

The  
**SAMOYED**  
QUARTERLY



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# SAMOYED PEOPLE



Sam O'Khans Sali Sarai

Ch. Sam O' Khans Sali Sarai

The Samoyed Quarterly Talks With  
JIM SHEETS  
FROSTFIRE SAMOYEDS  
Alexandria, Virginia

*This interview was taped at the home of Mr. Sheets in March, 1979 by Deborah Walters.*

*When did you first get started in Samoyeds?*

We got our first Samoyed in about 1963 from a local breeder. We found out later that she didn't have a very good standing with other Samoyed breeders, but we did get one from this particular local breeder. My ex-wife wanted a dog. We were living in a townhouse in Washington, D.C. at the time, and the place was only 14 feet wide and 35 feet long, two stories. Anyway, she had been going through the ads in the paper and she finally asked me what a Samoyed was. Well, I had come from Seattle, Washington and I had encountered sled dogs so I answered her. There was a little bit of confusion, however; I think what I really described was a Siberian Husky. Anyway, she thought that description was all right so we went out to see these dogs. Now, you have to understand that Samoyed puppies are round, utterly round. So here were these five or six round things with black noses and eyes. The minute Joan saw them I went for my checkbook. That's how we got our first Samoyed.

The puppy we got was a female and we named her Nikki. She was huge! She grew up to be about the size

of a Malamute. And, she was ungovernable. We were out camping once in West Virginia and met some people who owned a farm over there and they wanted a dog. We thought this would be a place to put Nikki where she would be loved--and a place she would love--so, we gave them Nikki, and as far as I know she lived happily ever after.

*Had you become more knowledgeable about Samoyeds by this time?*

Oh, yes. My wife was a physician and she was never mildly interested in anything. If she had taken up knitting I would have been up to my hips in books on knitting. As it was she took up dogs. She bought books and she studied them and she figured out for herself that Nikki was not what one would call a prime example of the breed. She also determined the method used to go shopping for a quality dog. The woman had tremendous industry when it came to anything that really interested her.

After Nikki we got a bitch from the West Coast. This bitch was about a year old when we got her and she was named Sarai. She was a very nice dog, but she had been a kennel dog and she had the terrible habit of peeing every time I looked at her. I don't think she liked men. Anyway, I went around for a year mopping up after her, and trying to keep from killing her. Well, we finally got used to each other so this became a relatively small problem.

*Did you show her?*

Yeah. (Ed. note: She finished and had two Group placements.)

*Did you ever show Nikki?*

No. We tried her in obedience, but that wasn't one of Nikki's strong points. If they had given ribbons for orneriness, however, she would have gotten it; she was stubborn. And she was dumb too. I think she was one of the really few dumb Sams I ever met.

Anyway, we then got a notice from a friend of Joan's out in Seattle that a male was available. This was a dog out of her Noatak, who at that time was the leading Sam, and there had been a divorce in the family. The lady wanted to keep him, but she was unable to manage it. This was Ch. Sam O'Khan's Chingis Khan.

Jingo was two years old when we got him. And I can still remember going out to Dulles Airport to get him. I went out there and I really wasn't sure I wanted to buy a two year-old male dog. Here was Jingo, who was not a restful traveler; he was just raising sheer, unadulterated hell and he had reduced the poor freight attendants to absolute terror. They all left the warehouse when I announced that I was going to let this dog out. Jingo was big. (In fact, he was probably a bit too big for the breed.) He weighed about 80 pounds and he came out of that crate like a storm at sea. He wasn't having any more of that thing. Fortunately, I had a chain collar and when I opened the door I just put it right in front of the door. When he went over me I had the collar around his neck and the leash in my hand. THEN I could see why the woman couldn't take care of him. I didn't weigh as much then as I do now, but I was still around 250 pounds and it was almost an

equal contest. Well, I got him loaded in the car and then everything was okay. The car was one of the things he liked and he soon settled down. I got him home and he settled in very quickly. Of course he was hungry so I gave him something to eat. As soon as he ate he revised the social structure of the house by beating the hell out of Sarai, who was his litter sister. He was really a male chauvinist pig, you see. After that, it was like he had lived there all the time.

*How did you get into showing?*

We got interested with Nikki, but it only took a couple of shows to realize that Nikki was not worth investing the money it took for entry fees into. That's why we tried her out in obedience. The dog was really more of Joan's dog than she was mine and what Joan wanted was to show and breed.

We did show Sarai and we won some Best of Opposites with her. Her conformation was good, but she did have a short coat. (Or she had a short coat every time she was at a show, anyway.) Sometimes it got fairly long, but...

We got started on showing in a big way when we got Jingo. He turned out to be a natural show dog. He had a great deal of presence; he was a dominant type of a dog. When he got into a ring he looked great. Of course what he was doing was strutting around challenging all of these pee-wees to a fight. The less inclined they were to fight the better he looked. He'd get his head up, his neck arched, his chest out, and he'd sneer down his nose at the other dogs. He'd just impress the hell out of a judge.

*Did you know how good he was when you first got him? Did you know what you had?*



*Ch. Sam O' Khans Sali Sarai & puppies by Rogue*

Joan claimed that she did. I must confess that I had a little problem of communication there. I was raised in what you would call sort of a puritanic type of a family. They weren't really all that strict, but... The things you did for fun, you just did for fun. You didn't read about them, study about them, you just did them. So, my approach to the whole thing was a great deal looser than Joan's approach--and much less intense. We had a fair amount of trouble over that. If we didn't win I would say, "Oh, hell. So what? We just came for fun, didn't we?" And this is definitely not the attitude that you go around with in dog show circles.

*I don't know about that. I think there's a great amount of relief that you sometimes feel when you run across someone like that.*

Well, I never noticed the relief. I did notice, though, that when my dog was winning I seemed to get along much better with people, people in other breeds and all. When he started winning the Group I got along with people in other Groups very well, and when he won his first Best In Show I began to wonder if I had any friends left at all.

*Did Jingo start winning real big right off the bat?*

No. . . yeah. I think he won his first Group within six months from the time we got him. And he won his first Best In Show, which was in Scranton, Pennsylvania, about a year after we got him. By that time Joan had gone to a professional handler. We didn't try to show him ourselves. He was competitive at the highest levels and she wanted to have a professional handler on him.

*Did you start showing him yourself in the beginning?*

I tried. Joan couldn't; she couldn't even walk him. Jingo, you see, had been raised in a fenced yard and we kept him in a fenced yard. His attitude toward leashes and collars and walks, therefore, was one of bare tolerance--at best. So I could walk him because I was bigger and stronger than he was, but no one else could do it. He was a pet in the house, but he wasn't comfortable with it. If the gate was left open or something he just followed his nose until you caught him.

*So, he won his first Best In Show about the time he was three. Is that right?*

Yeah, that's about right. Perhaps he was a little older.

*How long did you campaign him?*

I think pretty close to four years. Of course we lived here and it wasn't as if we lived in a place where we could breed a successor to him, and he was really all we had to show, so, we kept on showing him. He kept on going up for the first three years as more and more judges saw him, and apparently talked about him. He kept on winning more Groups as time went on.

After the first Best In Show at Scranton there was sort of a long hiatus until his next win which was up in the Bronx. Then he won four in fairly close succession, as close as those things go. The last year was not too productive as far as Best-In-Show wins were concerned. I have always been convinced that dog showing is an emotional thing for the participants, and I think dog show judges are so dependent upon the clubs to keep working that I think a dog goes out of fashion if you try to extend his show life for too long. This is simply because the judges, I think, feel that it becomes dangerous to keep one winning too much.

*That's interesting.*

That's why dog showing is such an interesting thing. It is the only activity that is engaged in with that intensity in the United States which has absolutely no economic justification. It's true. If you show horses you make money at it, particularly when there are money prizes offered. And, you can make money by breeding and raising colts, even a colt. I don't know anybody who makes any money as a backyard breeder of dogs. If you show cattle you obviously do it from an economic base. The same is true with racehorses. You show your dogs because of pure emotion. There isn't any money there. As a matter of fact it costs you.

I suspect that we spent \$10,000 each year that we campaigned Jingo.

*Wow!*

There was the traveling expense. Then there were the entry fees and a host of other expenses. One or both of us were always at the shows. All that sort of thing adds up. And Jingo was shown, during the second and third year, almost every week. Just the breed fee which was paid to the professional handler was a fairly substantial burden, and every time he won or placed in the Group there was an additional fee.

*Who was the handler on Jingo? Did you use the same one all the way through his career?*

No. We started out with a fellow up in Connecticut and then Joan wanted to change handlers for some reason. I was willing to change, too, because it's a hell of a long way to Connecticut and we kept Jingo at home.

*You had to pick him up every week?*

And prepare him for the show on Thursday night--bathe him, groom him, blow him out. It was a long session every Thursday night. Then, we would leave Friday night right after work, drive to Connecticut, go to a show on Saturday and Sunday, and then drive back Sunday night because we both had to go to work on Monday. I did this for a year and a half, almost. I really don't know how I did it. I can't even drive to Baltimore now without getting tired. Retrospectively, it's just amazing.

*Was he winning fairly consistently the whole time, or did he start winning more after you changed handlers?*

Well, we changed handlers, like I said, after about a year and a half. We changed to a fellow who lived in Delaware, which at least had the advantage of being a shorter drive. It was a two-hour drive as opposed to a five-hour one. As I recall, Jingo did about as well with either handler, with both of them, Bernie and John. I don't remember their last names.

*Did Jingo ever win the Specialty?*

No, but he was only entered in one.

*Why did you not enter him in others?*

At that time the Samoyed Club only had one Specialty a year. (There was some big holly-golly with the A.K.C. over this.) But, it was never near enough for me to want to go to it. And, since he was a handler's dog, we would have had to pay the handler a terrible fee to go to the independent specialties. To the best of my recollection he was only entered in one specialty and that was the year it rotated East. He didn't win.

*Did you advertise him a lot?*

Only in the club magazine.

*When did you become a member of the parent club?*

At that time you could only become members of the parent club. I don't know whether the Samoyed Club is still organized the same way. There was only one in the nation. There weren't any regional divisions and the A.K.C. was sniping at them for that reason, you know. They "didn't encourage the establishment of local breed clubs" and all sorts of wonderful things.

I think we became fairly active in the parent club fairly soon. It must have been right after we got Sarai. Joan joined for herself right after we got Sarai and right after that we decided that we would become exhibitors. That would have been in about '64 or '65. And, as a part of the whole holly-golly with the Samoyed Club the presidency was to rotate to the East. It had been up in the Pacific Northwest when we joined. Anyway, there was a definite division between eastern and western members, between old and new owners, and all of this sort of nonsense was going on when I was asked to run for the presidency of The Samoyed Club of America.

*How long had you been in the breed?*

Just about a year. I really wasn't that interested, but I ultimately agreed. And my support came from outside the eastern portion of the club. Anyway, I got my nomination and all that and, much to the horror of

the people I was opposing, I won. So, there I was with the presidency of the club, having only been an exhibitor and owner for about a year, a year and a half at best. I had never even read the breed Standard. That was Joan's responsibility. It was her hobby, and it was up to her to read the breed Standard.

I did this, however, knowing that it really didn't matter. Again, I grew up in the trade union movement and organizations are organizations. Really, it is not even necessary for the president of a dog club to own a dog. All he has to be able to do is to run a club. This I could do. So Joan went on, happily, showing her dogs and I occupied my time as president of the club for two years.

*It sounds as if you sort of inherited a "bag of worms" when you became president.*

Yes, something like that. The club had been working for something like six years--maybe that's an exaggeration--on an illustrated breed Standard and on a new breed Standard. Such were the divisions concerning what the breed should be (honest divisions) and the suspicions between individuals that these things were never able to be concluded. And the club was under fire from the A.K.C. concerning its attitudes on local breed clubs. There were these Standard fights going on, deep divisions between the eastern and western members, over the size of the dogs mostly, and all of those other things.

The Standard at that time was derived from the British Standard. Its defenders insisted that one was the pure Standard and it called for a relatively small dog. The western people who had, frequently, more space and higher incomes, which meant that they fed their dogs better, had bred bigger dogs. Jingo, for example, was much more typical of a western male than an eastern one. We were in the area of a noneconomic quarrel; it was sort of like a fight between relatives that goes on for years and years. It was almost an impossible situation, but the answer was really very simple, you know. The dogs had been brought out of Siberia to England. Now, obviously, in Siberia they lived with primitive tribes, and primitives are never good to their animals. The dogs ate what they could hustle, and they ate blubber and fish. Of course they weren't big dogs. The British don't have a lot of surplus in their economy either. Even a rich Britisher does not put as much into his dog as an average middle-class American. Well, the dogs that were being bred out West were no different than the people were. When I moved here to Washington, D.C. from Washington state there was no store around here where I could buy shoes. This was in 1959 and the size of the people here was that much different from the people on the West Coast that I couldn't buy shoes; I couldn't buy gloves. I was just too big for what the stores stocked for turn-over purposes here in Washington. I couldn't even buy suits; I had to have them made.

Now it's changed. People mix, you know. Now there are two or three stores where I can buy a size 15 shoe. And I can get clothes off the rack now. But, that's only been a relatively recent thing. Anyway, it's the same thing in horses and dogs. The eastern horses are smaller than those in the West. Morgan breeders have had the same type of brawl going on over the years.

Anyway, getting back to the club... We never did settle the business about the rotating specialties. Since there were no local breed clubs there was no basis for holding local specialties--and this is what the A.K.C. objected to. We held a meeting with the A.K.C., however. Well, we said that we would rotate the one big specialty every year. That wasn't enough for them--and we never did settle that. We did, however, settle the question about local breed clubs quite readily. The A.K.C. had the attitude that The Samoyed Club of America wouldn't allow local breed clubs. I pointed out to the members that there was no provision in the constitution which made them forbidden and that nobody

in the S.C.A. was going to shoot them for organizing one. Several of them were organized, including one here in Washington, D.C. The people were so busy fighting about the Standard that they had lost sight of the fact that all they had to do to have a local breed club was to get a number of people together and organize one.

*Did you help organize the one here?*

Yeah, with my wife and some others. There were a few before that, but they were maintained on a very informal basis, aside from the one that was in Los Angeles or San Diego. Somehow, everybody had gotten so lost in this fight that they didn't realize that all they had to do was go ahead and do it. It's typical of that kind of brawl.

The illustrated Standard was finally produced. This was shortly after the end of my second term as president. The official Standard revision I'm not sure ever went through. We got out before that and I don't know if it was ever completed.

I suspect most of the old quarrels have largely been abandoned by now. It seems like the people who were the most determined to keep them going were fairly old at the time and they are probably dead. And some of the key eastern people actually moved west. Then, because of peer pressure, they changed sides. Or, their dogs got old and died and they got new ones locally, thereby becoming defenders of the large Samoyed. It was all a matter of whose ox was being gored.

I must say that it was an interesting experience. I was totally tired of being president after my second year and, fortunately, that was as long as I was president.

*Did you do any reorganizing within the club during your tenure?*

No. . . or did I? Somewhere along the line a new constitution came into being. I know that I commented on it and made several suggestions regarding it. I think it was written by a fellow in Colorado. And the constitution was revised although I can't claim credit for that; I'm not sure it happened during my term of office. A lot of work went into it, though, when I was the president.

I suppose the only thing that I did that contributed to the restructuring of the club was to stop badgering people about the formation of local breed clubs. Local breed clubs started springing up all over, and that was all that the A.K.C. really wanted anyway. The other contribution I possibly made was to simply explain to people that you really can't fight the A.K.C. The A.K.C. has all the gun and everything and you can sit around and debate all you want to but eventually the A.K.C. is going to pull the pin on you. You really "can't fight city hall" as the saying goes. I think that once that argument got out to the people that revising the constitution became very simple. There were, too, the questions about rotation of offices and things like that which were considered quite important by everyone. You know, I don't think there were more than 300 members in the Samoyed Club, ever, but there were the groups back here in the East, in California, in Colorado, and in western Washington and it seemed that these groups were fairly numerous. I'm talking about the years we were in office now. Anyway, there was this thing about the rotation of offices. The A.K.C. made some objections against the institutional rotation of offices, but I couldn't see where it violated any rule of theirs. I thought they were just natural-born bitchers over there. Anyway, I ended up defending this rotation of officers so fiercely that the A.K.C. got off of it and I believe that was put into the constitution. These were for the offices of president and treasurer, by the way. These were the only two offices that anybody was interested in which would rotate from east to west in some kind of cycle. And, oddly enough, these two couldn't be in the same division, at least I don't think so. I'm not sure.

*Was the club separated into four divisions before*

you took office?

Yes. This had been the original structure of the club. I think it had been structured after some other dog club; I don't know. Maybe it just outlasted the tolerance of the A.K.C. They had long ago gone after some of the other clubs.

Were they going after the Samoyed Club?

Oh, no. I think they were just bitching.

As president, were you the delegate to A.K.C.?

The delegate was someone else. For awhile it was a fellow who lived up in New York.

How important is it to have a dynamic, forceful delegate to A.K.C.?

Well, if we had one, that would have been very important because my recollection of A.K.C. at that time is that it was made up of a pretty rabid bunch. If you had somebody who would go in there about twice a week and scream at them you might have gotten your way.

Now, I don't think it's too important. The system is very carefully engineered so that the delegates don't mean all that much. The operation of A.K.C. is pretty much of a handler-stamping management. I don't know. . . I guess it's six of one and half a dozen of the other. The fellows in A.K.C. are going to run the thing the way they want to. There's no real constitutional check on them.

Were you still fairly active in the parent club after your presidency?

No. It was at about that time that things started to go a little sour for me and for my wife. We weren't getting along all that well. And, a part of it was because of the dogs. My attitude was one that said a hobby should be for fun and I could never achieve the intensity that was required for normal participation in the purebred dog world. On the basis of that a lot of things became issues: the amount of money and time we were putting into the game, the sheer physical effort of getting that brute ready for a show. . . It was unbelievable what you had to do to get ready for a show. You had to bathe the dog--and he didn't like that--and go through all of this other stuff.

Where did you bathe him? In the bathtub?

In the bathtub. Oh, no single human being could bathe him; it had to be a joint venture. He was never entirely sure that he needed a bath. And then he had to be dried. A double-coated dog can hold more water than the battleship Missouri and the only way we could reduce this drying thing to less than a week's work was to use a vacuum cleaner. We'd put that thing on outflow and then just stand there for hours and hours while we blew warm air on him. I even got an electric heater, thinking that might help. I put it in front of the intake of the vacuum.

I tell you, getting him dry was something else. We'd start his bath immediately after dinner--an early dinner--and then work on him for hours. Bobby was just a baby then and we'd get some food in him and get him bedded down and then start to work on Jingo.

What did you use to bathe him?

We finally found something that had a detergent base, something which was used in beauty parlors. They used it on women's hair and it was sort of a thick paste. I can't remember what the name of it was, but it really made him white. It wasn't a bleach, but it really brought the whiteness out. And it conditioned the coat. (My goodness, I feel like that little pansy fellow on TV who has the comb and talks about these things. . . creme rinses and all.) Anyway, that was pretty good stuff, and it came in cases of big plastic gallon jars.

Let's see. . . We started washing him about 6:30 and that took at least an hour--at least an hour. You might have to pursue him through the house a couple of times before you got through washing him. (And drag him back.) Well, we would finally get him downstairs and start drying him--or at least we would try to.

There was always a period of time in there when you couldn't control him. He'd run around the house, shake the water out, and run some more. You'd get him subdued and up on the table and *THEW* start drying him. And we'd still be working on him at midnight. We would use the blower and the towels and then Joan would start trimming him. She'd trim his hocks, pasterns, and maybe a little bit behind the ears where he tended to get a little bushy.

So instead of having the handler do it, you did most of the grooming yourselves?

Yeah. As I said, we kept Jingo at home; we didn't want to leave him at the handler's kennel. Anyway, this was a great base, or starting-off point, for the weekend. You'd start out tired on Friday night when you took off for the handler's place and then you had the shows on Saturday and Sunday. After about three years I decided that I really couldn't cut it anymore.

I'm not surprised. Now, as exuberant as this dog was, could you use a normal show lead?

Oh, yeah. As I said before, Jingo looked upon his entry into the ring as a challenge to all of the other dogs, and when you're putting up a challenge you're not running off and playing or goofing off. You're paying attention and watching the other dogs, and trying to impose yourself upon them. So, as far as the handler was concerned, he was beautifully behaved in the ring. Then, too, after he had done it for awhile he began to do it for its own sake. He liked the attention; he'd really get in there and strut. He really wasn't a problem for the handler.

Was he the type of dog who turns on to applause?

No. He didn't care that much for people; he really didn't. Jingo was my dog and I was the only people he really cared that much about. If I got mad at him he was very upset, and if I was pleased he was very happy.

He didn't like children, but, on the other hand, he was a very responsible dog with our children. He treated them very well although he seemed to have the attitude that it would have pleased him if we had never brought them home.

He must have thought that they sort of imposed themselves upon his lifestyle.

Right.

He liked stud services because the bitch showed up in a very interesting condition, and then was taken away and he wasn't bothered with her anymore. He despised puppies. He and his father both had a habit of hating puppies.

He was just very aloof with people. If we had company he would come around and look the people over, but then he would just go off and do his thing. He would come over by me and lie down or he would just go into another room or something. I used to exercise him with a bicycle (I was much younger then) and we would go here and there around the streets. He loved that.

That's how you kept him in condition?

Yeah. He loved that.

How far would you take him?

Maybe a mile, or two miles, a day. That was about all I could stand, and that was about all I had time for. Now, of course he was a pretty dog, and he attracted a lot of children because of that. You had to be careful. He would tolerate them, but he didn't really like them. I never knew him to even offer to bite, but. . . You had to be careful that no one stood right in front of him. If he felt that he was surrounded he would get very nervous and he would snarl and maybe snap. Now, if there was a clear space in front of him he was gentle as a lamb; he would let anybody pet him.

Did you have any other males around when you had him?

Not within a mile. Jingo got along moderately well with young dogs after they got over being puppies, however. They had to have some stamina and be able to play with him and he would be okay. Then, when they got to be about a year old he would tolerate them, even

play with them occasionally. The minute they achieved puberty they had it; he attacked them. It was a pack leader sort of thing. So, you never took Jingo around other male dogs, except to a show where he was kept under very close control.

He would tolerate females and we always had females around, but they had to maintain a proper harem type of existence or attitude. They had to leave him alone when he wanted to rest and they didn't get to eat out of his bowl and... I forget what the number of sins were, but there were a number of them. They couldn't sit by my chair either. Now, each of these offenses, if committed, earned them a shaking. He would just grab them and shake them. Consequently, the female dogs were a pretty subdued group. (I used to have a lot of fun explaining all of this to Joan's friends and then saying that animals had a much higher society than man.)

*Had he ever been used at stud before you got him?*

No, we started that nonsense ourselves. And he caught on fast. His main problem, at first, was an excess of enthusiasm. In fact, a couple of times I saw him jump clear over a bitch. He did catch on fairly rapidly although his style left something to be desired. He reminded me of an old song by Oscar Brand called "Three Prominent Bastards." One part of that song goes like this: "In a dusty little chain gang on a dusty southern road my late lamented pappy found his permanent abode. Some were there for murder, but Daddy's only fault was an overwhelming weakness for criminal assault. Daddy's code was simple and free from moral taint: Seduction is for sissies; a he-man wants his rape." That was the attitude Jingo had.

I remember one time when we bred him to a rather small bitch. We had a great deal of trouble with her. She was a virgin and her enthusiasm was even greater than his. We couldn't get her to stand still! Finally we called the vet and she said "Bring them on down." So, I took the dogs down to the vet, and in the meantime the guy who usually helped her in these things disappeared. I ended up doing the thing there. We were at the point where it had to be done, and I FINALLY managed to get the thing done. I put leashes on both dogs and the bitch up against some furniture so her back-end was still hanging out. Then, I braced her with one knee and held Jingo by his collar. I never did think I would get them still enough for the breeding, but we finally managed it--and when we did it impressed the hell out of everybody. This fellow who worked for the vet had been in on a couple of breedings with Jingo and he had had a great deal of trouble so he was greatly impressed. Believe me, it was sheer muscle.

*Roughly, how many times was Jingo used at stud?*

I wouldn't have any idea. It wasn't that many, though, because he died rather unexpectedly at just about the time he was ready to start rolling as a stud. You see, getting back to the peculiar characteristics of dog people, while he was a winning dog on the circuit there were an awful lot of people who wouldn't breed to him because they were just plain mad that he was winning. Then, as his winnings tapered off, his breed and group placings tapered off, his stud services went up.

*What did you charge for a stud fee for him?*

Either a hundred or a hundred and fifty dollars, with a guaranteed return. When we retired him, when we officially retired him, I think he would have gotten a lot of stud services but, as I said, he died rather unexpectedly. He got a stomach inversion, torsion, or that "balloon thing". It happened at a time when I had taken the kids down to Miami (my mother and dad were there and we all got together after Christmas) and Joan was out. By the time she got home, got him up into the car and to the vet's, it was just too late. So, his life as a stud was not very long.

*Did you ever keep any puppies that he produced?*

No. Again, we had a problem with lack of space. And, too, one of the other problems was that the bitch

we were breeding was his sister, and breeding them didn't seem like such a good idea.

We had eight bitches over the life of this insanity, if you will. Sarai was a mature dog when we got her. She was a nice dog, very gentle, but she wasn't the best show dog or the best breeder in the world. We did get other puppies from related lines, though.

Now, it was about the time that we got into it that hip dysplasia in large dogs was beginning to be talked about, and this veterinarian up in Pennsylvania established the O.F.A. Joan, with her medical background, was into this right away--it was a great idea: "Hip dysplasia is a genetic defect. There's no question about it; it is in humans and it has to be in dogs, too. The only way to stamp it out is to x-ray them, register, and breed clear dogs." Jingo and Sarai were number two and three in the breed, I think.

*To be x-rayed and certified?*

Yeah. They had some low numbers. Well, we had gotten some very nice bitch puppies that would have been very compatible with Jingo physically, but one of them turned out to be so dysplastic that after she got to be about eight months old she couldn't even get up without crying. Another one was less dysplastic, but she was still dysplastic. Joan was determined that we weren't going to have any of that so we never really did get a bitch to breed to Jingo.

*How many dogs did you have at the time Jingo died?*

We had three. We had had as many as five at one time but that was because we overlapped one we got with some puppies that we had. That's far too many for this piece of property. We had Jingo and we had two bitches. Jingo died in December, Joan and I split up in April, and I gave both of the bitches away.

*Was Jingo the only champion that you ever finished?*

No, I think that we finished three, or maybe four. Most of the dogs that we kept for any length of time became champions.

*But none of them came close to his winning record?*

Oh, no. His winning record was reserved for what he was: a large, proud male who could go in and dominate the ring. This is very difficult for the bitches, especially in long-coated dogs. They just don't look nearly as impressive as their male counterparts, with their fancy coats and bushy tails. I suspect it's very unfair. Size is the desirable factor for a lot of the judges. . .the bigger, the better. So, the females, who tend to be built along more delicate lines, tend to collect a lot of Best Opposite ribbons.

*Yes, trying to special a bitch can be a very trying and expensive experience. Can you tell us any memorable show experiences?*

Oh, yeah. There's one that I will live with for the rest of my life. We decided that when Jingo was at the height of his career we would take him to one of the really well-recognized, national dog shows, so we flew him to Chicago for the dog show there--on the day that Martin Luther King was assassinated. We had reservations in a motel just off of Michigan Avenue on the other side of the ghetto from the stockyards. Now, at this point I was ready to go home. Such was the fervor of dog exhibitors, however, that my wife wouldn't hear of it. She insisted that we had to stay. We rented a car to go back and forth between the motel and the stockyard. We loaded Jingo and his equipment into the car that first morning and started out through the ghetto to get to the stockyard. Now, under ordinary circumstances, in New York for example, when I would walk Jingo down the street, even though we were walking on the fringes of sort of a slum area, there was no problem. All of these city-dwellers, seeing this dog walking down the street with me, would make a lot of space for us, and that was very comforting. What I had forgotten, though, was that it was Jingo's unvarying habit to sleep in a moving car. He would just stretch out on the back seat and go to sleep. Anyway, we were driving along through the Chicago ghetto and people were smash-



Ch. Frostfire's Galadriel

ing windows and breaking into liquor stores, and I'm turning around and yelling at this lazy dog to get up and growl at somebody.

That was the worst, the very worst dog show that I was ever at. The people were terrified. The organizers really should have called the show off. The dogs were upset because the people were frightened. I've never seen a dog show with so many dog fights. All these dogs were looking around to see who was scaring their people; their eyes would light on another dog and they would just pitch in. It was just two days of unrelieved fear and frustration. It was just amazing.

*What about other memorable times?*

I remember one show in Atlantic City on Thanksgiving weekend. The show was on a Sunday and it took me three hours to drive there, but it took me almost eleven hours to drive home after the show! I remember that one.

One of the shows that I remember best was the Bronx show where I first saw Jingo take Best In Show. New York is not one of my favorite places--New York City isn't--but we went to the show with the handler, and Jingo looked real good. The armory, the National Guard Armory, where this thing was held was unquestionably the filthiest place I have ever been in. We walked in and it looked like utter disaster for a white dog. This is the kind of place where you wouldn't want to show anything but a Doberman--because they start out with a natural advantage. It was really dirty and we went to ridiculous lengths to keep that dog clean; we practically took my overcoat off for that dog to lie on. When we had to go to the exercise pen Joan decreed that he had to be carried, and, obviously, I was the only one who could carry him. And it was cold; it was very cold. I think an unheated armory is cold enough to keep meat. Anyway, we went through a whole day of this. I don't

think that it was a bad show either. I think that we just kind of stood around the armory until our time came. It was a twenty-five hundred, all-breed dog show, and it took about twelve hours. When it culminated in Jingo taking Best In Show even I decided that it had been worth it.

*When he was competing in the breed was he ever defeated, or was he often defeated?*

He was defeated, but not often. There were a couple of judges who were fairly solidly on the side of the small breed argument and they wouldn't put him up because of his size. Then there were a couple of them who were just plain dumb and they would never put him up regardless of what was in the ring, although they never cited his size as the reason. You know that judging is a fairly subjective thing.

*What do you think of the quality of judging?*

Well, I don't think it's very good, but I don't think it's possible to make it any better. Again, this is because of the lack of an economic factor in this whole thing. What that does, for example, is to make your breed standard very vague because people, when writing breed standards, tend to avoid putting anything very definitive in them; no one wants to offend somebody who is a very potent member of the club. One who has a dog, or is running a line of dogs, with pink eyes is going to object to eye color being mentioned in the standard. You know, somebody whose line has a bunch of dogs with their noses set sideways is going to be very fussy about what the standard says about the breed's nose. Well, these people each have their own little clique of folks to whom they've sold dogs or are otherwise persuaded, so the breed standards are sort of a mish-mash of undefined terms. In that sense the judging can't be on very good terms, because it's not on a very good base.

*Do you feel that it is generally fair?*

All the judges that I've ever met were fair within the limits of their capacities. A lot of them were fair with some fairly strong prejudices. As I say, I never figured out any way to improve this sort of thing. What would probably help an awfully lot would be to retire them eventually. I can remember one old boy that could barely make it through breed judging he was so shaky, and it was perfectly obvious from watching him walk through a show that he was three-quarters blind. But, he was a big name in judging, especially in one breed or another, and his presence as a judge of that breed would bring in one hell of an entry. Keeping these folks around tends to eliminate people who can sort of appreciate the evolution of the breeds. Most American breeds are larger than their European or British counterparts; western dogs at that time (I don't know if it's still true) tended to be larger than their eastern counterparts in the same breed. The younger people in the breed have recognized this and accepted it. These old guys tend to be very fixed in their opinions and, of course, since there is at least one person in each show that will assure a judge that he is the best thing since sliced bread, their egos tend to get in their way a little bit. So, I think a good answer would be to limit the length of their ability to judge a little bit and to keep feeding younger judges into the system.

*How political did you find judging to be?*

I never felt that the judges were particularly affected by personal friendships or knowledge of who had the clout in any particular breed. Of course we were in a breed where there were no big breeders. Everybody was a kind of a backyard breeder in Samoyeds in those years so political considerations on the basis that people claimed existed in the other breeds couldn't exist in the Samoyeds. I think that the judges all did the best job that they could in a breed that by its nature was unfamiliar to almost all of them. After all, there were only about three hundred members in the S.C.A., and there probably weren't even three hundred Samoyed exhibitors. We went to some shows where Jingo would be only one of two or three Samoyeds entered, and that was even after he was a special. (We were going for the Group actually.) But, in a situation like that a judge can't become too familiar with the people.

*How important do you feel making the top ten, or the top twenty, is in a breed? Does it relate to the actual quality of the dog?*

It would be more important in a large breed in America than it would in a small breed. If you've only got five really good dogs being campaigned in a breed then numbers six through ten are schlumps, regardless of whether they're in the top ten or not. So, statistically, I'm sure the top ten in German Shepherds, or Dobs, or Irish Setters, or Collies, or something like that is far more important than it is in Samoyeds, or Lhasa Apsos, or Irish Wolfhounds, simply because there's bound to be ten good Shepherds or Dobs being campaigned. I think it's like any other top number listing: You have to take it in context.

*How do you feel about Samoyeds being specialied?*

Well, any relatively rare breed, in my experience--and I don't think that this has changed--has a hard time as a special. This is simply because he's always up against the big operators, the popular breeds, and that I think is a distinct disadvantage. If you stop showing a dog when it becomes a champion you're really engaged in a meaningless exercise, except in a commercial sense, which really isn't important in dogs. This is because any dog can become a champion: If you show the beast long enough he's going to pick up those fifteen points. I've seen some champions that didn't even look like they were purebreds being specialied. I really felt sorry for those people because, as I said, they were engaged in futile exercises. We lucked out with Jingo. We just happened to get a very fine dog. We could have been

in the breed for ten years, and never have come up with anything like him. It was just an accident: somebody else's family misfortune, and Joan's almost neurotic pursuit of the hobby that put her in the position to be informed when Jingo became available. But, really, the proof of the dog is in "specialing." If he can win there, against the heavy hitters in his Group, and against the all-breed competition, then you know he's a good dog.

*When you were novices starting out, did you find people fairly helpful? Were they willing to share information, give advice, or anything along those lines?*

I found that people were more willing to offer commandments from on high. But, some among the eastern exhibitors at that time, and a lot of the older members who felt they should speak with unquestionable authority, tried. They really tried to be nice to us, in their fashion, but it was defeated right from the start because I was never a humble person, and humility was what they desired from novices. (I suspect that this is still true.) I mostly, in the time that I was showing Jingo, found companionship from people in the other breeds and from the professional handlers. They were in the game on a basis that I could understand: They were making money at it. Consequently, we could sort of talk the same language. And, of course, there wasn't any friction between me and a person in another breed because until we got to be in the "threatened" Group we could be very friendly. That's not entirely true either. There were some other people who got into exhibiting Samoyeds about the same time that we did that we got very friendly with. There weren't very many, though.

*How or what has the popularization of the breed done to help or to harm it?*

I don't think Samoyeds are a popular breed, and I don't think that they ever will be. For one thing, they're too darned hard to take care of. If you really want a Samoyed to really look nice you have to put your back into it. If you neglect them just a little the first thing that happens to them is that they turn yellow, and that looks pretty disgusting. They turn a very ugly yellow. A double-coated dog of that size just isn't going to get very popular.

Then, they don't do anything, unless you happen to be in one of the few parts of the country where you can engage in sledding, and they really aren't the best for that. Siberians are better for sled racing, and Malamutes are better for the freight type of contests. Samoyeds kind of go down in the middle between them. They're not as fast as a Siberian and they're not as big as a Malamute. There have been some racers who have had a Sam or Samoyeds on their teams and there was even a guy who raced for awhile with an all-Samoyed team--and it didn't do badly--but the big heavy getters in racing are Siberians. So, Sams are not going to get more popular with the racing types, and they are not hunting dogs, in spite of the claims of some of the more emotional owners. A few have been trained to be bird dogs, but they're not that either. What they're good at is being a herding dog.

*Did you ever use any of your dogs, or Jingo, in this manner?*

The dog we gave away found an immediate niche on this farm because she only had to be shown twice how to bring the cows in for milking before she started to do it herself. She did that for all the remaining years of her life, even did it at the right time, without being told. She'd bring them in when the time came for the evening milking and then she would move them back out into the field in the morning. It was a matter of instinct with her. But Sams are not good for herding sheep, and that's the only place where we use herding dogs in this country.

*Why do you say they are not good for herding sheep?*

That's because a sheep dog has to be black and white. I don't remember the exact combination here,

but sheep respond to these two colors. They respond with fear to one and with at least indifference to the other. These black and white mutts that do herd sheep apparently do learn to use this to help move the sheep. And, also, a shepherd doesn't want a dog as big as a Sam; he wants a small, quick dog that doesn't eat a hell of a lot. So, they're sort of excluded for that. If anybody ever starts a commercial reindeer herd they've got a job, though. That's what they were designed for.

*How does the quality of the Samoyeds in the ring today compare to the Samoyeds you were seeing in the ring?*

I think, mostly, it started to improve as we got out, and that was largely because of the debate over O.F.A. Hip dysplasia doesn't only affect the joints, it also affects the muscles. As people became more aware of it you began to see stronger dogs, and that's very good in a breed like this. But, again, you find that it is really very difficult to improve a breed of dogs through conformation showing. As a matter of fact, conformation showing works against it. This, again, is because of a lack of economic need.

I remember going out to California one time on business for a staff meeting. This was shortly after I was finished being president of the club, and we went up to Petaluma for a dog show. (Apparently that's one of the big shows in California.) As I watched the dogs being shown I noticed one very striking thing: Samoyeds are supposed to have very dark eyes, and they're supposed to have dark eye rims because of the place where they originated, and it's very definitely a survival-related characteristic. Dark eyes are less susceptible to snow blindness. What struck me most forcibly was that almost all of the dogs there had light brown eyes, or brown ranging to light brown eyes. Now, the reason for this was that the people who dominated the breed out there, the Samoyed owners in the State of California, had gotten into some brown-eyed lines, and so they had just adjusted their concept of what constituted dark eyes to fit their circumstances. When I said they had an eye problem they all got very indignant. And this happens all the time. I can remember being told by a Doberman exhibitor to be very careful because you could buy into a line that wouldn't eat. He told me that a very good male was imported from England about twenty years ago. He really swept the field. He was used for breeding for a number of years, and he passed on a genetic quirk: His descendants would rather starve to death than eat, and they would have to be force-fed. I said, "That is insane. The damned critter can starve before I'll force-feed him." So be very careful if you buy a Doberman. As a matter of fact, his dog was from this line, and occasionally he would have to force-feed his dog. But, you know, this is the kind of thing that happens in dogs.

It happens because there isn't any money motive in it. You don't let it happen to racehorses, for example. You don't let it happen to cattle because if you do you stop making money at it. Until this sort of hurdle can be overcome there isn't going to be any way that conformation showing can improve the breed. I think that this is why hunting dogs, for example, hold up better than the working group, as a general rule. There are a lot of people who are still devoted to the purpose of the dog, they use them for hunting, and they tend to set the standards for the breed. In the working group most of the things that the dogs did that had commercial value have disappeared over the years, and so the Collie has become this skinny-headed Borzoi type of creature instead of what he was, which was a sturdy, hardworking animal with a head that had room for brains. This has been the result of conformation showing. I'm sure that back along the way somewhere somebody got ahold of a skinny-headed Collie and decided that the only way that they were going to be able to special this dog was to convince everyone that skinny was beautiful-- and did it! They probably had a long correspondence

list and enough clout with Collie breeders to sell the program, and they really changed the breed.

*Did you require the bitches that you bred to Jingo to be x-rayed?*

Oh, yes. They had to be x-rayed and they had to be accepted, registered. This cost a fair amount of pushing and hauling at times.

*Were there ever any bitches that you refused?*

Yes. We would refuse them sight unseen if they weren't O.F.A. registered. We refused a few because when they showed up on the premises they just weren't anything that we were prepared to breed Jingo to. That made it difficult if the dog was shipped in to us. Usually we liked to see a picture of the bitch before she was shipped, but sometimes that wasn't possible. My position was less pure than Joan's. If we accepted the dog and she was shipped in, unless we could find something definitely wrong with her, we went ahead with the breeding.

*What other criteria did you have in deciding to do a breeding?*

There were some bitches that we wouldn't have accepted because of the people, not the dogs. But, fortunately, they never contacted us so it never became an issue. And there were some people around here, locally, who were acting as puppy factories. They sold fairly bad dogs and we avoided their dogs, even to the second and third generations. By and large, however, the people were so scattered that many of these things were based on telephone conversations and pictures we had seen in the bulletins and that sort of thing. We pretty much took what came along.

*Do you want to relate your incident with the bitch coming into the airport?*

Yeah, that was exciting. A fellow called from North Carolina and he had a bitch that he wanted to breed. Like a lot of people who call, he had waited until the situation was desperate. I don't know if this is characteristic of all breeds, but it sure seemed to happen to us an awful lot. So, anyway, the dog's ancestry was all right, the dog had been x-rayed and registered with O.F.A. As a matter of fact, it was pretty close to a linebreeding as far as Jingo was concerned. On this basis we said to go ahead and ship her in. Well, in this town he was living in you have to drive to some other town some fifty miles away, and put them on a little feeder airline. He did this on a Friday night. Saturday morning I went down to the airport and found the freight office for this little airline closed up tight. Nobody was there, and it was apparent that nobody had any intention of showing up. I checked a couple of the other airline freight offices and they assured me that this outfit didn't open on Saturday. Well, I could see the dog in there so I went to the airline offices and raised hell with them. I was yelling at some poor little girl who was only there to handle passengers and her supervisor wasn't even on the premises. I then decided to go home and see what kind of campaign I could plan out. I called the owner of the dog and told him what the problem was. I told him not to get excited, that the dog hadn't been there that long yet, and that we'd figure out something; then I started to call people like the local supervisor of the airline. In between phone calls I got a phone call from the freight supervisor of the Washington terminal and he asked me to come down and pick up the dog. I got down there and I found this guy pretty ruffled. He didn't want to be there on a Saturday. His attitude was "just get the mutt and get out." That I did. We brought the bitch home, gave her food and water, and let her rest. Then, I called the owner again. I told him what had happened and he said, "By God, I knew something would happen. I found the president of the damned airline fishing off a yacht in the Gulf, and I talked to him on a radio-telephone hookup!"

*Would you have a special diet for Jingo while he was being used for stud service? While he was being*



Ch. Sam O'Khan's Chingis Khan  
"Jingo"  
Uncle of GoGo

*campaigned? What were you feeding him at that time?*

That dog had a better diet than the kids'. His stud services weren't that frequent that we had to worry about it, but Jingo spent his life on a high-protein diet. We customarily gave him a scrambled egg or something for breakfast. He would get an egg or some scraps of meat left over from dinner (that he hadn't already stolen) for breakfast. His basic food was Alpo, which we used to buy by the ruddy case. You have no idea, in an area which is mostly devoted to small Poodles and little Spaniels and so on, what happens to a grocery store manager when some Klutz comes walking in and asks if he has any unopened cases of Alpo. He was always on a very good diet and we never had to worry about changing it for his stud service.

Speaking of stealing food. . . Jingo would do that. As a matter of fact, Jingo would eat anything that wouldn't eat him. His thieving career reached sort of a height one time. We had company, old friends of mine. The guy was a fellow who liked to eat about as much as I do, and he showed it in just about the same way. I decided to do things on an impressive scale. I went to a very expensive butcher shop up the road here and bought a big roast and did it on the spit. It was gorgeous. The only trouble was that we got a little bit pie-eyed and we didn't eat too much. So, in order not to interrupt the conversation while we cleaned up the table, I just put the meat on the counter. Finally our company left. Joan and I set about cleaning up and

I looked toward the counter--no roast! I said, "Joan, when did you put the roast in the refrigerator?" She said that she hadn't so I looked around some more. There was no roast, but there were some very suspicious smears on the floor--and a dog that was going around acting like butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. He was really being beautifully behaved. The interesting part of this whole story is that it was the only time that I know of when he split the chow with one of the female dogs.

*He let her in on his big kill?*

She obviously tried to take some and he didn't want to draw any attention until he had that thing eaten. Under ordinary circumstances that sort of thing would have caused him to get up and crush her, but this time he put up with it.

*How many pounds would you estimate that he put away?*

He probably finished off about four pounds, four or five pounds of good, prime U.S. beef. One time I had a bar-be-cue out in the back, and the back was sort of Jingo's domain. I took a big steak out there to bar-be-cue and I got a phone call about that time. I took my phone call on the kitchen phone, and I turned to look outside. Then, I just about broke the caller's eardrum, first by yelling "NO" to the dog and then by dropping the phone on the floor while I dove for that damned steak. I made it though. When Jingo heard me say "No" he stopped. Nobody else could do that to him, but he would stop for me. We had an agreement. The

first or second night that he was here I got distracted when I was putting his food down. I straightened up and turned away before I put his bowl down and he bit me. He was still hungry, I guess, from traveling. Anyway, I beat the living hell out of him. No critter ever bites me. That was the sort of deal that he could understand. From then on we had a fine working arrangement.

He was not an easy dog, really. He was, as I said, never vicious, but he had a strong sense of his own rights. Jingo could easily have gotten along in a world that didn't contain kids and puppies, but when the kids came along he accepted his responsibilities. He would sleep under the crib. He would defend them from the most mythical kind of threats. If you put Jingo in the back of the car along with one of the babies in a traveling crib or something nobody had even better look at that car; he would be up, and snarling. And he would never sleep when one of the children was in the car as he would when he was alone or when he was with just us. In those days I traveled a lot. When I was away and Joan would get up to answer the door Jingo would go with her; if I was home and would get up to answer the door he would lift his head, look around, and go back to sleep.

*How many litters of puppies did you actually whelp here?*

Not more than six. We seldom had more than one bitch at one time.

*Did you help your bitches whelp?*

Well, we were there. We never ran into any problems that would require any substantial help. We would take the pups and dry them, see that the cord was properly taken care of, and we would tie it off if necessary. Aside from one litter of Saraf's, where she tried to deliver the litter sideways, there was never any real problem. I guess we were just lucky in that fashion. We always contrived to be there when it was happening.

*Did you supplement your young puppies, or did the bitch pretty much take care of the feedings?*

We never had any problems with that. The bitch always fed the puppies. It was never necessary to bottle feed or anything. As a matter of fact, that probably would have been one of the lines I would have drawn. I'm sure I wouldn't have let the puppies die--I would have gone through it for one litter--but that bitch would have gone, regardless of her quality.

*How important do you feel "animal husbandry" is in dogs? Some dogs seem to thrive under the care of certain people.*

Very important. One of the first things that we found out--and I have found to be *VERY* true--was this matter of imprinting. It takes place, I think, between the seventh and eighth week of the puppy's life. We were told about it by a vet, and she advised us to never take a puppy less than eight weeks of age. She was advising us in relation to Nikki, whom we had taken at six weeks. Nikki was an absolute ding-dong, and it has proven out at other times too. A knowledge of these things and other things, too (like growth patterns and variations in nutritional needs), is vital. I think that one of the reasons why you get some pretty sour dogs from what should be experienced breeders is that their only experience is in their breeding. Far too many people who own dogs never really bother to study any part of the operation. They know what they were told by the people from whom they bought their dogs, and that's all they really learn. They have their own internal experiences, and then most of their mistakes are gone because they've sold their dogs, the people moved, or they have lost contact with them somehow. Consequently, they go on year after year making the same mistakes.

*What do you feel that Samoyed puppies should sell for?*

What do dogs sell for now? I don't even know that. Purebred dogs generally were selling for about one

hundred and fifty dollars a throw when we were in the business, if you can call it that. Pick of the litter puppies from a dog like Jingo could go for as high as three hundred or three hundred-fifty dollars. I always felt like I'd have my back up to somebody that wanted a hundred or a hundred and fifty dollars for a puppy. But, even at those prices you didn't make any money for producing a litter. I don't really suppose that the price has changed that much, even though it's been almost ten years since I've sold a pup. I think that a hundred and fifty dollars is kind of pressing the limit of what people are willing to pay for dogs. That, again, is part of the economic problem. The majority of people who are buying a dog are simply buying a pet. The few who come along who are willing to spend more to get something that they can show, or have some objective like that, also are working a very limited market. They will find out first who is producing the kind of dog that they want. So, I would be willing to bet that probably two hundred dollars would be "top dollar" for purebred dogs right now.

*That's interesting. It's different from Wolfhounds where you pay five or six hundred dollars and up for a show quality dog.*

That's right, but that's because of the special nature of Wolfhounds. They are big and they eat a lot. Also, it can be a bloody disaster to be stuck with a litter. I suspect all of you follow the same practice: You don't breed a bitch until you've sold at least half of the expected puppies. Nobody else does it like that except for one or two other giant breeds wherein it's just sheer economic disaster to get stuck with a litter of six you can't sell. Also, because of the special nature of the dogs, you are more of a professional group of breeders.

I think it's more common to see the sort of thing that I saw happen to the brother of one of my colleagues. He bought what turned out to be a beautiful Doberman bitch. She was really a nice dog, but he never showed her. All the time he raised that dog he remembered that he had paid a hundred and fifty dollars for her, so as soon as she was old enough he went out and bred her. He knew absolutely nothing about it. He knew nothing about selecting a stud, he knew nothing about the breed itself, or of the necessity for finishing the dog before he tried to do something like this. He wound up with nine puppies, and he finally had to get rid of them by giving them to a pet shop for twenty-five bucks a throw. And this is, I'm sure, a far more common story in dog breeding. What really grabbed me when I found this all out was that he had two reds with black points in there, and that's the kind of Doberman I'd give my arm for.

*At what age did you place your puppies in homes?*

We wouldn't release a puppy at all until it was eight weeks old. If that meant that we kept the little beast for a couple of extra weeks because of someone's vacation schedule we went ahead and did it. We even gave them their first shots, which kind of knocked our profits in the head. We were just very determined in that. As far as I was concerned, it had been proven to be true that a dog that was separated from the litter too early was just a big problem all his life.

*Did you ever cull your puppies?*

Well, yes, but not in the most brutal fashion of destroying the dogs and the pups that didn't measure up. That was a little hard to do with Sams. A Samoyed puppy is such a formless thing. . . you can see a badly overshot or undershot jaw or something like that that's really obvious, but, you know, they have little round heads and they have no muzzle at all. They're just a powder-puff until they're a few months old. You could pick heaviness of bone and the most obvious structural faults, at least in the face and jaws, and we would just sell those off as pets. And if we sold a dog off as a pet we wouldn't deliver the papers.

*Did you sell on terms, or cash only?*

I don't think that anyone really asked us for terms. I don't remember anyone ever getting a ninety-day account with us. If anyone had asked I would have probably said "No." Really, you would have been asking them to pay for the dog at the time of its life when all they really wanted to do was to get rid of the thing. Those first six or eight months with that puppy are sheer hell. All they do is chew on things, and they are not housebroken. They make every mistake in the book. If they do survive puppyhood, if nobody kills them before they're six months old, they'll probably live to an old age! Anyway, I wouldn't want to ask a guy to be paying for the dog while it was chewing up his rug or something.

*Did you ever sell on puppy-back terms?*

Yes, but only for specific reasons. If, for example, within a year or eighteen months, they went to O.F.A...

*Now O.F.A. won't certify them before they are two.*

Well, at that time it was eighteen months. If the dog was rejected by O.F.A. I would return the purchase price. It was sort of a multi-level deal. If they wanted to keep the dog we would only return a part of the purchase price; if they were wanting to get rid of the dog (many were looking for show dogs) we would take the dog back, return the purchase price, and then try to find a pet home for the puppy. I don't think that we ever had one come back that managed to ingratiate itself with us. We did return a couple of purchase prices.

*Did you ever sell a bitch puppy with the terms that you would get a puppy back when she was bred?*

Yes, and I don't remember the reason why; it had nothing to do with the purchase price. I think that we sold one puppy with a first-refusal deal because we knew the people were going to breed her, and they knew the dog they were going to breed her to. In that case we asked if we could have first refusal for pick of the litter. I think they wanted a male from this breeding and we wanted a female so we got a pick-of-the-litter female.

*When you sold your puppies did you have written contracts?*

Yes, we did after the first litter. I think we had what seemed like very good reasons at the time, but I don't remember what kinds of disputes we got into.

*What types of things were included in your contracts?*

Just the purchase price, the O.F.A. terms, that type of thing. We had two types of terms, actually. One was a sale where we delivered the papers and a dog we said had the potential for quality. For pet sales we had a contract that included the purchase price and a statement that we would not deliver the papers. I think that was one of the problems that we ran into, come to think of it. A fellow bought a puppy from one of the first litters and then he came back and wanted the papers because he thought that he could make some money from her. We finally had to deliver the papers because we didn't have the protection of a written contract.

*What were you looking for in a puppy buyer?*

I was looking for somebody who could pay for the darn thing. Seriously, I don't think that we ever got into that very heavily. An awful lot of the sales were at such distances that, again, it was a telephone deal. We would only ask who had referred them. We never sold that many puppies. We didn't sell any puppies until Jingo was a fairly well-known dog, and we either knew most of the customers, or we knew somebody that had referred them to us. The questions never really came up. I suppose that if somebody had shown up on the doorstep and looked like an absolute bum we wouldn't have sold him a puppy, but that never happened. A lot of these things that we are talking about never really happened to us because of our relatively short participation in breeding.

*Would you have considered breeding Jingo to a mediocre bitch with a good pedigree?*

Yeah, as a matter of fact we did breed him to a couple of mediocre bitches who didn't even have that going for them. My assistant, a fellow who worked for me for a time, had a Samoyed bitch he had purchased from a very undesirable breeder, and there was just no way that I could turn Fred down. I went ahead with the breeding. Joan refused to have anything to do with it, however. And there were a couple of others who showed up that were not at all what we had expected. They just weren't like the descriptions that we had been given, but they had been shipped in so we went ahead with those breedings.

Jingo had an advantage as a stud. He did come through in his puppies. With that going for him, if you really are committed to improving the breed, that is just the sort of a male that you should use in the situation you have described.

*Do you believe in breeding a good dog to a superb bitch with a poor pedigree?*

I think that it would depend upon how poor she was. If the bitch had been bred by someone whom we had written off as a bad breeder the answer would have probably been "No". Really, in a small breed like Samoyeds, you're damned lucky if the dogs aren't first cousins anyway. There just aren't that many of them.

If you go back two generations these pedigrees all look pretty much identical, so if it was a real good bitch with a couple of poor generations immediately behind her we would probably have bred her because, again, Jingo bred very true.

*What do you think of inbreeding, linebreeding, outcrossing?*

As a former agricultural student--at least in high school, not in college--I'm aware that the only progress that has really been made in improving animal breeds has been through inbreeding and linebreeding, so I would be favorably disposed to it, with reservations in dogs. Again, this is because of the lack of commercial motive. Linebreeding is good if you have a good line. What you have in dogs, usually, is good individuals, without good lines or with just sort of an average line. In dogs I would be very wary of these things because the chances are that there are as many bad characteristics as there are good ones in a line. If this were not the case, if this were like cattle and horses and so on, or if there was careful attention paid to preserving the good points and eliminating the bad ones, inbreeding and linebreeding would do just fine.

Incidentally, we used Jingo with his sister one time. It was an utter disaster. They were both beautiful dogs, both were sturdy, strong dogs, and I think out of six puppies we got five and a half dysplastics. The whole litter wound up having to be destroyed. And this is the kind of thing that I'm talking about. Here you have two very fine dogs and... Jingo was almost a duplicate of his sire so the generation behind them had been very good dogs. The inbreeding was just a disaster because there are just so many bad genes--in every line.

*That's interesting. Would you breed to a dog with a very serious fault if he had outstanding points? What would you consider to be very serious faults in the breed?*

Well, let's look at this dog, the Samoyed. The only points, for example, are the eyes and the lips. They are supposed to be black. Now, very frequently you find breaks; Jingo even had one up in the corner of his mouth. Then, too, you find dogs with a whole white under-lip or over-lip. Possibly it's pink or, really, liver-colored. Now that's the sort of thing that can spread rampant if you breed to these dogs. We would refuse a dog like that. Other than that the only points you were looking for was the absence of dysplasia and, then, overall conformation.

*What about temperament? What if a gorgeous dog had a bad temperament?*

I think only viciousness would have turned me off. I have a very fixed rule: Critters do not attack people. So, a vicious dog I wouldn't have bred to at all. Other kinds of temperament problems are harder to see, but it's easy to see if a dog is vicious: If the damn thing bites you, it's vicious. If a dog is cowardly, or something like that, you won't be able to see that in the short time that you have a bitch for breeding. If I knew about it, however, I probably would object. If the temperament fault was something that somebody was willing to put up with I probably would let them, because it doesn't hurt anybody but the person who owns the dog. Viciousness, of course, makes a dangerous dog, and I didn't want them around.

*Many people seem to breed to the current winner regardless of the dog's pedigree. How many people do you know who really know and understand Sams? How can the situation be improved?*

To be perfectly honest, the only person I ever knew who seemed at all knowledgeable about Sams, or really even dogs, was Joan, and that was because of something that was almost a defect in her personality. She would study a thing so hard that it was no longer interesting to me. She really made a sincere effort to learn, and she didn't go to the breeders for her knowledge. She read the medical texts and the scientific works that had been done in dogs. She had a medical background, since she was doctor, and she probably learned more in two years about dogs--and more about Sams--than anybody else I ever knew. I think that, by and large, dog people tend to reject knowledge in favor of affection. They learn just enough to justify the belief that their own dogs are damned near perfect, and anything that runs counter to that preconception they reject, or they get mad about. The only thing that will improve that situation is to figure out, somehow, a way that people can make money breeding dogs. Once there's a commercial motive you'll find folks getting a hell of a lot more serious about how they consider these things.

*I heard an interesting quote the other day: "People constantly criticize their memories, but never their judgments."*

Right.

*How did you feel about the different attributes of the dog and the breed when you were showing? What areas did you find lacking? What areas did you feel were strong? How about movement?*

Movement is a very big thing in Sams. When they have good movement they are almost as distinctive as the Shepherd with its low-lying, loping gait. Movement was a tremendous weakness. You'd see choppers, wobblers, wigglers, and everything else in the ring, and nobody seemed to notice. If you go back into the working background of the dog that has got to be one of the most important considerations, just as it is in the hunting dogs. The Samoyed is basically a herding dog, or a draft dog. His ability to cover large areas of ground for long periods of time is the most vital part of his make-up, so it's very irritating to see that go by the boards in favor of some stupid thing like head shape, or something like that. Movement, I think, was the main thing that we would look for; it generally tells you a lot about the dog. If his rump wobbles when he moves he's dysplastic, or he has a bad back or something like that. In a Samoyed, since he is primarily a draft animal, you don't want a long back. Neither do you want one in draft horses.

*Did you consider side movement more important than movement coming and going?*

The Samoyed is supposed to be a pacer, and the pacer's front and rear legs work in opposition. He's supposed to move smoothly, with a level back, which is a part of the fact that he was a herd animal. He wasn't supposed to waste his energy bouncing up and down and he was supposed to cover ground. That was important. But, the most important thing was the fore and aft movement. He should put his feet down in a line and

point his toes forward, and his shoulders should be in line. He should move from the hips. A Samoyed should move from the hips and his neck shouldn't wiggle back and forth. To me, that was one of the more important things.

*Covering other fine points of the breed, how did you feel the heads were?*

That was another weakness that was overtaking the breed. Jingo had, at the risk of bringing screams from all of the people who will read the article, an almost perfect head. The Samoyed is supposed to have a wedge-shaped head when one is looking at it from the top, and not from the side. He's supposed to have a well-defined stop, which is related to distance vision. A dog whose stop slopes is really going to be looking straight ahead and he isn't going to have stereoscopic vision to a great extent.

Jingo had the wedge-shaped head. If you looked at him from the top, from right under his ears it was practically an unbroken line. You didn't see a round muzzle. In effect, he didn't have any cheeks. That was apparently a very hard thing to maintain because if you look at Samoyeds the next time you go to a show you'll find most of them have very well-defined muzzles, which seem to be getting longer. Jingo also had a very short head for his size; however, when you looked at him he looked about big enough to fill a bushel basket. The distance from the top of his head, from the crown between his ears to the stop, and the distance from there to the end of his nose was almost identical. And that was another desirable feature.

*What about ear set, ear placement on the dog? Was that a problem?*

I don't think that was too much of a problem. Soft ears are kind of a problem in the breed, or were. Samoyeds were supposed to have those prick ears, and they were supposed to be thick enough that they didn't flop under any conceivable set of circumstances, and Jingo had that. They were also supposed to be relatively short. That was another problem. You would see some dogs with real mule ears sticking up out of thin coats and when they moved they would bob. That was supposed to be a definite no-no but nobody ever seemed to notice.

*What about eyes?*

The Samoyeds, because of the contrast between the all white coat and the black eyes and eye rims, look very odd if there is any break in the eye coloration. That becomes a matter of consuming importance. Their eyes sort of disappear if there is a break. It's really very odd. I've seen some that have had no pigmentation in the eye rim and they are quite strange-looking creatures.

*What about this "winter" nose, this pink nose? Did you ever encounter that?*

Oh yeah. Jingo had that. That dog loved the snow so much that he rooted in it like a pig. If we got a good heavy snow in the backyard he'd go out in it, put his nose down in it and plow lines through it. He would just wear his nose raw, and he would lose color. It never would turn pink, but it did get to be a kind of dusty, faded black. You could see the liver color appearing at the base of his nose. It is an effect of the cold and the snow, and it's a genetic effect. It's a kind of bleaching by the snow. I'm not really sure why it happened.

*How important are feet? What was the proper foot, and did you see many of them?*

That was one of the things that they were fairly consistent at. The biggest problem you would spot with feet was that they would tend to get a little dainty. A Samoyed is supposed to have a large foot, and it's supposed to be round. Also, unlike most dogs, he has some muscular control over his toes. A dog's foot sits flat and, generally speaking, to get his claws into position to dig the dog changes the position of his ankle, his hock. A Samoyed doesn't do that; his toes can actually curl. That's to give him perches on ice

and snow. And, his toes are also supposed to spread, giving him a broader base on a snow crest so he doesn't break through. The combinations of these things were very important, but they're largely overlooked by American Sam breeders, simply because they never see the conditions that gave rise to these requirements. It took me a long time to figure out what Jingo did with his feet that was so unusual. Finally, I realized that it was the fact that his feet could grip. If any other kind of dog were to put his foot on your arm, he would throw his whole foot over your arm and pull. Jingo would put his paw on your arm, the toes would curl, and he would pull.

*What about tail carriage in the breed?*

A Samoyed is supposed to carry his tail up and over his back. And it's supposed to be a proud tail. A proud tail is one over which a dog has control. There's another name for the kind of tail that just lays down flat against the back. Now, Jingo's tail arched up from his rump. It wasn't really lying on his back. That, however, was in his better days; later on we had a female that chewed off all of his plume and his tail only looked about half as long as it was. Anyway, it's supposed to be set high on his rump and he's supposed to carry it over his back most of the time--always when he's moving. And you will have that. The dog might be standing with his tail down, it may be flopping down behind him, but the minute that his feet start to move the tail is supposed to flip up over his back. Again, there's a reason for that. There's a reason why all northern dogs have the over-the-back tail, and that's to keep the thing from balling up with ice. It's to keep the dog from dragging it in the ice, snow and mud--and to keep it from getting all balled up.

It's also part of their sleeping equipment. They throw their tails up over their heads so they don't feel the cold; they get some insulation from it.

There were an awful lot of Sams who had to get their tails lifted into position in the ring because it was down too far on their rumps. They could put it up but they didn't. And there were a number of them who just dragged the fool thing until the handler held it for them. If you want to get some real improvements in conformation showing you have to get rid of handlers.

*Why do you say that?*

Because then what you would really be looking for, what everyone would be looking for, would be a dog that could do it all himself. Now you have professional handlers in there who become very skilled at hiding the dog's defects, and it becomes very tricky. I remember this one Springer Spaniel that used to do a lot of winning up and down the East Coast here. When the dog was at rest he sagged, his shoulders sagged, but his handler could correct this by the use of tension in his own muscles. The dog would sense his tension and move with it. The handler would be standing with his own shoulders all hunched up and the dog would sort of look up at him and wonder what he was doing. It got the sag out of the dog's shoulders. And it was really obvious. I have thought that the judges should have disqualified them when they saw something like that happening, but they never did--probably because a lot of them were handlers themselves.

There was a Great Dane, a beautiful Dane... I kind of liked his owner, too; the guy had a good sense of humor. Anyway, this Dane was a baby, and the only person in the world that he loved was "Daddy". So, when he was in the ring "Daddy" was constantly maneuvering around the outside of the ring, staying in front of his dog. And he carried a bunch of keys which he would toss. (It was just a nervous habit.) At one show I organized a group, and we all brought our keys. When the dogs were up in Group I contrived to stay in front of "Daddy," and there were six people standing around the ring throwing their keys up in the air. We drove the dog crazy!

*Did he go up in Group that day?*

No! No, he was frantically looking for his owner and the poor handler couldn't even hold him still.

As long as you have that sort of thing going on you're not showing dogs, you're showing handlers, and you get a kind of constant deterioration by virtue of those kinds of practices.

*What about the coupling of the dogs? Did you find that most of them were correct? Or too long-backed?*

I don't remember that well. I can remember seeing some dogs that were awfully long in the back, but that's a very hard thing to judge. The term in the Standard was one of those really meaningless flights. . . you know, "moderately short coupled," or something like that. What the Standard should really say is that the dog's length should be such and such proportion of his height, because that's what you mean when you talk about coupling. It's really almost impossible to make a judgment on that the way it is. I thought that Jingo was in great proportion, but, then, I never really knew if that was because he was my dog and I was as goofy as all the other people around or if he actually was. The only ones that I would ever notice were the ones with a back that looked as if you could land a fighter plane on it. You knew that that dog was long in the back! It had to be a really extreme case before you could really get outside of that vague language of the Standard.

*There seem to be almost two types of Samoyed breeds today. One is more of a "bear" type and the other is more of a "fox" type. Would you care to comment on that?*

Well, the bear type is the type that you're supposed to have. The bear type comes closest to fitting the descriptions in the Standard. It has the wedge-shaped head and the musculature that can do what the breed history says the breed was designed to do. The fox type, and here again is where you run into trouble with maintaining and improving dog breeds, has an awful lot going for it. It tends to be smaller and to eat less, to be shorter-coated, and to make an all-around better pet. So, which one are people going to buy and to show?

*What did you notice as far as quality of coats is concerned on the dogs that were being shown during the time that you were breeding and exhibiting?*

I think that was probably the most standard part of the dog that I ever encountered, probably because most of the dogs that you saw in the shows here in the East came from around this area and the north. They were all exposed to fairly severe winter climates so their coats tended to develop to the maximum on the individual dogs. I never spent enough time in the Southwest with the people there to make a judgment on the dogs' coats, and that is where you would tend to see coats thinning out. The white coat is an effective insulation against both the sun and the cold, and I noticed in hot summers here that if you would dig down in Jingo's coat and get into that undercoat you would find it to be cooler than the outer coat.

*Were there very many biscuit-colored dogs being shown?*

I don't think the biscuit-colored dogs are as pretty as the white. Jingo was as white as he could be. He had one black hair, just one. (And so did his sister.) Somebody told me one time, somebody who had no authority to speak of on the subject, that without that one black hair the dog couldn't be all white. I don't know why. That was a sort of a legend that I encountered from time to time.

The problem with the biscuit is that it tends to make a spotted dog, and you are competing against all white dogs. A real white Samoyed is a spectacular dog. When you put some freckled-faced thing in with him, or a dog who has a blotch of pale brown somewhere, they find it tough to compete against the pure white dog, even if the dogs are good. The biscuit is really a kind of a pale color and when it's spotted it tends to look dirty. It looks like the dog was improperly

groomed. I should think that an all-biscuit Sam, which is really a very pretty golden brown color, although it fades if it is mixed in with white, would be a very attractive dog. The spotted ones, though, are just not very pretty.

*Are there any other points of conformation that you'd like to comment on?*

No, not really. The two things that I always felt were outstanding about a good-looking Sam were the head and the movement--and I guess the tail carriage gives them a very classy look. Incidentally, Jingo always carried his tail to the left. You could move it over to the right side but he'd move it back; he just wasn't comfortable like that. (I'm not sure if that means anything.)

Those were the points that I always looked for. . . maybe I just never mastered anything else but that. A lot of the other things, to my mind, were just meaningless phrases, and since I couldn't get a grip on them I just didn't pay much attention to them.

*What do you think is the proper age to breed a bitch?*

That was the sort of thing that Joan took care of, and I tended to accept her word in that sort of thing. I think her rule was that the youngest she would breed a bitch was the first season after the bitch was eighteen months old. It was a matter of maturation and the bitch's ability to carry the pups.

*At what ages did you evaluate the puppies and what did you look for?*

Until a Samoyed is six months of age he looks like a nothing. You really couldn't tell until then. So, at about six months, if the puppies were in the area, we'd try to go see them, or get pictures of them or something.

*What about the puppies that you bred yourself?*

*How did you evaluate them for show or pet, or whatever?*

We'd look for some fairly gross things in the shape of their heads and some things like that. It had to be something gross so you could notice it. If they had teeny-weensy feet we would put them down as pets. They're such shapeless little things that's about all that you can see.

*How important did you feel that size was to winning? I know that it was very controversial, but did the judges consider it important?*

Oh, very important. Jingo had trouble if he was in a ring with a lot of little dogs because that would trigger the judge's thought that the Samoyed was a relatively small dog. His best point of showing, in terms of competition, was if most of the dogs in the ring were almost his size. Then it was his style, his attitude, coupled with his size that really drew the judge's eye. But size was very important. The big dog tends to draw the eye if there's nothing obviously wrong with him. He also draws the judge's eyes if he's not big, just fat.

*What about bites in Samoyeds?*

They're supposed to have a scissors bite. I did see a lot of problems with undershot bites, and that was because of the foxy kind of face that some Samoyeds developed. You can't do that if you have an even bite because that gives you a square muzzle.

*Did you ever notice when you were showing that some dogs look beautiful standing still, look like they are put together the way they should be, and then when they start moving they are just disasters?*

Yeah.

*Would you care to comment on that?*

In that, again, we would look for dysplasia or for the back to be too long. The back which is too long tends to wiggle, or turn in the middle, and that gives very bad movement. There were an awful lot of these dogs, and not just in Samoyeds either. The thing that everybody should be in is Old English Sheepdogs. When they're moving well they'd be thrown out of every other breed ring. Everything that every other breed

says is desirable in movement is just the opposite in the way that a good Old English moves.

The other thing happens too. I've seen dogs that move pretty well, and when they stop they look like hell. There was a dog that did very well in breed showing, but never very well in the Group, that was so pigeon-toed that he looked like a Bulldog. When he moved his feet would track, and when he stopped you'd see the handler get his toes between those feet and start kicking back and forth in order to get them out straight.

*If you could rate an entire Sam on a point system, how important do you think the head should be?*

It should be assigned enough points so that without a good head the dog's other faults would bring him down. I guess maybe twenty percent of the points is about right, but no more than that. In any animal, it's the musculature, the shoulders, the back that are important. You can allow a lot of variation in head shape before you lose the dog.

*What is the ideal Sam temperament?*

I always liked Jingo's. He was not a friendly dog, but he was not mean; he was just aloof. He didn't cotton to strangers, as the saying goes, and that is a good way for a puppy to be because, if nothing else, it makes him hard to steal. I think a Samoyed, actually any dog, should have a very strong territorial sense. You want any dog that you buy to have some desire to protect his home and the people in it. I like a critter with dignity. A dog that's all over everybody and slobbering all over everything just annoys the hell out of me. One of the things that I just loved about Jingo was that he didn't lick. I hate to have a dog lick me. A touch is all right, but these dogs that start painting your arm or your face turn me off instantly. Jingo didn't do that; he'd give you one shot and quit. Jingo's way of getting your attention was to grab your arm. He'd grab it in his mouth, and that could be a fairly soul-shattering experience if you were a stranger and he liked you well enough to take hold of you. He would cover half your arm in that mouth. I had one guy here when Jingo did that and the guy wanted to know if Jingo was going to eat him. I told him, "No, he's just trying to be friendly." The guy said, "Teach him to shake hands."

*How do you feel about the Standard? Do you feel that it's a good one? What would you like to see changed?*

I haven't looked at the Standard for a number of years. At the time that we were exhibiting dogs I didn't think that any of the standards were any good. Most of the terms are so non-specific that they give guidance neither to the owner nor the judge, and they're deliberately written that way.

It really can be overcome. If you want a dog with a wedge-shaped head, for example, then you can describe a wedge-shaped head in terms of proportions. If you want a dog to be moderately short-coupled... We're talking about a relationship between length and height, and that can be measured. There is no reason for the standards to be written in this language that they use.

*Should the Standard have additional disqualifications? Would you like things to be specific enough to disqualify a dog from breed competition?*

Oh, yes. The only way that conformation showing is going to improve the breed is if you have some very specific notions of what you want the breed to be, and this requires standards to be written in strictest clarity of language. Once you've done that, everything that doesn't fit it should go right out of the ring.

*Do you feel that advertising influences judges?*

Golly, I was never that close to any of the judges. There was one old boy right here in Alexandria that I got to know well enough that he got to know me, which I guess is the only gauge of these things. I always felt that he was reachable, but not by advertising. I'm afraid I thought he never read that much. But, he was reachable by the dogs he saw most often, and the people

that he saw most often. There, again, is an area where the handler, the professional handler, is a distinct danger to the improvement of the breed through conformation showing.

John Brennan was basically a Poodle handler when he took Jingo, although he had had some working dog experience. He had an angel in the Poodle business. She was an elderly lady who had Poodles in all three size classes for years and years and she bought the best dogs that she could find. Johnny was her handler. I think there was sort of an assumption on the part of the judges that a Brennan Poodle was probably better than the other Poodles that they would see.

There's another woman in the business, a Jane something or other, who also had an angel in the business. She would buy dogs that Jane would ask her to buy, in any breed. She just liked to collect ribbons, I guess. If Jane had a dog in the ring I think that the judges assumed that this was a better than average dog in its breed or she wouldn't have directed this woman to buy it. Now, that may have been true, but what it meant was that a very good dog could come into the ring against a not-quite-as-good dog which was handled by one of these handlers and lose--and just because it happened to fall into the hands of some individual who wanted to show his own dog or who hadn't wanted to show the dog in conformation to begin with. Again, that's not the way that you improve the breed.

Seattle Slew, the horse that won the Triple Crown, was a horse from good racing lines that had been sold as a colt because the people just wanted a riding horse. He was raised in a half-acre paddock near Seattle, Washington and the people found out that they had a top flight racehorse quite by accident. Their system works for them because if you have a good racehorse he proves it by winning races. You bring home the bacon in purses. There's nothing similar in dogs.

*With a racehorse it's much more objective: The first one to the line wins. In dog shows it's much more subjective.*

But you could eliminate a lot of that subjectivity by a better writing of the standards. This is just an area where, I guess, it just shows the limitations of democracy: You let the people who are most affected write the standards. Nobody else is that dumb. Horse races are in the hands of stewards who are appointed by the state, and there's none of that nonsense about letting the owners elect the stewards. Who ever heard of a thing like that? The standards for cattle are set by the market. The market decrees what will be the highest priced cuts of meat, and then the ranchers try to breed cattle with big back-ends because that's where the money is. In dogs, we have this concept of letting the owners write the breed standards and that's dumb. It's self-defeating. It means the standards will probably, over time, get worse. They'll get less objective because more and more variance will come in as this and that person becomes more influential as a breeder or exhibitor. What you're doing, I suppose, is turning the disqualifications into virtues.

I had one other great experience with dog shows that I almost forgot about. We went to a dog show in Boston which was held in the Prudential Center, right in the heart of the city. It was not one of our better dog shows; we lost in breed--and this was after his third or fourth Best In Show. Joan was pretty upset. (She tended to get pretty upset when things like that happened.) and everybody was just sitting around complaining. I finally told everybody to go back up to the house, and that I would hang around for awhile and bring the dog back after the show. They agreed and left. I went out and bought a few paperbacks and sat in the middle of all of this dog show stuff, reading. (That kind of intrigues people.) Finally the show ended and we could take the dogs off the bench. I got Jingo and loaded his gear into the station wagon and I started off for Connecticut only to discover that Boston only has one-

way roads running north. I drove around that damn town for an hour and a half trying to find a road going south. I'm the sort of a guy who is fairly even-tempered, except for when I'm driving. Anyway, I finally see one of these green and white Boston police cars and I swing around in the street, honking my horn, and cut it off. This is definitely not the way to treat policemen. Bouncing out of the car, I approach their car. One cop has his hand on his gun as he doesn't know what to expect. And then I start screaming, "How do I get out of this damn town without going to Maine?" The cop and his partner start laughing and he just tells me to calm down. I followed them and they finally got me to the road going south.

*Did you do any training with any of your puppies?*

We took a couple of them through basic obedience. I guess we did it with the thought that we might compete in obedience, but we never did. That was something that required more practice than I was willing to put into it. As I think I indicated, Jingo was practically untrained. He was so strong and so independently minded that he would not really submit to any kind of discipline. He and I had a working relationship, but the fact that it was just a relationship was demonstrated one time when we were out on the bike and a German Shepherd popped out of a side street and issued a challenge to him. I braced for him. I had gotten my feet down off the pedals and I thought that I had him. That dog was so strong that he tore the collar, a rolled leather choke collar, and he broke it. I chased him for six blocks, at least. They would stop and fight and he would be beating the hell out of this Shepherd as I would come running up. Jingo would let him up and run him for another block or so, and then grab him and start whipping the hell out of him again. When I finally caught him I was so mad I wanted to kill him, but I was so out of breath that I couldn't do anything. It was obvious at that time that if he was determined enough the equipment I had, generally speaking, wouldn't stop him. So it was a working relationship. It involved discipline on both sides.

*What about the feeding? What did you feed most of your dogs? The same thing that you had Jingo on?*

We basically fed them a raw meat diet, Alpo. We struggled a long time trying to find a dry food that Jingo would eat and we never really did come up with one. The closest we ever came was when Kraft (I think it was Kraft) started putting out a dry food with cheese bits in it. He would eat a little bit of that, but if you tried to feed him simply dry food he just wouldn't eat it.

*What did you feed your young puppies? What did you start them out on?*

We used puppy chow, but we fed them meat dog food, too. That was before Alpo put out a ground beef and I'll be darned if I know what it was. It was all meat and it was just chopped up finer than Alpo. We found out that a puppy very early in life could handle the chunks in Alpo; he might have to work at them a bit, but he could handle them.

*What advice would you give to Sam owners and breeders who are just starting out?*

Ah, . . . get a Miniature Pinscher. I guess if they have their hearts set on a Sam, I'd just say to do their best. They should try to establish contact with someone who will refer them to some good books to read, and there are some good ones. Always avoid the guy that says, "Oh, you're interested in my breed. Well, let me show you a perfect one that I have in my backyard." You know that he's obviously feeding you a line of bull. The person to trust is the one who urges you to go out and learn something about the breed before you go out and buy a puppy. About the only protection that you have is a healthy dose of skepticism.

*Should they go to the kennels with the big winners?*

Well, they're more apt to find a big winner there, but you really don't have those in Sams. Jingo was the

biggest winner that the Samoyeds turned out since they came to the States. I don't think that's true, but he was certainly the biggest winner in the past twenty-five years. And he came from a backyard breeder. There just are not any big breeders in Sams.

*Should a handler be used? Does big-name handling help in Sams?*

Yeah, it does, as long as they are in the game. If you want to pile up a big winning record, and you have a dog that can do it, you pretty much have to use a handler. Judges are predisposed toward the more popular breeds. Obviously, they have more shows and they have more influence on who gets the judging assignments. A judge who gets waves from Samoyed breeders can have an interesting and successful career, but if he gets the German Shepherd people and the Dobe people down on him he's just about out of business. If they say that they won't enter a show where this dude is judging, then he won't judge.

*What kennels do you consider the best today, or in your day, and why?*

Well, the Silver Moon line was the best there was around then, and they were certainly the line that bred the truest. I really don't think there was any real reason for that because their pedigrees weren't all that great. The unfortunate part of it is that both Noatak and Jingo, and another son of Noatak, all had very short breeding lives, and they were not owned by people who could capitalize on their characteristics for the breed. As a consequence I don't imagine that they had any very long-term effects on the breed. There really weren't very many kennels in the breed. The Samoyed is a dog that is largely a pet.

*How long have you lived in your present location?*

I came to Washington, D.C. in 1957, and I've lived in this house since 1966.

*How old are you?*

Forty-six.

*What have you done for a living?*

I've been a construction laborer and a soldier for a term. I am an economist by training, and I am the Research Director for Economics for the Laborers International Union of North America.

*Education?*

I have a degree in economics from Washington State University. I've done some graduate work, but I've never finished a degree.

*How did the dogs effect your life style?*

They limited it considerably. Showing dogs is unquestionably the most expensive hobby that you can get into, especially when you consider the fact that there's practically no return. We didn't even get a chance to adjust to each successive level of expense that you encounter as you develop in this because we went in at the top. We started out with a dog that could be the big winner in his breed and right at the first we encountered all the expenses of the professional handlers, the campaigning, the equipment, and so on. One of the major insanities of dog people is the price they will pay for the things they will use. A grooming table cost more, at the time that I bought one, than a far stronger carpenter's table. The people who make dog equipment are all good businessmen who are aware that they are dealing with a bunch of bloody nuts who are not economically motivated for doing all of this, or who have subjective personal motives, and they just exploit the hell out of them. When they deal with a construction contractor they know that this is a guy with a sharp eye on the bottom line, and if they overprice their product the guy is going to go across the street to somebody else. So, it is, as I say, one of the most expensive things that you can get into.

Within Jingo's show life, I was so browned-off at the whole thing that there was no way we would have continued. We would have been much better to have started out with a dog that perhaps did a fairly solid job in the breed, then moved up by breeding or sale into a dog



*Ch. Silveracres Jinni O' Frostfire*

that would do well in Group, and worked up like that over a longer period of time. That's the way most people do it, and it wouldn't have been nearly as intense or expensive.

*What were the benefits of being in dogs?*

There really weren't any. I liked it for a time. I liked Jingo because he was companionable, and he had many of the personal characteristics that I have. At first I enjoyed the shows and some of the people that I met, but that intense preoccupation turned me off. And when we became the big winners, we also became the enemy. Even the people that I liked got kind of distant.

*Was that one of the drawbacks?*

That and the expense at the level at which we were practicing it. The intensity of it all was vicious.

*Was it worth it?*

No, not the amount of money that we put into it-- maybe at half of that.

*Is there anything that you would like to add?*

Nope. I think I've offended every group there is. Thank you.

\*SQ\*

