

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Robert and Constance Gaskin
BOB MARDON
Grimsby, Ontario, Canada

This interview was conducted at the home of Bob and Connie Gaskin in July 2002 by Lynne Robertson.

How many years have you been in Samoyeds?

Bob: This is our 38th year.

Connie: I got my first Sammy in 1964.

How did you first get started in dogs?

Connie: I actually got started first, and then Bob came on the scene later.

Bob: She got her first Sammy in 1964 as a pet, like most people start out.

Connie: His call name was Nikki. He was a companion dog, and we made all kinds of mistakes with that dog. We had a humongous yard, but I didn't think the dog was getting enough exercise. So we all decided that when we were going to take the dog out for a walk, we were going to run with him. Well, he got into the habit of every time he was on a leash, he was running. The kids would run with him, I would run with him, and I suppose that is how we all stayed healthy. Nikki's registered name was Snowland's Nikki of Nomad. His grandsire was Ch. Snowland's Ziska Buck, an English import.

Why did you choose Samoyeds, and how did you get your first show dog?

Connie: With my first dog, you couldn't walk down the street calmly with him because he felt it was a big running game. So I decided to take him to obedience class. Of course, as soon as we got out of the car he wanted to run. It was a big learning experience for me; I realized as time went by that the dog was getting better and better. To us, and to any of our friends, he was a gorgeous dog. But the mannerisms of that dog, he needed obedience. He would do all kinds of tricks; he would sit, bow, shake hands, even kind of salute. He could walk on his

hind legs, and do lots of tricks. I could ask him to sing and he would, and if he was too loud I would say, "Quietly," and he would tone it down. I guess that is why I chose a Sammy. My second dog was over a year of age. I got her from a breeder north of Toronto. That was Koweeka's Tkeena, from Mary Lawson's breeding. Mary used

show and breed?

Connie: I initially went to Betty Dixon. She was showing her dogs, and I always thought they looked nice. The dogs were so well-behaved and groomed. Not that our dog wasn't groomed, it seemed like he was being bathed all the time! He was in the tub as often as the kids were.



to get a lot of her dogs from Betty Dixon, who was of Ziska kennels. That was a big kennel in the '60s. Betty Dixon was from England, and she would go over there to visit and bring dogs back. Most of her dogs were from England, and then she did her breedings here in Canada.

Was your second dog from English lines, then?

Connie: Yes.

Bob: Wasn't that your first brood bitch?

Connie: Yes, it was. That was Tkeena. My first litter was in 1967.

What made you first decide to

Bob: You were looking for an activity that would involve the children, too.

Connie: On September 24, 1966, I took Tkeena into the ring and we won our first ribbon. On November 2 that same year we picked up a first place ribbon at the International Samoyed Society Specialty. I joined the Canadian Samoyed Club and was well on my way to being a "doggy person." It was not that I was looking for all kinds of awards or anything, it just seemed like a fun thing to do. The kids wanted to go out and see things, so I would drag them all over the place. It was a

family activity.

Bob: Tkeena's first litter was very interesting. It was one of those things that normally would have devastated anyone else. There were seven puppies, and by six months of age, six of the seven had very marked hip dysplasia. In any event, at that time there was no hip dysplasia preventative program. Nobody was doing the x-rays and so on. This was in the late 1960s. I am not saying anything against previous breeders, because we all experienced something. We have all moved on now. The diagnostic tests just weren't there to begin with.

Connie: I started talking more to different people. I phoned Mary Lawson, who I got Tkeena from, and talked to her. Not having a litter before, what did I know? I thought she was older and more knowledgeable, since she had litters before. I told her I was experiencing this problem, and that people who had gotten puppies from me took them to veterinarians and were told the dogs had hip dysplasia. The joints weren't functioning properly and things like that. I told her I wasn't saying it was anything she had done, but I asked her for any idea of how I could correct this. These people were devastated. I had never kept a puppy from that litter, and I didn't know how to handle it.

One of the veterinarians asked if the parents had been x-rayed, and the parents of the puppies had never been x-rayed. I asked Mary Lawson if Tkeena's parents had been, and she said they had not. Mary decided she would get her dogs x-rayed; she had ten champions in her kennel. She x-rayed those ten champions, and eight were dysplastic. She didn't know! It is a touchy subject, and we will be stepping on toes, but those older breeders are since gone. Anyway, Mary phoned Betty Dixon, and told her what was happening. Betty said it had nothing to do with us, and that it had to be a virus. These are some of the things, a few of us older breeders sort of laugh about now, because that is an

easy way of explaining things. You see, nobody x-rayed dogs back then. We are not pointing fingers.

Bob: The tests were just becoming available then. Eventually, of course, the veterinary community became able to diagnose this through an x-ray. There is a veterinary college here in Ontario called the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) that has a program whereby breeders can take their dogs, have them x-rayed and be certified free. That is the program we got into immediately. From then on, all breeding stock got x-rayed. Going from the pedigrees in 1967, if you go four or five generations deep and none of them were certified, we can take a 1994 or 1995 pedigree from our kennel and go at least four back to see OFA or OVC hip dysplasia-free dogs. That was the plus of getting that discovered. Normally, it would have knocked a breeder out on their ear! The fact that we got it right off set off the alarm bells. We found out how to handle it and in the long term, how to lessen the incidence of it.

We have, as a breed nationally, and this is applicable in Canada and the United States because we do both OFA and OVC since we exhibit in the United States. That is how we got into the hip dysplasia program. That was the first genetic screening we did. In the late '60s, our national club, the Samoyed Association of Canada which was founded in 1966, was the first breed club in North America or in Europe that had in its constitution that its purpose was to eliminate hip dysplasia. They linked with the Ontario Veterinary College, so that not only could you get a certificate from the college, but as a member of the national club in Canada, you would get a certificate saying your dog was clear. And they would publish those dogs that cleared in the journal. So we jumped on to that, and subsequently, over a period of time, we still had it of course, but it was less.

Connie: It is not like we just sort of started this kind of thing. There were a lot of breeders who were experiencing problems, and the national club addressed it. I had this six-month-old puppy and she was really nice, lying there all the



"Koko," Bobmardon's Klondyke Koko in 1981.

time. I told my son when the puppies were small that he could keep a puppy. He picked that puppy, and she was so sweet and good. We had a puppy run, a big area close to the house, and every time I would look outside, I could see her lying around all the time. She was always sort of curled up into a ball. Of course, it was not that cold out that she was trying to keep warm or something. My eye wasn't trained to look for anything out of the ordinary.

As she got older, she was having trouble standing. She had a nice front, really built up nice and solid, because she was

using that for attempting to stand. She had to pull her rear end up. Her back end was weaker all the time. You could see it. She had muscles up front, and her legs were really skinny and through the back end. I studied her, and I didn't like the way she was maturing. The front was more muscular. So I took her in and had her x-rayed, and she didn't pass. She was so bad, we all cried.

Bob: The flip side is as you see some of that, you begin to pick it up. You can pick up on the gait and from what your eyes tell you, and you start to see it. I can say that about Con-

nie, I am amazed that she is so much better at it than I am. In some cases, she will say she doesn't like the gait on a dog, even at six months old. When you see that, it is like any activity, if you are not exposed to it, you don't know. Medical doctors today don't understand polio because they haven't seen it in years. If you don't see these things, you don't get an eye for it. She has an excellent eye for gait in that respect, so that is the flip side. You hate to see a dog have it, but if you don't see it, you don't pick it up.

How many litters have you bred?

Connie: I don't think we

have had that many.

Bob: We have been owners, breeders, and exhibitors, sometimes all at once and sometimes not. Sometimes we have just

enough of those two dogs to think something great was going to come out of it. That is why I don't like to say this is my best litter.



Serena and Spark's pups with Donnie in 1972.

been owners and not breeders. In that 38-year span, believe it or not, there were about seventeen where we never had a litter. Not seventeen straight, but over that time. So we didn't have great numbers. In other words, we have had 44 litters to date over the 21 years that we have had litters. That's an average of two per year.

Which was your best litter?

Bob: That is a good question. There are a variety of answers because it depends what you are speaking about. Do you say okay, out of that litter seven were champions? There is one litter that comes to mind; out of seven pups there were four champions. If you look at conformation and use that as a benchmark as how your dogs are going toward the standard, or your breeding program, then we have done that twice. That is not bad.

Connie: If you start saying who your best litter was, that is high praise for those two dogs. I feel like every attempt we have tried to do, as far as having a real good litter, we thought

Bob: You can say that based on conformation results, this is our best litter, but you can take another litter and say that we had six puppies in that litter, and they all went to pet homes. We have had fifteen litters over four years that said, "Outstanding!" They are great with the kids, they have never had better dogs, the dogs are fantastic and their temperaments are outstanding.

Connie: We try to breed for temperament first, for the families.

Bob: These are some of the positive things. When 95 percent of our puppies are going to go into pet homes, our number one goal is temperament. We want to breed to the standard, of course, but we want that puppy to leave here and go into a family. If we have done our assessment information right about the family, is it a good fit for that particular family and puppy, have we read that puppy right, if we do that, then we get these letters back with positive feedback.

Connie: Not every puppy

has turned out, though we try. They leave here with great temperaments, but you will get one sometimes where the dog has been tied up in the backyard or something. For instance, one puppy had been kept mostly in the basement. We brought that puppy back.

Bob: To answer your question about the best litter, there was one where we had the four champions in the '90s. Out of that litter came the top Samoyed in 1994 and 1996. In that particular case, his call name was Erik. That was Ch. Bobmardon Quasar O'er Ladakha. What happened with that litter was there was six males and one female. Erik came out of that litter, and initially we had him. Connie and I both agreed he was a dog that could go places so we hung on to him for a while. We decided we were really busy, so we might want to co-own him. Barbara Van Loon of Ladakha kennels came down and agreed to co-own him with us, and off she went with the puppy.

Connie: We sort of twisted her arm. (laughter)

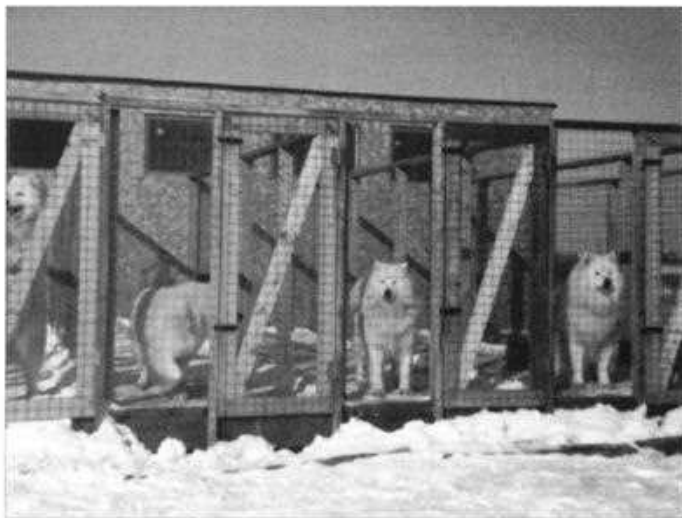
Bob: We co-owned him and handled him together, and after a while she wanted to own him outright. But it was through her

1996.

Connie: We all had a hand in getting his Canadian and American championships, though.

Bob: We were all in there rooting for him, of course. Also out of that litter was the one female that we had to send to France, Bobmardon's Friska Flyball. It had to start with the letter F that year to register them. We had made arrangements with a breeder, Mde. Tronche in France, to send a puppy over, so Friska went over there. She calls her Fly. In any event, she is a person who sleds. We don't have a picture of her, but she kept the puppy, and at about three years of age Mde. Tronche put her on her three-dog sled team and competed at the French Nationals in the French Alps. She came in first! So here is an outstanding sled dog, and here is the top Samoyed in Canada and they are littermates. So to me, if you are looking at a litter, I think that Jasper x Kiska would be one of our better ones. As a side story, we owed this breeder in France a puppy and Connie went over to France. She wanted another Sam. Connie tells it better than I do ...

Connie: I sent her a dog, and she wasn't too happy with it



Krystal, Chimo, Jana and Nomi in 1973.

efforts that he became a special. She took him out and campaigned him in 1994 to make him the top, then gave him a year's rest and took him out again in 1996. He was Top Samoyed in Canada again in

and the hips didn't clear. Our philosophy and our contract says we have to replace it. She actually wasn't my breeding, it was just at the time we had quite a few dogs, so we decided she might be happy with this one

because it was the right leg length and things like that. Anyway, the dog went to France but it didn't work out. I felt so guilty; if there is a health issue with any of the dogs that we have or that we are breeders of or anything, I like to make everybody happy. I told her Bob was on the Superdog circuit with a dog, and she was great-looking with a great disposition. She was about three years of age; she was a champion and her hips were good. I told Bob I had to see where my dogs were going, especially since the first one didn't work out. This one was a mature dog and I wanted to see where it was going to go, what environment she would be in and everything.

It cost to go to France, but I wanted to go. This girl that I know is a French interpreter, and she was looking for a Boxer puppy at the time. She said she was going to France, and I suggested we both go together and I would take Ziza. We would fly over together and she could interpret for me, and then we would go and evaluate some Boxer puppies. She and I stayed at this French lady's kennel. This lady had a smaller area than we have, but she sleds all through the mountains and everything. We stayed there overnight, and I left the dog for one day. The next morning, her son took us out sightseeing and this lady could get acquainted with the dog, and do some bonding. My dog wasn't too sure or too happy with this lady. She was happier with her husband, but he was at work all day long. He was a diplomat there in France, and he was away a few times a year.

I thought this dog would be good for this woman, and she was excited about seeing the dog, but as soon as she sat down and called Ziza over, Ziza would come but then she would go and lay down in a corner. She would come over to be petted, but then she would go to another room and lay down. When we came back and asked how the lady had made out with the bonding, she said the dog didn't want to bother with her at all. She found that kind of odd. I thought maybe it was the language barrier, because the woman didn't speak English. As long as you get the dog's name right and have the tone of

voice, she was bound to come. Anyway, she didn't bond. I told this friend of mine I was feeling very guilty, since we had slept there. Ziza would come into the bedroom and put her head on the mattress and just look at me.

I was trying to figure out what was going on, because the dog didn't normally do that in our house. I didn't know how to handle it. My friend said we had to leave the dog there so we could go; we were supposed to be seeing Boxer breeders and all that. The dog had never done

Bob: The gist of it was that the dog did come home and we owed that lady a puppy. That was how she ended up with that puppy, and she got the right dog.

Connie: I'll tell you something, I could have sold that dog to breeders of Boxers and other breeders in France, because whenever we walked around fairgrounds and parks, people would look at the dog. I could see they wanted to pet the dog, even though I had to tell them it was okay. My friend would

else. As I said, this happened quite a few times. People were telling me what a gorgeous dog she was.

Bob: That was the one who was doing flyball.

Connie: We went to the national show outside of Paris. I don't speak French or understand it, so M.J., a friend, was advertising over the loudspeaker the different activities, and they said there was a flyball demonstration going on. It is a sport that started in England, and they were starting to participate



Our first champion, Ch. Centurion Nomad Of Bobmardon in 1971.
Large trophy in center is the Robert Bremner Challenge Trophy.

anything wrong for us, so I couldn't just say, "Okay, here you are!" It is like a mother leaving her child on the doorstep of an orphanage. I just couldn't seem to do it. Aziza kept coming near me, doing a real job on me. I phoned Bob and told him I couldn't leave the dog there, and he said, "You flew all that way over there and paid all that money!" The dog cost even more than what we had thought to fly; usually they can go on your ticket but they charged us extra. I told him I just couldn't do it; I had this lump in my throat as I was talking on the phone. I told him she was coming home with us. My friend was all upset, wondering what we were going to do.

interpret and tell people they could pet the dog because she was friendly. When we went to visit Boxers, I told Ziza to stay in the car with the windows all down. I would tell her to just watch the car, then my friend and I would go in and look at some Boxer puppies and so on. Then when the breeders would walk out with us, I would ask if I could let my dog run in their field. I would let her out and she would do her business. She didn't venture way out; she was always within close range. Then the Boxer breeder wanted to buy her; he was going to give me lots of money for her. I said no, because if I couldn't bear to leave her with the first lady I couldn't leave her with anyone

in it. They had Giant Schnauzers and German Shepherds that were going to be doing this demo. When the guy said that it had originated in England, M.J. got her back up and said that the Canadians had been doing flyball for years. She was going on about it, but I told her I didn't care because I am not that kind of person. I told her to go talk to the announcer if it was bothering her that much. So she went over there to talk to him, and when she came back she said, "Okay, Ziza is doing flyball tomorrow." I said, "WHAT?!" The dog was loose in the hotel because she was very good. I could just give her a toy and tell her to watch it, and we would



Chaena winning BISS at nine years old.

be back later.

Bob: The friend had told the people in charge of the flyball demonstration that here was a champion flyball dog from Canada, and she would show them how to do flyball. She was part of our dog obedience flyball team, so she wasn't just making it up. We belong to the Swansea Dog Obedience Club. The gist of it is that she would do the flyball up and down and back. She was part of a team, so she knew the drill perfectly. She had done it in demos across Canada. The other dogs hadn't advanced that far; they were still on lead with a handler.

Connie: They were using sort of an orange crate for it. I told M.J. she was going to be totally embarrassed because Ziza may not want to do it. She might still be tired after the flight and all that, and it had only been a couple of days. She had more confidence in my dog than I did. I said she would need a little bit of practice just to see if she would pick it up and do it.

So we put on this demo, and they were amazed watching this dog do it. It was a Samoyed, not a German Shepherd, so it was like, "Wow!" When they announced us, they asked where the dog was from, and I didn't want to say Grimsby because nobody knows where Grimsby is. So I told M.J. to just say Toronto. People applauded and so on, and of course, the lady we were staying with heard about it. She heard all about the Samoyed that came from Canada and put on this demo, and she was supposed to be getting this dog. So she wondered why I brought the dog in the first place! I told M.J. she really got me in hot water with everybody. The lady didn't get her dog, but Ziza did the demo and I brought her home. Bob was pleased to see the dog, so he could still do his stuff across Canada with everybody else. It wasn't meant to be, and I am glad.

Bob: It was a win-win situation, because she eventually got her sled dog and we got our

dog.

Connie: I had sent a dog over to Germany, an adult dog, and I think what happens is that there is a language barrier. We speak English to our dogs, and if they go to France or Germany or somewhere, if the dog is an adult, they don't know what the person is saying. It makes the dog kind of frustrated, and that is probably why Ziza had trouble. That has been our experience. I think they are better off with puppies. When it is going to a foreign country, it can pick up the language.

How many champions have been in the litters you have bred?

Bob: In Canadian champions, it hasn't been our thrust to take dogs into the conformation ring a lot of the time. In other words, it won't be our main activity, as I mentioned before, because we do a variety of things.

Connie: We have some dogs that aren't finished champions. They even passed away from old age but never finished.

Bob: Yes, they were pointed but never finished their championships. But we still feel it is essential to benchmark our dogs, and how we are doing against the other breeders who are out there exhibiting.

We started with our first champion in 1971, that was Can Ch. Centurion Nomad of Bobmardon. He came in with a bang on getting his points for his championship, and finished it in 1971.

Connie: We had a lot of compliments on him.

Bob: He was at the National Sportsman's Show, at a booster by the Canadian Samoyed Club in the Open Dog class. He was Canadian-bred, and there was an entry of 24 or 26 at the time which was big for those days. He moved from the Open Dog class to Best of Winners to Best of Breed. He got five or six trophies, and won the Robert Bremner Challenge trophy. That finished his championship. From that, we will go right up to 2001, and our most recent champion was a Best Puppy in Show, Ch. Bobmardon's Quite A Venture. He was our twentieth Canadian champion.

What is the best dog you have owned or bred?

Connie: They are all special to us. In 1973 when Bob and I got together we had the one Samoyed, Nomi. We were both working at the time, and for a few years we were just owners. In 1977 we had become good friends of Helga and Frank Gruber of Shebaska kennels. That year we acquired Shebaska's Tawnywhite Happiness, a female, from the Grubers. We had great hope for this dog to restart our breeding program. It was ironic because that was her call name, "Hope." She was Ziza's dam and we got some nice puppies from her. Over the years we have traveled to many Samoyed Club of America National Specialties with Helga and Frank.

Bob: My understanding is that the average life span of a breeder, or as a breeder, is about ten to twelve years and then they are out of the game. We have been in it for 38 years, so we have been in it for three life spans. I'm going to say in each life span, we have had one good dog, from my perspective or recollection. Nomi was one, no doubt about it, in the '80s. And

Chaena was one.

Connie: We weren't the breeders of Chaena, we were the owners.

Bob: In the '90s, I would say there were two. One was Tiko, who went over to Germany as a stud dog. He was a great dog, but he had a hard time adjusting over there. The most recent one, though we lost her as a four-year-old, was Sota. She didn't do anything as far as big strides in the ring, but for a Sammy around the house, you couldn't beat her.

Connie: She didn't finish her championship, either.

Bob: No. But depending on the parameters you use, Connie might have four different dogs as best.

Connie: I agree with Bob. Then there were more. You know, each one has something. I look at it, and Sota was so special. You could talk to her, and I think she understood everything you said. Just like Tiko, who went to Germany. Tiko used to love helping me do laundry and things like that.

Bob: If you put an armchair out on the patio, you would have to put out two. Sota jumps right up and sits right beside you. She was unbelievable. She would help with the laundry.

How did she do that?

Connie: You know how everybody sorts laundry. You put it on the floor, and you have your pile here and your pile there. I would start picking up the different clothes after the water was running in the machine, and start loading the machine. She saw me doing this, and she looked like she was interested. So I would tell her to bring me this or that clothes, and she started doing it. I encouraged her a little bit more and more, and once she got the hang of it, she would drag over the clothes for me to load into the machine. Then when my dryer went out, I had to start hanging things up on the line. Bob put a line up for me. I would be hanging things out on the line, and Sota would come over and look at me to see what I was doing. This dog was always right there all the time. I could call her name once and she came. It didn't matter how busy she was doing her own thing, she always came right away when she was called. I would point to something in the

basket, and she would pick it up and hand it to me. We worked on it. Treshka, my other dog, would come over and start taking the socks to give to me. I couldn't move fast enough! Sota picked up the clothespins, and Treshka was handing me the clothes, and we were hanging up laundry. I told Bob to get the video camera and film how the dogs worked with us. He brought the camera out, and of course the dogs wondered what he was doing. I told them, "Come on, girls, let's do this again." Well, he had to get more film and whatnot, and then the camera wasn't working. I could have taken that camera and hit him over the head with it! (laughter) I was so upset.

I had the dogs doing what they should have done, but if you take a still picture of it, it is not the same as a video. When Tiko was helping me with laundry, he started helping me when we got him back when he was

about two. We drove all the way to Thunder Bay to get him, but that is another story. He was watching the different things that I do, and if anybody took their shoes off or something like that, he would pick up their shoes and take it to them. He didn't chew on shoes; he just thought he was helping by bringing them. You just had to take it from him and say thank you.

Bob: He didn't differentiate, because we used to send him for our slippers. We would tell him to go upstairs and get our slippers. Then of course, anything that appeared the same he would get.

Connie: He would do that, and he would go into Bob's pockets and pull out things. From his winter jackets or whatever, he would be in the pockets. People would ask if that dog wanted them to leave because he was giving them their shoes and getting into their

pockets. When we were doing laundry, he would help me load the machine. I would tell Tiko to get this or that, and in the wintertime, Bob wears long underwear. So the dog got to the long underwear, and he was standing on the leg while he was pulling on the top. It wasn't budging, and the dog was looking at me. (laughter) I almost killed myself laughing; it was so funny. I had to take them from him before he tore a hole in them. Then when the dryer stopped, I would open the door and Tiko would put his head in there and start pulling things out.

Bob: We also have to mention Chaena. He was definitely our best conformation dog, our ambassador. He was a dog that we got as a five-year-old. He was owned by Paul and Lisa English, when they had their kennel in Calgary, Alberta. Chaena was born in 1980, and he was a Breaker son. Ch. Ice



Can/Am Ch. Orenopac's Chaena. Judge: Gord Garrett. When Chaena won BOB, he went on to place in Group fifty percent of the time in his ten years in the conformation ring.

Way's Ice Breaker, that is, a famous stud dog in the United States. Ch. Orenopac's Chaena, as a three-year-old, was the top Samoyed in Canada in 1983. He was campaigned strictly in western Canada. They took him out and showed him for a five- or six-month period. They were originally from Ontario, and they came back to start up a business north of Toronto. We were living in Toronto at the time, in late 1984. In early 1985, Connie was looking for a stud dog, and she had heard about him. She went up to visit the Englishs.

Connie: A friend of ours, Dr. Judy Wasserfall, told me about Paul and Lisa English.

Bob: She wanted to use their dog, who was fantastic. So we used him, and at the time, I was involved flying here, there and everywhere. On one of my trips back, Connie picked me up from the airport, and we started to drive back. I noticed we were not heading home, and she said no, she had a surprise for me. We ended up at the Englishs'; she had bought the dog! That was how Chaena came to our place.

Connie: They only sold him because they had to move from their location.

Bob: They knew us, and they knew the dog was going into a good home. So he came to us in 1985, and he really took off. Over the years, he did well.

He was shown for almost ten years. He was the Open Dog class winner in 1985 at the American specialty in the United States, and he was the Veteran Dog winner at the American specialty in 1989, 1990, and 1991. He placed first; he didn't pick up points or anything. But he was first place as a Veteran Dog in those three consecutive specialties. He was an Award of Merit winner in 1990 and 1991; this is at ten and eleven years of age. He took a BIS at ten years of age, and a specialty win at nine years of age. He was in the Top Ten for seven of ten years, in the rankings.

Connie: I started him in obedience at the age of ten, and he got his Canadian CD at eleven and his American CD at eleven and one-half.

Bob: He had his Canadian and American championships, a BIS, a BISS, his Canadian and American CDs, and he had 23 Canadian champions. Of his litters, 69 percent have at least one champion, and he has eight American champions and one international champion. He was sire of the first registered Samoyed litter in Australia, using frozen semen. When we went with him in 1985 to our first specialty in the United States, everybody had placards up on the doors saying who they were and their kennel name. Well, we stuck ours up and called him "Mr. Canada."

He got stuck with the name, so every specialty we went to afterwards we had that sign up. That is the scoop on him; he was quite a dog. He was our biggest winner, no doubt about it.

What is your favorite story about any of your dogs?

Bob: One comes to my mind, although I am harping back to this dog, Chaena. We flew him out to the American specialty in San Jose, California one year. He was a great flyer; we put him in the crate and away we would go. We hit some turbulence outside of Los Angeles, because we were going to land in Los Angeles and drive up.

Connie: He didn't like thunder.

Bob: He didn't at all. When we landed in Los Angeles, we were deplaning when we heard an announcement that the owners of a white dog should please come to security to see the attendant. Well, he was out of his crate when they opened the luggage compartment! There was this big white head, so they closed it right away and started looking for whoever owned the dog. We got the leash and I went and got him.

Connie: He had to go up under the belly of the plane and get him down on this ramp.

Bob: We had to kind of clean him up a bit for the show. The show was in California, and then we had friends to visit, and then we flew back to Toronto. On the flight back, I told them we had a white dog and he was in the belly of the airplane, and he COULD be loose.

Connie: I told Bob I felt very uneasy, and every time I got those feelings something was always happening. So I told Bob to tell the stewardess to radio Toronto and tell them before they opened the compartment.

Bob: I thought we were fine when we landed; we were just about off the plane when we heard, "Will the owner of a white dog ..." (laughter) What had happened was, they were a little smarter at that time. The RCMP officer drove his car up before they opened the hatch. Sure enough, he was loose again. He called the dog, and of course Chaena loved cars so he jumped right into the car and they closed the door.

Connie: Then when Bob went to get the dog out of the car, one of the high officials there told us it wasn't good. I started to say I was really sorry that the dog got out of his crate, but he said, no, he was talking about how the dog didn't care whose car it was. He just jumped right into an unknown stranger's car!

Bob: That was in the late fall; in the early spring, we motored down to the east coast and he won a Group 1st down there. We were doing some showing down there. It was in Nova Scotia. He won a Group 1st, which made him eligible to go to the shows in the fall with the other Group winners, to compete. We decided to fly him down, and gave him a tranquilizer to keep him calm. I told Connie he would be fine. This was a big affair in front of three judges; I had to take my tuxedo. They give them 100 points each, so it is a big deal, and we wanted to go a day or two early. We loaded the dog up, gave him the tranquilizers, and flew down to Halifax. I got off the plane thinking I had it beat, when all of a sudden, "Will the owner of a white dog ..." (laughter) He always figured out how to spring the airline crates. We didn't think of bungee cords or locks and all that.

Connie: It wouldn't have mattered with a bungee cord, because he was opening the door into the crate. He pulls it into the crate.

Bob: Thank goodness we went two days ahead of time, because it gave Chaena the chance to get over it.

Connie: He tranquilized the dog coming home, and I drove to the airport in Toronto to pick him up. Well, the dog had gotten out again, and the tranquilizer didn't take effect until after the plane had landed!

Bob: Needless to say, he didn't fly anymore. It was 24 hours later when he got over it; he had to be rebathed, and I had to get in my tux. We went in front of the judges, and all were Group 3 winners. We won the Group. We didn't take the Best in Show, but we took the first place, in Group 3.

Connie: Then we decided we were going to go to a specialty in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This was at the end of November.

Bob: We didn't want to fly



Kasha, "Ben," Aziza x Roger pup.

him, but these friends of ours were going to Winnipeg to a big show at the end of November or middle of December. It was one of the last shows in Manitoba for the year.

Connie: I told Bob I wanted to drive there, but he didn't want to.

Bob: I didn't want to drive across Ontario in the middle of the wintertime. So we decided to take the train. There were supposed to be eight or nine dogs in the baggage compartment on this train trip, so off we went. It was also the Samoyed Association of Manitoba specialty in conjunction with that show. We had a nice, beautiful trip out on the train. We went to the baggage compartment to feed the dogs, and we had exercise pens set up.

Connie: There was all this plastic so if the dogs lifted their legs, it wouldn't spray the walls or anything.

Bob: We took the dog to the specialty, and lo and behold, who won the specialty? The theme was Wine and Roses, so we won a big bottle of wine, roses, a cooler bucket, and a crystal decanter and glasses. We had a great time.

Connie: I loved the roses; I was so excited.

Bob: On the way back, we should have known things were going too good for us. We were all too happy. Halfway back, about the last six hours back, we were told that normally, a baggage man was in the baggage car. Well, they didn't have a baggage man, and if we wanted to go see the dogs, we had to go see the conductor to get the key. The train company was cutting

back, or something. We found out later that they had \$250,000 in gems in there. We checked the dogs an hour out, and again about two hours out of Toronto. They were fine, but about an hour later I decided to go back and check them just to make sure everything was okay. I went with the handler, Lori Ross and when I went to open the door, it was like entering a sauna. A steam pipe had broken. We don't know how long it had been like that in there. I could see in the distance an Old English Sheepdog and Chaena were down at the end of the car, out of their crates. To my left was another Sammy down from heatstroke. There was a Rot-



BIS Can/Am Ch. Orenopac's Mogul CD, the number one stud dog in Canada in 1990.

tweiler down from heatstroke, so I sent Lori to get the conductor and tell him we were in deep trouble. They threw open the train door to cool the place off, and they brought some ice.

Connie: They started dragging these crates out, and he put Chaena and the Old English Sheepdog way down at the other end of the car to get them as far away from the steam as possible. But the Rottweiler died, they couldn't save her. And the Sammy that was in a comatose state was a Chaena daughter.

Bob: When we arrived at Toronto we took the dog to an emergency clinic.

Connie: One of the things

we have to say about the cabby, these are all sort of like limos that pull up to train stations or airports. There was this limo, and Bob was carrying this dog. He had to get this Sammy to the emergency vet clinic. Some of these cabbies were saying no, we weren't putting a dog in their cars. All of the sudden, one guy jumped out and said he would take the dog in his car. He told Bob to get in, and asked what he wanted us to do. Bob told him to open the windows to get the dog some air to keep it cool. If it weren't for Bob and that cab driver, we might have lost the dog.

Bob: The gist of the story was that it was a good thing

Chaena was a Houdini as far as crates go; it probably saved his life.

Connie: At another show, a handler came up to us and said he would like to take the dog to Bermuda to get his Bermuda championship. He said he wouldn't even charge us; he just wanted to take the dog down there because he thought he would do well. I told him he had to drive all the way down to Florida and then catch a boat, because he wasn't flying my dog!

Bob: No trains or planes for that dog; we were starting to be limited.

To be continued ...