



THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Jim and Marian Osborn
LYNTHEA
Northridge, California

Part II

This interview was conducted at the home of Jim and Marian Osborn in July of 1995 by Barb Matson.

How popular are Samoyeds?

Jim: It has gone downhill in California quite a bit in the last few years. I don't know where it ranks nationally compared with other breeds. It is probably still in the same place it was some time back. Back in the mid-'70s, it took 25 dogs for a three-point major here in California, and now a three-point major is about half that, which says you have about half the number of dogs being shown. The local club here is having a hard time maintaining membership, because there are not new members coming into the breed, and old ones are dropping by the wayside. I am talking about locally here in California. Nationally, I am not sure what the breed has done relative to other breeds. It has certainly lost popularity here, and maybe on a national level also, but I think it has gone down more here in southern California than it has in the rest of the country. At the same time it has been going down here, it may be going up in the Midwest or some other areas, so nationally it may not be sliding that much.

Do you have any thoughts as to why it is declining here?

Jim: I think everybody has wondered about that. People in the local club wonder why the membership is off and there is a lack of interest, and so on. I guess I don't really have a good opinion. I don't think there is any one or few breeders here locally who are really out there doing great things on a national level, so some of the publicity and popularity may be lacking, that spark of success that everybody wants to be associated with. That may be a small factor. I don't really know why it has



With KK and Dolly.

fallen off. In our own case, we have been at it too long and have slowed down. We have showed very little in the last ten years, just an occasional show here and there, for the most part, and as I said earlier, our last litter was bred eight years ago. Obviously, we are not very active in the dog fancy these days, although that isn't really true. Marian is still quite active in the local club, and I support her in the club activities. I am doing a lot of work on the history and pedigrees. We still feel like we are very much involved, but that involvement does not include breeding very many puppies or participating in very many shows. A lot of people of our era have also slowed down or dropped out entirely. Why isn't there a continual influx of younger people? I don't really know.

Did both you and Marian handle the dogs?

Jim: Yes. Marian handled more than I did, although over

the years it may be close to equal. I preferred Marian to handle. There were individual dogs I was comfortable with and enjoyed handling. I did most of the training of the young dogs and would handle them in the Puppy classes. Once they were mature enough to be competitive, I really preferred to turn it over to Marian. I didn't enjoy it that much. It's not that I didn't like it, but I did not get a big bang out of handling a dog in the ring. I enjoyed the dog show more by standing at ringside, looking at the dogs and studying them, and so on, and letting Marian handle in the ring.

Marian: As I got older, I did not like handling. That's probably the reason we don't show anymore. I don't like to run around the ring.

Do you have any advice for owners who would like to handle their own dogs?

Marian: Learn how.
How did you learn?

Jim: Go to handling classes, watch the professionals in the ring who win consistently, whose dogs show well in the ring, and study what they do. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. I really mean that. Work with the dog at home. You can train a dog to do anything. I think you can train a dog to stand on its head, so you can certainly train a dog to walk into a square stance, to alert to you, although there are limits to that if they get bored or hot and they might let down and quit. You can train the dogs to respond to what you want to a large degree and learn the mannerisms and techniques to accomplish that. Get some proper instruction via handling classes, watch the good handlers in the ring and study their technique very carefully, and then practice, practice, practice.

Did you ever use videotapes for yourself?

Jim: We didn't have one

when we were showing a lot. We got a movie camera and we used to shoot films, which can get a little expensive if you just want to shoot for practice. We did do that and study what we were doing in the ring. The advent of video and instant playback would certainly be a boon for somebody learning to handle, because seeing what you do in the ring from a camera's point of view should be very instructive. Rather than just what you THINK you look like and what you THINK you are doing, see what you actually do look like through the camera. The use of video in that respect should be very helpful.

How often have you used professional handlers, or have you?

Jim: Once or twice. When we wanted to get a dog to a show that was out of the area, and we knew a handler who was going, we would put the dog with the handler for that weekend. That was only a couple of times in all the time we showed dogs. We always handled our own dogs.

How do you train puppies and at what age?

Jim: Six and a half weeks old is when you start. In opposition to what the obedience people say, I use food for the training, because puppies respond to food. No puppy has ever left our house until it was pretty thoroughly leash trained. Whether it was going to be shown or not, it had to be pretty darned well behaved on lead before it left our house. You can do that in about fifteen minutes. Five three-minute sessions over a period of a week will give a puppy a pretty good idea of what a leash is all about. I used cookies or kibble in little bite-sized pieces. By the time they left our house, which was generally not before nine weeks, they would be pretty well trained puppies. By that time, they had been on lead on the street and to a shopping center or two. Pfaffenberger showed in his book that one of the critical periods for training is from seven to twelve weeks of age, so I started at six and a half, but generally not before then, because a puppy's attention span is too short. You start them out for just a few minutes each day until they have the fundamentals. Then you take them on the street.

At eight-and-a-half or nine weeks, you start stacking them. That is, lifting up the feet and trying to pose them a little bit. A lit-

tle bit of that goes a long way with an eight-week-old puppy, but you get them used to being handled. They rather quickly get the idea that something is expected of them, although they are not sure what, but they are sharp enough that they figure it out. By the time a puppy is nine weeks old, you should be able to take it in to a fun match, and it should be well trained enough that it is manageable on lead. I always felt like I was very good working with young puppies. I like puppies, and that's part of it. It is a matter of being consistent. I don't know that there are any special tricks to eliciting the response you are looking for. I always enjoyed that. Of course, if you have a litter of six or eight pups to train all at once, it can be a chore, but it is only for a short period of time, and within two or three weeks the fundamentals are all there.

Marian: It pays to give individual time. We have a command word for all bathroom chores, which is "hurry." By the time the puppies are ready to leave, they knew pretty much what that word means. We could take them out, tell them to "hurry," and they would squat, and as long as the new owner did the same thing, they would have a house-trained dog in a short period of time.

Did most of your puppies go to matches?

Jim: Only the ones we kept. We sold into show homes, also, but I didn't necessarily take them to a match as part of their training. If it was a dog we were going to keep and show, we would try to get it out of a match or two early on, sometime between two and six months of age, before they were old enough to go into the Puppy classes at a licensed show. The handling classes are good for that too. The handler is trying to train YOU, but YOU are there to socialize and train the puppy. Being around other dogs and in a show environment is a very important part of puppy training and socialization and learning the show ring atmosphere. The handling classes are very good for that, and we often would go to the handling classes, not because we thought the handler was going to teach us anything, but because we wanted to socialize the pup. All the things you can do along that line for young pup-

pies under six months of age is very beneficial to them in terms of getting them comfortable in the show ring, having them entirely comfortable on lead, and knowing what's expected of them. That's the whole key.

ience stuff. I have to attribute that to my own laziness. I just didn't want to put forth the effort to do it. We had some dogs of our breeding that were very successful in obedience work with other owners, but we never did it



Ch. Lynthea's Joshua of Waken (double grandson), BOB, and Ch. Southern Star of Lynthea (at eight and a half years), BOS from Veteran Bitch class at Samoyed Club of San Diego Specialty in May of 1979.

The dog is perfectly willing to do what you want it to do if it knows what you want it to do and knows what to expect. All of this early training is really to get the dog to understand what is expected. Most of the training is done in our backyard, so the handling class would be a once-a-week thing for a few weeks at the most.

Marian: The handling class also introduced our puppies to other breeds.

Jim: Where they learned that all dogs were not necessarily white. (laughter)

Marian: It is amazing to take our dogs onto a show grounds and they will seek out the Sammies. We don't have to ask where the ring is. Our dogs will spot them a mile away.

Did you ever put any obedience titles on your dogs, like CDs or CDXs?

Jim: We never worked in formal obedience at all. We had some dogs that I thought were particularly well suited for that, but by the time I finished a championship, I didn't really feel like starting to wade through the obe-

ourselves.

Did you do any kind of field work with your dogs?

Jim: No. You don't do much sled work here in southern California, and we didn't do any tracking or agility. The only thing we ever did was the conformation.

Marian: The only hunting they ever did was when they would catch a squirrel on the ground in our backyard.

Jim: Dolly is a squirrel dog and will let me know when she spots a squirrel in the trees overhead. I keep all the squirrels off the pine tree over the patio, because they will sit in the tree eating pine nuts and drop all the hulls on the patio and make a grand mess. I use the air rifle to chase them out of there, and Dolly can get very enthusiastic about the squirrels. There is no formal hunting.

Can shy or aggressive dogs be corrected by training?

Jim: It depends on where the shyness or aggressiveness came from. Most of that is hereditary, and while training



KK baby-sitting Karima's pups.

will influence it, it won't eliminate it. If it came from some earlier deficiency in the dog's environment, then training can do more perhaps than if it is inherited. By the time a dog is an adult, however, nothing will do very much. Training will affect an adult dog that is shy or aggressive, but it won't ever eliminate it. Once it is there, whether it was hereditary or environmental, it will be there to some degree forever.

Is it appropriate to take a dog anywhere off-leash?

Jim: Oh, yes. We go to the beach and turn our dogs loose. They will encounter other people, but we try to make sure we have a clear beach before we do it. There are people here who turn their dogs loose out the front door to let them run around in the morning, and I don't approve of that at all. Not only is it dangerous to the dog, but it is disturbing to other people. There are not very many places in an urban area where letting a dog off-lead is appropriate at all. Dogs love to go to someplace new and be off-lead. They thoroughly delight in that. Unfortunately, there are not very many places you can do that in an urban area.

To what extent were your breedings natural or controlled?

Jim: I almost always hold the bitch once the dog has tied her, and support her, and help them to get turned. We make sure we know which way they turned and turn them back the same way. It's important to hang on to the bitch so she has some support when she needs it from the dog's weight, and so that she doesn't try to turn or twist, which

they usually will, or sit down. I always preferred to see them achieve a tie without any interference on our part. That didn't always happen and occasionally we would hold the bitch for some reason. We would try to get them to tie before we did anything, and then move in and hold the bitch to keep her from twisting, and turning on the dog.

What is a fair stud fee?

Jim: I don't have the foggiest idea. It has always been the price of a pick puppy. I guess that's as good a rule of thumb as any. We never had a lot of out-

course, we never had a famous stud dog to work with. Our prices tended to be on the low side of the prevailing rates when we were doing that kind of thing. It's been a number of years since we have sold a stud service or a puppy, so I can't really tell you what the prices are.

Marian: It was cash, and if we wanted a puppy out of a litter we would buy it. We never had any breeding strings attached.

Jim: We never bred a litter unless we intended to keep the pick puppy.

Did you refuse service to very many bitches?

Jim: Not very many, probably because I suspect people know me well enough not to bring a wrong bitch for service.

What would keep you from breeding a dog or a bitch?

Jim: That concerns that illusive thing about personal interpretation of the standard and assessment of quality. If I felt like any dog or bitch simply was not of breedable quality, I would not breed to it. The next question, of course, is what is breedable quality, but I can't really answer that. It goes back to your interpretation of the standard and your personal priorities about what is important. Any time that I felt an animal was not of breed-

ducer could be bred once a year for six or seven years. If she is not an outstanding producer, you probably know that after a couple of litters and you ought to quit.

Did you help your bitches whelp?

Jim: Very little. We were always there hovering over them, but we let them do it themselves, and most of them did. Once in a while there was a breach birth or a poor presentation of the puppy where you have to get in there and help. We only had one bitch that had to have a C-section. They almost all did the job themselves with a minimum of help on our part. We learned that from our foundation bitch, Mama Bear, who was as instinctive as any dog that ever lived. With her very first litter of pups, you'd think she wrote the pediatrics book. She knew exactly what to do and how to do it. Fortunately, she tended to have small puppies. Most of the puppies were around twelve ounces, which is not a big puppy, so the deliveries were pretty easy. She was so instinctive and did it all herself beautifully. I have a set of slides I took of her whelping. I was busy with the lights and camera, and she was in there for two or three hours doing her thing and ignoring me. I have a nice set of slides of the whelping. I had no qualms about doing that because she was all in her own world, intent on doing her thing, although I think she was glad we were there.

Marian: Jim fixed the whelping box so he could lower the sides and get right in there with the camera, and she didn't mind.

Jim: We learned with her and used the same technique with others. They were maybe not all as instinctive as she was, but they all caught on.

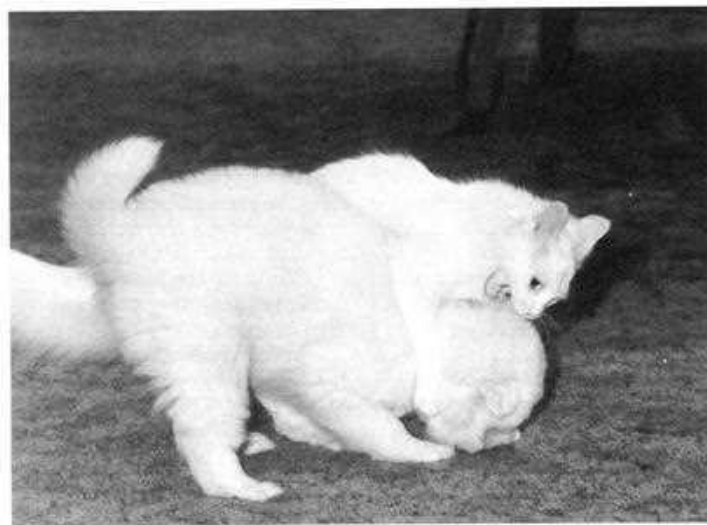
Marian: After the first puppy came, they knew exactly what to do.

Have you supplement-fed young puppies?

Jim: We never had a litter where we felt that was necessary. We had one bitch that became very ill, and we think she retained a placenta or a piece of one. Her milk was bad and we had to keep the pups off of her. We had to feed the puppies when they were just a few days old.

Marian: I used baby bottles, not tube-feeding. I wanted them to use their sucking instinct.

Jim: People with large litters



KK and Lyntheas Last Chance, great buddies from beginning to end.

side stud service. J C was bred to a half dozen outside bitches, and a couple other dogs were bred to outside bitches. We always charged what I felt were nominal stud fees, usually less than the going rates other people used. Of

ing quality, then it obviously shouldn't be bred from. In my case, that would apply to a lot of specials I see in the show ring.

How many litters should a bitch have?

Jim: An outstanding pro-

frequently have to supplement, but we've never had a litter over six.

Do you remember what you supplemented them with?

Marian: It was a recipe a vet gave me. In fact, it's in our pediatric book. We used goat's milk, Karo and lime water.

Do you wean the puppies yourself, or let the bitch do it?

Jim: We usually let mama do that. If you have a small run where the mother and puppies are kept, she will have a difficult time doing that, but in our situation, where she had the run of the house and yard, she could retreat from them when she needed to.

Marian: We would introduce solid foods early to help with the weaning.

Jim: By the time the puppies are five weeks old, they are getting a pretty good portion of solid food. We cut back on the mother's food so she doesn't have as much milk, so we assisted.

Marian: We would have to watch, because we've had bitches that felt we weren't feeding enough and would regurgitate their food for the puppies. The instinct to do that is there.

At what ages did you evaluate for pet and show quality, and what did you look for?

Marian: From the moment they are born.

Jim: We used colored ribbons around their necks to mark them with, and I always tagged my pick bitch with red. My pick male would have a blue ribbon. I did that at birth to keep tabs on myself to see how good I was at picking them at birth.

How did you do?

Jim: Pretty well, although not 100 percent. The majority of the time, however, my picks at birth would turn out to be my pick at eight or nine weeks old. More than half the time, anyhow. It's an ongoing evaluation. It is an art you develop and you do it almost intuitively. There are techniques involved such as measuring bone lengths and looking for angulation, and determining the contour of chest at certain ages. You could sit down and make up a set of rules, but I am not sure how valuable the rules would be. There is a lot of art involved that is either intuitive and instinctive with the person, or comes with a lot of experience and practice, or both.

What should a potential show

puppy sell for?

Jim: Again, at this point in time, I don't know, since we have not had a litter in so many years.

Did you sell your pet puppies with spay and neuter agreements?

Jim: Most of the time we didn't. It was usually specified in the bill of sale that the puppy was not to be bred from, but we did not demand neutering. In almost all cases, we were selling into homes we knew were not interested in showing and breeding.

Marian: We did request that they have hip X-rays and eye exams.

Jim: We didn't always get that information back, but I don't think we ever got into a dispute with anybody over it. We were just looking for information back on the dogs as to how they turned out and didn't force the issue.

What do you feed your dogs?

Marian: I use a fresh frozen meat product, cottage cheese, and mix in vitamins C, E, brewers yeast and vionate. We used to give oil, but we cut that out with the older dogs. With that I use a lamb and rice kibble. They are fed twice a day, the dog's weight is watched, and the kibble is adjusted accordingly. If the dogs start to get pudgy, they get less kibble.

How much grooming did you do

on a regular basis, and what was the routine prior to a show?

Jim: They get a pretty good grooming once a week.

Marian: We check them every other day for fleas, or every day at the height of the flea season.

Jim: Marian puts the blower on them, because it parts the hair to where you can see the skin and look for fleas.

Marian: We spray the yard, but we don't dip the dogs and they don't wear flea collars, because I don't want any chemicals on the dogs. Normally, bathing is about every six weeks or so. I like a clean Sammy and it makes me feel good to keep them bathed.

How about exercise?

Jim: With multiple dogs here, it wasn't bad.

Marian: We have a big yard.

Jim: They would get out and romp. I would play ball with them, and we would take them for walks on occasion. We are down to one dog, and Dolly has been kind of mopey here since she is the only one left. She is getting a little older now, but there is still a regular ball playing time with her, and Marian takes her for walks in the morning. We used to roadwork the dogs on bikes, particularly dogs we

were showing. It has varied over the years, depending on the number of dogs and their ages. You don't need to worry about exercising puppies, of course. They wear themselves out, flop down and go to sleep, and get up and go at it again. Dogs that are senior citizens, at about six and seven years old, start slowing down in their activity. Some kind of stimulation is required to give them a reasonable amount of exercise. The stimulation can be walking, biking or ball playing. We used to do better at that than we do now. Part of it is my own inertia.

What advice would you give to breeders who are just starting out?

Jim: Don't! (laughter) No, that isn't true. Learn the breed. Study it and learn about dog anatomy and so on and study lots of dogs. You need to learn all the things that make you knowledgeable about a breed. You can't do that instantaneously. It takes time, but start working at it and work at it rigorously until you feel like you know the breed. You can't do an honest job of breeding any animal unless you really know the characteristics of the breed you are working with. First and foremost, learn the breed. Secondly, study the pedigrees. Your dog is the product of a bunch of dogs that are behind it. Every gene it carries was carried by some combination of those ancestors. Study the pedigree. Don't just memorize the names, but find out as much as you can about the dogs themselves, particularly the parents, grandparents and all the dogs close up in the pedigree. What kind of dogs were they, what did they produce, what were their strong points, and what were their weak points? Some people think pedigree analysis means counting the number of champions, which is utterly irrelevant. The two key things are to learn the breed and study the pedigrees to learn as much as you can about the dogs in them.

Is it a good idea for newcomers to go to the kennel with the big winners to purchase their first pup?

Jim: It is always difficult to argue with success. If someone is producing big winners and is successful, I can't advise anyone not to do business with those people. Someone may own a big winning dog that they themselves didn't produce. You might use that dog at stud if it is truly a good dog



Lyntheas Stardust Elegance, "Ellie," first in 12-15 Bitch class at the 1988 SCA National Specialty Sweepstakes.

and if it is what you need. To buy a puppy from a successful kennel would be the best advice I could give anyone. Deal with people who are successful.

What are some of the top kennels today?

Jim: I'd rather not answer that. I have not shown the last few years and there are a lot of dogs in the ring I haven't seen. If I started naming names, I would be going back to people I was familiar with ten years ago rather than people who are active today. I haven't seen enough of what is out there the last five years or more.

Would you recommend that new breeders join clubs?

Jim: Yes. First, you meet people and learn things. You may not learn a lot, but every little bit helps. Secondly, everybody owes the sport something. Dog shows are put on by volunteer labor. If you go to a lot of dog shows, you need to pay your dues by joining some club or organization or doing something to contribute your share towards conducting the sport. We did that ourselves. We joined a club for the specific reason of paying our dues to the sport. In the process of doing that, we made a lot of friends and learned a few things along the way. It can't help but be beneficial to you as an individual, and someplace along the line, you have an obligation to support the sport you are participating in, and simply paying entry fees isn't enough. The work is all done by volunteer labor, so get out there and do some of it.

Is the parent club doing enough to educate new members?

Jim: It is probably doing as much as a parent club can do. The SCA *Bulletin* is a very good book published by the parent club. There are helpful articles in it, and there are some other materials that have been published by the parent club, which are available to members, some of which is pretty good. A national organization can't really get to individuals and tutor them in any way, so there are limits on what a national club can do, and of necessity it is pretty superficial. A local club can do a lot more in educating new people, because you have one-on-one personal contact. In the national club, its members live all over the country and their business is conducted by mail and phone. There is a meeting

once a year where people actually come in contact with each other as club members in an activity. The rest of the time it is a nebulous thing. How do you reach people on an individual level? Printed material is about as much as you can do, and the SCA does a reasonable job there.

Marian: I will add that the parent club should be more supportive of the individual specialty clubs. As a committee member for our local club's PR, we went to AKC who gave us all kinds of literature, which they always supply. The parent club wanted to charge us for the literature they put out. How can I educate someone if the parent club doesn't back me? The parent club needs to back the individual clubs.

Is your club involvement for a regional club for Samoyeds only?

Jim: Yes. We are members of the parent club, and Marian is a member of the Samoyed Club of Los Angeles, a regional specialty club. I was a member of SCLA for many years and retired from that a few years back for personal reasons. The regional clubs have regular meetings where you have personal contact with the people you see at dog shows. There is an environment which at least allows critiquing of individual dogs. All of those things are best done by personal contact. If you just want to read, there are a wealth of books. I have fifteen shelf feet of dog books. The club doesn't generate that much material that is meaningful, but the information is out there if someone wants to educate himself or herself by reading. They don't have to have a club to do that.

Marian: There are people who will approach you at shows and want information about the breed. I prepared a packet and wanted the SCA's pamphlet on how to select a puppy. They were going to charge us for that. I only made up 25 packets. All of our active members are at the show ring most of the time and keep the packets in their tack bag. Jim also wrote up a history of the Samoyed Club of Los Angeles, so we have all of that information, plus an application for membership, and an SQ card to order a subscription. It is all free stuff that people can go through and look at. There is also a list of books they can get on the breed. Once people decide the Samoy is

the breed they want, they need to find out the different books that are available on the breed, and who can help them.

How long has the SCLA been in operation?

Marian: Since 1966. We are having our 29th specialty in January 1996.

Jim: The club was founded in 1966 and had its first licensed specialty in 1968.

Marian: I am the club historian, besides treasurer.

Jim: Marian is the historian for the local club and has been for eighteen years.

Marian: We have seven volumes of history and photographs of almost all of the winners of all of our specialties. I originally started writing people and they would write back, but the photographer is invited to give free pictures for our books.

Jim: If they don't, they aren't invited to photograph the show. (laughter)

What books would you recommend to someone interested in learning about Samoyeds?

Jim: The Wards' book is still the best book that has been published on Sammies. That's *The Complete Samoyed* by Bob and Dolly Ward. It is out in two editions now and they are working on a third one. In terms of being all-encompassing and being well researched and well written, it is probably the best book. I have everything in my collection that has ever been published on the breed, going back to an English book in 1934, which was the first breed book published, by Puxley. I am an historical nut and a book nut, and all kinds of nuts, and I have a complete collection of Sammy literature. In addition, there are non-breed books that are essential. Those are books that deal with genetics and dog structure, and so forth. There are many around that are good, and it is difficult to recommend specific ones.

Don't just read about Sammies, but read about the technical aspects of inheritance, structure and temperament. Pfaffenberger's book, *The New Knowledge of Dog Behavior*, is a good book. It's not new anymore. It's probably 25 years old or so, but he does an excellent job, based on research and his own dog breeding of Guide Dogs for the Blind. That is probably the most demanding task for dogs and he was trying to breed dogs for that task and

did a great job of researching and describing the developmental aspects of dog behavior. That is a book that is unique. There are other books that talk about dog behavior and temperament based on other research, but his is really unique and well written. I recommend it as a classic for dog behavior.

As far as training, you won't find that in breed books, but in general obedience books. There are a jillion of them out there and I can't recommend one over another. Every serious dog fancier should have a modest library of at least a half dozen books on that many different subjects and should study them. There is a lot of wisdom based on past research and experience of other people, and individuals can't go out and reinvent that all by themselves. They have to learn in some way if they are going to become truly knowledgeable. Studying a well-written book is by far the most efficient way to learn that. All of that kind of reading and study is necessary to back up the hands-on kind of experience of looking at dogs, studying the standard, and talking to people, and so on. Perhaps I am a little hung up on reading because I am a book nut.

Of the writing that you have done about dogs, of what pieces are you most proud?

Jim: It would have to be the article I did for the charter issue of SQ, called "Conformation: a Question of Purpose." I was very flattered and pleased to be invited to do that article, and I was pleased with the way it came out. It is a large, comprehensive article. Of what I have had published to date, that's the most significant piece and I am proud of it. I hope to do some more publishing on the history and research I am working on now, but what form that may take, I am not sure. It may be an article, series of articles or a book. There is quite a bit of material I would like to be able to publish. I am not sure how much interest there is in some of the ancient history I have compiled. It interests me, but it doesn't interest a lot of people, so what kind of market there is for that kind of material, I'm not sure.

Can you give us a brief overview of the subject matter you are working on now?

Jim: It is basically dealing with the origins of the breed. By



Lyntheas Dulsam Pollyanna (Ch. Kondako's Dancing Bear x Ch. Southern Star of Lynthea), later a champion.



Lynthea's Joshua of Wakan (Ch. Lyntheas J C x Ch. Miss Cheevous of Lynthea), grand prize Futurity winner, owned by Tony and Maxine Chavez, and later a champion.

origins. I mean what was the breed and where did it come from before it was introduced into the Western world? The history of the breed after it was introduced into the Western world has been rather well documented. There are a number of breed books around that cover it, and I recommend the Wards' book. Those books, however, only lightly touch on the origins of the breed. A lot of what has been published on the breed's origins, even though it is minuscule, is just plain wrong. The people didn't do their homework. They used opinion and hearsay rather than fact, so a lot of the material is misconceived and not properly presented. But, as I said, how much interest is there in that kind of stuff? I'm not sure. That's the area I have been working in: where did the breed come from, and what was it like before it was introduced into England, the United States and other Western countries?

What sources have you had for your research?

Jim: Some of the best material is from people who traveled and explored Siberia and the northern parts of Europe and

wrote diary-type accounts of that. Those people tend to give you descriptions of dogs, harnesses and equipment that are understandable and visualizable. You can say, "That's not a Sammy," or "That might be a Sammy," based on a description an author gave. When their material gets boiled down and repeated in some history book, all that identifying detail gets lost. Nobody cares about repeating the description of a dog or some piece of equipment, or whatever, so that kind of material gets left out of formal history books. The formal history books are of little use. The travelogues are the best thing, but there are also archeological works, both books and articles that are very good. Of course, a lot of stuff is in German and Russian, and I can't read either one of them, so I have to stick with stuff that has been translated. I have a ten-page bibliography of materials that I have gone through to date. That's a bibliographical listing of stuff I have waded through.

Has this involved a fair amount of travel to other parts of the country?

Jim: I have done it all by working through local libraries,

collecting my own books, and correspondence with other people. I would love to travel to England and Russia, but I'm not sure that will ever happen, and I am afraid my research will be incomplete unless I am able to do that. This is just an area of interest. I would like to publish something, but I am not sure I ever will, or if I do, I am not sure what form it will take.

I would like to ask each of you at this point to give a brief biography of yourself - where you grew up, went to school and what you have done for a living.

Jim: I'm 60 years old, born in Tipton, Indiana, and lived on a farm until I got through high school. I went to Purdue University and studied engineering. Since then, I have spent my life as an electronics engineer in aerospace. I retired from Lockheed four years ago after a 31-year career there. Marian and I met here and were married in 1964. I was 29 at the time. We have one adopted daughter, Kimberly, who was married a year ago. All of my adult life I have lived someplace other than Indiana, although not necessarily all in California. I left Indiana as

soon as I got out of college. Most of the last 30-odd years have been in California. We lived in Yuma, Arizona for four years, where I was on a flight test program for Lockheed.

Marian: I am a native Californian, and living in Yuma for four years was an experience for me. I was born in Glendale and grew up in North Hollywood, and I met Jim in North Hollywood when I lived there. I went to school in North Hollywood and then became a dental assistant and office manager for an orthodontist there. We got married, went to Yuma, and the rest is history.

How would you say the dogs have affected your lifestyle?

Marian: Quite a bit! (laughter)

Jim: That's true. They really have. We had a daughter here for many years, and with the combination of our daughter and the dogs, Marian felt like she couldn't go back to work. We didn't want to leave the dogs home all day by themselves, and with our daughter, Marian never went back to work after she once quit, so there was a financial impact on our lives because of

the dogs.

Marian: And we always have a sitter for them.

Jim: We had one dog-sitter that worked for us for ten years. She was great. Since then, there has been a turnover, so we have missed some things we have wanted to do because we didn't have anyone to stay here with the dogs. We have put the dogs into kennels on one or two occasions, but that's all, because we do not like to kennel the dogs. It has an impact on the kinds of activities we can do because we are tied to them. To take off on the spur of the moment for even a long day's outing is difficult to do. Taking off for an overnight stay anywhere is out of the question. We can't do it. We have to make some arrangements for the animals. We have been overly protective of them in that respect, in that we almost insist on the dog-sitter living here to take care of things the way we would ourselves.

There is the work and cost involved in maintaining animals. One dog isn't a big deal, but three or four or a half dozen dogs increase the vet bills, food costs and show entry fees. It adds up to quite a bit of money. You have to decide: Am I getting enough pleasure out of this activity to spend my money there, or would I get more pleasure spending it someplace else? The dogs have had a big impact on our lives. I have spent countless thousands of hours, either working with the dogs, training puppies, going to shows, going to club meetings, reading and studying pedigrees. There has been a big chunk of my life spent, time-wise, on dog-related activities. In order to spend that much time on dog-related things, I had to give up time someplace else. It inherently impacts your life a great deal.

Marian: It's not just the pet in the backyard. At least not in this house.

Do you have other passions that are as intense in your life as the dogs?

Jim: Yes. My career was always number one, more so than the dogs. Engineering is a challenging profession, and particularly electronic engineering is a fast changing profession, so you go to school for four years and spend the rest of your life trying to keep up with the changing technology. It was a satisfying profession and I thoroughly enjoyed my career, although it



Dolly.

had its ups and downs and flat spots like everything else. That had to be the overriding passion of my life in terms of my focus and energy. The dogs were second to that. I also enjoy lots of other things. I guess part of it is my nature as an engineer. I am basically a problem solver. If I don't have a problem to solve, I will imagine one to solve. I always do a lot of reading, hypothesizing and thinking and researching something, just because some question has arisen in my mind. I am an intellectually curious person. If it wasn't dogs, it would be something else. There have been other little passions that have come and gone along the way. Photography was one of those, and I was a photography bug for quite a few years. I did my own dark room work and all that sort of thing. I eventually lost my enthusiasm for that. So there have been minor passions, but the dogs have been around for quite a long time.

Were the dogs subjects of your photography?

Jim: Yes. In early years, I photographed my dogs a great deal. The last three generations, I had lost my passion for it, so we don't have very good photographs of the more recent dogs.

Marian: He lost his passion because he lost his dark room, which was the bathroom. I finally got tired of that dark room. (laughter) We thought about building a dark room, but it didn't happen. He did some beautiful work.

How about you, Marian, do you have any other passions?

I try to do my best at whatever I undertake. Being a wife and mother always came first. "Kennel marm" was next, and then volunteering my time and efforts to our local club.

I enjoy crafts and my latest interest is counted cross stitch. I've done several nice dog pieces in cross stitch. I love going to craft shows for new ideas. It's a "have glue gun, will travel" sort of thing.

Is there anything you would add to the drawbacks and benefits of being in dogs that you haven't mentioned?

Jim: It has been satisfying and fun, even though we have withdrawn from the showing and breeding end of things in recent years. I don't think I would undo any of it if we had to go back and start over again. We just described it as having had an impact on our lives and there are obvious pros and cons. I would do it all pretty much the same

way.

Marian: I don't think we would ever have a kennel run situation. I don't believe in that. Our dogs are family members. The only thing we might change if we could is not having so many at one time. We took some dogs back, which increased our population for a while.

Jim: Sometimes people have to give up dogs for whatever reason. There may be a divorce or maybe someone loses his/her job and you end up taking a dog back. It may be here for a long time before a new home is found for it. When we were at our peak number of dogs, there were a couple we had taken back, so it was not necessarily intentional. We did keep too many dogs. Three is really a practical limit for a household like ours. Being up to six or seven, plus a litter of pups, was too many dogs. That situation didn't exist for too many years.

Is there anything we haven't talked about that you would like to discuss?

Jim: It seems to me like we've covered it all.

That's why I'm here. Thank you very much for taking the time to do the interview. •