

Breeding Priorities: Lessons from Lyrics for New Breeders: From Jagger to Joel+

Nancy Melone, PhD, Jeannie Bussey, Abigail DeCamp & Ivy Gregory

Monday April 28 9:00-11:00a.m.

This class is designed to be an intimate, but active workshop for new breeders and those considering the possibility. Students will bring a list of their breeding priorities to class and BGF pedigrees of two dogs you would like to breed (or see bred if you do not own them). You will work with these items in class. We will help you think about how to manage and make informed trade-offs in a world of risk, uncertainty and incomplete information. You will be able to ask any question, and we will try our best to answer them.

Topics that we plan to explore include but are not limited to analyzing pedigrees, understanding differences in inbreeding coefficients and how to use them correctly, using the Histio Mating Simulation to select stud dogs that can lower risk in litters, canine herpes virus and brucellosis risk, the importance of trust in breeding relationships and the financial costs of breeding responsibly. Addressing issues once pups are on the ground, we hope to cover puppy development, the breeder's and dam's role in raising well-adjusted puppies and making difficult decisions such as knowing when to stop resuscitation. If time allows, we will address contracts and the most difficult of all, selecting puppy buyers.

Nancy P. Melone, Ph.D., is a graduate of the University of Minnesota in Information and Decision Sciences. Her articles and editorial work on canine health have won multiple Dog Writers Association of America Maxwell Medallions, a Morris Animal Foundation Advances in Canine Veterinary Medicine Award, and multiple American Kennel Club Publication Excellence Awards. She is Editor Emerita of The Alpenhorn and served on the boards of the Berner-Garde Foundation and Bernese Auction Rescue Coalition. She currently serves on the board of the Nederlandse Kooikerhondje Club of the USA (NKCUSA) and chairs the NKCUSA Health and Genetics Committee. She breeds under the kennel names ThornCreek Bernese, Reg'd. and Eendenkooi Nederlandse Kooikerhondje.

Jeannie Bussey and her husband Bill have been selectively breeding Bernese Mountain Dogs since 2006 under the kennel name Hid'n Oaks. They have been fortunate to have had excellent and knowledgeable mentors. They work very hard to breed healthy dogs with longevity and excellent temperaments while trying to maintain breed type; many of their dogs are healthy at 11 and 12 years old. They both train and show their dogs in the bred-by class and have 7 bred-by-exhibitor champions and 10 finished champions. Since 2007 eight generations of their therapy dogs have volunteered at Akron Children's hospital, currently including a grandmother, mother and daughter team. When not enjoying her family and her dogs, Jeannie teaches children with special needs as a retired special education teacher in her community.

Abigail DeCamp Abigail's journey with Bernese started when she brought home Parker, her heart dog, who ignited a deep and passionate love for the breed. Although Parker wasn't a show dog, he possessed all the qualities that made him the perfect ambassador for Berners—loyal, sweet, and with an incredible personality. Her first experience with showing dogs came in 2007, and when she welcomed her first litter in 2008, she wisely took a break from showing and breeding to focus on raising her wonderful 'bonus children' with her husband. She has been fortunate to have many fabulous mentors. Abigail truly enjoys helping others research pedigrees, discussing various options, and supporting each other during challenging times. Her years in the breed have provided her with numerous teachable moments, not only about the dogs but also about the people involved in this generous community.

Ivy Gregory's dogs have afforded her unbelievable joy. Her first Berner was a bundle of energy and after working with her veterinarian, they figured out that she was deaf! It seemed not to slow her down in obedience classes as she was doing well. With her second Berner she participated in Obedience, Agility, Conformation and Farm Dog events. After meeting other Berner breeders and owners, she has learned about the importance of health testing to identify individual risks and to help researchers reduce genetic diseases. Currently, she has four Berner girls ranging in age from 1.5 years old to 15.5 years old. While Ivy has had Berners since 2008, last year she bred her first litter under the kennel name EdenVale and found breeding joyful, painful, hard work, along with the benefit of some new Berner friends.