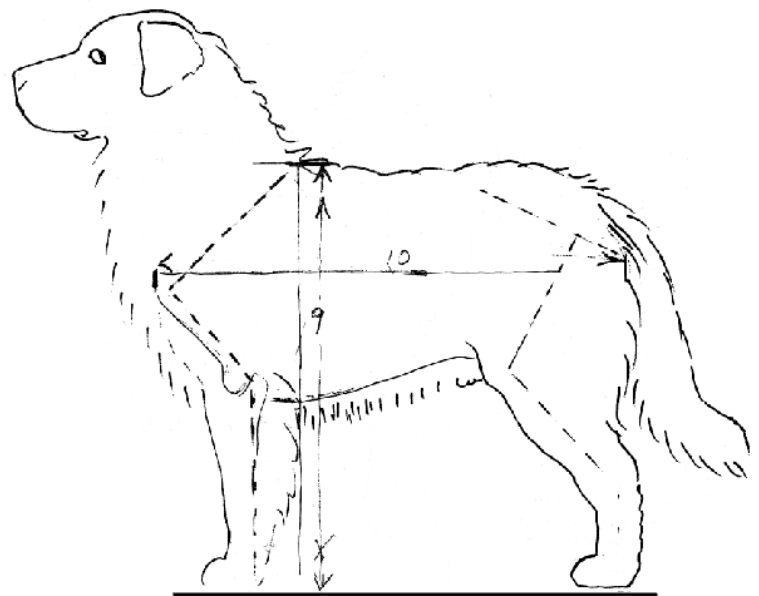


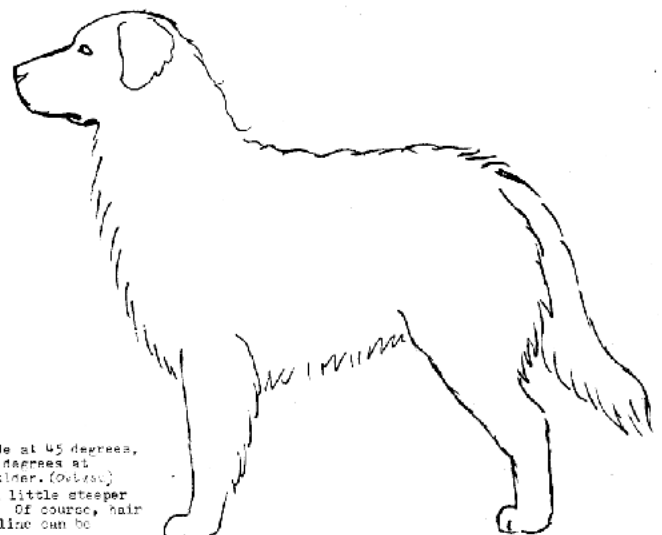
Fig. 1A

"Inside" view of Fig. 1. I feel also good angulation in rear

Square body.
Shoulder blade at 45 degrees, more than 90 degrees at point of shoulder, (obtuse)
Croup also a little steeper than Fig 1. Of course, hair on the top line can be deceiving.

Fig. 2

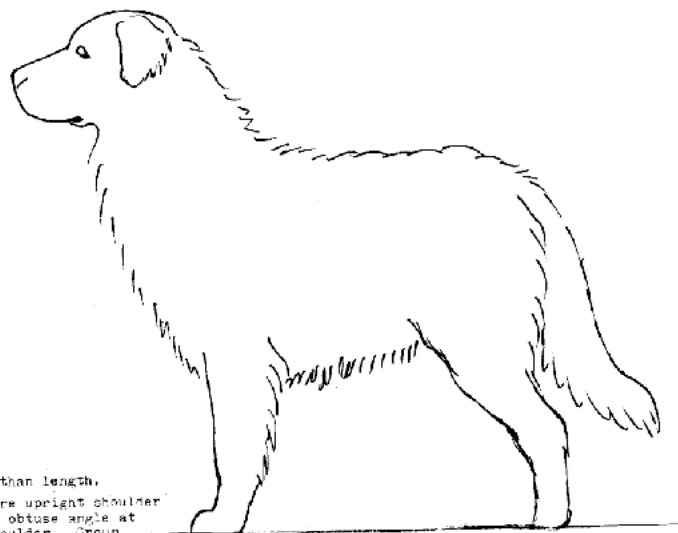
Square body.
Shoulder blade at 45 degrees, more than 90 degrees at point of shoulder. (Obtuse)
Croup also a little steeper than Fig. 1. Of course, hair on the top line can be deceiving.



Dog taller than length. Shorter, more upright shoulder blade, more obtuse angle at point of shoulder Croup also steeper.

Fig. 3

Dog taller than length.
Shorter, more upright shoulder blade, more obtuse angle at point of shoulder. Croup also steeper.



Resuming text after illustrations

the skull and muzzle, prominence of bones, exact location and length of ears, description of each angle of the entire head, etc. These were details discussed and rejected because of the tendency to define too narrowly the head and, with wordiness, draw the judge's attention strictly to the head when he should be judging the complete dog. Might I repeat that I am not disagreeing with Mrs. Gruber's comment, simply explaining what our problems could be in using exact proportions. Does anyone have other possible suggestions?

NECK AND BODY: (Proposed Standard) Neck strong, muscular, and of medium length. Top- line firm, broad and level from withers to croup. Chest deep and capacious with well- sprung ribs and brisket reaching at least to the elbows. Body nearly square with overall body length measuring slightly greater than height at the withers. Loin strong. Croup broad and smoothly rounded to tail insertion.

VOCABULARY.

Neck: The first seven vertebrae (cervical) of the spinal column from head to withers. (Lyon, McDowell. The Dog in Action. N.Y., 1976, Howell Book House, Inc.)

Topline: Line from base of the neck to tail insertion, the profile of the dog in this section.

Withers: The highest point of the shoulders immediately behind the neck. (AKC. The Complete Dog Book. N.Y., 1975, Howell Book House.)

Croup: The back part of the back; above the hind leg. (CDB)

Chest: The part of the body or trunk that is enclosed by the ribs. (CDB)

Well-sprung ribs: Ribs having sufficient capacity for organs and flexibility for use of organs without interfering with the movement of the forequarters. For an excellent explanation read Lyon, p. 232-233.

Brisket: The forepart of the body below the chest, between the forelegs, closest to the ribs. (CDB)

Body length; Measurement from point of shoulder to point of buttock. (CDB, p. 22)

Body height: Measurement from a point horizontal with the withers straight down to the ground line. (CDB, p. 22)

Loin: Region of the body on either side of the vertebral column between the last ribs and the hindquarters. (CDB)

COMMENTS: Mary Dawson, Valencia, Pa.

In many ways the Swiss Standard gives a clearer picture of this section than does the proposal. The statement, "topline firm, broad and level from withers to croup" seems especially weak. 1) A line can be straight, but how can a line be firm and broad? The statement "back firm and straight" says it better, and "back firm, straight and broad" would encompass what the proposal seems to try to say. The description of the chest in the Swiss Standard is also better. 2) A small point, but should't "loin" read "loins", since all dogs (and others) have a pair.

Gail Palmer, Easton, Pa. Add to the first sentence after "length" necessary to present overall balanced appearance. I don't like "well-sprung ribs". Sounds like a Bulldog.

COMMITTEE RATIONALE: At first glance, the Swiss Standard seemed to be quite adequate to the committee, but on closer inspection, we found it poorly translated into American dog jargon as well as lacking some points asked for by the AKC. Beginning with this section, we are faced not only with the task of describing what we think, is "pretty" in our breed, but also with the task of describing a dog that will function efficiently as a draft dog. When a dog moves, his body head and to tail must work-in harmony with his legs. A dog with good chest construction will allow for proper movement for the forequarters as well as provide efficient room for internal organs, No matter how well constructed a dog's rear, power provided by that rear is wasted if there is not a strong back to transmit that power forward.

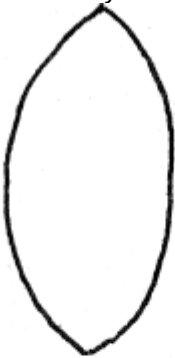
In the description of the neck, we felt the Swiss Standard to be concise and as well put as possible with the exception that we felt "medium" to be more appropriate term than "middle". Including a phrase here about balance would be repetitious as balance was mentioned in the General Appearance section. Actually, it would be tempting to insert, such a phrase nearly every other line throughout the Standard!

"Topline" is one of those dog world terms which' is generally interpreted as "back". A topline can be firm. If you have ever watched a dog with a "soft" back move, you have watched the topline move up and down; bit has not stayed "firm". The word "straight"

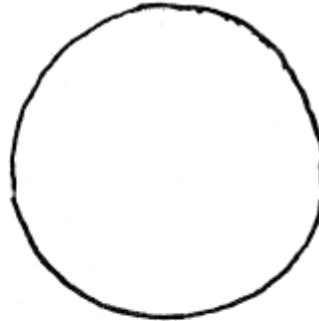
is to be avoided here as no dog has a straight back. The natural curve of the spine and the overlaying muscles do not allow for a straight line. "Level" conveys the idea that the dog is not to be roached or swaybacked. We will reconsider the difference between "topline" and "back" in further review of the Standard.

The Swiss description of the chest we feel is definitely unclear in its translation. Depth of chest is the most important

dimension, along with the capacity of the ribs to expand properly. "Broad forwardly arched", the Swiss description, is difficult wording. The term "well-sprung" is meant to combine the concept of "broad forwardly arched" with "round-oval". Well-sprung is not the same as barrel-ribbed. The confusion here may come from the Swiss usage of round-oval. A Bulldog is barrel-ribbed, where the ribs form a circle, and such construction has a drastic effect on the shoulder assembly. A dog with well-sprung ribs has the ability to have proper lung expansion without the ribcage moving into the way of the forequarters.



flat or "slabsided"
ribs



barrel ribs



well-sprung ribs

Since we had problems with describing proportions of the head, you might well imagine that we had considerable trouble defining the body proportions. On one extreme, we had the wishy-washy terms of the current U.S. Standard, "Body rather short than too long in back, compact". And to the other extreme, the Swiss had added the ratio of 9:10 height to length. The judge is faced with the problem in judging dimensions in that a dog may look square, primarily because of coat, when in actual fact, he is not. The desirability of the dog being slightly longer than tall comes from the importance of balance and the ability to move well. Dogs that are actually square will probably be lacking in other desirable qualities, i.e. angulation, easy movement with good reach, proper timing. The line of distinction is very fine, but is an arguable point.

We hope that the accompanying drawings by Martha Decker are as useful to you as they have been to the committee. Another invaluable aid that we have drawn upon is McDowell Lyon's The Dog in Action: A Study of Anatomy Locomotion As Applying to All Breeds. If you need to give someone an idea for a Christmas present for yourself, may I suggest this. It is available from Howell Book House, 230 Park Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10017, for \$10.95. (N.Y. State residents add applicable sales tax.)

Next month's article will discuss forequarters, hindquarters and tail. Please feel free to write us on any part of the proposal where you are in disagreement or are unclear. We also like to hear when we're on the right track.

Mary Alice Horstick, 938 N. Griffith Rd.,
Oconomowoc, WI 53066, (414) 965-2943.

The BMDCA Newsletter , February, 1979

REPORT ON PROPOSED STANDARD

by Mary Alice Horstick

STANDARD DISCUSSION: Forequarters, hindquarter, tail, gait.

Because forequarters, hindquarters and tail are the contraptions with which the dog is supposed to move, we will also discuss gait this month. This is slightly out of order as the proposed standard has the sections on Coat and Color and Markings before gait, but we feel that the standing structure of the dog is too closely related to the moving structure and would like to keep some continuity of thought.

PROPOSED STANDARD:

Forequarters: Shoulders well-laid-back, flat-lying and well-muscled. Forelegs straight and strong with the elbow well under the shoulder and never loose. Pasterns slightly sloping. Feet round and compact with well-arched toes. Dewclaws may be removed from front legs.

Hindquarters: Thighs broad, strong and muscular. Stifles well-bent, tapering smoothly into the hocks. Hocks well let down and straight. Dewclaws should be removed from rear legs.

Tail: Bushy, reaching to the hock, carried slightly suspended. Faults: tail curled over the hack, kink in tail.

Gait: Natural working gait a slow trot, but capable of speed and agility in keeping with use in draft and droving work. Good reach in front. Powerful drive from the rear transmitted through a level back. No wasted action. Front and hind legs on each side follow through in the same plane. At increased speed, legs may converge toward the center line.

VOCABULARY:

Shoulder: the region created by the shoulder blade and supporting muscles. (Lyon) **Laid-back (shoulder):** a shoulder blade inclined backward from the joint to the top at an efficient angle for the dog's work or action; 45 degrees being the most efficient angle. (Lyon) See figures 1A (Dec. 1978 issue) and 7.

Pastern: commonly recognized as the region of the foreleg between the carpus or wrist and the digits. (AKC, Complete Dog Book)

Dewclaw: an extra claw or functionless digit on the inside of the leg; a rudimentary fifth toe. (AKC)

Thigh: the hindquarter from hip to stifle. (AKC)

Stifle: the joint of the leg between the thigh and the second thigh. The dog's knee. (AKC)

Hock: the tarsus or collection of bone of the hind leg forming the joint between the thigh and metatarsus. The dog's true heel. (AKC)

Hocks-well-let-down: a term which is synonymous with hocks close to the ground; this produces a relatively short distance between the hock joint and the ground, a short cannon bone, which reduces the leverage tax on the Achilles tendon and lessens fatigue. (Lyon)

Gait: the manner in which a dog walks, trots or runs. (AKC)

COMMENTS:

Ron Smith, Ontario: "Forequarters". Please add something to the pastern comment to clarify that pasterns are not sloping because they are weak. "Tail". I do not agree that tails are always slightly suspended. Many BMD's carry their tails very low when set up and carry them quite gaily when not in motion, though not over their back. This is quite acceptable in my opinion. "Gait". You mention leg movement in the same plane. A lot of BMD's wide track in front and single track in the rear at full trot. Should this be mentioned?

Gini Shambaugh, Penn.: "Forequarters". I think it should still state "Dewclaws should be removed." My feeling is that dewclaws detract from the appearance of the leg and front and cause problems by being torn off, etc. They can also get caught in eye corners (this rarely happens, but once is too often).

Beverly Barney, Mass: Dewclaws may be removed from front legs. "Can" would be more positive. "May" be sounds like we would rather see them left on. Dewclaws should be removed from rear legs, "Should be" doesn't help the judge or breeder. Either "can be" or "must be" would be more positive.

Arthur Hesser, N.Y.: "Paws". I would say they should be mentioned; short, round and compact (cat paws).

Mary Dawson, Penn.: Forequarters looks alright. "Hindquarters"...I do not think that "well bent stifles" are what our dogs have or should have. Draft dogs should not have them too well bent (see Lyon pp. 79-80; 196-197; also see standards for other heavy draft dogs). "Moderately bent stifles" is a little wishy-washy, but may be better. "Tail" o.k.

"Gait".. Why limit "the natural working gait" to a slow trot? I am sure all gaits are used, including the walk, for both draft and droving work. Again, eliminate "agility", substitute "activity" for "speed and agility". I suggest starting out "Gait reflecting strength and activity in keeping with use in draft and droving work." Otherwise, fine.
 Arnold Woolf, Maine: Other than gait, standard looks pretty good. Better include cowhocks as a fault. Your gait is so erratic now and you won't improve it without penalizing cowhocking BMD's.

COMMITTEE RATIONALE:

It's a bit hard to imagine trying to write a brief article on these sections when some people have written entire books on the anatomy and/or movement of the dog! It is also difficult to explain the proposed standard section by section when it is the coordination and balance of the whole dog which is our prime interest. The structure of the dog has been considered by the Standard Committee primarily with the consideration of getting the most efficient movement out of our WORKING dog. We have already established that the BMD is generally a farm dog used for light draft and some droving work. He must have stamina to pull his load and also some amount of speed. Though I have received one comment that we are dreaming if we think that the BMD is still used for this type of work, rest assured that I am one owner who does use my dogs for these purposes and am not alone in this world by a long shot. Though it may be from the joy rather than the necessity of seeing my dogs enthusiastically pulling a load of vegetables or firewood or playfully ushering sheep, how important it is that they do their job without tiring! Many breeds have had certain characteristics determined quite simply by the fancy of their admirers. If this is to be part of our criteria, then perhaps the key word is "moderation". Very often people who are seeing a BMD for the first time remark that the beauty of the dog is that it is just a "normal" dog, nothing exaggerated, nothing to excess. With the working ability and the "normalness" of the BMD in mind, the Committee has worked to keep each part of the Standard in balance with the other parts.

In the "forequarters" section, we have described the shoulders as "well-laid-back" to impart to the judge and breeder the desirability of angulation of approximately 45 degrees (see figure 1, Dec. '78 issue, and 7). It is at this angle that the dog get most efficient use of his muscles (Lyon, p. 6). Note that the proposed Standard also calls for "stifles well-bent", which generally goes hand in hand with proper rear angulation. This rear angulation is necessary for the power, drive and follow through needed for the dog to pull a load without tiring. The angulation in the rear must be balanced with that in the front. A dog with straight shoulders, a common fault in many BMD's, and well-bent stifles will have poor movement in that the front end will not be able to utilize the power coming from the rear. Likewise, a dog with good front angulation and straight stifles will not have powerful movement because there will be little ability for the leg to extend the force coming from the rear. A dog that is straight in both front and rear will probably have smoother movement than a dog that is out of balance, but will be lacking in reach and drive. As Mary Dawson has noted, a well-bent stifle is not always desirable in some breeds. The Alaskan Malamute standard calls for moderately bent stifles, but also calls for "moderately sloping" shoulders. Moreover, the Malamute is a heavy draft dog and is not used for any herding or droving work. The Siberian Husky, Samoyed and Rottweiler standards call for well-laid back shoulders and well-bent stifles.

"Pasterns slightly sloping" may imply to some a weakness mentioned by Ron Smith, but this impression should be corrected by the preceding sentence "forelegs straight and strong". "Slightly sloping", we feel, is an improvement on the Swiss Standard: "pasterns giving slightly". The necessity for the sloping pastern is for the dog to absorb the shock of the impact of the front assembly coming down when moving and assures a smoother gait. Dogs that lack such slope do not have the cushioning or spring (Lyon P. 152). Sloping pasterns are not the same thing as broken down or weak pasterns. In a weak pastern, the bones are not doing their job, but are putting the burden of the weight on the foot muscles and would unnecessarily tire the dog (Lyon p. 154).

Mr. Hesser's comment regarding paws is exactly what the proposed Standard has said in the description of feet. ("Feet" is the term asked for by the AKC.) "Round and compact with well-arched toes" implies that the foot is also short. To add "cat paws" would be redundant. ("Cat-foot: a deep, round, compact foot which is characterized by a short third digit bringing the toes nearer the base or heel pad, resembling a cat's paw." (Lyon, p. 268) "The short round, compact foot like that of a cat." (AKC, p. 648).

Mr. Woolf's comment that we should mention cowhocks certainly brings out a problem that we have with our breed. The Committee has taken its cue not to mention the fault from the AKC by stating our case in positive terms. "The standard should list only such faults as are peculiar to the breed, and should not attempt to list faults which are obvious from the positive description of the dog... If the positive description specifies "hind legs straight as viewed from behind", it is generally not necessary to mention that "cowhocks are a fault".

Fig. 7 SHOULDERS (see also Fig. 1A, 2A, 3A)

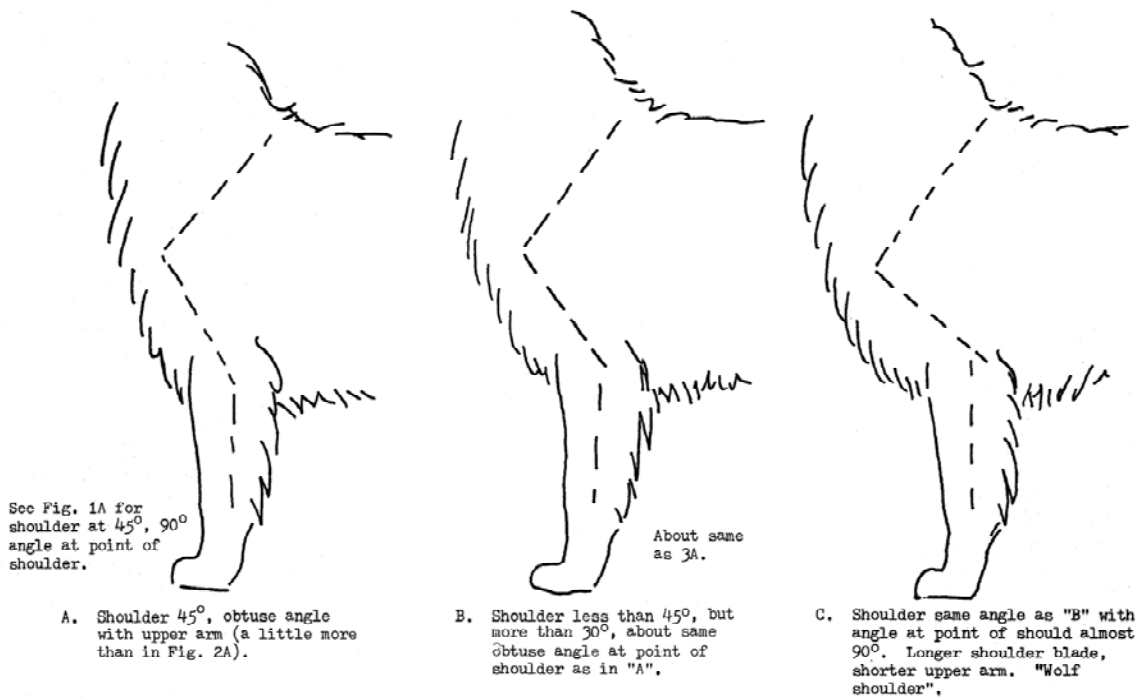
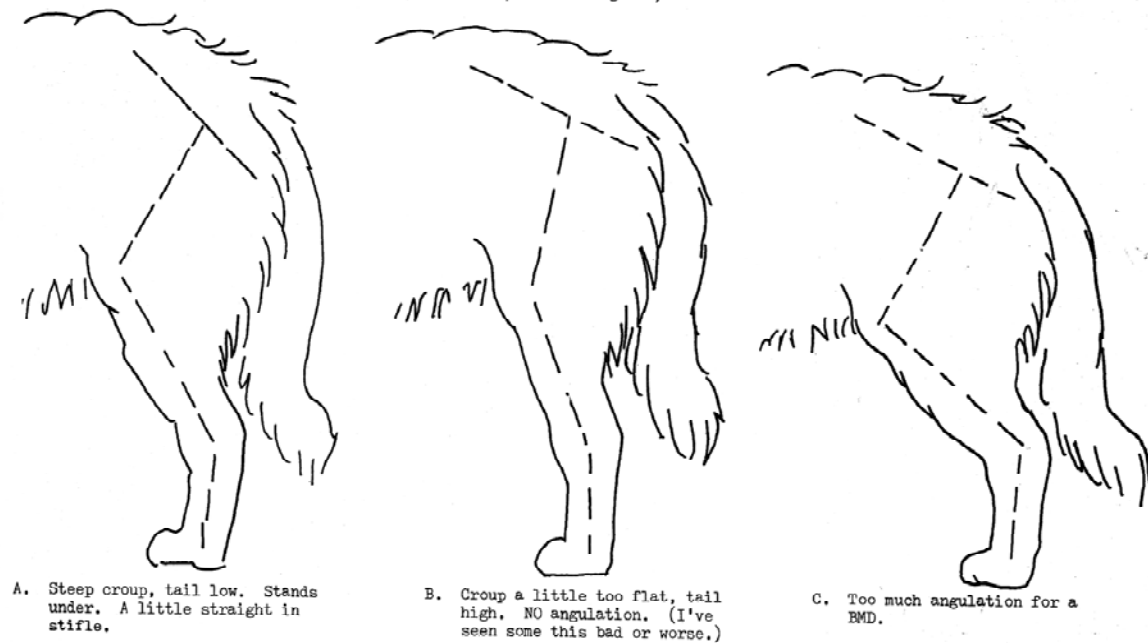


Fig. 8 REARS (see also Fig. 1A)



[Caption Tex from page 15] Fig. 7 SHOULDERS (see also Fig. 1A, 2A, 3A)

See Fig. 1A for shoulder at 45° , 90° , angle at point of shoulder.

A. Shoulder 45° , obtuse angle with upper arm (a little more than in Fig. 2A).

About same as 3A.

B. Shoulder less than 45° , but more than 30° , about same obtuse angle at point of shoulder as in "A".

C. Shoulder same angle as "B" with angle at point of should almost 90° . Longer shoulder blade, shorter upper arm. "Wolf shoulder".

Fig. 8 REARS (see also Fig. 1A)

A. Steep croup, tail low. Stands under. A little straight in stifle.

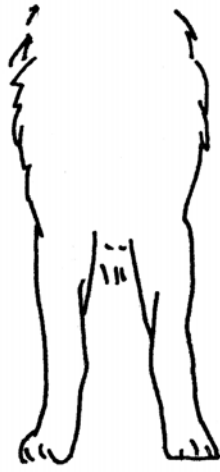
B. Croup a little too flat, tail high. NO angulation. (I've seen some this bad or worse.)

C. Too much angulation for a BMD.

FROM FRONT AND REAR



straight

narrow, pinched in
at elbows, toes
turned out.

out at elbows

forearm inclined slightly
inward, toes turned out.

broad rear, straight



cow hocks



barrel hocks

a little close behind,
but hocks parallel

("Guide for Writing Breed Standards") Perhaps we are unclear in that we have omitted "as viewed from behind", which is the intent of this sentence in the hindquarters section.

Ah! Dewclaws Those funny digits that none of us really like, but that come on the forelegs of most imported dogs and many American-bred dogs. Those that feel that rear dewclaws should be removed are in a vast majority. Removal of the rear dewclaws is how both the current U.S. and Swiss Standards are interpreted. The usage of "may be removed" in the forequarters section permits, but does not require the breeder to remove front dewclaws. At this point, we do not feel that the removal of front dewclaws is one of our major concerns. In the AKC "Guide for Writing Breed Standards", we are asked to specify whether dewclaws "may be, are generally, should be or should not be removed, distinguishing between dewclaws on the forelegs and those on the hind legs in each case." (Underlining's mine; it's AKC's wording, not ours!) The Committee does not feel strongly enough that the front dewclaws should or should not be removed. Should we dock tails because they frequently knock everything off coffee tables or sometimes get caught in doors??

When the Standard Committee did a survey a number of years ago, the section on "tail" was the one section of the current U.S. Standard which most people felt was adequate. Well, we have greatly changed this section, not because we felt the current Standard inadequate, but because the Swiss Standard is more concise. The current U.S. Standard's section on tail is wordier than the combined sections on forequarters, hindquarters and gait, which are

actually just lumped together. The tail is essentially an extension of the backbone and, as such, "is a barometer to the set of the pelvis and the value of the muscles attached to the pelvis and croup". (Lyon, p. 223) A tail that is slightly suspended, we hope, reflects the proper structure of muscles and bones in the rear assembly. The argument that many BMD's carry tails higher or lower than we ask for as the ideal does not make that tail carriage necessarily desirable. By taking the word-mess out of this section, we have tried to minimize the overemphasis on tail carriage in the current standard. The faults listed, we felt, are a problem in the breed. Note that "tail curled over the back" is listed as a fault, but not "tail carried more or less than slightly suspended".

Considering that the current U.S. Standard has no section on gait and the Swiss Standard's translation is awkward and difficult to translate, the Committee drew up this section with considerable reflection on the purpose of the Bernese Mountain Dog as a working dog, suited for light draft work and droving. All dogs, walk, trot, canter and gallop when circumstances call for each gait at which he would be pulling a cart most efficiently. A slow trot keeps the cart rolling once the dog gets it going, but is not as tiring as a fast trot. A walk is also used as the least tiring and smoothest pace in pulling a cart, but is not known for the speed necessary for droving. And whether we like it or not, all breeds are judged in the ring at a trot. The tendency for many exhibitors to race their dogs around a ring frequently covers up poor movement which would be easily observed at a slow trot. As Ron Smith points out, many BMD's have a "tricycle" gait; they move wide in front and close in the rear, which we feel is NOT proper movement. For this reason, we have stated that the "front and hind legs on each side follow through in the same plane. At increased speed, legs may converge toward a center line." (The Committee's original wording here was revised, clarified and improved with the help of the AKC.) With this wording, the single-tracking and double-tracking dog are both allowed, but the dog which has a combination of the two is not desired. When pulling a cart (which is actually a pushing action), two factors are involved, balance and force. A dog having the breadth in front and rear needed for the power to pull a cart may start out to double track for best balance and force. As his speed increases, the center of gravity is balanced over a center line, the dog brings his feet closer to this line and he throws his weight straight forward, first onto one foot then the other. The dog which is moving wide in front is not utilizing fully the drive coming from the rear that is now moving closer, as the force is going forward from side to side rather than straight ahead.

The case of why we need proper angulation and good muscling to assure us of an efficient cart dog has been greatly simplified and understated above. I urge anyone who is interested (or confused) to refer to McDowell Lyon's Dog In Action and/ or Rachael Page Elliott's Dog Steps, Illustrated Gait at a Glance, both published by Howell.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the proposed Standard, we welcome them with open arms! Copies of the current U.S., Swiss and proposed Standards are available from me, Mary Alice Horstick, 938 N. Griffith Rd., Oconomowoc, Wis. 53066.

An ongoing discussion of the breed standard by all who appreciate the qualities of
Bernese Mountain Dogs is the key to
the breed's future development and preservation of traits which are uniquely Bernese.

Understanding a breed is a learning process.

This document was prepared by BMDCA members, Ann Milligan & Pat Long.

OFFICIAL AKC STANDARD FOR THE BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG (1980 version*)

BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG

GENERAL APPEARANCE - A sturdy, balanced, large, strong-boned dog. Intelligent and having an appearance of strength and agility suiting it to draft and droving work in mountainous regions. Dogs appear masculine, while bitches are distinctly feminine.

HEAD - Skull-flat and broad with a slight furrow and a well-defined, but not exaggerated stop. Muzzle strong

and straight. Dry mouthed. Teeth - strong; scissors bite; complete dentition. Serious fault:

overshot or undershot bite. Ears - medium sized, triangular in shape, gently rounded at the tip, hanging close to the head when in repose, brought forward and raised at the base when alert. Eyes-dark brown, slightly oval in shape with close-fitting eyelids; expression intelligent, animated and gentle. Serious faults: inverted or everted eyelids. Disqualification: Blue eye.

NECK AND BODY - Neck-strong and muscular and of medium length. Back-broad and firm. Topline level from withers to croup. Chest-deep and capacious with well-sprung ribs and brisket reaching at least to the elbows. Body-nearly square with over-all body length measuring slightly greater than height at the withers. Loin-strong. Croup-broad and smoothly rounded to tail insertion.

FOREQUARTERS - Shoulders-moderately laid back, flat lying, well muscled, never loose. Forelegs straight

and strong with the elbows well under the shoulders. Pasterns slightly sloping without weakness.

Feet round and compact with well-arched toes. Declaws may be removed from front legs.

HINDQUARTERS - Thighs-broad, strong and muscular. Stifles-moderately bent, tapering smoothly into hocks. Hocks-well let down and straight as viewed from the rear. Dewclaws should be removed from rear legs. Tail-Bushy. Bone reaching to the hock joint or below. When in repose, tail should be carried low, upward swirl permissible when alert. May be carried gaily, but may never curl or be carried over the back. Fault: Kink in tail. Coat - Thick, moderately long, slight wavy or straight, with a bright natural sheen.

COLOR AND MARKINGS - Tri-color: jet black ground color with rich rust and clear white markings. Nose always black. Markings (symmetry desired): Rust: over each eye; on cheeks, preferably reaching at least to the corner of the mouth; on each side of chest; on all four legs; under tail. White: blaze and muzzle-band; chest marking, typically forming an inverted cross; feet; tip of tail. Faults: Markings other than as described to be faulted in direct relationship to the extent of the deviation. Serious faults: White legs; white collars. Disqualifications: any ground color other than black.

GAIT - Natural working gait is slow trot, but capable of speed and agility in keeping with use in draft and droving work. Good reach in front. Powerful drive from the rear transmitted through a level back. No wasted action. Front and hind legs on each side follow through in the same plane. At increased speed, legs tend to converge toward the center line.

HEIGHT - Dogs: 24 1/2" to 27 1/2" at the withers. Bitches: 22 1/2" to 25 1/2" at the withers.

TEMPERAMENT - Self-confident, alert and good-natured. Never sharp or shy. A dog which will not stand for examination shall be dismissed from the ring.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Blue eye color.

Any ground color other than black. Approved July 8, 1980

*Please note the AKC breed standard for Bernese Mountain Dogs was updated in 1989. The 1980 version shown above is presented for historical documentation purposes.