

**JUDGE'S REPORT
LEONBERGER CLUB of AMERICA
FIRST DRAFT TEST
April 14, 2011
Warwick, Rhode Island**

**Draft Test Chair.....MARIETTA MENNONE.....Camden, CT
Draft Test Secretary.....STEVE PFLEDERER.....Burlington, CT
Draft Test Judge.....DR. BARBARA GIBSON.....Edgecomb, ME
Draft Test Judge.....SARA STEELE....Long Valley, NJ
Apprentice Judge.....MARIETTA MENNONE.....Camden, CT**

It was an honor and a pleasure to be invited to judge the Leonberger Club of America's first draft test. Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of the making of history.

6 dogs were entered in total.

5 dogs were entered in the Novice Draft Class and 1 dog in the Novice Veterans Class.

2 dogs were absent, one from the Novice Class and the one from the Novice Veterans Class.

4 dogs exhibited in full.

There were no passes, but all the teams worked exceedingly well, were well-prepared, and displayed naturalness and teamwork and control. All four teams were first-timers in a draft ring.

Two of the teams missed passing by only a hair. In the first case, the dog contacted the Narrows, and, in the second case, the dog moved during the Unload due to handler error. Both teams performed otherwise flawlessly. One of the handlers was only thirteen. The other two dogs were handled---and very nicely, I might add---by a single handler. In both cases, she had trouble backing the dogs the 4 foot distance within the allotted 1 minute. Other reasons for failure were: failure to wait on the Recall exercise, contact with the Narrows, failure to stay during Unload exercise, and failure to stay during the Group Stay.

The weather cooperated for the draft test. While we had much rain during the week of the LCA National, we were thankfully spared for our event. The temperature was brisk; good for the dogs but a little uncomfortable for the people during those times when the sun disappeared behind the clouds and the wind picked up.

For the Maneuvers course we selected a flat, grassy area cornered by the road in front of the hotel and the access road. The hotel had erected orange snow fencing to prevent dogs that might be so inclined from running away. For two boundaries of the Maneuvering ring, we used on one side this orange fencing and on a second side, a wooden fence. The remaining two sides of the ring were gated off.

The Maneuvers Course was designed by our Apprentice Judge, Marietta Mennone. The Basic Control Pattern was: Forward, Fast, Normal, Right Turn, Slow, Normal, Left Turn, Halt. Marietta had set up the ring entrance so that the Recall exercise would not be directed toward the ring opening.

The theme for the decorations was in accordance with the Specialty theme, which was the sea. One marker that in particular intrigued me was an orange cone that had been painted a dark gray and had a whale's tail attached to it. It looked very much like a whale was diving into the ground! The audio distraction was an awesome-sounding nautical bell, and the visual distraction was a fish trap that was pulled in front of the dog by a rope.

The Maneuvers map was as follows: Harness and Hitch, Load, 360° Circle Right, Right Turn with Audio Distraction, Slow (using the entire lap of the ring for this exercise), Right Turn, 360° Circle Left, Removable Obstacle, Right Turn with Visual Distraction, Right Turn, Narrows, Left Turn, Left Turn, Backing Exercise, Unload.

The Freight Haul was directed over long hills with mild pitch. The terrain was mostly grass, sparse grass, a spring onion patch !, and asphalt. Goose poop provided plentiful natural distractions along the route.

Marietta did a tremendous job in initiating and establishing the Leonberger Club of America's draft program. She wrote the Regulations, produced the maiden draft test, apprenticed in the draft test, and, later in the day, oversaw a hugely successful draft workshop presented by Barbie and Bill Wilczek and judges, Barb Gibson and Sara Steele. Steve Pflederer, a veteran draft test secretary for the BMDC of Nashoba Valley, once again did a terrific job at secretarying. Marietta provided us with excellent stewards, one of which was her own daughter, Willow, and the other, Yulia, the niece of Judge Barb Gibson.

The aforementioned workshop ran for two hours. 17 teams had pre-registered, but many more showed up. Bill and Barbie and Barb Gibson and myself were teachers, as well as some of the exhibitors from the morning draft test. We split up in groups with one teacher to four students. We were in awe of how readily the Leonbergers took to the carts. The Leos were 100% successful in achieving Harness and Hitch and Pull within a short time. The Leonberger temperament lends itself naturally to carting. The Leos are calm, laid back, easy going, and unflappable. They prove the adage that "Slow and steady wins the race."

**Respectfully submitted,
Sara Steele**

