



## **The FIRST “two” Saint Bernards to Earn the Draft Dog Excellent (DDX) Title**

The Draft Dog Excellent (DDX) level of competition was first introduced (for Saint Bernards) at the Saint Bernard Club of America’s annual National Draft Test on the east coast. There were no entries at this level. The next draft test which offered the DDX level was at the Saint Bernard Club of the Pacific Coast’s Draft Test in Napa Valley California, and there were three entries at the DDX level alone! Two of the three dogs qualified for the DDX title on the same day, November 5, 2011. Since draft tests are not a timed event (like Rally or Agility), it was determined that both DDX titles would share the spotlight. Terry Popish wrote, *“Wendy and I both earned the DDX title on November 5<sup>th</sup> at the SBCPC Draft Test. There was some “fun” debating over who was first to earn the title--Wendy was entry #2 and Tundra was #3 but Tundra finished the Freight Haul first and Wendy finished second but I think that we both decided to share the title of the “first dogs” to earn the DDX title.”*

**Congratulations go out to:**

**Snowy Pine's Tundra CD GN RN RA RE  
NAP OAP NJP OJP DD TDD DDX**

**WDCH Stones One Hit Wonder of Yixy  
CD CDX RN TD DD DDX**

Their stories and photos are on the following pages...

## Breed First –Draft Dog Excellent Title (DDX)



### **WDCH Stoan's One Hit Wonder of Yixy CDX RN TD DDX**

**By Wendy Lee,**

After training T-Bone (Stoan's One Hit Wonder of Yixy) in basic obedience, I hooked him up to a cart for the first time. He was ten months old. We started with baby steps and worked with quite a bit of positive reinforcement (mainly food). Within a few short sessions, we went from harnessing, to hitching, to being able to pull the cart in and out of my driveway. I guess you can say that he is quite a natural. As I slowly trained T-Bone to work the complex maneuvers, he would hesitate at first, but with verbal encouragement and food rewards, he overcame his doubts very quickly. I also took advantage of familiar settings in our neighborhood to train the various required elements of a Draft Test. I entered T-Bone in his first Draft Test as a demo dog in the Fall of 2007, just a few days shy of his first birthday. It was all on-leash and great experience for us.

As we worked more on competition obedience, T-Bone's off-leash reliability improved enough for me to do off-leash carting training with him as well. I entered him in another Draft Test in the Fall of 2008 as an official entry. Unfortunately he was not ready, and we did not pass. I wasn't discouraged by this performance. I planned to try again and I set my goals for the 2009 Hood River Nationals. To warm up for the Nationals, I entered T-Bone in a Bernese Mountain Dog Draft Test in the Summer of 2009 as a novice entry, which was again done on-leash. Even though we also did not pass that test due to handler's technical error, I was very pleased with his performance. I knew the experience was what I needed in order to give a good performance at the Nationals.

The week at the 2009 Nationals started with two failed attempts to get our last leg on T-Bone's CD title at the pre-shows. The environment was just too intense for T-Bone and he was very stressed out. I was not expecting too much at the Draft Test. The Basic Obedience exercise of the test was not his best performance, but we were good enough to pass. As we worked our way to harnessing and hitching, T-Bone was starting to relax and became more focused. As I gave my first command at the maneuvering course, I knew my working partner came back to me. We went on to finish, passing the test and earning his Draft Dog title. I was so proud of him.

With continuous training in tracking, and in open and utility obedience work, T-Bone has slowly matured to become a reliable teammate. He requalified his Draft Dog title a second time in Fall 2010. As soon as the regulations of the newly offered Draft Dog Excellent title became available in September 2011, I immediately worked with T-Bone on the additional exercises at this higher level. I also spent a significant amount of time to review the new regulations, understanding the new elements of the test. Sometimes after I got off from work, we would practice the 360 degree "wheel spin" over a manhole cover down the street. Other times, we took advantage of our neighbor's hedges and sidewalk to work on the 10-foot backup. We visited our neighborhood park often to use the curbs as our obstacles.

After three months of training, I entered T-Bone in the November 2011 Draft Test offered by the St. Bernard Club of Pacific Coast. At the test, T-Bone worked hard from one exercise to the next, without hesitation. The physical training from our field tracking work and the focus that we've learned from our obedience training also helped us through the day. At the last fifty yards of the Freight Haul, T-Bone knew the finish line was getting close. He was pulling with so much focus and conviction it's hard to argue that he is not a true working dog.

**WDCH**  
**Stoan's One Hit Wonder of Yixy**  
**CDX RN TD DDX**

Wendy Lee



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**November 5, 2011**