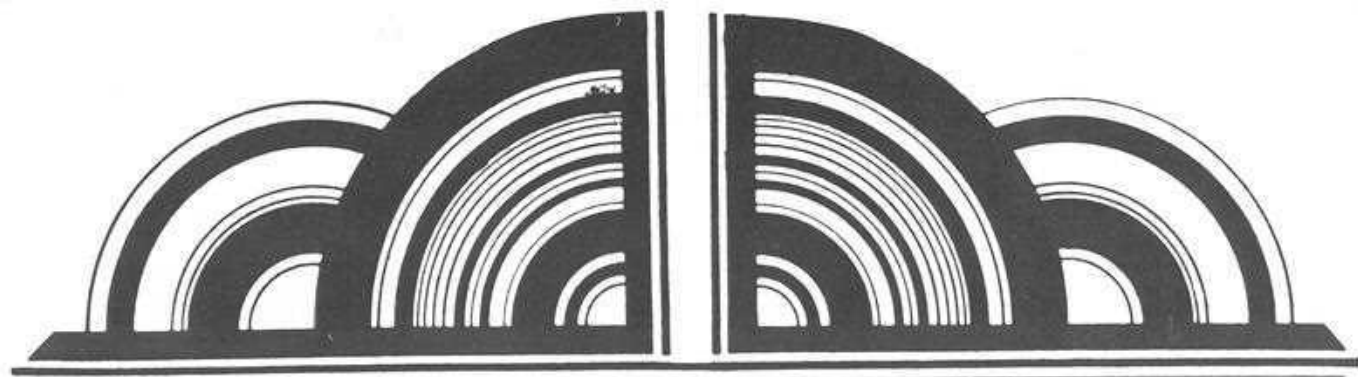


THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY
Winter 1982-83 57




You better watch out;
You better not cry;
You better not pout;
I'm telling you why...



SAMOYED PEOPLE



The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Lloyd Bristol
STARTINDA KENNELS
Thousand Oaks, California

*This interview was conducted at
the home of Lloyd Bristol
in January, 1982*

by
Cynthia Kerstiens

*How did you get started, and when
did you get started, in dogs?*

When I was eight I went to my
first dog show, with a Collie as a mat-
ter of fact. Then I had a German
Shepherd, and all the time in my teens

until my son was born, I had a Belgian
Sheepdog, for fifteen years. When he
died there wasn't a Belgian Sheepdog
to be found in California, anyplace. It
was just after the war, and my cousin
Dolly Ward had some Sammy puppies.
I got one of hers then immediately I
got another little female. That was the
beginning, which was in 1946, and I've
had them ever since.

*Who was the first puppy that you
got?*

Ch. Starchak's Witangemote, known
as Starchie. The little bitch that I got
was Ch. Princess Startinda, known as
Tinda. They were the start of the
Startinda Kennels. I bred Tinda first
to one of Agnes Mason's dogs, because
I was becoming interested in sledding.
I bred to Toby of White Way, and the
second litter I bred her to Starchie.
Out of that litter I had five champions.
Not bad! I have never been a big
breeder, maybe one litter a year. They
seem to have turned out all right.

*How did you come up with your
kennel name?*

I put Starch and Tinda together -
very, very easy.

Your first two?

Yes.

*That's a nice kennel name for
Samoyeds.*

Well, they're a wonderful breed,
let's face it!

Are you still breeding?

No. I had my last litter ten or
eleven years ago. It's too much for me
here. I only retired three years ago, so
with my daughter out on her own and
no one else, it was just too much of a
hassle to breed and have puppies. I
still go to shows, and I do judging a
lot and obedience work. But I'm really
out of the dog business - not out of
Sammies!

*How many litters do you think you
had?*

I would say probably twenty, no
more than that. Because I'd only breed

my bitches once or twice. I had a lot of bitches I never did breed. You know, working and bringing up a family, that's enough!

Which do you feel was your best litter?

I think the first litter I had. You don't get five champions out of one litter very often. I've never repeated that. That was from Starchie and Tinda. Talnik, Sarana and Chrinda were from that litter.

Were there just the five in the litter?

No, there were nine.

Five out of nine is very good!

Yes. Their kennel name was Starchindā. I continued on down, and I would try to keep the best female because I'm strong on good females. You can breed out to a male, but I'm very, very strong on having the best female that you can. So I would keep the best female and breed her to someone, and then always keep the best female. You couldn't buy that one!

Which one do you think was your best?

For all around, conformation and everything, in the show and in the sled work, I think Talnik was. He wasn't as showy - we had the misfortune of running at the same time with Jean Blank's Yurok, and he was a very showy dog - absolutely. He was the top Sammy in the country for years, and she was lucky enough to be able to campaign him all over the country. He was a very showy dog. But I think for soundness, disposition and working - Talnik was my lead dog, too. I think he was, all around, one of the best that I've ever bred. I've had some very good females, very good. I had one who was an excellent ... as a matter of fact, Tinda was a pretty good lead dog in her own right. We got interested in the sledding, and split the teams, and I used her. She learned just from being behind Starchie. Then I had another - Chrinda was a very good lead dog. But you don't make very many lead dogs, they're either born, or you work with them and hope and pray. Some of them never make it, though they may be beautiful team dogs.

How did you get involved in sled-dogging?

We bought a cabin at Frazier Park, which is on the ridge route going to Bakersfield. The first year we were there we were snowed in. We had the two Sammys, and I also had a Labrador. We decided to put them to use because we couldn't get up the hill. We knew nothing about making a sled, so I think our first sled was a little orange crate with skis on the bottom. We'd put our supplies in and let the dogs haul them up again. So then we thought, we might as well. Tinda had had her first litter, and we went to the United States Government, as a matter of fact, we wrote to them for their specifications on sleds and harnesses, and made our own. So we made many, many sleds and harnesses over the



Ch. Starchak 1952, Witengemote

years. We always made our own. We just really became interested in it. Agnes Mason had her professional driver, Lloyd Van Sickle, and we talked to her and really became fascinated with the idea. Over the years, from when we bought the cabin in 1948 through 1953, a lot of the people in Southern California, Siberian people too, would meet up at Frazier Park and have fun times every weekend. That eventually ended up in our starting the Big Bear Valley Sled Dog Club, which now is the Southern California Sled Dog Club. We started that in 1954, and it's still going strong.

Did you run the dogs?

Oh, yes! I ran them myself. We trained them, and I entered in Williams, Arizona and Tahoe, Truckee, Sisters and Mammoth. It takes a lot of training, and a lot of running, but it's a lot of fun.

How many dogs did you run?

I usually ran seven. That's about what I could handle, because they're pretty strong. You can run with a five-dog team, but I think the roads in California, the race roads anyway, are ninety percent up, and only ten percent down. It gets hard going up! You get off and run, and it gets awfully tiring running!

Were there competitive races?

Yes. The ones I usually ran in were what we called the long-distance races, and eventually we conformed to the universal sled dog rules. Our races usually ran twelve to fifteen miles two days in a row, Saturday and Sunday. Then we had smaller races for the kids, and scavenger racing. Freight racing is fun for the people who are looking on. And the women's race and the teenagers' races. It was a whole family affair.



Ch. Princess Startinda BOS and Startinda's Tainik BOB, Mother & Son - Glendale, 1955

Were the Sammies competitive?

Oh, you bet! We didn't always come in first, but we placed. As far as my team, I always finished the race. In Williams, Arizona it was last, and I got the red lantern! It was eight degrees below zero when we got there, and it was cold! We were about 10,000 feet elevation, and my dogs were not used to that. Neither was I.

Was it running against Samoyeds and Siberians?

Everything. They had what they called the Targhee Hounds, and they had the Eskimo dogs, and they had the Alaskan dogs. You didn't have to have purebreds in there. I gave a couple of talks to the German Shepherd Club in Van Nuys, and we have a German Shepherd team that has been running all these years. It's mostly for fun; you know you can't compete with the professionals, but we'd get out two or three nights a week and every weekend and work them. It keeps you in shape!

Getting back to breeding for a minute, what was your long-range goal, as far as what you were trying to achieve?

The best Sammy I could, to conform to the Standard. The first and foremost part was soundness. I don't care about color of eyes to that extent, or the texture of the coat. I want a sound dog with a good disposition. You can have 27 dogs all together, and no fights. That's been one of my ambitions all the time. I will not have a dog that fights. Number one, you can't in a sled team. You're ten miles out in the wilderness, and you don't want to stop for a dog fight!

What was the most dogs you had?

Twenty-seven at one time. I did have a kennel before we moved here, going way back. I was interested first in obedience. I had the two Sammies, Starch and Tinda, and my Lab. I trained them as a trio, which is probab-

ly dumb, but it was very effective - two white and a black in the middle. I was asked to put on some shows, and I got with the KTLA Channel 5, which was one of our first channels out here. I went on with Herb Wagner, who was an obedience judge. Every Saturday we had a program called "Man's Best Friend." We showed all types and breeds of dogs, from puppies on. And from that I branched out a lot on KTLA, their "City at Night," and their Ice Capades and Ice Follies. I had a lot of TV openings. I've been with Red Skelton and Eddie Fisher and Bob Hope. I was on "Queen for a Day," "You Asked for It." Then I did a lot of commercials, and a lot of movies. As a matter of fact, the first team everybody saw in Sergeant Preston was mine, colored! Because they do not show very well in the snow.

How did they color them?

With brown and black and gray color, to make them look like Siberians or Malamutes or something. Just enough so that you could see the team.

That's fascinating!

We went up to the mountains on location, and of course I kept them spotless for shows; I was showing almost every weekend. I groomed them all. We spent about four days on location, and most of the time when they shot the pictures, you could see flashes of the harness go by - maybe a couple of beady eyes - and then the sled! We wasted miles of footage. So from then on I had them a little dirty. It was really quite startling, because you'd never think of that. When we were on with Lassie, for instance, I just let them get a little dingy and dirty, and they would show up.

What were they doing with Lassie?

They had a couple of episodes with one lad, Timmy, I guess that was his name, who wanted to enter a dog sled derby. So I was the professional

that helped Timmy. They filmed it around the Big Bear Valley races. They took footage of the races, and in it I had to wear a long parka and had my hair up, and I had to be a man. They filmed a lot of the footage of the actual race at Big Bear.

That's great! Talking about obedience, do you think that you can show in obedience and conformation at the same time?

I think so. I think you have to have a dog that would almost go through and get its C.D. before you can do almost anything with it, whether it's in sled work or the show ring. It's basic to have them stand and stay, and come on command, even in your backyard, and to know the basics of obedience. I'm not one that says every dog should go out and get its C.D. Even though I have taught since 1947, I've taught classes every week for all the kennel clubs, I am still not one that says you definitely have to go out and get your C.D. But I do think that it doesn't hurt them, if you're good enough. If your dog is in the ring and you give him the command to stand and stay, he's going to stand. I think that it's very good, and I think they should have it.

Did you put titles on most of yours?

No, I didn't. I've been too busy showing and when the sledding came, it just wiped out everything. That was first and foremost. I wanted good dogs that did what they were supposed to do, whether it was my Labrador hunting or my Sammies sledding. I was one of, I think, the only ones who ever had one team of full champions from one litter, and raced them. It's a little hard - you're pressed for time. Just the training. And, of course, I was training other people's dogs at the time, because I was a professional handler, too. So I had other people's dogs to train,



Starch, Musty, Tinda, Yukon, Topper, Nicky, Frosty
1950 - Frazier Park

alert and looking around, to see what they can get into next.

Are you happy with the Samoyed Standard?

Oh, I guess. We have to have a Standard, and as long as they don't do what they did to the Siberians with the disqualifications, that I think was a mistake. Because I think that you can have a very fine Siberian that's just one-quarter of an inch over that height standard. I hate to see them be disqualified.

But the only trouble with that is, after it's one quarter, it's the next quarter. It seems like in this society bigger is better. It's always what wins out. I don't think it would stop at just a quarter.

But it isn't true of the Sammies or the Malamutes. They stop. I have big Sammies, but I didn't breed for size. I don't believe in disqualification for size. They tried to do that to our Samoyeds, and over the thirty years they haven't grown. They haven't changed. So I think it's all right. You have to have some kind of a Standard.

Are there any changes that you'd like to see?

No, not really. Everyone is going to judge for more or less what they think is more important in that Standard. But you read that Standard and follow it. You'll always have judges who think ... I had one tell me that the dog should be disqualified, he had a buff ear. Well, of course, that's in the Standard, and it's perfectly legitimate. Some judges don't like buff. You have to tell them, buff is perfectly legitimate. You don't like it, that's fine. I know there are a lot of judges who don't like a split-eyed Siberian. You and I know that it's perfectly legitimate.

If a judge has to ask about a buff colored ear ...

I told him to go read the Standard! (laughter) That's what I did. That was my male in Open, and I had a bitch in Open, the litter sister, with a buff ear. So by the time I came back with the litter sister, with the buff ear, he had read the Standard!

What breeds do you judge?

All breeds. I have done Best in Shows. I'm not a licensed judge. As a licensed handler over all the years, I have studied up and judged every single breed there is. And I've done Best in Show for Antelope Valley, Orange Empire, the Simi Kennel Club and San Bernardino. I am qualified as a handler, and I study - believe me, when I go in, I have studied. I've done a lot of specialties - Bassets, German Shepherds and a St. Bernard Specialty.

You obviously enjoy judging.

Yes, I love it.



Zac - trimming the tree!

Do you think that breeder-judges make better judges than all-rounders, as a rule?

It depends on the person. There are people who are not good judges, just like there are very qualified PhD's who are not good teachers. Just because you know your subject, doesn't mean that you can teach it or preform it. When you go in, even though you like a certain type of dog yourself, you've got to conform to the Standard and put up the best dog that day that conforms. Even if it isn't one you'd want in your backyard, you have to be fair and put it up. You can't be blind. Of course, there are some that I would like to take home with me!

Do you think that most judging is fair?

By and large, I really think they try. I've been with so many judges, at judges' dinners and lunches and everything. I think most of the time they try. Years ago we had some old-timers that were literally blind. I had one old guy judging Labradors at Long Beach, and I had one of my males. He was looking due East as I gaited my dog due West! He said, "That's fine!" But I don't think you have that much. You have some older ones that have been around a long, long time, but let's face it, they have to have assimilated some knowledge in all those years of judging. Something has had to rub off on them. There are undoubtedly politics and little games to be played, and I know a lot of judges will tend to put up a dog who has been plastered in all the dog magazines, and all the publicity. Because if they're undecided about whether to put one dog up over another, and that one has won before, I'm sure that that enters into it. Me, I like to go out on a limb and startle people occasionally.

Do you think having a top handler makes a difference?

I think it does to a lot of people who just are not able to show a dog. There are many people who cannot. They go to pieces handling their own dog, and there they are all nervous, and it transmits itself to the dog, and the dog doesn't do as well. A handler can hide quite a bit. A handler can pose the dog and make the dog show off. If he's got a good profile, that profile is always going to be there. If he's a good handler, he's on that job every single second. He knows he has a change, and he never lets anything be shown that could .. he never lets the dog have his hindleg turned or twisted or anything like that. He's working that dog every minute. An owner doesn't do that ... or an owner fusses when he shouldn't ... that's one problem that I've run into. I've seen a dog where the owner keeps moving the dog's legs, and moving it and moving it and placing it. I just want to yell at him, "Leave the dog alone!"

You handled your own dogs?

Yes. I always handled my own dogs. I handled everything. The only

dog that ever bit a judge was a Chihuahua! (laughter) I've had some nasty ones and some big ones, but the only one that ever took a nip at a judge was a Chihuahua.

If an owner handler is good, do you think they can actually compete with a professional?

I think so. That's been one of my things that I've tried to help with when I used to have classes. People with their own dogs would get together, and we'd have what we called handling classes. I'd say your breed is set up this way, your breed goes this way, and so on. I think it's more fun, and I think you get a lot more out of showing and working with your dog if you yourself do the work. The satisfaction of winning isn't "Well, I gave him to John Jones, and he took him on the circuit, and I finished a champion." That's fine, but I'd rather sweat it out myself.

When you were having puppies, did you help the bitch whelp?

Usually. My first litter, as a matter of fact, one of our best friends was a doctor, so we were supposed to go out one evening with the doctor and his wife, who was a nurse. She started having puppies, and I said, "You guys go to the theater, we have the tickets." No, they'd stay. So my first litter was attended by an M.D. and an R.N. (laughter)

That's class!

I helped them, and I've run into difficulties. Anybody who has had a number of litters, you do. I had only one female with a Cesarean, and she had a very large puppy in the passage, and just couldn't get it out. It was on the 30th of May, and two doctors came into the hospital. We were living out here with no veterinarians. I had to go into Canoga Park, and the three of us delivered them. They would hand the puppy to me and I'd get it breathing and put it down. She had eight, and they all lived. They did a beautiful job! But that's not bad. Maybe there's been more than twenty - maybe thirty litters. It seems to me there's been a lot of them! (laughter)

Did you supplement your puppies?

Usually yes, because they never had nice convenient litters ... I'll take that back, my one female had only three, which was wonderful. I didn't supplement them, but most of them are eight, nine, eleven, and ...

Is that pretty big for Sammy litters?

Yes, but eight seems to be the common number. I always did just a little bit, just to make sure. As a matter of fact, getting back to that first litter, the doctor had a bunch of Similac for babies, and one of the so-called detail men was Dennis Day's brother, Mr. McMulty, and he heard about my litter, and he supplied me with three cases of Similac. I didn't have to do anything but clean the bottles and give them a little. They grew up very well! (laughter)

Did you wean the puppies or did

you let the bitch do it?

I weaned them very early. They still feed on her, but I let her get them fairly weaned by four weeks. And then when she needed to get rid of the milk herself, she'd go in. But I started them on Pablum most of the time and the formula by the time they're three weeks old. Their little teeth come out, and I think that hurts the bitch. Those little teeth go in, and I'd just as soon she not be hurt too much. By the time they are four weeks, they've had their little taste of baby meat or hamburger,

a very good idea about how they're going to move and how they're going to stand. You get so you can mark one, and say I know this is the one the day it's born. Then you see how close you are. But you'd be sort of silly to do that just on looks that day, and stick with it. Sometimes it works out that way, but I like to see them when they can move. I let them run a couple at a time so that I can study them together, and let them run in the yard by themselves and see how they move. Because you can't tell in a box. As I



Chrinda, San Francisco - 1957

but I still keep them around until they're at least eight weeks, seven or eight weeks. I won't sell the puppies until after then.

At what age do you evaluate the puppies?

I start really studying them at about five weeks, five or six weeks. You know pretty much by then. You can't tell a thing about movement, of course, really. But when they're between six and eight weeks you can get

said, I like moving dogs.

Did you sell the puppies at different prices for pet and show?

Oh yes, definitely. If it were a bitch, for instance, that should not be bred, I would sell it with the agreement that they would buy it and I would pay for it to be spayed. Because no way do I want a bitch out of my kennel going out and being bred. So I did a lot of that, too. There were some older women who wanted a spayed

dog, and I sent one East to New York, and she used her as a Guide Dog. She was only eight weeks when she went, but that's what she wanted. She lived to be thirteen years old.

And was successfully trained?

Very successfully. I've had two used as Guide Dogs. A male who was older - I kept him for quite awhile, and used him on the sled. He went, I guess it was, to Oregon, and they trained him, and he was used as a Guide Dog, too. So they've been Guide Dogs. I had one buy one on a farm, and of course, they are herding dogs, too. They herded reindeer originally. And this one turned out to be a beautiful herder, worked beautifully on the farm. They have that instinct. I think they can be trained for almost anything, except to shut up when they're in harness and ready to go in a race.

I've never seen them trained for that, either!

No way! I think you can do anything you want with your Sammies, but no way will they shut up when they're ready at the starting line, and have to wait. I just hope I don't cross the starting line before I'm supposed to.

I know you haven't had puppies for awhile, but do you have any feeling for what a good Samoyed puppy should sell for these days?

I haven't the slightest idea. I really don't know. I sort of ran out in a hurry, of my older dogs, and I haven't bred. So two of those out there are not of my line. The big male is one the owners wanted to get rid of, so he got a good home. He can't be bred, he's dysplastic. The other little female I bought from Mar-dee Ward. So I don't really know. I haven't even priced puppies.

What are some of the problems that you see in the breed?

Too popular, and too much bad breeding. There are too many Sammies right here in this area that you see running the streets. There are Sammies up the street, Sammies in the next street, Sammies over there. I

don't like the idea of them getting popular enough so everybody is breeding them for no reason. Because when you look at them, they aren't show quality, and they shouldn't be bred, and yet they're being bred. That's, I think, the worst. I don't think we have the problem we had too much, or at least I haven't seen it in this area, of Sammies showing up in pet stores. We had an awful problem. There was one breeder in L.A. that ran a puppy mill and supplied all the pet stores. It didn't matter - she just gave out papers, and didn't know who, where or why. It may exist in parts of L.A., but I haven't heard about it. That's the only thing - everybody who has their little female figures they have to breed her for some reason, and that's not necessary. They can go through life completely happy without being bred.

Is that a lack of education on the part of local breed clubs?

No, because I don't think those people ever joined the breed club. I know they don't join the local kennel club, because they don't show. It's just ignorance on their part, they figure, "Gosh, I paid \$200 for this bitch, I have eight puppies and look how much money I can get!" And they breed, and they end up with eight puppies that are no good and are not sold, and they finally end up giving them away for \$25, and they in turn get bred. I think that's the major problem.

So when people ask, I say, "Just go around and look." Unless your bitch is known, and you have a good male, you're not going to sell those puppies. So I try to discourage them as much as I can, and I've never bred to just any bitch. I'm very particular. That's probably why so many of my dogs were not used that often at stud.

I was introduced to hip dysplasia by a guy who really started a lot of work out here, Dr. Brown, Jimmy Brown. I was training a Boxer, believe it or not. It was back in 1946 or 1947. And the poor dog could not sit cor-

rectly. So the owner and I took him down to Dr. Brown, and he mentioned that, "Sooner or later everybody has got to face the fact that this is very prevalent and something will have to be done about it." So immediately, long, long before it was stressed, I had my dogs x-rayed. Any bitch that came to me, I had them taken to Dr. Brown, because he was about the only one that knew how to do it. That was long before OFA ever came onto the scene. So at that time, there were a lot of bitches that got turned down. That's part of the soundness right there, that's fundamental. Now I was lucky, because who knew back in 1945, or who stressed it? Like the eye problem, I guess, it was never stressed to that extent. I lucked out, that's the only thing I can say.

Do you feel that those are serious problems in the Samoyed now? Hips and eyes?

I think so. I think they're there. I still would not breed to a dog or show a dog ... I'd purchased a bitch that was really out of my line, and she was a beautiful bitch, but slightly dysplastic. I mean very, very slightly. I could have finished her, but I didn't show her. I gave her to my daughter, and she put her through obedience. That dog worked in the sled team until she was 12, and never limped, never hurt, never did anything. But she was dysplastic, so I would not breed her. I sometimes wish I had! (laughter) I just don't think that you should, because maybe she had slight problems, but she would pass that on to any puppies, and maybe doubled.

Have you seen that enough times that it kind of ... well, you said the Boxer couldn't sit correctly ... but in some dogs that are dysplastic, they can move beautifully?

That's the way it was with this bitch, she was a beautifully moving bitch. She was the mainstay of my sled team for twelve years, and she worked, and ran those sixteen miles two days in a row and never limped,



Prince - weightpulling



1961 - Bringing in Santa at the Crippled Children's Association.

never gave up, never hurt or cried. Oh, by the time she was thirteen or fourteen, she groaned ... but so do I, and I'm not dysplastic! (laughter)

What are the eye problems that are ...

I'm not too familiar with them. I never ran into it. Again, I was lucky. As far as I know, mine have always lasted; they have very long lives. The only eye problem I ever had was one of my dogs got shot in the eye with a beebee, and lost sight in one eye. But I have never had them go blind, I've never had any problems at all, so I'm not familiar. I'm really not. I know one Collie, I'd put him Best in Show at Angelope Valley, and within six months he started to have eye problems, and within a year he was blind. Now here I put a dog Best in Show, and I was dumb enough, but I couldn't see anything wrong with the eyes. So I don't feel qualified at all. I have never had any problems. Dysplastic dogs - yes, I've seen a lot of

those. But I was lucky to start out with good stock. Somebody was watching over me. Or them! (laughter)

Sometimes now you hear theories that hip dysplasia is a result, at least somewhat, of environment. Do you agree with that?

No, I don't. It's there. I don't know whether it could occur because of something like a malformation - like no hands in a baby, for instance. I had one puppy, believe it or not, born with no tail, out of all my litters. How do you explain that? I had him put to sleep immediately. But things like that are inherited, I think. It is in humans, so why should it be any different in animals? We have done enough studying ... the Pacific Coast Division of the Sammy Club put out the first really comprehensive booklet on hip dysplasia twenty years ago. I don't think they can prove to me that environment is doing it. I have seen litters that right at the beginning you knew that something was wrong with those puppies'

hips. There was something abnormal about them. You can tell almost at the beginning. Here again, I'm not an expert, but I do feel that if you have a dysplastic dog, you do not breed him or her.

What about relatives of a dysplastic dog?

That's a touchy subject. That's why I have Pete. Because people with winning dogs don't want a litter brother around who is dysplastic. But he's sweet, and he and I eat our Vitamin C, and it seems to help him. But he's very lame, and he won't live to be a ripe old age. But they wanted him out of the way, so I said sure, I had room for another one. But just to make sure, I had him castrated. I stuck with that, even though it killed me with Cara, because she was a magnificent bitch. She was a combination of both Talnik and Yurok. Helen King and Betty had a kennel named Pondale and Lancaster, and their foundation stock came through Talnik, and she bred her champion to Yurok, and Cara was a result of that. She was beautiful, and had the best line. For six generations behind her they were all champions on all sides, and she was good. But she had a slight malformation there, and so I would not breed her. I think if the examination for eyes had been going on at that time, I'd have done the same thing. But you know, as anyone knows, you can have a dog and a bitch who have been x-rayed and cleared come up with dysplastic pups. I had that happen to me. I sent a dog back East to Virginia in all good faith, and he became dysplastic, they said. So here again, I can't say environment, because of all the pups that I've sent out, he's about the only one I ever knew that turned out to have it. And it was from three generations on both sides. So how do you explain things like that? He grew up in the same environment as all the rest of them. He'd been cleared on all sides, and OFA cleared at that time, too. So you don't know. Mother Nature does little tricks.

Some of them are not kind, especially in dog breeding.

No.

You said you put down the one without a tail. Did you ever cull other puppies? Do you believe in culling?

No, because I've always had so many people who, because of my exposure to everybody, would say, "Look, if you ever have one that isn't a show dog, I would like one, because I don't want a show dog." So I always had a list of people that were available, and if puppies come back to me, if other people have Sammies, I always have a list of people who will buy them. I never give a pup away, NEVER. Because if they don't pay anything for it, they aren't going to take care of it. I don't care what they say or anything, no way would I give a dog away. I'd rather keep it here. If they are going to pay, even if it's \$50 or \$75, they aren't going to turn around and mis-



Ch. Startinda's Cheena - BOB - 1957, Hemet



Talnik

treat it or let it loose. So I always make them pay something, just to make sure the puppy's going to get a good home.

Things are only worth what you pay for them, it seems.

That's right. And if they pay money, even if it's a nominal fee, they are going to take care of what they paid for. They will not with something they got for free. So I figure that if they want it badly enough, they'll take care of it.

Did you ever sell on co-ownerships?

No. I never did.

Any strings attached, like a puppy back?

No. As a matter of fact, most of the time I just take the stud fee and that's it. They can sell their best puppy, because I always had enough puppies. I would send people to them, but I don't believe in co-ownerships, and strings attached, and contracts. There's always trouble. I'd much rather have them be mine, or they aren't. Just because if they go, I always end up showing them or training them. It seems to me they're always around.

What are some of the responsibilities of a stud dog owner?

Number one, make sure your stud dog is worth what you ... these absurd stud dog fees of \$500, \$1000, \$1500 ... I realize some people think their dog is worth it, but I think quite often it's too much of a rip-off because a dog may be magnificent, but not be able to throw it. And until he is a proven stud dog, and I mean his get is really out there, I think at first you ought to go easy no matter how well your own dog performs as a show dog. That is obviously why they breed to him. You'd

better be darned sure that dog can throw. Because we've had Best in Show dogs that never sired a champion. I mean NEVER. And they've been bred and bred and bred, and never a champion out of them. That happens in every breed. Just because he is good, doesn't mean he's a good stud dog. I had one male that I never really pushed. You can only show so many dogs! But he was one of my best stud dogs. He was Tinda's son. I never sold him, and he lived his full life with me, and yet he threw magnificent pups. He was not a champion. I just never got time to show him. He was one that I was always very pleased with; he was very reliable. As a matter of fact, I bred him to one of my own champion bitches. He threw two champions out of that one. He was also so sweet, and so dumb, and such a worker, he wouldn't give up. He threw sled dogs that never gave up. One of his sons was my lead dog after Talnik died, until he died. So he threw sound dogs. He didn't have many brains; he was always the kind that went up to the pot belly and turned around and warmed his fanny, and burned his tail! (laughter) But he was good.

Would you breed to a bitch, if it came to you, that had some major fault, but was really good in a lot of other areas? Would you let the people use one of your studs?

What kind of a fault? What do you mean "major"?

What kind of a fault would stop you?

Right off the bat, dysplasia. And obviously, now, if there's any concern with eyes. Before we hadn't done that much research, I guess. Or a small dog. I've seen Sammy bitches that

haven't stood any higher than that. And I have a very good out for that - I say my male dogs all throw big Sammies, and it would kill your little female. Which may be very true! (laughter) Or a huge bitch, out of proportion or something like that. But if she is sound, and looks good, and the lines seem to be pretty comparable, if I know anything about them, I would. I might not breed my top champion, I might breed my other male to her. But I would, because I'd rather ... if I thought she could throw something, I'd rather it come from my line than for her to go down the street to another male and "pepper" some more lousy Sammies. Because I know what my males can throw, if they breed to an average bitch. I never did that much outside breeding. As a matter of fact, I didn't advertise my males at stud. They were always too busy running in sled races! Every time, from about October through the end of March (Ebbets Pass was usually the end of March, and the next weekend marked the end of the racing season), I worked with those dogs two to three nights a week, and every weekend I could, in the snow. So I didn't have much time. Because I held down a full-time job, and raised two kids.

Obviously size is important to you. What is too small?

Oh, Sheltie-type. I've seen Sammies that are eighteen inches, or seventeen inches. Little tiny things. You doubt that they're a purebred Sammy. You think that they're a Canadian Eskimo or a Spitz. To me, that's not a Sammy. No way. I don't want them to carry on that size. That ruins it the way a 25" Siberian would ruin your breed. There was one male Sammy

that was magnificent, Cheechako, he was probably 26" tall, and in the ring he was outstanding. But he wasn't my idea of what I want for a Sammy even though I like big ones. I don't want a 26" Sammy, that's just too big. That's why I say the Standard isn't bad, as long as you stick with it. When they start saying above it - I don't think that dog Cheechako should have been disqualified from entering a show because he happened to be over the Standard. If he's good enough, I don't think size is that important.

As long as it's ...

As long as he's all together for that size.

And not too much smaller?

Yes, and not too much smaller. I will agree that I would prefer a larger rather than a smaller Sammy. What good is a little thing like this going to do pulling a sled? All right, so they haven't been sled dogs for generations. That's what they were bred for, really,

at the scavenger race. He is a tall boy, with long, long arms, and a scavenger race is when you put six beer cans out, in a row, about 300 yards, and have a little box in the sled. You run the team down, picking up the beer cans and putting them in the box, turn around, and race back. You can't let go of the sled, you can't do anything but reach out. If you drop a beer can, you must go back for it. He loved that, he wasn't even old enough to drink beer, but he was fast! It's something the whole family can enjoy.

My daughter won her first trophy in a children's race with one dog. She was four years old. There were times when she said she was holding the lead dogs, she was scared stiff that they wouldn't stay the way they were supposed to, and she would be dragged. I'd keep saying it's all right, but I guess it must have been terrifying for her, and I didn't realize it. They both got a smattering of the TV. They both



Startinda's Chogpon, at about 10 weeks.

that and the herding. A little dog is a fine herder, so we can't take that away from them. Size doesn't hurt them there. Little Aussies and Shelties are magnificent herders, and they're not big dogs. But that's just my opinion.

Do you think more people should run their Samoyeds?

Yes. I think they'd have more enjoyment. I would say that as a family, our family really did enjoy the whole thing. I know my son got tired of always having dogs around, and I'm sure my daughter got tired of it. But I have always tried to do all the grooming and all of the picking up. There's nothing worse than making your kids pick up, and clean up after dogs. They've always helped me feed them, but the other part's my job! (laughter) They're my dogs. But my son loved to run the dogs, and he was very good

have been on location with me. They've both been in the movies, they've seen a lot of what you can do with them, and neither one has ever complained about it. It has been fun. You meet so many people and go so many places. It's enjoyable. It isn't just politics, or my dog's better than yours, or anything. You just get together when you feel like it, and you can take some dogs from this family and that family and put them in a team, and have fun racing, and have two or three teams. I think the companionship and the fun of really working your dogs is well worth it. Yes, I'd advise everybody, not to do what I did! I think that was too much, and it's very expensive to keep that many dogs.

Would you think it would be hard to find places to train for most people?

Oh, it's impossible now. That's one of the main reasons I gave it up -

I kept moving farther and farther and farther out, and the last time we went out to do any training, I had to drive about 30 miles to find a dirt road. By the time you load your dogs in the car, and you load the sled, and you drive thirty miles, and then they complain because there were cattle there ... there's no place now. Most of the sled dog people have moved into the Riverside area, the San Bernardino Mountains. All of them are out there. I think I'm about the only one that's left out here. I don't race, though. It's terribly hard. The people who live in places like Nevada City and Tahoe have it made. You probably have heard of Mel Fishback. Well, she bought her first dog from me. What about that! (laughter) As a matter of fact, it was one of Starch and Tinda's puppies. She and Lee wanted a dog to go skiing with them. Well, he ended up a professional sled dog driver, and she is still making harnesses! I said, "See what you did!" (laughter) When I was in Alaska, in 1980, I visited a lot of kennels. I went to Mt. McKinley, to the Mounties, where they keep their kennel, and I talked to the gal who's in charge. She showed me her harnesses, and I said they were just exactly the way mine were. She said, "Yes, I buy them from a girl in the States!" I said I bet her name is Mel. So it's a small world - the Canadian Mounties, all from my harnesses!

You visited some kennels?

Yes, but we didn't have much chance. Everyplace we went I tried to go and find a kennel. The bus driver, when we were going from Whitehorse to Tuck, took the whole bus and busload off and went by the Sabarka Kennels of Siberians. They have their own beautiful Siberians, and then they have their Eskimo dogs that they race. He took the whole busload, because he had a sled dog driver on board! (laughter) So he just took us off the beaten path, and gave us about twenty minutes there at the kennels. They were friends of his, and he said, "Well, you ought to see one." Then in Fairbanks we went by a lot of kennels, and I took pictures that I could. Then one of the Indian villagers had a guy there that ran his dogs. So I talked to him when I had a chance, and the Captain of the stern wheeler had a team, so I talked to him.

Then in Alaska, in Anchorage, I was looking for a totem pole piece. I looked all through Alaska to find one of them, and finally in Anchorage, just about the last day, I went into a gold rush store. They had one, and I said, "That's what I've been looking for." I got to talking to them, and we were going to go on a two-day trip - leave our luggage in Anchorage, and then go down to Valdez and the Glacier, and then come back. We talked about sled dogs always. He is on the Iditarod Trail Committee, and was one of the first ones to start it. So bless his heart, he took the arms off, wrapped the guy up, had him all insulated and

everything, then brought him to the hotel while I was gone, so that when I came back it was there with my luggage.

An authentic Alaskan totem pole - that's neat!

As long as it wasn't eight feet, I could bring it on my ticket. So you should have seen it sticking out of the taxi going to the airport. The porters would look! (laughter) I stayed a couple of days in Seattle, and put it in the car with his head out. That's my trophy from Alaska. We went to the Caribbean last year, and one of the families said, "Now what are you going to bring me home?" But I couldn't find any witch doctors!

Were any of the people, other than the man where you got this, training for the Iditarod?

I didn't meet any of them. There were some there when you go on the boat the Discoverer on one of those trips in Fairbanks. There are two huge kennels, and both of those run the trail. But, of course, we were on the ship, and all I could do was snap pictures of them. There are a lot of them up there in Fairbanks that come down and run that. That's quite a race. Just the little racing I have done, I know that the hardships must just be absolutely unbearable. The cold! There is nothing worse than that snow that just gets on them and gets in between their feet. Your hands are too cold, and you have to get down and bite those little balls out from the bottom of the dogs' feet. There's no other way that I know of. They will just hurt and make them lame if you keep on. It's a certain type of snow that I hate to run into. It's very unusual, but when it's really cold you get it.

I know last year they weren't sure there was going to be enough snow for the Iditarod.

I would love to go up and see the start, and then fly to Nome and see the finish. I can't afford that, and I can't afford to stay up there.

Didn't the S.C.A. recently start a sled dog class for the specialties? Are you aware of that?

No.

I understand that they did, where you can show at specialties if your dogs are qualified for it.

No, I didn't read it in the Bulletin.

It was somewhere within the last six months, I think.

No, I hadn't heard of it. The Specialty was in Wisconsin the last time, I guess. Breck judged the Futurity. He judged out here in September, and was going to judge the Futurity. I didn't notice. Christmas is a busy time for me, because we're teaching. Getting up on all the new tax things, and then we start in. January 4th I open the doors of the office.

I think there is such a class.

That would be interesting.

In Siberians, there's the sled dog class, and the dogs have to have run



Topper, 1953

seven miles. But I think the Samoyed Club made it that you can have a three-dog class that ran three miles or something similar.

Oh, anybody could do that!

That's a sled dog? (laughter)

That's what the Siberian Husky Club of America has always felt, too. It may not be proving much.

No, you can take ... anytime I've wanted something like that, you take them in as a team in your team class, and have four of them together. But it doesn't prove anything, except there are four that look alike! I used to do a lot of braces in shows. I think a brace is beautiful when you move them.

Do you enjoy the challenge of showing a brace or a team?

Yes, I do. To see the dogs working together. Anybody can handle one dog. But to have two ... One breed that I think are most magnificent as a brace when they are matched is Afghans. They will just float.

How did you train your brace?

And when you showed a team?

Mostly, I just put them together and would run them out in the backyard and get them to start, and say

"Hi!" Just the same way I did on a sled, just to get them going at the same time. Because there's nothing worse than one going at one speed, and the other going another speed. One of the best braces I ever judged - do you know Bebe Hoxsey from Sacramento? She had some very good Sammies. I judged up there a number of years ago, and she had two puppies. I think they were probably 12 and 14 weeks, three months or so, right at the really awkward stage. Their ears were just too big for the rest of them, one was still flopped on one of the pups. She put them in as a brace at a specialty. I had to put them Best Brace because, as I told her, they even flopped alike! (laughter) Absolutely beautiful. They have both finished, and they finished in a hurry. So I'm very pleased that I put them up. I put him as Best Puppy, and his litter sister as Best Bitch. Then afterwards, she said, "Well, they're out of your line!" (laughter) They're Hey Boy. He's way back, for them, but those puppies were beautiful. I just love them when they go together. Now those two bitches - I could no more put them in a brace - they don't gait alike, they don't look alike, but

you get some that really go together.

Do you think that the best braces are made up of a dog and a bitch? Somewhere I read that that's the ideal.

I don't think so. The idea of a brace is supposed to be how closely alike they are. Very seldom do you get a dog and a bitch who look or even move alike. My successes were always with my two bitches, most of the time. Either a mother and a daughter, or two sisters, or aunt and a niece or something like that. As a matter of fact, I don't think I ever entered a male brace. I can't remember a male brace. Even my team was four bitches.

Did you show them in one hand?

Yes.

One leash?

Yes, all hitched together in one leash. Luckily, those were the well-trained dogs. Otherwise I'd have gone right on my ... (laughter)

Are you familiar with Lorna Demidoff?

Yes.

She always used to say, and she had a team of four males that was a top-winning team back East, that she would take them out and run them on the sled however many miles, and then work them on the leash.

It works, it really works. If they have worked together in a team, they are not going to push and shove. They know. And, of course, they're always working together on the team, so if you put two more together they're not going to think anything of it.

I think she did it to tire them out. She would actually run them before she went and worked them on the leash!

I don't blame her! (laughter)

They do seem to have a lot more energy when they're all together.

Yes. When I travel with them,

I'll take three or four out on a leash, and you have to have them trained. There's where obedience counts! You're not going to walk each dog individually, and wait for him to decide. One of the first trainings I do, along with sit and stay, is "Go do it!" And they know. If you keep taking them out there and saying go do it and praising them, they know what they're doing. On trips you just take them together and say, "Go do it!" Because I have traveled all over this country with my sled teams, and individual dogs. I never go on a trip without three or four. I've never even been turned down at a motel. Some motels just have big signs up, "No dogs allowed." But I have never been turned down, as far as I know, anyplace. They stay in the car, and you walk them, and that's all. Of course, it's startling when you say, "Yes, I have dogs - eight or nine!" (laughter) They say, "Not in my motel!" No, in my truck. When Lorna came out here to judge, the sled dog group gave a big party for her here, and we had a buffet out, and we showed some of the pictures late at night. She was judging at Santa Barbara, and I went out and picked her up. There were about 100 people, believe it or not, in here milling around! We had fun; she's very, very nice.

She's a great lady.

I never knew her in the East. Of course, I left when I was still in school. But I never knew her then.

Do you think being in the Top Ten or Twenty means anything?

Oh, yes. It's very prestigious, excellent. I never made it. I was always second! (laughter) I always hit it when there was a terrific dog going, like Yurok. Everybody likes to brag a little, and it's kind of an extension of

yourself if your dog is good. Everybody likes to have something to say, even if your dog isn't that good ... who's to say it isn't if it's there? It must be pretty good to get there. I wouldn't necessarily run right out and try to breed to that dog just because he was in the Top Twenty, if that's what you mean. I'd look around. But I surely would have liked some of my males to have been in there, but I never made it. So I think it's pretty good. I think more important, though, is when you make it in your own breed, for the top brood bitch, or the best stud dog, or something like that. I think that's far more important. The whole country doesn't know it, but the Sammy country knows it. That I made it!

Were most of your breedings line-breedings, inbreedings or outcrossings?

The first one was completely outcrossed. Then Starch and Tinda were half brother and sister, and I didn't want to do it the first time - that to me would be inbreeding. So the first time I didn't, but the second time I thought I would try it, and that's when I got my five champions. I had one mistake, and it was definitely a line-breeding. It's the only mistake I had, and the last litter I had. I built an apartment back on there, and wiped out my kennels. I put my mother in the kennels! (laughter) I did have regular kennels out here. When we were re-doing that, I had a bitch get out, and my males got to her. It was an uncles-niece, and it was too close. And that's where my dysplastic puppy came from.

I went back three generations, but it was too close as far as I was concerned. I didn't sell those puppies as top - they looked good. Two of them went to Virginia, one went to Michigan, a couple were local here. They turned out all right, but one that went back



Sarana & Talnik, Pasadena 1955



Da'Big & Startinda's Norgali, 1955, with Linda Lee Moll

to Virginia turned up dysplastic. I think too much linebreeding is bad. I always went out. I always went to a male that I had looked at, and knew what his parents looked like, and his whole linebreeding. Then I waited for him to see what he threw. I didn't inbreed and linebreed - very, very little. I always went out to get different males.

Did you special your dogs a lot?

Yes. Just because they finished ... And I did that with bitches, too. As a matter of fact, Chrinda, at the last Specialty, at nine years old, went Best Opposite. They aren't supposed to do that, not at ten years old. And her mother went Best Opposite at another specialty when she was nine. There's no value to putting bitches in, really, as specials, but I like to get them out and show them. They were good

bitches. I think if you have good bitches, you ought to show them - not hide them just because they finished. Of course, with my males I was always looking for that Best in Show that never came. Sad as it is, very few bitches ever go Best in Show. It's very, very sad, I think. I guess the male plumage is just a little better, a little flashier or something. I am one judge that if I see an excellent bitch, I'll put her up. Because I do stress that I think the bitches are your whole reason for having a kennel.

What did you feed when you were racing and showing? Was anything different?

No. I just added more protein, added more vitamins. I've never had any problems. You give your Linatone, and anything else extra. I'm a meat feeder. I believe in it very much, and

I feed meat by-products. When we're on the road, they get KalKan beef. Then I have stuck with Sturdy for thirty years. I have found the small kibble to be very good. There's not that much bulk and waste. We worked with Bordens, and were supposed to be representatives of Kenl Ration, Friskies. And we were with the Los Angeles Sportsmen's Show. Our team was on display. We worked with KalKan. And we were part of the performance two times in the day and at night, and we supposedly were hitched up with a pulley - three guys in a canoe in the pond, and then the pulley, and then our dogs. They would paddle like mad, and I would yell at my dogs with my foot on the brake. Because when we practiced, all of that dog team just took off like mad, and the guys in the canoe came back and hit the end of the pool and fell in! (laughter) So I had to be very careful. The dogs always won, but we did it very slowly so the guys ... But we did a lot of commercials. I've stuck with the Sturdy kibble.

That's what you're still feeding your three?

Yes, just three. I've got an extra boarder now. My son was killed three months ago, and my daughter-in-law is visiting, and we've got a mostly German Shepherd who's sweet. One of my bitches is just coming out of season, so the German Shepherd is on the other side of the fence, much to his disgust! They all get along really well. They got him as a puppy a couple years ago, so he comes down and visits.

Is there any advice that you would give to breeders just starting out in Samoyeds?

Yes! Give them plenty of loving. I don't know - somebody starting out is going to have their own ideas, and they're going to jump in in the wrong spots. I made a lot of mistakes along the way, I'm sure. They'll learn, and they'll sometimes wish they never did it. When I had 27 in the pouring rain, and the kennel was way out in the back, and there was mud in between because it had rained for four days and all the stepping stones were under water. There were times when I said, "Why am I doing this?" But it's been a lot of fun - I'm glad I did it. I wouldn't have missed it for the world. But it sure takes time! You have to keep them groomed and ready, at any time, because working in the movies and TV, you never knew when you'd get a call. You'd just have to up and go. Luckily, a lot of the locations we can do here. Agoura, of course, had Paramount Ranch, and we used to do a lot of shows there. Yukon Trails we did all there. As a matter of fact, they were even the dirty loose dogs in the street! (laughter) That didn't last - it was just thirteen times, and was cancelled. They were called for almost everything, everything and anything. You never knew, so grooming was one thing I did every night. I'd go through



Starch, Musty, Shaman, Topper - 1952.

and do at least two a night, to keep it up. They say you either go wholeheartedly or ... when I gave up running and showing, I just quit. I quit almost everything.

Some of the kennel clubs I still go to, and I still belong to the Sammy Club. Once in awhile I'll go to a sled dog meeting, but you cannot ... it takes your whole life, it really does. There's nothing left for anything else. If you're going to make a success of it, you have to give 90% of your time to dogs. You live with it. Your house is dirty ... of course, it's dirty anyway! My dogs aren't outside dogs. Twenty-seven of them, yes ... some of them always stayed out. I can't see the sense of having dogs always tied out in the backyard, and none of them in the house. I would rotate them. That's one thing I always did, so that any time I traveled they were all house-broken. That was the main thing. That's just as much obedience as sits and stays. Don't go on the rug! Maybe that's the best thing to say to people - if you're going to go into breeding, realize that you're going to give up everything - a lot of your time and money, and all of your energy. You can't do a good job doing it halfway. You cannot. Your dogs suffer, and you suffer, and the end result suffers. If you're going to race them, you've got

to work. You have to train. You can't just expect to go to a race and have the team work. You've got to train yourself. Anyone who has run a sixteen-mile race knows it takes a lot of energy. I sure put the weight on when I stopped! So did my dogs. I could see them. Everybody got cut down, including me!

You mentioned grooming. What kind of grooming did you do for a show, or nightly?

Just a comb and a nylon brush. You'd just sit down and make sure that odd spots - the ones that matted, like behind the ears, and the tails, and the tail feathers. If you keep the loose hair out, it's a lot easier. If you let them mat up, it's impossible. I always bathed my dogs, almost always, before a show. A lot of people don't, but under my circumstances, unless I had three in two weeks, I'd bathe them once and keep them inside most of the time, or at least keep them fairly clean. I have a small bathtub out in my family room that's part of the bar, so I can lift them up. And it's much easier, like a professional bathtub that groomers have, so you don't have to stoop over. I've always had one of those, so it's a lot easier to bathe them. I'm not one for trying to use powder. I had one Sammy brought to me late. I was just about ready to go

in the ring, and fluffed him up, and ALL of this loose powder came out. I grabbed that dog and ran behind the bleachers, and banged on him and brushed him. I thought that's all I needed - a powdered Sammy! Besides losing my license ... we even went up to Canada. The company I work for sent us up to Seattle on the preliminary design of the Boeing 747. And we all were lucky enough to rent a house, so I had four of my Sammies brought up. The others were boarded. I became an honorary member of the Northwest Sled Dog Club, and met all those people. We went to Vancouver show, and were on television here. We used the sleds from up there. I don't know if you've ever been to the Vancouver show, but Best in Show is always at night. They judge everybody during the day, and then everybody goes home and comes back in their long gowns and their formals. It is done at night, very, very formally. So we were there and put on a little sled dog exhibition, even in Vancouver. We were going to be there, so I entered my little bitch. She took both shows! So they said go home! (laughter) Even traveling, I run into the craziest things. One thing I have found is that these Sammies may be very stupid, but they're not absolutely dumb. We were in Sequoia, and my daughter and I had

the three Sammies in the little cabin with us, and the bear came through looking me straight in the eye, and he's way down here. He wanted the icebox we had out. He got the icebox, and the dogs stood there without one word. They just stood there and looked, and thought, "Forget it!" I put all the windows up really fast. They looked there, but there was not a word out of them. I thought thank God - they're stupid, but not that dumb. I enjoy taking them with me. They're a little extra bother - you'd like to sleep in the morning, but I hear them and they want to get up. But they love traveling! You rattle a harness or a leash around here, and that's seventh heaven for them.

Do you have a feel for what are some of the best Samoyed kennels in the country today? Would you care to comment?

No, no comment! (laughter) I want them to be speaking to me! I know a lot that I like, and some that I don't like. But that has nothing to do with the people. One of the dogs I hated worst, I thought the people were wonderful. I disliked that dog intensely! So I think that's where some people make a mistake - they don't like the dog, so they don't like the people.

Sometimes it works the other way. You like the dog, but you don't like the people.

That's quite true. You love the dog but can't stand the owner!

What about personal background? How long have you been married? How long have you lived here? What do you do?

I'm an engineer, an aeronautical, structures-type engineer. I graduated from college and then came to California to get my Masters at U.C.L.A., and then took my engineering courses at S.C. I went to work for Lockheed, and they needed engineers, and I switched to Northrup and worked for them for over 25 years. I retired two-and-a-half years ago. I was married and had



Tsarpet in lead, finishing at Big Bear

two children. As I said, my son died a couple of months ago. I was divorced about 20 years ago, and my ex-husband died about two years ago. Now I'm retired, and go on trips and do taxes in the tax season. I go all the places I was never able to go when I had to work. I've done a lot in the dog business. I've worked with the Glendale Kennel Club for years - that was a privately-owned one. I worked on their board for years. I helped found and start San Fernando Kennel Club, and was an officer there. I helped found and start the Antelope Valley, and was an officer and obedience director there. I went all the way out there and taught obedience. I started the Cameo Kennel Club here, and was an officer. I

taught obedience for the Cameo Kennel Club for probably fifteen or sixteen years, every week. I was a member of the Simi Kennel Club. And the S.C.A. - I was President when we had divisions, of the Pacific Coast Division, a number of years ago. I was not assassinated - no attempts made! Which I think is very good.

Sometimes in clubs that's VERY good.

I worked very closely with Sid Hecker from Santa Barbara - helped with trying to get good judges. And Ventura. That's about it. We were very active in all of them socially, always giving parties or raising money or giving functions. Oh, and we here in Southern California put on the first National Specialty for Samoyeds ever put on by private people. Dick Breckenridge and I did it out of this living room. This living room was piled high for months because we put the catalog together, we put the premium list together, I did all the advertising. That's the first one. Of course, since then we've been able to handle our own.

When was that?

1964. The first Samoyed Specialty that was ever done by private people. It was fun.

How have the dogs affected your lifestyle?

Completely! They've sort of dictated what I did, how I lived, where I went, how I had my entertainment, or whatever. As I said, if you're going to go into it, jump right in with both feet. Otherwise you're not going to make a success. And when you pull out the way I did, you don't have to pull out all the way. But I figured that if I could not donate my time the way I wanted to, I didn't want to do a half-way job.

What are some of the advantages of being in dogs?

You're poor! (laughter)

Is that an advantage?

Interview ... continued on pg. 127



Tsar, Stormy, Tinda & Kara, King & Teddy, Zack & Prince

You always have something to do. You get some good watchdogs - they watch everything.

How about the disadvantages, too?

Oh, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Sure, you're tied down, and I have to scramble like the dickens when my company ... I was on the Mercury and Gemini and Apollo program and had to go to test sites, so I had to make sure that whatever so-called babysitter I had was a dogsitter, too. I was very lucky in my final choice - she ended up a professional handler. But I think having dogs does necessarily tie you down - they have to be fed, they have to be groomed, they have to be taken care of. And unless you're willing to do it, you shouldn't have them. I always had more than one, always.

So has it all been worth it?

Oh yes! Now that I'm old and gray, I've got my scrapbooks, and my movies. And I give lectures a lot. Just two weeks ago, I went to Santa Barbara, to the obedience club, and showed some pictures and my movies. It's fun. I've met a lot of nice people, and have a lot of friends all over the country. I know that if I ever take an



All champion team, 1960, Big Bear

automobile trip through the country, I'll stop every other place!

You meet a lot of people and make a lot of friends, even if you just write. A lot of them I talk to on the phone, and become very good friends with. I never know what they look like, never see them. Oh sure, it's been worth it. Even though you do end up in the poor house buying dog food. I wouldn't have changed it, and looking back, there were times in the rain with 27 dogs, that ... (laughter) It's been a sort of recreation and fun. The kids all seemed to enjoy it. I've even asked them if they ever regretted it, and they said no, it's been a lot of fun. At least, when we go on these campouts and everything, the kids are with me, and we all have fun. It isn't like some hobbies. If I'd taken up golf or tennis, they wouldn't have been with me.

Is there anything else you'd like to add? Anything we haven't talked about?

I don't think so. All I've done is talk. I've never talked so much in my life! No, I don't know of anything. Siberians are nice, but Sammies are better! (laughter)

Thank you very much. ¶¶

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