

The Snake That Poisons Everyone

Jeanne Nonhof
Waldo, Wisconsin

THE rumor has recently been bandied about that one of the top producing brood bitches in the country had – now get this one – breeding problems. Never mind that she was shipped all across the country for breeding, was embarrassingly easy to breed, never failed to conceive and produced some of the top winning and producing Samoyeds in the nation. Some people will believe what they want to, no matter what. Or blame who they want to for their problems ... no matter what.

Also heard over the live wires was the tale that a champion who had been used at stud a couple of times was put down because he went blind due to PRA ... another blatant falsehood ... or case of facts getting distorted by too many repetitions.

And I heard that a handler had always done extremely well under a certain judge, only to talk to the handler later and find she had never even been under that particular judge before.

Also learned that a certain well-known and very nice dog was producing blue-eyed puppies.

Another instance is a person who wasn't even at a meeting who got so incensed at what was reported (read "distorted") to her that she wrote a poison pen letter which caused her to be caught in the middle. At least she had the courage to sign her name, which wasn't the case with the people who primed her. Getting straight facts can be a problem sometimes.

Gossip can certainly be harmful and hurtful. BUT ... how is one to acquire knowledge, especially of the fancy in other parts of the country if one doesn't listen to friends across the nation?

A friend of mine, from another part of the country, and I were recently discussing the fact that one needs various pipelines across the U.S. in order to plan breedings. After all, you can't believe everything you read in the "trade" papers. One cannot simply breed to the top show dog around because of his record. He could be the

nastiest, most vicious dog ever. You certainly can't tell that from a picture. Or, he may not be able to produce worth a pinch of salt. Hard to tell that from a picture, too. One needs good, reliable information.

The bitch that is coming in for breeding may have had three dwarfs and five monorchids in her last litter and the breeder is not saying anything about that. How can you protect yourself?

Ah, what to do, what to do. Mayhap when one hears such a rumor, particularly if it affects our future plans, it is time to go to the source and ask the question straight out. Or, go to the source of the rumor. Most of all, get your facts absolutely straight. If it is something necessary to pass on to prevent someone from making a mistake, yes, pass it on. That's called cooperation. But be sure it is the truth and not idle gossip. Check it out. Make sure your source is impeccable.

You can talk to people you trust in other areas to get some straight facts. Truth is truth. It can be avoided for a while but always find a way to she through.

What do you do when someone says an untruth about you (you're breeding un-x-rayed dogs), your dog (he's really a cripple), your wins (it was a setup ... you hired the judge yourself), or your breeding program (produces nothing but over standard monsters who lumber around like rhinoceroses)?

Think you will just ride it out because "blood will tell" and "truth will out"? Wrong! Rumors never die. They rear their ugly heads at the worst possible times in the most unlikely places. They won't just go away. They grow and become distorted. You have to protect yourself. It is a matter of self-defense.

Go to the source. Scotch the rumor. Provide documentation if you can ... or pictures ... or movies ... or witnesses ... whatever it takes. Sometimes it can be a case of an honest mistake. Sometimes it is the result of pure, downright nastiness, particularly if you are doing a lot of winning. Jealousy is responsible frequently. Dog show people are a competitive bunch.

It is the nature of the beast. Some people feel if they can pull you or your dog down to their level, their own dog will look better.

I can remember fifteen years back, a fellow saying he had heard rumors about his stud dog spread by a prominent breeder. He did confront that breeder and facts were straightened out and a valuable asset to the breed was saved from falling to the rumor mongers. (Note: I wanted to say "blabbermouths" here, but exercised iron restraint.) The funny thing is that the stud dog was basically from the source's own line, although not owned by her. Strange!

Perhaps one should be flattered when the tales start flying. It really means you have "arrived." You are now a force to be reckoned with, perhaps even a threat.

And then there are the ones who damn with slight praise. "Yes, they have nice dogs, but you have to look out for ..." (Fill in anything you can think of.) Are you listening? Who does this sound like? You? Me? Time to let the conscience be the guide.

DO I sound a little bitter? Forget that – I'm a lot bitter. The better your dogs are, the more vicious the rumors. Nobody seems to be able to look at the facts, or the records. You, with the young, good dogs coming up, get ready. The price you will pay for your well-deserved wins will be a stab in the back. If you're lucky, it will be right to your face so that you can defend yourself. But, most likely, it will be innuendo, snide comments ... the old shiv in the ribs trick.

You can turn your back when somebody does you a dirty, adopt a professional attitude, ignore them. It won't work, though. They will take this as a license to hunt. It will not stop. You must defend yourself. Go right to the source. Stop the river of innuendo from flowing, right at the spring.

You may tell yourself that it doesn't matter. But it does! In the end, the breed is what will be hurt the worst. Good dogs will be ignored

because somebody inferred something. Breeders who have the ability to have a great influence for good may be driven away from the Samoyed and use their talents elsewhere. Think about that!

The Snake That Poisons Everybody

It
topples
governments,
wrecks
marriages,
ruins
careers,
busts
reputations,
causes
heartaches,
nightmares,
indigestion,
spawns suspicion,
generates
grief,
dispatches
innocent
people

to cry in their
pillows.
Even its name
hisses.
It's called
gossip.
Office gossip.
Shop gossip.
Party gossip.
It makes
headlines
and headaches.
Before
you repeat
a story,
ask yourself:
Is it true?
Is it fair?
Is it necessary?
If not,
shut up.

(A message as published in the Wall Street Journal by United Technologies Corporation, Hartford, Connecticut 06101.) •

Controlling Your Veterinary Costs

*Don and Dot Hodges
Poynette, Wisconsin*

THE serious dog fancier who maintains more than half a dozen dogs and breeds regularly soon finds that veterinary care has assumed considerably more importance than it did when he had only a couple dogs. As numbers go up and the range of activities broadens, the type and frequency of health problems changes. Formerly, the neighborhood vet with a mixed large and small animal practice or the vet who catered primarily to the pet trade was perfectly satisfactory most of the time and health costs were tolerable. Now, monthly vet bills may exceed the mortgage payment, threatening financial capacity to pursue an otherwise expensive hobby. How do people manage to keep a dozen or more dogs and still find time and resources to go to shows? Ask around and you will discover they manage with considerable difficulty. Veteri-

nary service has risen in cost just like everything else, only more so. The exasperating aspect to the high cost is the highly variable quality of service that money buys. A really good veterinarian is worth his weight in gold but unfortunately, the average practitioner fattens his portfolio without solving your problems. In fairness to that profession, we must admit that the average fancier often demonstrates appalling ignorance, a propensity for cheap, quick fix solutions, and maybe even quackery! It takes a lot of work, a good dose of common sense, and some do-it-yourself skills to keep your dog's health needs under control.

Your first consideration is establishment of a good working relationship with a well-trained, experienced veterinarian who is willing to devote time to your special needs. You will have to be willing to pay for this service because you will require more of his time than his average client. We emphasize "experienced" because, in our own situation, we have found that

the breadth of the vet's experience has been very important in diagnosing those unusual and rare problems you will inevitably encounter as a result of the numbers of dogs you keep, and the breeding, travel, and showing you do. Even more important than experience is your veterinarian's attitude toward your activities and attendant problems. Many vets don't want you because you take too much time and make too many demands for things they may not consider that important. Finding the right vet may take time. Talk to all the dog people you can find in the area, but ultimately, you will have to try some of them. Ideally, the vet you select will consult with you by phone, be willing to try some experimental therapy in special, difficult cases, and, hopefully, provide reasonable emergency service. First and foremost, however, he should be a good diagnostician. If you don't know what is wrong with your dog, you can't treat it.

PEOPLE who are successful in keeping their vet problems down must also practice good animal husbandry. There are many aspects to consider including facilities, sanitation, breeding stock, feeding practices, exercise and grooming, just to list some of them. Establishing a routine and keeping accurate health records is part of it, but we have found that the greatest variable is how observant a person you are. Some people seem to have an innate skill, but anyone should be able to develop their powers of observation. Of course, the more time you spend with your dogs, the easier it is to spot behavior that indicates an incipient problem, but if you groom and examine your dogs routinely and systematically, you will soon learn to recognize signs of trouble. Your facilities should be adequate for your numbers — overcrowding predisposes to problems — and they should be easy to keep clean. Nutrition is taken for granted — don't skimp! If you breed, show or work your dogs, they need to be in good shape for the stresses involved. Exercise is mandatory but frequently inadequate when you let your numbers get out of hand. Next thing you know, your dogs aren't showing or working well, your bitches don't whelp normally, and your puppies don't develop as

expected. Practice preventative maintenance. Keep vaccinations up-to-date, do frequent stool checks, treat parasites, skin problems and minor injuries before they become serious.

Finally, if you will spend a little time and money, you can cut your bills on several routine operations and your vet may help you gain needed skills. If you read the AKC Gazette, you may have seen a couple of articles describing how you can learn to check stool samples and follow the progress of bitch's season for the best mating time. A reasonably good microscope is indispensable, but it needn't even be as expensive as the one they describe. A monocular, compound student microscope with a built-in light source but no mechanical stage can usually be obtained for \$150 to \$200, used. Your vet may even be willing to show you how to do the sample preparation. It

helps if someone can demonstrate for you and show you examples of the common parasite eggs. Doing vaginal smears is just as easy from the standpoint of sample preparation, but interpretation of the smears is not that easy. It takes a bit of experience and even many vets aren't that good at it, as I'm sure you have discovered, if you have had many smears taken. It can be learned with time and practice, however. Other things many people do for themselves include removing dew-claws, giving vaccinations (be sure to get good quality vaccines), and even doing heartworm tests (kits are available without a prescription). At \$15 a dog, you can save a lot of money if you have eight or ten dogs.

You can have healthy dogs and save money too if you want to learn some new things and work at it. You might even enjoy it! •

Do-It-Yourself Structure Analysis

Betty McHugh
Oshawa, Ontario

ALL Samoyed publications of late have carried articles, letters or comments with regard to structure and gait. A look at the show ring or racing results will certainly prove that we

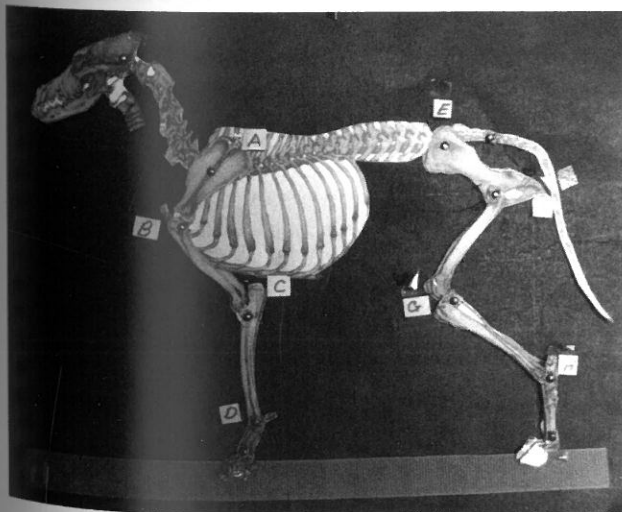
have a long way to go, but at least now, someone is interested. The raw material is out there, and all you have to do is learn to recognize it and then learn how to use it to breed a better Samoyed.

With this in mind, I am going to repeat an article that I did originally for my Canadian Obedience Fancy. It

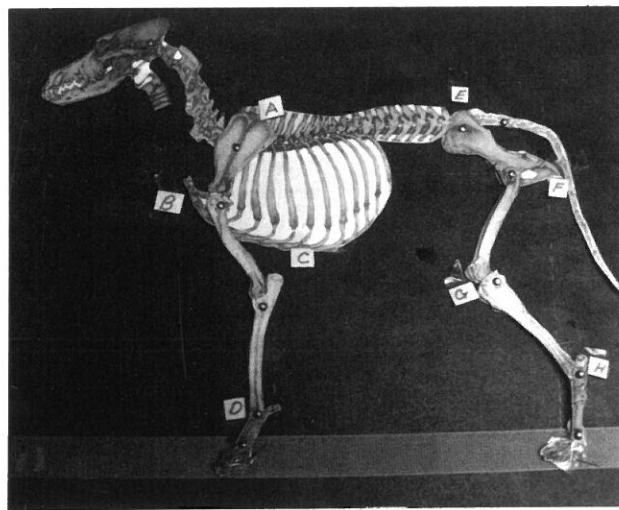
was done to help obtain better dogs for obedience competition, instead of lowering the jumps to suit the dogs that some of them had. It is, in reality, a do-it-yourself structure analysis. Tools are becoming increasingly more difficult to obtain, and I find that untrained people using them are coming up with figures that are questionable. With this in mind, let's start to feel our own dogs. It takes time, but you will be able to feel a difference from dog to dog, and, with further help, could start to evaluate your stock more accurately.

Note the two pictures of "George," a cutout skeleton, used as a teaching aid for the courses of the School of Canine Science. In picture number 1, George has been placed in the position generally accepted as being IDEAL. IN picture number 2, the front and hind limb assemblies have been placed in a position of less angulation, a condition unfortunately all too common in our dogs today. George could be almost any breed, except for cosmetic differences, such as heady type (Boxer), tail placement (Samoyed or cropped) and leg length (Basset or Dachshund), etc.

In picture 1, our dog has the ideal 45-degree layback to the perpendicular line, which runs from the point of the spine (the line up the middle of the shoulder blade) of the scapula (from points A to B) down through the elbow and the accessory carpal bone. The scapula meets the humerus (between points B and C) at an angle of 90 degrees, proposed to be the most efficient of angles. The humerus



Picture 1.



Picture 2.

meets the radius and ulna (points C to D) at an angle of 135 degrees. The angle of pastern is about 80 degrees, to provide a cushioning effect as our dog moves. In our ideal dog, the measurement of the scapula (A to B) should equal the measurement of the humerus (B to C). You will note that each includes parts of the next bone. This is why we call this the measurement of, instead of the length of, the particular bone. The radius and ulna (C to D) should be, in most breeds, 25 percent (including Samoyeds) longer than the measurement of the scapula and the humerus. When the above characteristics are present, the dog will move with maximum reach at a walk, trot and gallop.

The hind limb assembly of our ideal dog must match or be in balance with the front assembly. The pelvis (E to F) should be at an angle of 30 degrees to the horizontal line, drawn across the tip of the pelvis and parallel to the ground. The femur (G to where the head fits into the pelvis) meets the pelvis at an angle of 90 degrees. The fibula and tibia (G to H) meet the femur at an angle of 90 degrees also, thus providing our ideal dog with maximum propulsion whether for movement or for jumping. The tarsals or hock meets the fibula-tibia at an angle of 120 degrees and the hock is at an angle of 90 degrees to the ground, in our ideal dog. The measurement of the pelvis and femur should equal the measurement of the scapula and humerus. The measurement of the fibula and tibia should be one-third longer than the femur. However, Mother Nature, in her wisdom, shortens the length of the fibula and tibia when angulation and/or length of the forelimb assembly is less than ideal.

If you stand your dog foursquare, in a normal position, you can palpate the bones as outlined above. Feel the angles and bone lengths; practice until it is easy to find the reference points. Palpate as many dogs as you can until you begin to notice differences in structure.

Picture 2 is exactly the same skeleton, only the bones of the front and hind limbs have been maneuvered into straighter and more open angles. The shoulder layback is now 30 degrees and I am sure that you can see for yourself that the scapula is more upright. As a result, this dog will

move with a more restricted gait and will not jump with the ease of dog number 1. The joints of the front assembly of dog number 2 will take more punishment as the result of their upright position. Since front and hind limb assemblies must match, more or less, so the dog can retain a relatively level topline, the hind limb assembly is also more upright, with angles more open and less efficient. This hind limb assembly will have reduced propelling power, which will adversely affect gait and jumping ability. Note also that number 2 is taller and appears more square than number 1.

There are other structural faults that you will find as you palpate your dogs, all of which will reduce the dog's efficiency. Scapula and humerus

that are shorter than they should be, and also the radius and ulna. A pelvis can be shorter or too steep or flat, and a femur can be too long. Many times, the fibula and tibia are out of balance with other bone lengths.

This is a very abbreviated lesson in applied canine anatomy. The point has been to try to impress on you the importance of a more efficient dog and to give you a simple means of finding them. Puppies at sent to eight weeks can be assessed in the same manner using tools or your hands to palpate their skeletal structure. Those that are the best at that time and are raised sensibly will be the best structured from that litter as adults. When buying or raising dogs, settle for nothing but the best. •

Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks With
**Pat Gillam Spath
and Doug Gillam**
DESERT SON
Tucson, Arizona

This interview was conducted at the home of Doug and Pat Gillam in June 1983 by Lyn Snyder Hoflin.

How did you get started in dogs?

Pat: Years ago, when Doug and I first met and started dating, we had a friend named Lou Snow who had a beautiful white dog. We got married and got into a place where we could have a dog, the type of dog we wanted. We looked and looked, and in Tucson at that time, twelve years ago, there just weren't many Samoyeds. Supposedly not the climate for Samoyeds. We looked in the paper and finally found someone who had a litter of puppies. We went out, and it was your typical backyard breeder. But, of course, being novices at the time, we didn't know a thing about backyard breeders. We brought home a little puppy who was very small, and we named him Sobaka, which is Russian for dog. We bought him on a Sat-

urday; I believe we took him to the vet on Monday and he was sick. He was at the vets for six weeks. He came down with everything a dog could get, because he had never been inoculated. We didn't get the blue slip until six months after the dog had died. So it was a very sad experience. That was our first experience.

Our second experience wasn't so bad. We found some people not too far from here who had Samoyeds; they were doctors at the University Hospital. We went out and looked; they had the mother, they had the father, and they had pedigrees. The puppies were very nice, so we took home a male. We named him Tomah's Teveye.

After a few months, when he was in some shows, a friend of ours who had been in dogs for about twenty years was at the park with us. I showed Teveye to him and said, "Jack, I don't know what is wrong with this dog; he just has this weird movement sometimes, and I'm not sure what it is." So I moved him up and down for him; Jack felt him, and he went back to the rear. Jack pushed the hocks and they buckled. Teveye had double jointed hocks, which is, of course, a fault in Samoyeds. Of course, we were

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very upset about this, but what can you do? So we stopped Tevye's show career as far as conformation went and started him in obedience. Doug took Tevye into the Novice obedience class and Tevye got his CD in three shows.

While we were going through this problem with Tevye not being able to be shown, I had by this time gotten "the bug," as most people do. I decided I wanted to "show dogs," and started looking again. There were some people here in town, finally, who had Samoyeds. I met them at handling class. I went over one night to their house; they brought out a stack of about fifteen Bulletins, the Samoyed Club of America Bulletins, and I just sat there, going through them for about three hours, looking at the different pictures of the dogs and deciding, you know, which ones I liked the best. I came up with three kennel names that I liked especially. One was Misty Way, one was Kondako, and the other one was Ice Way. I liked the looks of the dogs from the ads.

So I wrote all three kennels and got responses from Kondako and Ice Way. When we were over in California visiting my parents, we drove down to San Diego to the Samoyed Club of San Diego Specialty. Some of my friends here from Tucson were going; they said to come because these people, Kondako and Ice Way, have dogs that would be at the specialty, and we should come and meet them. So we drove down and went to the dog show. That was our first experience, and, of course, there was nothing but Samoyeds. We had been to all breed shows, but never all Samoyeds. So we met the Richardsons and we met Bobbie Smith. We also met Pat Morehouse of Kubla Khan Samoyeds. It was just by chance they had bred two of their dogs. They had bred Ch. Sam O'Khan's Kubla Khan, which was Bobbie and Pat's dog, to Bobbie Smith's bitch, Ice Way's Angel. They were expecting the litter of pups in about two weeks, so I said I would like to reserve a male. After the puppies were born, Bobbie wrote me that there were only two, a girl and a boy. Pat had wanted a girl, so she took the girl and we got the male, who we named Ice Way's Bialow Mishka.

We were looking forward to showing Mishka. He was a beautiful-ly structured dog, conformationwise.



*Ch. Mishka shown winning Best of Breed at San Fernando KC, October 23, 1977
— four-point major over 75 entries — from the Open class over 12 specials.*

But he went through what one would call the "God awful uglies." He just started going gangly and everything. I'd take him to matches and he'd get beaten. If there were four dogs, he would be fourth. If there were five dogs, he wouldn't place. You know, that type of thing. So I kept writing Bobbie, and I'd say, "Bobbie, well, this is kind of disappointing. This is supposed to be a show dog. He's showing, but he's just really not a cutesy little fluff ball that a lot of match judges like." So after about a year, he had finally come together. He finally had gotten over the high rear, and the weird front, and the ugly head. He came all together, and I took him up to a match in Phoenix. I had been going to matches regularly with my

friends in Tucson. All the time, you know, we loved to go, and he loved to show, but he just kept getting beaten. So finally, when he was about a year of age, I took him up to Phoenix and competed against every single puppy and every single dog that he had been competing with when we first started with him. He beat every single one, and we went into the Group and took a Group 4, which was just a thrill. I was just so excited. Of course, that started his show career.

So what is your goal?

Pat: Well, we're not going to be a kennel that breeds a tremendous amount. We can't really handle that. Now, I do have three months off in the summer, but having puppies in the summertime here is not terrific. So it

would just have to be during the fall or during the spring. Right now we don't really have the facilities to have too many puppies. What I would like to have someday, of course, is a dog to replace Mishka as far as showing goes. He's semiretired now; when he was in active competition, he did very well. I think he's a special dog because he is biscuit; he was competing with a lot of dogs that were very good and he did his thing. I think he was very competitive. I hope to eventually have some puppies from him that are better than him or are as good as him. So far we have several that are doing very well. One now that we co-own, Kazak, has one point to go to finish. One last point. From this one particular litter, he was my pick, and the breeder's pick, and I think he's done very well.

Invariably, of course, with Mishka being biscuit, a lot of people have thought that because he is biscuit, we're going to get all biscuit puppies, and that's just not the case. He has produced, I think, 23 puppies. Of those 23, 12 are in show homes, and of those 12, I would say perhaps 3 have biscuit. Some of the others have a few freckles on their noses or maybe a touch on their ears, but as far as biscuit goes, the male puppy I have here, Konan, has the most biscuit of any of the puppies Mishka has produced. He has biscuit on the ears, which is sometimes an Ice Way trait. A lot of Ice Way dogs have biscuit on their ears; Konan has a few freckles, and he has one area on his back that is biscuit. But none of the puppies that Mishka has produced look like Mishka, with the patches of the biscuit very pronounced. I know of two other dogs that look like him. One is his uncle, Ch. Ice Way's Honey Bear, which is where he got his biscuit. Ice Way's Angel is Honey Bear's sister. Then a son that Honey Bear produced, who is no longer with us, Ice Way's Prancer of Perma Frost, had biscuit coloring just like Mishka. I don't know any other of the Ice Way dogs that have that particular coloring. There are other biscuit dogs that I've seen, but mostly the biscuit is not as pronounced as Mishka's is. I've always found his coloring rather unique. I like it. I'm only sorry that more people don't like it, because it is something that one needs in many ways to have good pig-

ment. I have done some studying on it, and those dogs who have biscuit coloring tend to have very dark pigment and their coat texture is very good. I think that it is something that one needs occasionally. You can't get white and keep going. You need something in there to produce a little pigment.

Doug: What I would like to see, sometime in the future, if you could ask for the best of all possible worlds, for us, would be to have all champions with CDX's that were really good on the trail. To me, that would epitomize the best that there is in the breed. Dogs who can work, who can act responsibly, and who also typify all the physical traits that are good about the breed.

Pat: One of the reasons we bred Mishka to the Silverado Samoyeds bitch Gilly was because she has her CD. Gilly is a very intelligent bitch; she and Mishka produced two litters for a total of seventeen puppies. Many of those puppies, including some here, are in obedience right now and doing very well.

I'd also like Doug to take Mishka through obedience, because I think Mishka would do very well. Mishka's grandfather is Shawnee, the Mayfields' top winning, top obedience Samoyed. Doug has worked with him, and Mishka does a lot of things right now, so he could go into the obedience ring and do very well, I believe.

Did you ever refuse to service a bitch?

Pat: Oh, many times. First of all, I always talk to the people about x-raying the hips. If they never heard of that, well, that's about as far as the conversation goes. But if they have x-rayed the hips, then the next to do is to go and look at the bitch. We look for any noticeable faults, such as cowhocks or too wide a front or anything that we feel that would not be something that one would want to carry on. Too many faults - I mean, you can overshadow some by breeding and bettering them, but when a bitch or dog has too many faults, then it's not a good idea. We discouraged some people; others, of course, when you talk to them, they're not going to listen and they're going to breed anyway. They will just go to some other place and find some other person who will. I don't feel that we can afford to

do that. We don't want our puppies running all over the place and have people say, "This is from Mishka" and have this type of breeding practice going on. I do not want to be associated with that type of situation.

Doug: Some people come off immediately as being interested in breeding because they want to make a lot of money. Some of these people sell dogs for the heavy bucks, you know. I'm not interested in dealing with people like that. People who have that philosophy are the same kind of people who have ruined the breeds. We all know that there are some breeds, who shall remain nameless, who have very high percentages of manifest genetic faults. I'm talking about monorchidism, I'm talking about CHD, and there are some breeds that have a better than nine percent manifestation. I think that it's unprincipled people who are breeding dogs for what I consider to be the wrong reasons that have ruined some breeds. By ruined, I mean to say that I would think twice or a few times before buying a member of that breed under any circumstances, no matter how many X-rays I was shown. It wouldn't matter if someone gave me his sworn oath that this dog was free and clear of all faults. There are some breeds that I just wouldn't take a chance on at all. I think that when we decided to become involved in AKC and involved in dogs as opposed to just having a couple of dogs around, we made a moral commitment to ourselves and to our dogs to never do anything that might prove detrimental to the breed and to our own integrity. I think that if there is any question whatsoever about possible detrimental affects of the breeding or association, then you're better off not taking a chance at all. I don't believe in playing Russian roulette with genetics. It's enough of a gamble to begin with, but when you're faced with situations where the odds become shorter and shorter, then you just get out of the game. When we see a dog that has faults or has a very questionable pedigree, or when we see an owner who has faults or very questionable moral fiber, we don't deal with them.

We have a bitch who had a very minor subluxation and it was a tough thing to hear from the radiologist. It wasn't something I wanted to hear,

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because she was going to be the brood bitch. But once we found out and we accepted that, then the next responsible thing to do was set her up for spaying, and that's what we did. Not happy decisions to make, but you know you've got to make them, you've got to do them.

Pat: She ended up in a very good situation. We have a teenage friend whom I had talked to about showing our little bitch, Dani, who is spayed, in Junior Showmanship. Patty showed Dani in Junior Showmanship for two years. There are two classes where you can have a spayed dog, in Junior Showmanship and in obedience. They did very well. Patty and Dani took a Best in Specialty and took four Bests in Show with Junior handling; they were in the Top Ten for Sam Junior Handlers for two years. So there is always something, you know. If you can't work in one area, you can work in another, and that's what we try to do.

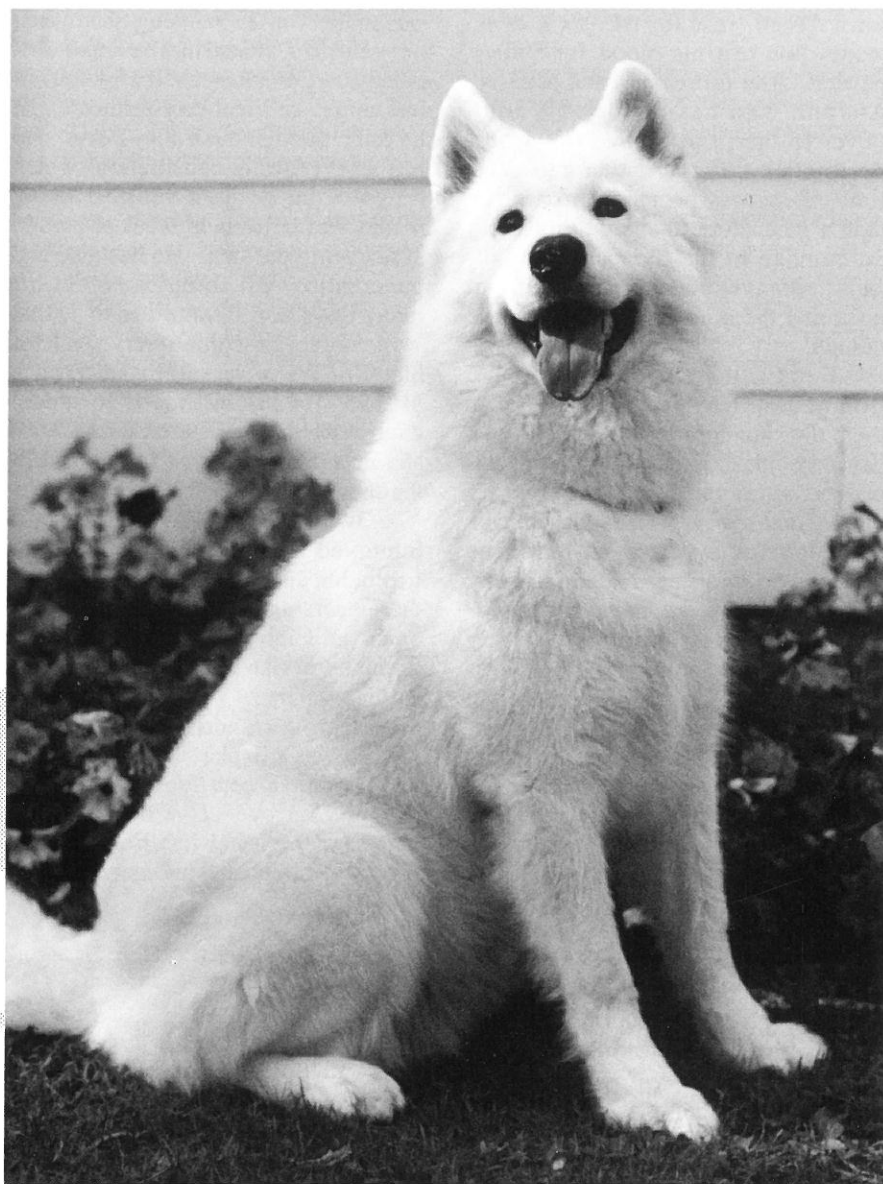
Doug: Anybody who thinks that reputable Samoyed breeders make a lot of money, or breeders in any breed make a lot of money, is probably way off the mark, because that adjective, reputable, itself denotes a certain responsibility to the breed and responsibility is further defined as economic outlay in terms of vet bills, inoculations, prenatal and postnatal care, and Lord knows what all. But if you're responsible, you take care of those things. You have to.

Pat: You also have to be concerned about parvovirus and coronavirus that can wipe out the entire litter. I know there have been several instances in the recent past, friends of mine not only in Sams, who have had their whole litters wiped out by one or the other of these viruses. It's a very sad thing. It's a lot of pain and a lot of grief for people who aren't used to it. It's devastating. It's one thing that a lot of people aren't used to; that's what breeding entails. They just don't expect anything like that. Coupled with everything else here in the Southwest is that extra heartache, Valley Fever.

What is "Valley Fever"?

Doug: You've never heard of that?

Pat: Valley Fever is indigenous to the Southwest and to parts of central California. It is a disease that is



Ch. Desert Son's Jena O' Devonshire (Ch. Smiling Janus of Gem-Mar x Ch. Devonshire's Roxann O'Samkist).

transmitted through a spore in the air.

Doug: Actually, it's in the ground.

Pat: Yes, it's in the ground initially. The spores get stirred up by the dogs digging holes in the ground and sticking their noses into the hole or digging in gopher holes. The spore is breathed into the lung.

Mishka finished his championship rather rapidly; he started in May of 1977 and finished in November 1977, I believe. When he finished, he was about two; the following spring, we were going to take him to a show in San Diego at the end of February. At the beginning of February, he con-

tracted Valley Fever this way - it had been raining constantly in Tucson for about a week, and the dogs had been inside most of the time. Finally, one day, it was beautiful. I put them out in the dog run; I came home after school and I was in shock because our developer had cleared a lot next door to build a house. That's almost a sure sign that you're going to have Valley Fever spores disturbed.

Sure enough, in about a week, Mishka started with the runny nose and the coughing. We took him into the vet's and they thought it might be some type of a respiratory problem. They gave him some medication, and I

said, "Well, just for the heck of it, would you test his blood for Valley Fever?" The test came back positive. Anyone who has ever had Valley Fever in their dog knows it's just a devastating thing. At that particular time, there was no medication other than a medication that would possibly do damage to the liver and the kidneys. One vet advised us to put him on it and the other said don't. So we did not.

I contacted Pat Morehouse and Bobbie Smith immediately and told them the situation. Pat had given me a list of health foods, vitamins and minerals to get at a health food store. We put Mishka on an immediate diet; he was sick for a year. He lost nine pounds and was very listless. Trying to keep an active dog down is very difficult. We just had to keep him very quiet, because the Valley Fever was situated in the lungs. If you let him get very excited, the fungus could disseminate into other parts of his body, into his bones, where he could develop bone lesions, which would result in limping. It was a very unpleasant experience for us.

At the same time, there were a couple of my friends, one was in Phoenix, whose Samoyeds came down with Valley Fever and subsequently died. It was a very depressing thing. Here we had a beautiful dog that had just finished and we were going to start out campaigning as a special, and then boom! He's got Valley Fever. Mishka was out of the ring for a year. He wouldn't eat; I had to force feed him for six months, twice a day. He swallowed about 30 vitamins a day. It was a very unpleasant time for us, to me especially. Valley Fever in Arizona is not something to scoff at, because it affects people as well as animals.

Doug: They now have a medication for this called Ketaconazol, and they are using it on people now, too. But for five years the FDA wouldn't authorize the use. I'm not sure if it's been approved, but I know it's been tested. They're going to have vaccines for everything pretty soon.

Pat: One important thing to mention here is that Mishka overcame this particular disease and went on to do very well. He was sick the entire year of 1978; he came back and went on to do very well. In 1980 and 1981, he

was in the Top 25 Winning Samoyeds, he went to Canada in 1981 and finished his Canadian championship in one circuit, so I feel very fortunate that he came through the Valley Fever. He has a very strong constitution, which he got from Khan, I think. Having Valley Fever tends to weaken certain systems in your dog. He has also had pancreatitis, which he came out of; many dogs don't come out of it that well. I feel he's done very well for himself. We're very fortunate to have Mishka. He's an all-around great dog, temperamentwise; he's produced well, and he's done very well for himself in the show ring.

Owning and showing a biscuit Samoyed has been both somewhat frustrating and interesting. I remember three years ago when we went to the Samoyed Club of American National Specialty in San Diego; there were 75 specials entered. They were all in the breed ring together, and right in the middle was Mishka. The effect was totally white except for him. It really caught your eye. I've been told by some professional handlers, by the way, why not bleach his coat or cut his

coat down and do something to it so he would be totally white. I can't do that. My dogs are going to be shown the way they are or not at all. I like white Samoyeds, I have white Samoyeds, but Mishka has always been special. He was born under special circumstances, he's come through a lot of difficult situations, and he's done very well for himself. He's beaten some of the top dogs in the country, and we feel very fortunate to have him. He's one in a million as far as we're concerned. Apart from being a top winning dog, he also has a great personality. That's one of the things he passes onto his puppies. He's special, very special. We wouldn't trade him.

Do you generally have handlers show your dogs?

Pat: Mishka is the only one that we really had a handler on. When I started showing him, I was very novice and I would get nervous; it would transfer to him and he would get nervous. There were several times when I began showing him, I started in American Bred after he was a puppy, I ruined any chance he had because I would be so nervous I didn't know what I was



Mishka at nine weeks – our favorite picture of him.

doing. So a friend of mine helped me and started showing Mishka; Ken worked with him and they did very well. After that, I just felt that Mishka showed better with someone else. Now that I have more confidence, I show all of my other dogs. I can show other people's dogs, train my dogs, and train other people's dogs, but I guess with Mishka we became very close and attached to each other.

Tell us a little bit about your personal backgrounds.

Pat: I'm a schoolteacher and have been for fourteen years. I teach English and reading to seventh and eighth graders. I think being a teacher

and having dogs sort of balance each other, because I see 160 students every day and I can come home to my dogs. It's sort of a relief.

Doug: I work for the county attorney. I'm an investigations supervisor in the child support unit. I have been with the county attorney for about seven years.

Thank you very much.

Reflections on Puppyhood

Doug Gillam

Of wagging tails
And mournful wails
And an always-empty food bowl;
Of soulful eyes
And puppydog cries

And a newly-excavated bone-hole.

Of puppyish plays
Through an endless day
And the innocent sleep of the young;
Of the blessed quiet
After the riot
When the howls and songs have been sung.

His name means "bear"
And he's wondrous fair
And so much fun that I wish ya'
One of your own –
(Did I hear a groan?)
Just like our little Mishka. •

Centerfold

Ch. Kondako's Dancing Bear

April 21, 1968 – August 17, 1980

Breeders/Owners: David G. and Constance Richardson

Ch. Rokandi of Drayalene

Ch. Nachalnik of Drayalene
Drayalene's Clarisse

Kobe's Oni Agra Chief of Encino

Ch. Oni Agra's Silver Bunny
Mac's Snow Queen

CH. Kondako's Dancing Bear was born on April 21, 1968, the first born of Ch. Nachalnik of Drayalene and Ch. Oni-Agra's Silver Bunny. He gave indications of his innate stubbornness by refusing to leave his mother's womb and being forcibly removed by Connie.

He died at sunrise on August 17, 1980, again showing his stubbornness by refusing to die until Connie was home from a trip and holding him in her arms.

Between these dates, he was the most beloved, willful, funny, hard-nosed brat with whom I have been associated. Ol' Ruff's idea of fun was to tear down the fence so he could go visit his mate, Ch. Kondako's KoKo Lossal. He was the top dog at Kondako and he ran the kennel with an iron fist. He was also the most gentle dog I've ever met. The single most important thing that DB did for

Samoyeds was to sire puppies that exhibit what I think must be the true Sammy temperament.

Ruff did sire puppies. He won the Samoyed Club of America Stud Dog Award in 1972 and 1975 and was the Kennel Review Top Stud Dog some year or so. He sired Group winners and specialty winners and pets and champions. He sired 30 champions in all, and those dogs are special, but so are the ones that never came out of their backyards. Unfortunately, unlike other sires in the breed, he never produced a perfect puppy.

Two incidents stand out in Connie's and my memories. The first was one of those days when Ruff was having a conniption about something, probably bitches in season, and Connie tossed him into his doghouse and dropped his door. The noise was deafening. Bark, crash, rattle, thump! And then, quiet. "Aha," said Connie, "he has decided to be good, so I will

let him out." She stood back out of the way, and raised the door. Nothing. She looked inside the doghouse. Nothing! She crawled inside. No Ruffles. She heard noises on the doghouse lid. She went around the runs and into the kennel building and there he was, playing his darling Woofles-bear role, and saying for all the world to hear, "I didn't like it in there, so I left."

My memory is of the day that Ruff was in the house, loose, and must have become bored with being inside. So he left – through my daughter's front window. He just pushed the screen out and stood on the window-box and left. Ah, but once he was outside for awhile, he knew he was going to be in deep puckies when Connie and I found him wandering around loose, so he went and got two of our neighbor ladies (who knew he was not to be out) and led them back to the window and somehow conveyed the



Sudwig

idea that he was supposed to be inside. So, they boosted him up and through; he turned around and barked at them (!), and went to sleep in the living room until we got home. We heard the story from the ladies, who were really impressed with Ruff and his Lassie act.

Connie was reviewing this last night and reminisced about her mock chasing Ruff around the livingroom with a rolled up magazine so that he could run over to where I was sitting in the recliner and dive through the newspaper I was reading. He would end up sitting in my lap or on my

chest, saying, "You can't touch me now - I'm on base."

Ruff was a dog of a lifetime. In our breedings, we see this and that of him, a little here and a lot there, but we will never see another Dancing Bear. •

Notes by Dave and Connie Richardson

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Choose Carefully for Wheel and Lead Positions

*Geoff and Brenda Abbott
Pine, Colorado*

THE 1982 National Specialty is now over and with it the first Sled Dog classes for dogs and bitches. The number of entries was quite respectable; more dogs were entered and present than either sex in the Veteran classes. The spectators gave both classes a big round of applause and a group picture was taken of each class. The first place winners were Kriskella's Adam Up Again CD (Abbott) and Poison Ivy of Bubbling Oaks (Price).

With a few weekends of training behind us, things should be beginning to take shape. Generally speaking, most drivers can use their strongest, most powerful dogs at wheel, the position just in front of the sled. Although "wheelers are usually thought to be the slowest dogs on a team, remember a team is only as fast as the slowest dog on it! These dogs are taking most of the shock of pulling the sled and still maintaining the team's speed. Many novice drivers tend to underestimate the need for good dogs at wheel and put a problem case or reluctant runner there with the idea that the rest of the team will force him to run. If you do so, you may find that YOU are the wheel dog on this team and solely responsible for getting your sled through deep snow and up hills. A wheeler who won't pull is as useless as a leader who won't lead! Try your inexperienced dogs first in the team for a few sessions just to give them some confidence. If a young dog shows no sign of pulling back and keeps a tight tug, then move him back to wheel if that is where you need him. We prefer to train a new wheel dog at that position only on snow so as not to spook him by the sound of the training cart. A dog usually doesn't notice the noise of the cart at any position after a season of training and racing.

The inclination to lead may also be spotted quite early if a young dog continually leans out away from the gangline to see around the leaders and find out where he is going. Be cautious about putting a dog at lead too young, as some cannot stand the pres-

sure their first season out and you may ruin a potential good leader. We were faced with the unfortunate necessity of using a fourteen-month-old male at double-lead on a three-dog team last season. The four-year-old bitch at lead had lost her drive for much speed, but would still take all commands except "pick it up!" Andy was placed up with her because of his obvious enthusiasm for pulling out the stops on speed! And he did! So far this year he is running at single-lead with all the confidence of a veteran.

Some dogs definitely express a preference to which side of the gangline they run. Have you noticed a dog

jumping over the gangline, or leaning heavily into the dog on the other side? The maximum performance from any dog at any position is obtained only while he is running at his top speed, straight ahead with a tight tugline. Using older, experienced sled dogs to train your young team is a great idea if you have them available; however, the necessity of borrowing dogs to fill out your team can be a pain in the ole' siter unless you have the room to kennel such dogs for the season. The building of a team which works together is done during training, so don't be afraid to experiment to find the best in each dog. •

Bigger is Not Better

*Kathy Wiley and Larry Mackai
Bloomington, Minnesota*

THE following is written to clarify a few points on size and length of leg in the Samoyed. In the past ten years of handling and breeding Samoyeds, we have bred, handled, and won with both large and small Samoyeds. The one thing that bothers us the most is when others, and this includes judges, will put a dog down for being too small or too short on leg. Their statements point out their lack of understanding for the Samoyed Standard.

Proper length of leg in the Samoyed does not mean you have to have a 23 1/2-inch male. It also does not mean that a 22-inch male is short on leg. The standard for the Samoyed says "Height - males - 21 to 23 1/2 inches; females - 19 to 21 inches at the withers. Length of leg from the ground to the elbow should be approximately 55 percent of the total height at the withers."

Just because a dog is 23 1/2 inches does not give that dog proper length of leg. It does put him at the TOP of

the Samoyed height standard. A dog that is 22 inches does not automatically make that dog short on leg; it puts him in the MIDDLE of the Samoyed Standard.

Proper length of leg is proportionate to the size of the dog. A 22- or 22 1/2-inch male will have a shorter leg than a 23-inch male, that just makes sense. If 55 percent of his height is from the ground to his elbow, then he does have the proper length of leg for him, according to the standard.

All of us, breeders, exhibitors, and judges, must remember we do have a height standard for the Samoyed breed. A smaller dog should not be faulted for being within the standard. A smaller male in full coat may give the illusion of being short on leg, but do not judge him so until you have felt the location of his elbow and the top of his withers. Do not call a smaller dog short on leg just because he is smaller. But most of all, do not penalize him for being within the standard.

Remember, all else being equal, a smaller in-standard dog should win over an equal quality over-standard dog. Bigger IS NOT better. •

Canine Structure and Gait

Betty McHugh
Oshawa, Ontario

THE old adage that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing" was never more true than in the field of canine structure and gait. I have read more misinformation during the last few months in the Samoyed publications than at any other time. However, how can the layperson be expected to have a firm background in this field, if his self-styled peers in the field can't agree on what is proper and functional?

It is necessary to know and understand the musculoskeletal system to understand the limitations of its mechanical capabilities. However, we are never going to understand each other until we find terms that are commonly used to describe the mechanics of dogs.

Gait is how the dog moves, in a walk, trot or gallop.

The forelimb assembly provides columns of support over which the body is propelled by the hind limbs. This assembly carries approximately 60 percent of the dog's weight. The hindlimb assembly acts to propel the dog forward.

The vertebral column supports the head and aids in balancing the moving dog. The curves of the back are designed to transmit the forces of propulsion and absorb the shock of the striking limbs. The croup governs the tailset and carriage and the tail acts as a balance for the moving dog.

Static balance is standing balance; kinetic balance is moving balance. Center of gravity is the point in any assembly of bones where opposing forces are equal.

Single tracking is when the paw-prints of the four striking limbs fall on the center line and allows the dog to move with the least amount of effort and loss of energy caused by vertical and lateral displacement.

Vertical displacement is the rise and fall at the withers and pelvis during movement. Lateral displacement is the movement of the dog from side to side during movement. When the dog single-tracks, displacement is at a minimum.

The walk is a leisurely means of

travel and is the least tiring of all gaits. It has a four-beat rhythm and the shift from one lateral support to the other gives a side-to-side motion often mistaken for an amble, which is in reality a pace. The pace has a definite two-beat rhythm, as the forelimb and hindlimb of each side advances forward at the same time. Dogs will often resort to the pace when tired or out of condition. The pace can become a habit. We have yet to find a definite type of structure connected with this type of movement. Although frowned on in the show ring, both good and poor dogs pace.

The trot is a one-two beat in which the opposite diagonals strike the ground at the same time. Our well-built Samoyed will tend to come into the center line as speed increases, and the imprint of the hindlimb will be beyond that of the forelimb, thus cutting down on lateral displacement and loss of energy. This is single-tracking. When

appraising movement in relation to structure and balance, this is the more revealing gait. The flying trot is simply the result of a sufficient increase in speed to lift the dog up and forward with all four limbs off the ground. All dogs can do a flying trot.

The single suspension gallop or canter is the gait at which all four limbs are off the ground once in a complete stride. It is slower than the gallop and not as tiring. It is the gait that all racers hope their teams will be able to maintain over the entire race course.

The double suspension gallop is when all four limbs are off the ground twice during a stride. This is the dog's fastest means of covering the ground but is very tiring. It is a circular four-beat action with one limb striking after the other. All dogs can also do this.

Reference: "Dogs, a Hobby or Profession," Volume 2, Canine Consultants Publishing Ltd. •

Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks With
Aljean Mason Larson
(daughter of Agnes Mason)
WHITE WAY
Orangevale, California

This interview was conducted at the home of Aljean Mason Larson in June 1983 by Lyn Snyder Hoflin.

How did you get started in dogs? Or maybe I should ask how your mother got started in dogs!

I think it was when she moved back after she had lived in Alaska and had gotten interested in sled dogs. I can remember going to dog shows when I was a little girl and going to State Fair dog shows. That was where she met Mrs. McDowell, from whom we eventually bought our first Samoyed Czar Nicholas Lebanov. I got him hooked up to a wagon and rode around the neighborhood; that was my

first introduction to driving a dog. My mother had a dog sled which belonged to her father and had been used in Alaska; my dad put wheels on that. Eventually, when we moved out into the country, we started raising Sams. We had one litter when we lived in town. We had gotten our first male puppy out of that, showed him and made our first champion. We also finished Czar Nicholas.

Our first trainer for breaking the dogs to a sled was Bill Thompson from Sunnyvale, California. We did some obedience work, started Czar Nicholas and also imported Dascha of Laika. With our own progeny and puppies and what have you, we had a dog team. The breeding developed; my mother got quite interested in proving that sled dogs could be work dogs and show dogs at the same time. That was her main goal. We bred some of our own, and she imported two dogs, a male and a female, Silver Spark of the Arctic and

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White Phantom of the Arctic, from Arctic Kennels in England. I think the same year we imported White Way of Kobe from Mrs. Perry's Kobe Kennels. Hence, the name White Way Kennels came from him; he was sent over and is in many bloodlines' background stock, as well as some of our own breeding.

One thing led to another and we got into doing a lot of parades, a lot of charity work, publicity, we created dog races, did a lot of children's things for orphanages, Christmas shows, Easter Seal shows, the Hollywood Christmas parade, Treasure Island in San Francisco (when I was about eleven or twelve years old), and we showed a lot of dogs. I did most of the handling of the dogs in the dog shows, except when we had more than one or two. Some shows we had as many as twelve or fifteen dogs entered, and that is when the entries were like \$3 a head! (laughter) That wasn't so bad.

Three dollars was a lot of money then, too!

That is true. And some of the shows where they used the dog team for parade work they sponsored the dog team, so we didn't have to pay the entry fee for that many dogs. We mainly did a lot of sled work; I don't remember exactly when Lloyd Van Sickle got into the picture, but he was the trainer and lived up at our place, he and his family. They also lived in Idaho and traveled back and forth. The dogs did a lot of things in Idaho, carrying mail, rescue work, parachuting from airplanes, and all kinds of things like that. One year, here at the Golden Gate dog show in San Francisco, they flew three dogs from the show, including Rex, to the city of Truckee when the city of San Francisco was snowbound. They needed Rex and the dog team to take the doctor in to the train. Rex was famous for his guard dog act for John Wayne at one of his movies. Not that he was much of a guard dog! (laughter) He was more of a PUSSY-CAT! Rex achieved a lot of awards and recognition.

The breeding continued during all this time. Mother kept improving; we sold some of our best dogs to Alaska when they first started getting Sams up there. I think we sent the first Samoyed to Alaska; consequently, we sent some of our best dogs up there because she wanted them to get a good start with good stock, and it was better to send



1939 - Aljean Mason with one of the earliest West Coast Sams, Ch. Czar Nicholas Lebanov, at Masons' in Sacramento.

the best dogs. It seems like we never kept the pick of the litter; we always sold it. The dogs that I finished and made champions, it seemed they were sometimes the ones that people didn't want. Our litters were pretty even, which to me always represented good breeding. As overall litters, they were all very similar: substance, quality. She was a stickler for hindquarters, which is very important, especially in pulling, and as far as the breed standard goes. I know that we got several other

people interested in Southern California, and people that we sold dogs to, but she and Lloyd were the first ones to get the dog races started up at Truckee again. Now it is a yearly event. I look back on how many years ago it was when I read these articles about dog racing, and think we were the ones in the very beginning. But Lloyd eventually moved to Truckee, so that is how we got so involved up there. We just kept showing dogs and breeding dogs, and sold an awful lot of dogs, and we

finished a lot of dogs ourselves. Our bloodline is in the pedigrees of a lot of dogs now.

What year was it that you got that first Samoyed?

Nineteen thirty-five. I was about eight years old. We didn't get him as a dog to show; we got him for sled work and because Mother liked the breed. We got points on Czar Nicholas, our first dog that I showed. The first champion that we finished was a son of his, Petrof Lebanov; then we finished Czar Nicholas. Dascha of Laika, Petrof's dam, was our first imported bitch from back East. She never was much of a show dog, she was very shy, and she spent more time having puppies than going in the show ring. She just didn't like the shows; she was part of the dog team, and she enjoyed that and yelled and hollered as much as any of them to get going!

I have had an interesting life with dogs, and really enjoyed them. Mother enjoyed them; she got very active in the Samoyed club, and was president of the Pacific Coast Division, and she was also president of the Samoyed Club of America. She received a lot of awards and honors for all of her involvement and accomplishments. She helped rewrite the breed standard, which took several years to do, and is the present standard ... at least the last I heard it is! (laughter) Mother was more into the breeding; I helped and sometimes would help decide who they were going to breed to whom, but most of the time I was more interested in handling the dogs at the shows and playing with them. After we had Bill Thompson and started using Lloyd, I helped settle dogs to the team, and had a lot of background in training and driving the dogs. Lloyd did a lot of the driving, because after a few years, they were on the road an awful lot. Mother and I went back to Chicago to the Samoyed Specialty and took three dogs. We did fairly well back there; I don't think we got any points, but our dogs placed well. I think I won with a pair of champions in the Working Dog Pairs, but got beat out for the Best in Show. We traveled all up and down California and Nevada; never went to Oregon to show. I don't know how we found time to do what we DID!

What was your parents' background? What did they do for a living?

My mother was in direct mail

automobile registration service. It was a business that she started in 1915. She was the first woman in the legislature in California; she wasn't a senator, she was involved with the legislative system. My father had a business, Mason List and Advertising, which was a direct mail advertising business which searched motor vehicle records.

Do you have any idea how many litters you bred?

Oh, boy. Probably 30 to 35. One time we had 36 dogs in the kennel, I do remember that! Some of those were puppies, but most were adults or over six months of age. In 1937, I was ten years old, and we moved out to the country. The property had a big two-story barn on it that they used to keep Clydesdales in; my folks made that into the kennel.

Do you have any idea how many champions you and your mother finished?

Well, there are 25 listed on this certification. A couple of years ago, when I looked at this list, I noticed a couple I knew were champions were not on it; but right now, I can't recall who they are. This list is dated October 1961. These are just ones we finished; there were others finished of the dogs we sold.

What was the best litter?

I guess the best was the one we called the "Herdsman's" litter. We finished Herdsman's Victory Leader, Herdsman's Faith and Herdsman's Chattiman. I don't know if some of that litter went on to other people; I don't think they used the name "Herdsman's" if they did. We just used that name for the dogs we kept. I think the smallest litter we ever had was four, and the largest litter we ever had was nine. The average would have been six or seven, and there were probably two or three out of each litter that finished their championships. One, anyway; even from the very first litter. I don't ever remember having a litter that was just a complete "dud."

Who was the best dog?

Probably "Chum," who finished in three five-point majors at a young age. He died of distemper before he was two years old, although he had been vaccinated.

I had heard that some of the early distemper vaccine wasn't really all that good.

Not reliable. And in going to the

shows, you were exposed to all of those things, without the good vaccines that you have now. It just happened to be that he was the one. The next best dog, and the one that I liked the best, was Silver Streak, White Way's Silver Streak; he was an outstanding dog. The best female, to me, was Herdsman's Faith, and I liked Ch. White Way's Sisters Buttons.

Rex never finished his championship; he had both his majors and I think he needed two or three points to finish. He was always too busy dog mushing somewhere to be bothered with the dog shows! Other dogs had points and didn't finish ... Romeo, Jock (Herdsman's Jocko) had at least one major, and two or three other dogs. When my father died, that kind of curtailed some of the activities, but my mother continued for awhile with the breeding and showing. Not as much as we did in the late 30's and all through the 40's, but some of these dogs were shown as late as 1961.

Would you say that the breeding program was mostly linebreeding?

We did a lot of linebreeding. Very seldom did we inbreed, but we did a lot of linebreeding. Mother felt that by linebreeding ... well, we knew the background, what the dogs were like, the stock, good qualities and the bad qualities. By combining these, we had a better tendency to improve the bloodline and to get the dog nearest to the standard. You had the firsthand knowledge. I think a lot of the other breeders who didn't have the background or as many dogs to pick and choose from were people who had probably seen the showing or seen the dog and what he has done, or the puppies he produced, and their breeding would come from this. We bred to a lot of outside bitches, but we were selective. We didn't just breed to any female; she had to meet Mother's specifications before she would consider her. If you breed to something that is not worthy of the breed, it tears it down. Some dogs have faults and you have to breed them out, and in order to do it, you have to sell the puppies that weren't good as pet stock with no papers. Then you go from there.

What faults would have kept your mother from breeding to a bitch or a dog?

Cowhocks, toeing in too much, bad bite, too sharp a head, or pointed

all of those vaccines that seemed to be the best dog. The best, was my Silver Spark dog. The Herdsman's White Way's Sister. She wanted the typical smiling face for which the Sam is noted. The dog with the "smile." But she was noted as a stickler on cowhocks, for sure. I think that's why we didn't breed White Phantom of the Arctic very much, because she was a bit cowhocked. For one thing, we bought both her and Silver Spark of the Arctic from the same kennel; they came over together from England. Mother thought, "Well, let's breed them and see what we get." Being from the English bloodline, our stud would have absolutely nothing to do with her. He would breed any other female in the kennel, but he would have absolutely nothing to do with her! I guess because she spoke English instead of American! (laughter) We tried several times; she would take another male, but he just turned his nose up at her. They have their likes and dislikes, too, I guess.

Did you have any biscuit dogs?

No. Daschnicks Sam had little biscuit spots on his ears about the size of the end of a pencil, and I think that was the only dog that ever had any biscuit.

Was the lack of biscuit intentional?

No, it wasn't. If it came from anywhere, it would have come through Czar Nicholas. I think he had biscuit. We found in breeding that the dogs threw more back to their grandparents, and would look to the grandparents to see what a litter was going to look like. You could get to be pretty accurate.

Why do you think your mother chose the Samoyed over, say, the Siberian or the Malamute?

I think she liked their temperament better. It was a different breed than what she was accustomed to and as a rule in those days, the Siberians and Malamutes were pretty tough dogs. Of course, her experiences with them came from when she lived in Alaska, and they don't have an easy life up there. They were hardy dogs. But when she was looking for a dog, she did a lot of searching; and she was looking for a companion for me, which primarily influenced her decision. Plus, this was a breed with which she could associate, and she did a lot of research. Books on Hansen, herding, etc., because Samoyeds were primarily a reindeer herding dog in Northern Siberia and this intrigued her.

On the final night in Oakland, they used to have a thing called "Lady and Her Dog," and you were supposed to



Left: Andy, house boy kennel man for White Way, watches as Ch. Herdsman's Chattigan (Silver Spark of the Arctic x Cleo) moves out. Center: Dolly Ward holding the young Ch. Starchak CD (Ch. Herdsman's Chattigan x Ch. Silver Star of White Way, who was a litter sister of Rex of White Way). Right: Agnes Mason, White Way Kennels, imported Ch. White Way of Kobe from England.

dress in the costume of the origin of the breed you were showing. It was a beautiful class. I can remember Mother making this costume with the mukluk boots and leather jacket, suede to represent reindeer skin, beads on the fur collar. There is a picture of the one she made for me, shown with Czar Nicholas.

Did you ever do any work in obedience?

Yes, I did some obedience work. The first dog we had was in obedience, but he didn't even make his CD. I was never really that much interested in it for some reason; it just didn't appeal to me. I felt that ALL dogs have to have some type of obedience, some manners, but it doesn't have to be formal obedience training. If your dogs are not obedient, they are not happy and you are not happy. Dogs are very smart, and they know what they can get away with and with whom. I like watching obedience, but I guess I was too involved with showing and sledding to have the time for it.

I never did any judging. I have been asked to do the Samoyed matches and things like that, but I never wanted to get into judging dog or horse shows.

I was very content to be the amateur and do the best I could. I had too many friends and wanted to stay on the fence; I didn't want to get off on one side or the other! (laughter)

I see Samoyed spelled "Samoyede." When did they drop the "e" in the name?

That is the correct spelling. They were starting to drop it, I think, in the early 60's. They used to call the breed the "Sam-e-ed" and some would say "Samoyed-es" because of the "e" on the end. I think they dropped that "e" because everybody kept trying to pronounce it.

Any other memorable experiences in the dogs?

Nothing that really stands out in my mind. Things ran pretty smoothly. A few accidents on the dog sled teams, but those things are bound to happen. We did lose our first dog, Czar Nicholas, in a sledding accident. The snub-line, used to hold the team back while hooking up dogs, broke and the team got loose. The tugline wrapped around Czar Nicholas' foot and dragged him. We got in the car and followed them, but we couldn't catch them; they can go at a pretty good clip.

We finally caught them, took Czar Nicholas to the vet, and then down to the firehouse where they put the resuscitator on him. They worked on him over two hours and couldn't save him. That was the only fatal accident we ever had during sledding.

Funny, the vet we took him to first was Dr. Hauge, and that must have been in 1939 or so. Years later, he was the vet I went to work for, and worked for him for 23 years until 1972. There was an article in the paper about the accident; in those days, things like that made headlines! Only other problems we ever had sledding was getting the pads tough; we used a lot of Tincture of Benzoin and iodine painted on their pads to toughen them up. The tincture of Benzoin did wonders. You have to toughen the feet slowly; it is like learning to go barefoot, you have to toughen your feet.

There are a lot of techniques when training dogs. They have to learn to stay in line, pull ahead instead of back. If I was breaking a new dog, I would use two experienced dogs at wheel, the new dog at point with another good dog next to it, and then an experienced lead dog. They would keep the new one straightened out. You had to have a good lead dog to keep the line tight, because if the others get their feet over, you are in trouble. When they would get their feet over it, the line would get them in the groin and they'd learn real fast! You have brakes on the sled, and so have control from the back, but you had to know what you were doing. We taught them to "gee" and "haw" and "come around, gee," which meant to make a reverse. And "whoa" is "WHOA!" (laughter) All you had to do was say, "Let's go" and they were gone! That first lunge was really something.

When you were looking at the magazine earlier, you commented that you didn't feel the Samoyed had changed a whole lot.

No, I don't. I saw some in there that looked just like the dogs we were showing. I saw some that I felt I didn't care for too much, but then that is true anywhere. But I really don't think they have changed that much. Some carry more coat than they used to, but then they are "show dogs" and they like that long coat. You seem to be able to tell the bitches by the fact that they still carry a shorter coat than the dog does,

and they seem to be trimming the hair and feathers on the dogs still. I just can't remember any of the dogs carrying coat like some of these dogs; maybe Jack Frost of Sacramento had a fairly long, heavy coat, bred by Mrs. McDowell. I think he was the first Sam we saw.

What advice would you give to someone just getting started who wanted to breed good Samoyeds?

Do some research on your dogs' pedigrees, talk to some of the prominent breeders and get their opinion. Look at their dogs, compare, study the standard, and then pick a person that you feel, after talking and checking around, is qualified to help you pick out a puppy, or sell you a puppy. As a rule, if you go to a reputable breeder, you will end up with a fairly decent dog. Now, all dogs don't turn out to be champions. You can only try to do the best you can; and if that dog doesn't turn out to be exactly what you want, then you have to sell it. By then you should know more about what you like, and what the judges like that you can live with. You should be more familiar with the bloodlines then, and should be able to pick out a better dog; this is assuming you were not happy with the one you've got. Of course, you get attached to those first ones, and end up keeping them. You can do that, but don't breed it. Set your limits as to the number you can keep.

Don't just take one person's "song and dance." Check around and listen; check with a local club, go to some of their meetings, look at their stock, and COMPARE. You have to look and you have to know what you are looking for. When you first start out, of course, you don't know what all these words mean in the standard, so you have to have somebody explain them to you and show you.

Do you have any regrets about being in dogs?

Oh, no. They probably gave me some of the best years of my life; I met a lot of nice people, had a lot of interesting experiences, a lot of fun. My mother was the one who did all the work, I just got in on the glory. I, of course, fed the dogs, groomed them and bathed them, but that wasn't real work! No, I have no regrets for either the dogs or the horses. I've had a good life and I wouldn't change anything as I look back on it.

Back when we first started showing Sams, there were maybe three or four Sams at a show! Three dogs was worth two points! It went that way for quite awhile, so there weren't that many Sams or breeders until we got into it. I do think we stimulated a lot of interest even down in Southern California, because it took a long time before the point scale went up. It went up and stayed at about 25 dogs for three points for awhile, then went up to 40 something, then dropped back down. The point scale out here got fairly stiff. I can't remember exactly when they formed the Sammy club out here, although I'm sure Mother had something to do with that! I was young then and a lot of that was over my head. Mother did a lot of writing and research. The Samoyeds were very active over in England because I can remember looking at English magazines when we were looking for our imports; there were a lot of ads and pictures of dogs over there, so they were fairly well known in that country.

Did you ever go over to England to see the dogs?

No. We bought all our dogs sight unseen; they sent pictures of some of them, but most of them were puppies or young dogs. When White Way of Kobe came over from Mrs. Pery of the Kobe Kennels, I feel that she sent the best dog from the litter, or the bloodline they were talking about, because he went back to White Fang of Kobe. White Fang is a very well known English bred Samoyed.

These things are pretty good if anybody really gets into the bloodline way back. My mother did an eight- or ten-generation pedigree on Czar Nicholas, or maybe it was White Way of Kobe. Anyway, it was a third of the size of a closet door. In fact, they displayed it as a backdrop on a bench a couple of times. It was interesting, but I don't know what ever became of that. Mother got sick and I finally had to put her in a nursing home; she had Parkinson's Disease and died in the nursing home. I don't know what she did with a lot of that stuff. I do wish I had kept the registration on the dogs, because I look at some of the pictures and think, "Now, who was the sire and dam?" I just can't take them off the top of my head.

Thank you very much. •

Saying the Right Thing

Jeanne Nonhof
Waldo, Wisconsin

AS Charlie Brown, of the Peanuts comic strip by Charles Schultz, says, "I remember once back about five years ago ... I said the right thing." Sometimes what you read in the funny papers is a little more profound than it appears on the surface. Like Charlie Brown and, I suspect, bunches of other people, I sometimes find it difficult to say the right thing at the right time. Oh, not when someone loses a loved one or even a dog. Having lost some loved ones myself, I can readily sympathize. And when someone says something nasty to me, I am one of those people who can always come up with the perfect squelch ... two hours later, after I'm home. Well, I can live with that.

But what I really find troublesome is tactfully telling someone who asks for my opinion the truth when it is hurtful.

It is easy to tell someone the facts as you see them when you can honestly be positive in your opinion. A few years back, a really nice teenager asked my opinion of his young Sammy who had been a really pretty puppy but was going through an awkward, gawky stage. Nothing seemed exactly right with the dog, but nothing was terribly wrong, either. This young Sam wasn't from our line, so I had difficulty with the growth pattern, but I had seen numerous dogs from his home kennel and consistently liked them. I told him to have faith in the dog's pedigree during this difficult period and that I thought the dog was finishable. Sure am glad I did that, as the dog matured nicely, and so did the teenager. A couple of years ago, that young man and his dog walked off with a Working Group One at the prestigious Wisconsin Kennel Club Show.

Now, I am not quite so egotistical as to think that if I had told him I did not think his dog would make it that he would have placed him immediately as a pet, but maybe a word of encouragement just at that time, when his young dog was not doing well,

helped to keep him at it long enough to make possible such nice end results.

Okay - that's the easy part. Now, somebody has come up to you and asked for your opinion of their dog. The first thing you need to do is discern what purpose they have in mind for the dog. Is it simply as a pet to love or are they looking for an Obedience Trial Champion? Do they plan on doing some "fun sledding" or do they want to seriously race the dog? Are they planning on starting a show breeding kennel? Are they planning on going for top winning Samoyed in the nation? Various assets are extremely important and different faults are allowable for each of these purposes. If you don't have any expertise in their area of interest, refer them to someone who does.

ONE way of replying to their questions is, don't answer. Instead, lead them to discover for themselves. Rather than saying, "He's got a God awful rear end," say something like, "Are you happy with his rear, moving and standing?" You can say, "Is this the type of Samoyed you want to breed and be known for?" That's a lot better than baldly stating, "He sure has an ugly head, doesn't he?" Lead them to make their own decision. Sum it all up for them after they have given you their opinion. Something like, "Okay, what you've just said is, you don't care for his movement, particularly in the rear, you don't like his round, yellow eye, his lack of coat or his shy temperament. From what you've just said, his faults vastly outweigh his virtues for breeding and showing purposes. Now, you can do a number of things. If you're not serious about raising and showing dogs, you can keep him for your own personal pet and maybe some obedience work will give him more confidence in himself. If you want to start your own breeding and show kennel, you will need better foundation stock." If the dog is not show quality, you can save them a lot of time, trouble and heartache by explaining that it is time to cut their losses and that it is so much easier and more economical to start with a good

one and go up from there.

Stress that this is your opinion in looking at the dog today. Dogs can change, although their basic structure will not. This is known in my office as CYA, or "Cover Your (ahem) Behind." Adult dogs are a lot easier to evaluate than puppies. I have seen puppies go from cowhocks to nice, single-tracking rears. I have seen overshot jaws become perfect scissors bites. With puppies, time is frequently their best friend and a hard and fast opinion may come to haunt you if you don't qualify your statements with the fact that what you see today may not be there six months from now. Some faults are more likely to disappear than others and it is nice if you have background information on the line. Some enthusiasts I know will never give another an opinion on their dog. I guess it is a matter of self-protection, but it is not very helpful to the novice. Their attitude is "Don't ask what I think of your dog. I'll let you know if I like him." It helps to sit at ringside with a novice and point out a good moving rear or front (provided, of course, that you can fine one) so that they will know what they should be looking for. Reading books is a wonderful way to gain knowledge for the newcomer, but seeing what a dog really looks like when moving properly is vastly more helpful. And using a movie camera or videotape is even better, for you can then slow the action down enough to ascertain what is actually happening with that hock, pastern, topline, neck or whatever. And, I would think, some movies of the dog in question in slow motion would show the uncertain owner what he is actually dealing with.

Everyone loves his dog. Feelings are very fragile things. Treat them with as much care and tact as possible. I know everyone is busy at a show, but if someone wants help, couldn't you tell them that you'll be very happy to talk to them after the judging is over when you'll be able to spend more time with them? You may be able to help someone else get hooked on your favorite breed of dog and maybe make a lifelong friend in the process. Think about it! •

The Obedience Trained Conformation Dog

*Don and Dot Hodges
Poynette, Wisconsin*

NEVER obedience train your dog before showing him in conformation! How often have you heard that opinion expressed? We could not disagree with it more.

It is sometimes argued that the dog will sit when you stop in the show ring, because of his obedience training. Such a view sells short the intelligence of your dog and his capacity to learn. Just as you train your dog for obedience competition, so too you go through training with him for conformation competition. You use different words and equipment for the two types of training, and the dog is quite able to pick up the difference. (Besides, how many Sams do you know who usually heel without any commands? The problem most Sam owners have is not with their Sams heeling when not required – it's getting them to heel at all!)

More importantly, perhaps, the obedience training helps to develop an even greater personal relationship with your dog that can't help but pay off

handsomely in the conformation ring, as your dog exhibits greater attentiveness to you. And obedience training hands the owner additional tools which can be used to deal with special situations in conformation competition or with dogs that have special problems. Furthermore, the dog with a bad attitude about showing in conformation often responds to obedience work differently and can sometimes be brought around through the obedience experience.

We have put several of our Sams through obedience before showing them in conformation (or showed them simultaneously in both). One of these went on to a multi Best in Show record and another made it into the Top Ten Winning Sams in the Phillips System. (In the case of the latter dog, we actually used the obedience commands in the conformation ring to great advantage.) We are now training another of our dogs in obedience before beginning his serious specials campaigning. We would advocate it for anyone! Not only can you reap the benefits mentioned, but you and your dog can both thoroughly enjoy the experience. •

or have any part of it).

I was part of a team that worked on the Samoyed hip dysplasia committee for SCA for many years. I can honestly say that ANY Samoyed with heart and desire can run his race; however, we did not use Samoyeds that were lame or, after working a short distance, appeared stressed. After a short trial period, if they liked it, conditioning and training for them and the driver resulted in a good combined effort.

Eileen Gonyeau: Of the physical features, what do I think most important? After just overall good health, I would have to say fronts. In my experience, a dog with an excellent front and an adequate rear will out perform a dog with a terrific rear and not much front. We had a really top Siberian Husky named Apache Chief who was just that way. A great front with a beautiful reach, but straight stifled and cowhocked. He was one of the best workers at point and double lead we ever owned. Look, for instance, at your long-distance swimmers – watch the way they throw their arm out for as much reach as they can get; the kick just keeps them going. Most of our dogs, better dogs, today, have too much power in the rear for their reach up front. You'll see very few good flying trotters in the show ring.

Leslie Fields: To me, the MOST important factor in a good sled dog is attitude; they must enjoy sledding. I don't believe in "beating" it into my dogs. I might run faster, too, if I'm scared, but I'll work longer, harder and be more steady and dependable if taught with patience and understanding. I think the dogs must feel that way, too! I think there is a fine balance in a dog's temperament that makes a good worker; I prefer them to be independent "thinking" dogs that keep me on my toes. I want a dog that LIKES to please me, but is not anxious to please; I find it difficult to work with a dog that tries TOO hard.

As for conformation, I think fronts are most important; a dog pushes the sled with his chest, rather than pulling it with his rear. At this point in Samoyeds, a short upper arm is the most common fault. Of course, when

Questionnaire Results

*Brenda and Geoff Abbott
Pine, Colorado*

MY first general question on a questionnaire sent out to a few Samoyed drivers was: Which conformation faults in a dog cause your worst problems on the trail? (Examples: close rears, short upper arm, wide front, narrow front, poor feet, etc.)

Cara Berryman: Close rears – insufficient rear power; short upper arm – shorter stride length; wide or narrow front – the dog will tire sooner. With regard to poor feet, a dog needs

good, thick pads to absorb the shock of the dog's weight, a "tight" paw to keep the snow from balling up, and it's not too much fun to run if you are flat-footed, so good arches help. A dog can still cover ground with any of these other faults, but "bad" feet will probably cause a bad running attitude. Good running attitude is the most important asset a dog can have. A beautiful body won't be of any use if the heart doesn't say, "Let's go!"

Richard Breckenridge: The only Sams to every cause trouble were not the ones with conformation faults but physical and mental (i.e., too fat, too old, or most of all, did not like to race

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I think of fronts, I start from the ground up ... that is, starting with the feet! IF the dog hasn't got good feet, the best front in the world won't help. I seem to have more foot problems on the dogs with the poorer fronts. I have the least trouble with sparsely haired, cat-type feet ... interesting, considering the standard. However, Rocky Mountain powder snow conditions are vastly different from the arctic tundras where the Samoyed was developed, so possibly the furred, hare foot is best for that tundra.

My second question to these drivers was: Do you prefer to tune males or bitches on a team, and what difference, if any, do you feel gender

makes in the performance of a sled dog? All of the responding drivers indicated that the sex of the dog made no difference (unless the bitch happened to be in season). Size and endurance were equal if properly trained and conditioned to the length of the race to be run. As Eileen Gonyeau stated, "The most important feature of ANY working dog has to be ATTITUDE! A modestly constructed dog (of either sex) who wants to do a good job will always do better than a loafer with the best conformation in the world. Read George Attila on this point. Never judge a dog's ability to work on the stakeout chain; judge him in harness!" •

exploits with the reindeer was chromosomal incompatibility. There were reindeer from the Yenesei River to the Kara Sea, all with Aarghh's brand. (The Big A, of course.) Based on what Ori had been doing with the reindeer when he wasn't chasing them, Aarghh's wife, Yechhh, came up with another suggestion as to what Ori should be doing as a useful function.

What was the suggestion that finally allowed the Samoyed dog to find his rightful niche?

YECHHH mentioned to Aarghh that the thing that Ori was best at were those things that had caused Aarghh to specifically denigrate the dog. The animal was a born stud. Yechhh said to Aarghh, in words of one syllable or less, "Boy, git that dawg a mate or watch yur dum' reindeer get drove into the ground." (Yechhh was famous for her red neck.)

So it was that Aarghh went out to try and recreate another oversized Pom, only female this time.

"There is nothing more frightening than man running amuck under the guise of technological achievement." DGR, 1982.

And lo, he succeeds in producing a mate for Ori. But, she was not quite the same. She was smaller, quieter, softer, sneakier, had less coat and more brains; she was smarter and faster than her male companion; she was two inches shorter and ten pounds lighter; she was ready to drop her newly gained life-mate in his tracks at the drop of a reindeer stool. She wanted to run the WHOLE show, and if an object was spherical, would fit in her mouth and would bounce, she would sell her soul to have someone throw it away. She was what she was what she was.

The Samoyed bitch had been created. Ori was ecstatic – for a little while. A very little while!

Yechhh and Aarghh became the first Samoyed (canine) breeders. Soon, they were surrounded by little, fat, woolly white wonders, to say nothing of the puppies, too. They only made one further mistake, but it was a lulu and was to be repeated time and time again. They decided to keep the puppies for a little while to see if there was something special that

This is a Test!

*David G. Richardson
Fullerton, California*

WHO bred the original Samoyed? Canine, that is. The original Samoyed was bred by a Siberian tribesman named Aarghh. He was trying for a Pomeranian that would fit in his stewpot without rattling and the size got away from him. It is in his honor that the standard greeting made to the Samoyed dog that has been left alone for too long of a time is named after him. (Aarghh, look at the mess you've made!)

Having bred the original Samoyed by mistake, what did the original breeder do with the dog?

The original breeder, Aarghh, found that he had a very interesting problem with his newly created pet or friend or albatross or whatever the hell it was. As a matter of fact, that was a great deal of his problem: whatever the hell was it? He tried hooking it up to his sledge and the Sammy just loved pulling the thing around until Aarghh really needed to go somewhere and pull something. At that point, Ori (short for Original) looped back in the traces and dove under the blanket in the bed of the sled. Plead and cajole as much as he

would, Aarghh couldn't get Ori out of the sled. Of course, it was against the Samoyed people's belief system to even strike a dog with a hand and Ori was too far into the sled for Aarghh to give him a swift kick. So Ori got out of being a real live sled dog.

What was the second attempted vocational rehabilitation of the Samoyed breed?

It seems that Aarghh, being a real meathead, kept a herd of reindeer. Aarghh got really tired of chasing his dumb reindeer all over hell's half acre of frozen tundra and figured that with this dumb overgrown Pom hanging around, eating him out of house and hogan, he had a built-in reindeer sitter. Now, he didn't want to move the reindeer from here to there or this way and that way, he just wanted the dumb critters to hang out and get fat. Make babies. Give milk. All the standard domestic crud. So, he says to Ori, "Watch the reindeer, Schmegeggee!" (Possibly a clue to the lost tribes of Israel, here.)

Big mistake. Where Aarghh saw fat reindeer, babies and milk, Ori saw friends, playmates and sex objects. The result was panic village. Aarghh now had reindeer all over hell's full five acres and the only thing that saved the world from Ori's sexual

they should be holding onto. Fools. Cute, little Samoyed puppies grow up into a thundering herd of Samoyed dogs. And, once they hit the age of six months, nobody wants them anymore. Frightening.

What was the final outcome of all of this foolishness?

If you are looking for a moral, Charlie, there ain't none! What there is is a picture of a tribal dog that didn't do a great job at pulling sleds and didn't do a great job herding reindeer, although I suspect that he was better at the latter. But, he did get along VERY well with people and he did guard the hogan, as long as there was SOMEBODY in it to protect. He dropped hair everywhere, dug out of

everything that wasn't nailed down, barked at all the wrong things and spent unbelievable amounts of energy trying to get to his in-season mate. The male of the species was unbelievably loving and a huge pain in the butt. The female of the species was fast and smart and able to figure out just what it is that you want and then not quite deliver it. Together, and that is the only way to have Samoyeds, they are a flat-out panic and a continuing inspiration and joy. It takes some kind of fool to live with Samoyeds, but it is a fun sort of foolishness.

So, why did you go through this whole exercise?

Every now and then, I get upset

with the totality of the seriousness of all the good folk involved with this beloved breed that I have specifically chosen to pursue and I think they need to have pointed out to them just what a difficult and overall undefinable thing it is with which they are dealing. I have very little faith in the fact that my twenty years of work and joy, to this point in time, are going to have any damned effect on 4,000 years of gene pool manifested in the very few individuals that were used to create the Samoyed breed as we know it. The Samoyed is, and will continue to be, and the devil take our efforts to alter the fact. •

Sammy (What Else) Hairs

*Elizabeth Crosby Metz
New York, New York*

THE IBM serviceman called today:
two machines down, to our dismay.

Rubberbands, as usual, stuck in there?
"No, no," he whispers: "Sammy hair."

Now, our Sammies are an industrious crew:

Doggies see and doggies do.
But no dogs type, that I'm aware,
And, in so doing, shed their hair.

We've finally reached that state of things
where Sammy hair has taken wings
and floats free-spirited through their lair
and ours: all-present Sammy hair.

The kids run in for a drink and snack.
I pity the allergic boy hanging back.
His mom has made him well aware:
To enter's to die from Sammy hair.

Chowder at eight weeks was so cute:
a bear-faced waddler in puppy suit.

Months later, guess the breed – double dare! –
of the Awkward White Whotzit sans Sammy hair.

See, June's the month we really dread,
When all our Sams conspire to shed.
They seize brown sofas, pair by pair,
And instantly – all smiles – "DROP HAIR!"

It clings to body, chastens soul
– I find it in the casserole –
In church the boys get smiles and stares:
blue blazers tipped with Sammy hairs.

We shop for a rugged washer-dryer:
top of the line, with prices higher.
Our top priority's to compare:
which one best filters Sammy hair?

We bag the stuff, we stuff the closet
– including some from the Naked White Whotzit –
I'll spin it soon, this Yankee swears:
Waste not, want not, Thy Sammy hairs.

The stuff creeps from the bags. How would you efficiently pack this canine kudzu? Yet no mere trashman, from despair, will take OUR tons of Sammy hair!

For Missy, Chowder, big old Frizz, hair makes all Sammies what they izz, but we'll all be happier, I swear, when we solve the problem of Sammy hair.

I'll creep up on their crates one night (the bags of hair tucked out of sight)
I'll grab my Crazy Glue and there
Permanently affix each Sammy hair.

BIG Frizbee's coat won't need a stitch;
I'll stick three bags on the postpartum bitch.
The Whotzit gets a double share of reapportioned Sammy hair.

Canine hair nets, tail to face,
Should keep new Sammy coats in place
as BOB goes to my bears
with triple-thick coats of Sammy hairs! •

Burn Out!

Phoebe Faulmann

A tough realization to come to, even sad, is when one finally faces up to what your heart knows is true. Dogs and dog shows are no longer the ultimate, obsessive drive they once were. The thrill of a win has been somewhat subdued, the smell of puppy poop day in and day out is less than aromatic! The camaraderie of old friends at the shows is gone, as they have long since retired. Nights driving the interstate are lonely. Now your focus on life's fulfillment is on once unimportant thoughts; unrestricted by the responsibility of dog ownership. Many of your friends these days are less than doggy. Career moves become important with weekend work and long hours a necessity. If you've been doggy for a long number of years, these feelings become confusing and hard to accept.

Many career fields of late have been speaking to the problem of "burn out." Now I feel that it's possible for even an avid hobby enthusiast to be afflicted with this syndrome.

As of late, I have been faced with the feelings and changes noted above. On one hand, I feel overpressured by the responsibility I owe my dogs; on the other hand, finding it hard to imagine life without them. Soon I'll have a new name, a new residence and a new life-style. Will my dogs, as I have known them these past number of years, continue to be a part of my life-style or will "burn out" get the better of me and make "getting out" an even closer reality?

Part of my disenchantment can be based on the passing of the really "great" Samoyeds from our ranks and realizing they were young and on their way up when my "girls" and I were getting started. My "girls," as I have had to realize of late, are moving much more slowly. They have lost much of the sparkle they once sported and the inevitable is getting nearer. When they are gone, many of my fondest memories and hardest times will go with them. The youngsters are fun, but as numbers grew, I've not formed the bond with them as I have with my old-timers. The girls who

blessed me with the honor of owning my first champion, first homebred champions and Group and specialty winners and, in direct effect, have helped form my oldest and dearest friendships.

Talking with the people I still recognize at the shows, I feel I'm by far not the only one feeling disenchanting with the things as they are now, ranging from the rising cost of exhibition and maintenance of our hobby to the decreasing efficiency of our new up-and-coming judges.

Sometimes non-doggy people try and pin me down for a reason for showing dogs. It's hard for me to give an answer I'm comfortable with. "Showing dogs certainly has nothing to do with making the world a better place," one told me. But you're wrong, I said, MY world is infinitely better because I've shown my dogs. Naturally, that feeling is relatively subjective. There are many of us breeding and showing, each of us gaining our own special rewards from a variety of its aspects.

In the beginning, I felt I had to put every breath I took into my hobby. I was obsessed and possessed. I felt the need to prove a point along the way. Possibly make an impression. One

day, I realized I had made my point and had made an impression on a very important person, me. My dogs have been a very therapeutic effect on my growing up. I wonder if I could have done it without them. For sure, I am indebted to them for the love and devotion they have contributed to my life. I mourn the earlier times, more carefree than now, that we all spent together. It troubles me to see them moving so slowly.

At this point, I don't think I'll be "getting out." Slowing down, cutting back for a time, but never life without a Sam and a very strong interest in the breed. But my SENSE of competition is somewhat tempered. Maybe a short time out will rejuvenate my waning desire to compete. I've seen it happen to others, never dreamed it would happen to me. It's interesting, watching and knowing the changes that beset us all over the course of time.

"You would adjust your conduct and even direct the course of your spirit according to hours and seasons.

"Yet the timeless in you is aware of life's timelessness,

"And knows that yesterday is but today's memory and tomorrow is today's dream." — Kahlil Gibran. •

Social Communications

*Dave Richardson
Fullerton, California*

THIS article will read a little more formally than my usual stuff. Chalk it up to my attempt to display existential knowledge in the field of ethology.

The place where I am sitting enables me to observe my living room and the three Samoyed dogs who are, at this moment, in that room. They do not know that I am observing them. The three dogs are all of my breeding and I know their environmental upbringing implicitly. The three are comprised of our senior male, who has just turned eight years of age, a huge and very playful yearling male, and a female of about three years, who has

just entered estrus. From the interface, I gather that one of two things is about to happen: one, the senior male is going to make the point to the yearling that he, the senior, runs the show, or, two, there is going to be a very large and messy dogfight in my living room. I know this because I know the social characteristics of this breed of dog.

Twenty-two years ago, I bought a Samoyed puppy as a pet. This puppy was so bad and into everything that my wife and I decided to study the breed in an attempt to understand why this puppy bitch did the things that she did. We are still studying and, although we know a great deal about the Samoyed dog, we are still learning new things every day. Every time I think that I know all there is to know,

a new individual Samoyed moves in with us and shows us a new pattern. It was my point to learn as much about the social behavior of the dog as I could.

The Samoyed dog, the "tribal dog" of the Samoyede people, is said to be the oldest domesticated BREED of dog. The Samoyedes were a nomadic people who ranged their herds of reindeer across Siberia from the Yenesei River to the Kara Sea. They were a very gentle and non-warlike people, which is probably the reason why the tribe is now extinct or so assimilated by the Russians as not to be recognized as an entity. Supposedly, the tribal dogs were thought of very highly and were accepted into the living quarters of the Samoyedes, a most unusual situation relative to the northern peoples. I presume, with my knowledge of northern nomads, that the Samoyedes were entirely capable of eating young, plump puppies, but the historical implications are that they did not treat their dogs at all like their cousins, the Chukchis, or their brothers across the Bering Strait, the Aleuts or the Mahlemuts.

ALL of these northern people's dogs – the Samoyed, the Siberian Husky, the Alaskan Malamute, the Mackenzie River Dogs – had a common heritage of wolf background. The Alaskans, to this day, will stake out a bitch in season in hopes that a passing wolf will breed her. The obvious primary outside breeding source of the northern dogs is wolf, contrary to the opinions of Konrad Lorenz and Michael Fox. I base this opinion on two things: the basic social interactions and behavior of the dogs and an occasional dog with wolf dentition. I have always thought that there was an uncanny resemblance between the so-called wolf subspecies LOBO or Great Plains wolf and the Samoyed dog.

It is crucial to understand that the Samoyed is a pack animal, as are all northern dogs, and that all of their social interfacing is oriented in that direction. Many years ago, my wife and I gave up trying to have a "group" of Samoyeds and we set up our pack – ourselves. The dogs accept me and her as co-pack leaders, or possibly, they give her the title and humor me. Nonetheless, the pack exists and is

controlled by the human members. The structure that exists below the human members is typical of a wolf pack.

The transaction taking place in my living room was a specific and well understood social interaction. It was set up by me, knowing full well that the yearling, Foamfollower, would be very interested in the female, Busybody. Foamy, as an untried male, is down pretty low on the hierarchical list of our Samoyeds, and yet, he is now the largest physical dog here. He is not much bigger than either his sire, Nightwatch, or our senior male, Sundance Kid, but he has the strength to be a real problem to either or both of them, if he decides that he wants to move up the ladder. The male, Kid, had the problem that this big strapping bulk of a puppy was in the house with Busy and Busy was in season. She was not yet ready to be bred – a fact that Kid, an experienced stud dog, knew full well – but Foamy was paying attention to her. Kid had growled at Foamy two or three times during the morning, which resulted in Foamy assuming a submissive (and playful) head down crouch in front of him.

I know, from past observations, that this is an attempt to appear non-threatening, but Kid must have made the decision that he would have to present Foamy with a more dramatic display of their positions. HE found a Nylabone, a toy, and laid down in the middle of the living room floor to chew on it. This is foreign behavior for Kid, as he normally will not touch the Nylabones. Using the bone as bait, he was able to lure Foamy over to sniff at him and the bone; as Foamy did so, Kid leapt to his feet and, attempting to tower over Foamy, gave a series of loud warning barks. Foamy broke off any frontal contact with Kid by turning his gaze and himself sideways, but held his position. Kid moved around in front of Foamy and stared at him, giving three or four more sharp barks. Foamy, recognizing that discretion probably was the better part of valor, laid completely down in front of Kid and then rolled over on his side exposing himself in a completely defenseless manner. This constituted total submission by Foamy to Kid and Kid turned and walked away. So ended the little drama that

began this essay, but not the entire social action. A little while later, Foamy approached Busybody to check to see if, after a half hour, she should be bred yet. As he approached her rear end, Kid walked up and gave the same warning bark he had used with the Nylabone. Foamy gave up trying to check Busy's bottom, averted his gaze and walked off.

THIS entire action was performed to a script that was written, probably millions of years ago, for an alpha male wolf to play with one of his own pack yearlings. As my interest in the Samoyed dog grew, so did my interest in the wolf and my understanding of "the social niceties" of surviving in a pack. All of the above actions were set up by the older, presumably alpha, male Samoyed so that he could make the point to the young male that the bitch was "off limits," and that he, Kid, was the alpha and could make decisions about what the young male, Foamy, could and could not do.

It is interesting to note that the Samoyed dog can and does communicate in the same manner as do the various wolf families that have been observed in the wild, if the Samoyed dog has enough freedom of movement and expression. By that, I mean that, although kenneled and managed people, the basic pack structure that I mentioned earlier is allowed to persist or is even encouraged. One of the reasons, I feel, that this ability of the Samoyed to be able to communicate among themselves still persists, after some 4,000 years of domestication, is that the Samoyed, as a breed, is still a natural animal. Man has not docked the tail, as in the Spaniels, nor has he altered the basic shape of the dog. The head, with its erect and expressive ears, the eyes, not hidden like the various Sheepdogs, even the normal double coat that can be raised, as in raising the hackles, all contributes to the Samoyed's ability to make his feelings known.

In the example that I described, Kid the alpha barked a special bark to warn Foamy; the wolves would use a different vocalization, but the meaning and the effect would have been the same. It was Farley Mowat in his book, "Never Cry Wolf," who mentioned that wolves, generally, do not

bark, and that thought was augmented by Barry Lopez in "Of Wolves and Men." when he said, "Wolves only infrequently bark. They do not bark continuously like dogs but woof a few times and then retreat ... as when a stranger approaches." Family lines of Samoyeds seem to adopt a bark versus non-bark mode; my personal family line seems to be changing to the bark mode. I miss hearing the quiet "woof."

The submissive posturing of young Foamfollower that I have described can also be seen in the wolf and is very classic in its intent and meaning. Foamy's original submissive posture was a head-down crouch, almost playful in its demeanor. Foamy was using this to try to have Kid react positively; he was attempting to say something like, "You're only kidding, eh, Old Man?" If Foamy had been serious about this submissive position, he would have put his tail down below his backline, he would have pushed his muzzle at Kid's muzzle, he might even have tried to lick the corners of Kid's mouth. In fact, he did none of these. Still, what he was doing could be called active submission. When, later, Kid finally asserted his position in a very specific manner, Foamy laid down on his side and totally avoided any kind of eye contact with Kid. This was passive submission and it could have been embellished by Foamy rolling onto his back, offering his underside. Kid could have more firmly established his dominant position at this time by standing over or on top of Foamy; something that HE did not do (and, in the future, may regret not having done). All of these signals and postures have been seen and noted in the wolf and have, further, been noted by other dog breeders who have an interest in pack behavior. An article by Ruth Miner, a Malamute breeder, in a Samoyed Quarterly magazine, describes very similar patterns in her dogs.

THROUGH the use of a domestic vignette, I have attempted to show the characteristics of a specific social communication between two male Samoyeds, relative to a female Samoyed in their immediate environ, to show the meaning of the communication, and to correlate

the social activities of these two males to similar characteristics in the wolf. It was my intent to indicate that there is more than a coincidental similarity to the actions taken by the Samoyed to actions that could be taken by the wolf in the wild.

Before ending, I would like to comment on another observation of communication that I have made over the past twenty years. The Samoyed is clairvoyant. Certain animals have the ability to understand things that other dogs are observing and to even be able to understand human wants without any overt attempts by the human to communicate those wants. A proof of sorts can be shown by indicating observed behavior: one dog will see "something" and, without movement or sound, bring another dog's attention to bear on "it," or a dog will sense his owners' feelings, good or bad, and commiserate accordingly. A most classic example is the dog show han-

dlar who, having been moved into a position that indicates that he is "going to win" will become tight and nervous and whose dog will simultaneously quit showing and fall apart. The dog show people call that "sending signals down the lead," but, in truth, there is seldom any observable physical manifestation. To this point in time, I have not seen any published data on studies performed on this particular area of dog communications, although I hope more fully to be able to understand this ability someday. For now, I will just accept it.

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"I Can't Believe I Did That!"

Jeanne Nonhof
Waldo, Wisconsin

WE did a breeding and I knew exactly what I wanted out of that breeding. I wanted the father's ears, the mother's tail, either head would do, either rear would do. I wanted the nice topline of the mother, the front of the father, the show attitude of the mother, the kennel attitude of the father, the coat of the father. The size and bone of either would do. Did want to hang onto the nice dark eyes and pigment of the father and the profile movement of either would do quite nicely, thank you. The dog and the bitch complemented each other beautifully.

So, we had a whole litter of two. In her last litter, this bitch had six, which I consider to be a nice sized litter. It gives you something to choose from and doesn't drag the bitch down too much. Also, it's pleasant if there are three of each sex or, maybe better,

two males and four bitches. We have had litters of ten and that's a heckuva pile of work and dirty puppy papers. Anyway, as I said, this bitch's last litter (unplanned wherein an ever ready, willing and able male grabbed his chance when he got it) was six, so when we bring her here for a litter, she has two. I think I'm gonna get my well water checked.

Ah, we raised those two pups well. They didn't have to fight for a nipple. There was plenty of good, nourishing milk for both and they grew rapidly. They had a good, caring mother and got to know a number of other dogs of various ages and even a couple of other colors. We had them up in the kitchen every evening during the normal clatter and rush of a busy family arriving home from work or school, getting dinner ready, doing kennel chores. They were used to car rides, radio and television, carpeting, tile, gravel and grass underfoot. They spent an afternoon at the local high school where our sophomore, Camie,

told everyone about the wonders of the white fuzzies. Even though her heart really lies with horses, Sammy pups are awfully hard to resist. It took her 45 minutes to walk 100 feet to bring those pups back to the van. Every kid in school had to pet them ... and the pups loved it. They were reasonably well lead trained by seven weeks of age. They were dewormed for roundworms. They had their DHLPP shots. Everything was going well ... except I couldn't make up my mind which one I wanted to keep. The other was to go to the dam's co-owner, a good home, so I wasn't a bit worried about that. Wayne said, "Keep them both!" Well, I couldn't do that, although I sure wanted to. They both looked nice.

ONE had her dam's tail, but her mother's ears, too. She had an adequate front and a nice rear, good coat, dark - almost black - eyes, and nice profile movement. She was very outgoing and showy, what I call a "gung ho" puppy. Let's call this one Star.

The other had a nice front, ade-

quate profile, a rear that was a little wide, and a low tailset. But I could not get past that puppy's head. It was gorgeous. Nice square muzzle, black nose, very dark nicely set eyes, small thick ears, face framing coat with sideburns and a nice stop. And she looked at me with those shining "Spanish" eyes and I was all done. Let's call this one MINE!

I can't believe I did that. I have always been a movement person, particularly on front ends, as I feel that that is the breed's problem at this point and has been for a number of years. Anyone who knows me well would say, "Jeanne, that's not like you." I have always graded my litters on movement first. Nothing else made much difference. Those were all cosmetic flaws which could be changed in one generation if necessary. So, I should have kept Star, for she had the better rear end, everything else being generally equal. Also, she had the tailset I wanted. But "Mine" had charisma, charm, she was the "it" girl. She looked like a baby Americ of Kobe. We'll have to pay the price in

the ring for that less than perfect rear under some judges, but she will charm some other judges right out of the right colored ribbons. And in about two years, I'll breed her to the Samoyed with the best rear end I can find and THEN I'll have perfect puppies.

WELL, it has been said you have to make choices when you are a dog breeder and you shouldn't make the same choices year after year. I cannot believe that this generally levelheaded Samoyed person of some twenty years who has raised a number of pups and looked at bunches more could be so bowled over by a pretty face. And Wayne wasn't much help in this case, either, leaving the ball in my court by saying I should keep them both.

Maybe I was just feeling sentimental, as we had just had to put our Ch. Moonlighter's Ice 'N Spice to sleep and these pups were her double granddaughters. I think I'll use that as an excuse for my lapse from cool, reasonable thinking. And I think I'll go now and play with MY puppy. •