



THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
**Jeffrey Skinner and
Dr. Shauna Brummet**
HOBBY HORSE FARM
Wadsworth, Ohio

This interview was conducted at the home of Jeffrey Skinner and Dr. Shauna Brummet in August of 1998 by Connie Porter.

How long have you been involved with this breed?

Shauna: About fifteen years. We got our first fifteen years ago this October and he is still alive and kicking.

And what is his name?

Shauna: His name is "Soryk."

How did you find your first dog?

Jeffrey: Actually, when we first got married twenty years ago, we went to the Ohio State Fair. At that time they had a place for people with dogs who exhibited different breeds, and you could meet all the different breeds. We just happened to run across someone with a Samoyed, and we looked at that. I decided when we had a place where we could have dogs that the Samoyed would be the one we'd get. As it turned out, it happened to be John Gormley from Marjon Kennels who was exhibiting his dogs there. We kept the information for many years until we bought our first house. Then Shauna gave them a call to see if they had any puppies available. They didn't have anything at the time, but they had a friend in Wisconsin who did - so that is how we got started. The friend in Wisconsin was Gail Mathews of Nordic Samoyeds.

Why did you like this breed?

Jeffrey: They were just so beautiful and so friendly. I don't know ... they just caught my eye.

Shauna: Jeff had never had a dog while growing up. I had had a Border Collie mix and a Boston Terrier when I was a child, but he had never had anything, and when he saw the Sammies, he just said, "This is it. I want one."

Was this your first show dog?

Shauna: We got Soryk as a pet. He ended up with his

American and Canadian CD, but we never really did show him. When he was about seven months old we decided he was lonely and needed a friend, so we got our first bitch from Gail Mathews, and her name is "Echo." She ended up being Ch. Nordic's Hobby Horse Echo CDX/CANCD. She was our first show quality one, but the one that we finished first was another bitch from Gail who became Ch. Nordic's Sunkissed of Marjon called "Kissy." She



came to us when she was about four years old. I finished her in eight shows and we became hooked. (laughter)

That's easy to do when you are winning like that.

Shauna: Yes. She won her very first show that I walked in the ring with her, and she finished very easily. Gail kept telling us, "It's not this easy," but with Kissy it was. She was quite spectacular.

How many litters have you bred?

Shauna: We've bred ten litters and co-owned three with Gail that she had at her house. Out of that we have produced 58 puppies, and 51 are adults. Seven we just had in May (1998). They were the latest litter.

Was there a reason for each breeding?

Shauna: We have only bred when we wanted to keep some-

thing for ourselves. We never breed a litter to just sell them. We only want to produce something when we want another to continue on with. We always try to breed what we think are our very best girls to the best boys that we think we can find. We have had many of our bitches that we haven't bred. Some of them are quite good bitches, but for one reason or another we either just didn't want another litter at the moment or there was some reason we felt we didn't want to breed them. We have had several champions that we've never bred. We only pick out the very best ones and go on from there.

Which do you consider your best

outstanding. She is two-and-one-half. Her name is Hobby Horse Nordic MagicKist, so that was our smallest litter. Another super litter was "Icy's" litter of just three dog puppies, all now champions. She was six-and-a-half before we ever bred her, which was later than we should have done, or intended to do, but we fooled around and waited. However, we have averaged six, even counting the one and the three.

How many champions have been in the litters?

Shauna: We have 25 champions that we have owned and/or bred. Out the 51 adult puppies between us, Gail, and other buyers, we have kept 29 or 30 as show potential. At this point, fifteen of those are champions and another eleven are pointed and a few of them have not yet been shown. So we have had very good success with the ones we have chosen to keep either for ourselves or Gail has kept or that we have placed as show potential puppies. Of those 30, which is about two-thirds of the puppies that we have produced, all of those have been x-rayed and all of them have cleared, so that is very nice.

What is the best dog you have ever owned?

Jeffrey: I would have to say Icy. She is overall the best so far.

Shauna: She is Am/Can Ch. Nordic's Blue Ice Hobby Horse, and she is from our first litter. She is a multi-Group winner and a multi-Best in Specialty Winner. Also, she was Canadian National Specialty Winners Bitch in 1991.

So is she your biggest winner?

Jeffrey: To date, she's our biggest winner. Her son "Caper," Ch. Hobby Horse Nordic Icecapade, we are just starting to special now. He finished very easily with four majors, three Winners Dog and Best of Winners at regional specialties and his fourth major was Best of Breed from the classes. He also has a Group One and another Group placement. He's a very nice dog. Another is Icy's dam: She was the 1990 SCA National Specialty Winners Bitch under judge Sam Pizzino.

Can pedigrees in this breed be trusted as to accuracy?

Shauna: Generally, they can. In our own pedigrees, we certainly know everything is cor-

litter?

Jeffrey: The first litter that we had was probably our best litter. We had nine puppies. Of that, six finished their championships, two were pointed, and one was sold as a pet and was never shown. We saw pictures of her later and we probably wish that we had shown her. She looked that nice.

Is nine a normal litter?

Shauna: That was our largest litter. We've average six. The smallest litter was one. That was the result of a surgical insemination from our quite old dog at the time who was our foundation dog. He was Am/Can Ch. Nordic's Magic Hobby Horse. For his last litter he was bred to a little bitch of ours and Gail's called Nordic's Hobby Horse Karioka - we got one puppy from this surgical insemination, and she is quite

rect back through Gail Mathews' and Donna Pagel-Yokom's breedings. Everybody we have gotten from Gail I certainly trust completely. Whether there have ever been mistakes, I suspect there have been somewhere along the line, but generally most people are honest. I suppose there may be some people out there who lie about it, but I don't know of anybody personally. I haven't discovered anything.

How have you used inbreeding, linebreeding and outcrossing?

Shauna: Mostly we linebreed. We don't inbreed at all per se as far as mother/son or father/daughter. We have never even done a grandparent to grandchild. We've done some uncle/niece and aunt/nephew and cousins, but I consider that linebreeding. We've done a bit of an outcross. All of our dogs go back to Gail Mathews' Nordic Kennel, and then from there to Tsiulikagta, Donna Pagel-Yokom's kennel, and they mostly have linebred, then gone out to an English dog. We have continued to do that. We bought a dog from Donna that she imported. He is now sixteen-and-one-half and still doing pretty well. His name is Can. Ch. Colleda Cabal, and he is sired by a dog of Margaret Wilcox's Anney Kennel in England. So we have continued to linebreed them, then introduce something from an English dog and then continue to linebreed. That has been successful for us, and we'll continue to do that.

When you outcross, is there a reason? Are you looking for something in particular?

Shauna: We have outcrossed just to bring in something outside - a different gene pool. This English dog that we outcrossed to, his call name is "Laddie," is a very sound and typey dog. By American standards, he is not a spectacular mover, but he is quite sound and at sixteen-and-one-half is still going. He can go up and down some steps. He's better than many American dogs that you see. He has a really nice head and a good jaw. In a lot of American dogs we see not enough underjaw, and that is something that he really does have, a nice head and nice jaw. Also, just his longevity. We didn't know that to begin with, but we are hoping that his

extreme longevity will continue in our other dogs.

What is the average longevity?

Jeffrey: Twelve to fifteen years.

So sixteen is outstanding.

Shauna: Yes.

Jeffrey: He will be seventeen on Christmas Eve. He was a Christmas Eve puppy.

tance.

How many dogs do you keep now?

Shauna: We have 25.

What is the most you have ever kept?

Shauna: 28.

Do you have help or do the two of you do this?

Jeffrey: Just the two of us.

horse names. One of our bitches is Ch. Hobby Horse's Foolish Pleasure. Another is Hobby Horse's Run For The Roses. We also have a dog named Sea Biscuit that is a very special pet. Icy's name is Blue Ice - we have carried on some blue and ice themes. Capar is Ch. Hobby Horse Nordic IceCapade For



Am/Can Ch. Nordic's Magic Hobby Horse.

Who or what has influenced your breeding the most?

Jeffrey: I would say Gail has influenced our breeding the most. Most of our breeding we do in conjunction with her. We ask her advice. We also look at what we have and what we think - we usually come up with the same ideas independently of who we should breed a dog to. With her guidance, we have learned quite a bit.

Shauna: She's always emphasized the importance of type and I think we continue to emphasize that. We all feel that if they don't have type, if they really don't look like the breed and are built in proper proportion, then they are not a good example of the breed. Therefore, type is foremost in impor-

(laughter)

Really! You are busy! (laughter)

Shauna: Yes, we are.

What is your kennel name, and how did you come up with it?

Shauna: Hobby Horse. When we got Soryk, our first one, we lived in a different place. We had a little farm, and two horses, and they were our hobby. We had already named our farm Hobby Horse Farm because of the horses, so when we got the dogs and then actually decided to show we decided we would use that as our kennel name as well.

Do you name litters with any sort of scheme or theme?

Shauna: A little. We haven't been formal about it. Some of ours are named with

Icy. His litterbrother is Ice Bear and his other brother is "Glacier." We have done a few.

Do you feel that you have established a distinguishable line?

Shauna: I think we have. I do hear people say, "That looked like a Hobby Horse dog." We are a little different from Gail overall. We do tend to select slightly different ones than she does when we grade a litter. While we think type is extremely important, we place a little more importance on side gait than she tends to - consequently, our look has started to vary from hers a bit, but you can generally tell a Nordic and/or a Hobby Horse dog pretty clearly.

And how am I going to know it's yours?



Am/Can Ch. Nordic's Blue Ice Hobby Horse
(Am/Can Ch. Nordic's Magic Hobby Horse x Ch. Nordic's Kismet O'Cynosura).

Shauna: They have a particular head. It's very beautiful and typey, but moderate. They are not overly heavy. Neither Gail nor we like a very heavy-headed or heavy-bodied dog. They are very moderate. They just have a certain look about them that is hard to describe. If we showed you a picture of all of them, they would look more like each other than they any other Sammies that you see.

How do you rate type, temperament and soundness in order of importance?

Jeffrey: We would probably rate type as the most important because if it doesn't look like a Samoyed then it is not a good Samoyed. Soundness is very important too. It is hard to say because it all goes into the whole picture, but they have to look like a Sammy first, and if they look like one the soundness sort of follows in with it. If they are proportioned correctly, which has to do with the soundness, then they will most likely move

correctly, which means they are sound. Most of our dogs have had lovely temperaments so we have not had to worry with this much.

What is your long-range goal in breeding?

Shauna: We want to maintain and improve the quality of the animals that we have. We think that type is lacking in our breed overall. We think there are a lot of people who have gone away from the type described by the standard. It's our goal to keep type. We feel that we have very good type. Also, we want to maintain the soundness that we have and to utilize the genetic and medical testing that is becoming available to ensure that the dogs are more and more healthy.

I'm pretty involved with the canine genome research. I'm somewhat of a consultant for the American Kennel Club on canine genetic issues. Also, we try to make use of anything that would be available for our dogs.

There isn't any genetic test available for Sammies as yet, but I've done some parentage typing on our dogs just for fun to look at some of the markers that are available and see if I can determine if there are any differences in our dogs, and I could identify them individually with the limited set of markers that I have. We want to maintain type, maintain the soundness that we have and continue to improve overall health and genetic health as well.

The ideal conformation. Describe your perfect Sammy to me.

Shauna: She's lying there. (laughter) "Icy, wake up and look alive here!"

Jeffrey: A well-proportioned head, dark eyes, good pigment, full pigment around the lips, strong underjaw, properly set ears, and a good neck is very important. If you don't have a good neck, you don't have a good front. A good neck and a good shoulder layback go hand-in-hand.

Shauna: I think balance is the most important feature and something we strive to have. If the animal isn't balanced both standing and moving then it is not overall good and sound. We tend to keep the middle of the standard size-wise. We don't think huge is correct, so we stay pretty much in the middle of the standard. We have some that are bigger, but we generally don't keep those to go on from. We want to see something that has a nice length of back and short in the loins. We are seeing a lot of long-loined dogs, and they don't move correctly. Not short legged and not long legged. The standard describes a moderate dog in every respect, and that is what we are looking for.

Jeffrey: If you read the standard and apply it religiously, you can come up with an ideal dog. A lot of people, I don't believe, either interpret it correctly or they don't understand what they are reading and they don't come up with the right dog.

Why do some dogs look good standing and posing, but not so good when moving?

Shauna: They may have a reasonable outline and perhaps a nice head, but their angulation and their balance isn't really correct. A lot of things can be hidden by hair and by appropriate grooming, so you can make a dog look good standing still, but moving will tell the tale.

Jeffrey: In some ways, a dog that is too short-backed or too cobby will look real nice standing there. It will be a nice looking picture, especially if it is animated, but when it starts to move, you'll see it is too short-backed. It doesn't look right moving.

How should a Sammy move coming toward you?

Jeffrey: You should see a single tracking front. As the dog increases in speed, the front feet should fall in front of each other. You should not see them toeing in. I see a lot of this in a lot of dogs nowadays. They do single track, but their feet come down and their toes come in. Yeah, the toes are single tracking, but the legs are making no effort to come toward a convergence. I see that as a problem in our breed. They should be single tracking; there should be a straight line down the shoulder

to the foot.

What about going away from you?

Jeffrey: The same in the rear. They should come from hips and converge down and make a "V" in the rear as they increase their speed going away. There should be no turning out or toeing in. You shouldn't see a real close parallel rear. You shouldn't see a wide "V" either - that is not appropriate. There should be a straight line from the hips down.

And from the side?

Jeffrey: From the side you should see balance with equal reach in the front and drive in the rear. From the side, when you freeze them in full motion, you should see a "W" and they should be even. All angles should be exactly the same as they are moving. Now, the supposed ideal is to have a 45-degree shoulder layback, so you get the equal drive in the rear and reach in the front. That shoulder is ideal, and you are probably never going to see that. I would rather see a dog that is balanced front and rear, has equal reach and drive, than one that is over angulated in the rear and has more drive in the rear than reach in the front. When you videotape the dog and freeze it at that moment when they have either reached out as far in front or stretched out in the rear, you will know whether they have a good side gait or not. You'll see a lot that have already reached the maximum front extension and their front foot is all the way down on the ground and starting to come back, and their rear is not completely extended all the way back. This is unbalanced and makes for a bouncy movement - our breed standard calls for balance. While the "big kick" may look real flashy going around the ring, it's not right. It's not sound. I'll take a dog that has a balanced side gait over a dog that has a flashy side gait any day. The dog that has the proper side gait can move as fast or cover as much ground in the same amount of time than the dog that has the real flashy but improper side gait.

What are looking for in the head?

Shauna: There has to be the smile. We want to see almond eyes, not beady little triangular eyes. They should have an eye



Ch. Hobby Horse Nordic.

that fits their head. We want to see ears that are set-on appropriately so they act as a frame to the head. They should not be low-set or wide-set. That's a major, major problem in the breed right now ... too many

dogs with their ears sticking out the side of their head. They can't have the proper Samoyed expression if their ears stick out sideways. Full pigmentation is important - they can't have a Sammy smile if half their mouth



Ch. Hobby Horse's Foolish Pleasure.

is pink.

Jeffrey: Especially with corners. If the pink is in the corners, then you can't see the upturn.

Shauna: Yes, you can't see the Sammy smile. You see an awful lot of dogs now who lack pigment. They should have an animation to their face that is a smile ... that is different than any other breed. The skull is supposed to be triangular. The entire head is a wedge. The skull should probably be 55 to 60 percent of the total head and the muzzle should be 40 to 45 percent - 60/40 is probably the optimum that you would want to see. We see a lot more dogs with narrower heads and long muzzles.

How serious are missing teeth?

Shauna: As far as I know, we have never seen a missing tooth in any of our dogs. I don't know whether it is a problem in the breed as a whole, but I don't think so. I don't hear people talk about it. Also, no other dog I have ever happened to look at have any missing teeth - I don't think it is a problem.

If you could rate the whole dog on a point scale of 100, how many points would you allow the head?

Shauna: 30 or 40. I think the head is of great importance.

Jeffrey: I'd say more than that.

So it is a head breed?

Shauna: They have to be sound. A part of being typey is being sound, but I don't really care what the rest of them looks like because they are not a good Samoyed if they don't have a good head.

Jeffrey: I would agree with that, but I'd say probably 40 to 50.

How about winter nose?

Shauna: Yes, we have some winter nose. Icy has a little bit of a lighter nose. Some of them stay coal black all of their lives, and some of them lighten a little bit. I'm more concerned with pigment in the eyes and lip lines. As long as that maintains full and dark pigment, I don't worry too much about the nose. That can come and go. Nose pigment may be affected by environmental conditions or the water in each area. We have seen differences in some of our dogs that are in different parts of the country. When they move from one part of the country to another



'94 SCA Stud Dog winner - Am/Can Ch. Nordic's Magic Hobby Horse and his get, Am/Can Ch. Hobby Horse Nordic Mischief and Am/Can Ch. Nordic's Blue Ice Hobby Horse.

er it can change. It also can vary with food.

What should be the relationship of chest depth to the rest of the dog? Should it come below the elbow or to the elbow?

Jeffrey: It should come to the elbow.

Shauna: They should have a nice heart-shaped chest, and the lowest point of their chest should be right at their elbow.

Do you see a lot of dogs that their chests do come to the elbow? Is that common?

Shauna: Most of ours do.

Jeffrey: I would say that in the area, in general, they do. Now you get to the point of leg length versus the total height of the dog, where the dog's depth can come to the elbow but then there may be too much length from the elbow to the ground.

Has it been your experience that coat is very important to winning in the ring?

Jeffrey: I would rate it as being important, yes. If the dog is out of coat you cannot determine if the coat quality and texture is good. I think it is important for a dog to be in full coat when you show it just so you can tell that they do have a proper harsh outer coat that stands off properly and is not

droopy. It should have good silver tips and a soft, plush undercoat. Therefore, I think it is important that the dog be in coat when you are showing.

Shauna: We seldom show anything out of coat.

What would you consider the ideal croup drop-off?

Shauna: The standard says it is supposed to be a 30-degree angle but I just want to see a good balanced angulation with the front end. I guess it is hard to put a measurement on it. You want the tailset to be right.

Jeffrey: Actually, if you have a good croupset your tailset will be proper, and if you have a proper tailset and it comes up over the dog properly, not too tight and not too high, you can tell that the croup is sloped properly or not.

So the tailset just kind of lays over the top. Is that correct?

Shauna: It should flip up and there should be a space between the tail and the back so that when you put your hand through it you can see your fingers. If it is too tight and you can't get your fingers through it is not correct. You want to be able to push your hand through and actually see the fingers. If the tailset is too high or the

croup is too steep, then they will have more of a gay tail, where it will just come up and set there over the back like a little mop head.

What is the ideal height of a dog and a bitch?

Shauna: We shoot for the middle of the standard, but anywhere within the standard is proper. The bitches are 19 to 21, and dogs 21.5 to 23.5. Realistically there is going to be some overlap. I don't believe there are many species that don't have an overlap in size between the male and the female. However, if it is within the standard it is correct. If it is bigger than the standard it is less correct and should be penalized.

Jeffrey: Size also has to do with what you intend to do with the dog. If you are campaigning a special, it would be much harder nowadays to campaign a Special that is on the lower end of the standard, whether it is male or female, just because of the American mentality that bigger is better. If you are really intent on campaigning, the middle to the top of the standard is probably what you would look for. There are other things that you want to look at, too - the quality of the animal and how it

reacts to showing and the rigors of campaigning, so size isn't the only thing. You are at a disadvantage, if you are trying to go to the upper levels of competition if you have a dog or a bitch that is at the low end of size.

What is the ideal foot?

Shauna: The standard describes a hare foot and I guess maybe some people don't know what kind of a foot a hare has (laughter) - there aren't too many hares running around. However, the foot should be oval shaped and a bit longer than it is wide. The toes should be well arched with lots of hair between them. It shouldn't be a flat, thin foot - you want the pads to be nice and thick. It is not a little round foot like a Doberman's ... it is an oval shaped foot.

Should a dog with bad feet be used in breeding?

Shauna: I don't think they should be. You see a lot of dogs in the ring with big, splatty feet, which tend to go on the huge, incorrect size, gross, overdone dogs. They often have these big, round, splatty feet, which are easy to see when you show indoors on concrete. As they come toward you, you can see that foot hit the ground and the toes just splay out. A Sammy with a good foot does not do that. Their foot should have kind of the oval shape, longer than it is wide, and when it hits the ground it shouldn't splay out. It should stay pretty tight. To produce a working dog, an animal that can herd or pull a sled or do any kind of work that you want it to do, they need to have a good, strong, solid foot.

What are the most serious faults in the breed today? And the most common?

Shauna: Lack of type is the biggest problem. You see a lot of incorrectly shaped dogs and a lot of very poor heads. In movement, we see a lot of unbalanced, more rear than front movement, so they are not a nice balanced dog. Toeing in is a front fault. That's in general what we view as poor about a lot of the dogs we see throughout the country.

Is our standard a good one?

Jeffrey: It is a very good standard.

Is there anything you would like to see changed?

Jeffrey: The only thing I would change would be to enforce the size.

Shauna: It might be a good idea to have a size restriction. When we say 23.5 is the top, we don't mean 25, 26 or 27. They really aren't Malamutes.

Jeffrey: They are supposed to be 21.5- to 23.5-inch dogs and that is what people should breed to.

Shauna: The Siberian Huskies have size restrictions so you don't see as many huge males in the Siberian breed as you do in the Samoyed breed.

Are there disqualifications?

Shauna: Blue eyes.

Jeffrey: Then any other color than white, cream, biscuit or white and biscuit. Therefore, you wouldn't see a black dog. You are allowed white, cream, biscuit, or any combination of white, cream or biscuit.

Now what is biscuit?

Jeffrey: Biscuit is the brown tips on Caper's ears.

Shauna: Caper has a biscuit saddle - right in the middle of him he is kind of honey colored. Biscuit can vary anywhere from the faintest lemon yellow to almost orange in an old dog. It often darkens with age, but it can be any color in that range.

Now out of these acceptable colors, does one go up more than another in the ring?

Jeffrey: In the past most judges wouldn't put up anything that wasn't white. But now, with some of the judges education SCA has been doing, I

think they are promoting the thought that yes, it is proper for these dogs to be cream or biscuit and the judges are being a little bit more understanding of what that means - it doesn't seem to bother them as much.

Shauna: We win with cream and biscuit, and we see lots of other people with nice cream and biscuit dogs win, too. There isn't much of a prejudice against it anymore. When we first started out, and prior to that, there was a stronger tendency to go for the really white dog.

Are either of you judges?

Jeffrey: No.

Shauna: Not yet.

Are you thinking of doing it?

Shauna: We might someday. We've both judged Sweepstakes and matches and have enjoyed it.

Do you feel that champions should be special?

Jeffrey: No, not generally.

Shauna: It is a rare champion that is really worthy of being a special. A special should be exceptional in every way. They should have exceptional type, be extremely sound with really exemplary movement front, rear and side gait, and they should have the temperament for it. They should be a show dog. There are lots of decent dogs that are finished that are dragged around as specials that aren't. The dog doesn't enjoy it,



Ch. Nordic's Sunkissed of Marjon

and it's just not that good of a dog.

Do you feel that making the Top Ten or Twenty means anything?

Jeffrey: It depends on how you achieved the distinction. If you are an owner-handler and making it to the Top Ten that means something. If you have a good handler it can make a big difference.

Shauna: But it can just mean that you have a lot of money to spend. If you advertise enough and have a big name handler almost anything can win, which is absurd sometimes. That isn't to say a lot of the handlers don't have good dogs. Many of them do show very nice dogs and win on the dog's merit. It just means more for an



Kismet's first litter - Ch. Nordic's Kismet O'Cynosura and seven of her first litter, six of whom finished their American championships and two were also Canadian champions.

owner-handler to get their dog to that level, and is more difficult. Generally, they are not spending as much money, and the dog really has to win on its own merits.

Would popularization help or harm the breed?

Shauna: It would generally harm it. Most breeds that have become extremely popular begin to be bred by puppy mills and the backyard breeder and I feel that is generally to the detriment of the breed. Better if they stay smaller, fewer in number and are really bred by people who are careful and try to use all the genetic and medical testing available to ensure their animals are sound. And if they try to breed good typey dogs, overall, the breed will benefit.

Jeffrey: I don't see them increasing in popularity due to the coat and the amount of care that entails. They really do shed. Normally, when we have someone who is interested in the breed and the first thing they ask you is, "Do they shed?" you know that's not the breed for them.

Shauna: They are not a good candidate. You would be surprised how many people ask you that.

Jeffrey: So due to their beautiful coat and the amount of care that is necessary, they just won't become as popular as other breeds - not that they aren't better or the best of all the breeds. (laughter)

I understand. (laughter) That goes without saying. Do you feel judging is fair?

Shauna: Mostly it is relatively fair. I feel there are a lot of judges who are not really knowledgeable about the breed. There are a lot of judges out there who are not really knowledgeable about it, so they may do things that appear to people to be unfair. However, I believe there are more errors out of ignorance than unfair judging. There is some just plain unfair judging, but I don't think it predominates at all.

Jeffrey: I would agree to that. There again it depends on what level you are competing at as to the fairness of the judging. The higher in level that you try to go it becomes more of how well known you are than always just the quality of your dog.

Do you both handle?

Shauna: Yes. Both of us

show.

Would you prefer to handle under a breeder-judge or an all breed judge?

Jeffrey: I prefer to handle under an all breed judge.

Why?

Jeffrey: A knowledgeable all breed judge. Some of our breeder-judges have agendas of their own and if I take them a good dog and they can't find a good dog because they are too busy playing games I'm not going to bother with them again.

Do you think there are some politics involved in judging?

Jeffrey: Oh, yes.

Shauna: I prefer to show under an all breed judge, and again, a knowledgeable one. Not someone who has just gotten our breed and barely has read the standard but somebody who really has an understanding of type and what the breed is supposed to look like and be. Again, I have been disappointed in the last few years amongst a lot of the new Sammy breeder-judges that we have seen come along. Some of them are not developing reputations as knowledgeable, quality judges.

Do you think that advertising influences judges?

Shauna: All those people spending tens of thousands of dollars in *Canine Chronicle* and *Dog News* must think so.

Jeffrey: Once again, it is at what level you are competing at. If you have enough money to put your dog on the cover of all the magazines you'll win your share of Bests in Show.

Shauna: When we were campaigning Icy, a very well known all breed judge told us that if we put her on the cover of *Dog News* that she'd win more. So ...

Is it ethical to retouch advertising photographs?

Shauna: I just had one where my hair was sticking straight up because of the wind. (laughter) I asked our friend, Lori Rossi, who does all of our ads, "Please fix my hair." Other than that, no.

Jeffrey: You shouldn't be retouching the dog. (laughter)

Have you ever used a handler?

Shauna: Yes, we have. Icy was campaigned by Tom and Andrea Glassford for about a year-and-one-half and they did get her to Number Two bitch and Number Eight overall for 1994. They have taken out a

couple of our class dogs when we just couldn't make it to a show, but it has been just two bitches and a handful of shows. Other than that, we generally handle our own dogs.

Have you ever handled for other people professionally or as a favor?

Jeffrey: We have for some friends.

How do you train your puppies and at what age?

Shauna: We try to videotape them when they are eight or nine weeks old, so we attempt to put a lead on them and we coax them to trot.

Jeffrey: We don't really

an outdoor show, we'll take with us to the shows. We'll take extra ones along and walk them around the show site just so they get used to the atmosphere. That is just to expose them to the different things.

Shauna: Socialization is the most important training but mostly they will gait on the lead nicely and most of them will stand up and show.

Do you believe in obedience training?

Shauna: Oh, yes. We started out with doing obedience with our first dog, Soryk. He is Nordic's Hobby Horse Soryk



Ch. Nordic's Kismet O'Cynosure.

have a formal training. We work with them as they grow up. We will give them their treats at night and teach them to pose and stand and teach them the words we use in the show ring, but in a happy atmosphere where they are getting their treats to teach them to stand and to bait. Really, we do most of our training in the ring - show training - anymore.

Shauna: We used to go to class religiously. Our first litter we wore out before they got to the show. They said that they'd had enough.

Jeffrey: Going to class was more for our benefit than the dogs' when we first started. Anymore, we take them out to shows. The young dogs, if it is

Am/Can CD. Also, our first bitch, Echo, who is Ch. Nordic's Hobby Horse Echo CDX and Can. CD. And then Kissy, our first champion, also had her CD. One of our two foundation bitches was Am/Can Ch. Nordic's Silver Hobby Horse Am/Can CD. We haven't done as much obedience training in the last few years as we did to begin with - we would like to have time to do more of it. We believe obedience training is important. All of our dogs are relatively obedient. As you can see, Capar is very nicely lying on the sofa, where he knows that he shouldn't be. (laughter)

Have you done any tracking or agility with any of them?

Shauna: We have never

done any tracking or agility. We have done a bit of recreational sledding. We don't really have a lot of snow around here usually, at least not enough to get out in and do a lot of sledding. We do have a sled and six harnesses and once in a while will drag it out and try to make a round or two before the snow turns into slop. The thing we like to do most and we do a little bit of, is herding. We raise Alpacas and use the dogs to herd them. It is quite interesting to take the dogs out and see who really has the instinct to do it. Some of them are more interested in hunting field mice and some of them just like to chase the cat. However several of them are automatic herders. They go out there and see the Alpacas, run out, gather them up and bring them back to us. We would like to go get some better training so we can develop them a little bit more.

How intelligent is this breed compared to other breeds?

Jeffrey: They are very intelligent. A little too intelligent sometimes. When we first started in obedience class with Soryk, we walked in the door and the trainer said, "Oh, no. A Sammy!" (laughter) They told us how difficult they were, but by the end of the eight-week

class he was the star pupil.

Shauna: They are very intelligent and crafty. They can figure out things. We are certain that ours lay here all day while we are at work and think up things that they are going to do when we get home. (laughter)

Jeffrey: They are very smart. They can see another dog do something and immediately pick it up and do it themselves. When I was training Echo in her CDX work, actually it was utility work I was training her at, we would do all the exercises. Shauna had Soryk there and just on a whim she had him do the exercises. Just by watching Echo do it he was able to go out and retrieve the correct glove.

Shauna: Another one of our dogs, "Rikki," watched one of our friend's dogs, Pat Delanzo's dog "Cruise," and he would bow. I had Rikki watch Cruise bow one time and I said, "Rikki, bow," and he did it and would continue to do it every time I told him to take a bow. So he only had to see Cruise do it once. The puppies learn to do all kinds of ornery things from their elders.

Can shy or aggressive dogs be corrected by training?

Shauna: Shy dogs particu-



Hobby Horses's White Tie.

larly can be helped by socialization and training. It gives their mind something to focus on so they won't be as afraid.

Aggressiveness ... in our own dogs we don't find many that are what I would really call aggressive. Therefore I don't really know if training could help.

Echo was rather shy. She had a period in her early life where she was afraid and the obedience training really helped.

Jeffrey: It gave her confidence.

Do you feel a big-name handler can help a dog win?

Shauna: Oh, yes.

Can you give any specific advice to owners who would like to show their own dogs?

Shauna: First of all you have to get yourself a good dog and you have to learn how to show it. A lot of owner-handlers think that all they need is a good dog but you do have to know how to show it and how to present it. You have to groom it well and you have to go out there in the ring and be determined to win. You can't be a wallflower. Owner-handlers should not be intimidated by anybody else in the ring. They just have to have confidence in their own dog and themselves, and they can go out and win.

We did it.

Jeffrey: But you have to have somebody who is willing to take the time to help you and to teach you. We were very fortunate that we had Gail to start us out with good dogs and advise. In addition, since she was in Wisconsin and we were in Ohio, we were very fortunate to run across a husband and wife who did local training classes. Her name was Jackie Figler, she bred Tibetan Terriers, and her husband Rob handled. She immediately recognized the quality of our dogs and could tell we were interested and determined to learn how to show them properly. She took us under her wing and taught us how to show the dogs.

Shauna: How to figure out how best to show each dog.

Jeffrey: Right. It wasn't just how to present your dog in the ring but to evaluate them and know how to present the dog to the judge to the best of its ability. So between the two of them we had a very good foundation to start from. If someone just buys a dog and doesn't get any help from the breeder they are going to have a difficult time unless they find someone local who will help them.

To be continued ...



Soryk and Echo, Brace obedience - Nordic's Hobby Horse Soryk Am/Can CD and Ch. Nordic's Hobby Horse Echo Am. CDX, Can. CD.