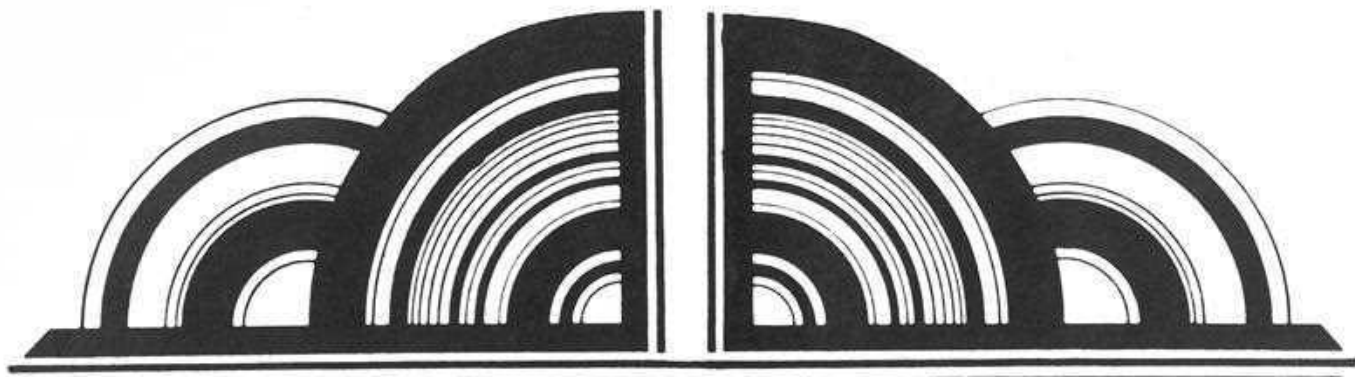




THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY  
Winter 1979-80 - \$4.50



## SAMOYED PEOPLE



The Samoyed Quarterly Talks With  
PEGGY BORCHERING  
St. Louis, Missouri

*This interview was taped in November, 1979 at Mrs. Borcharding's home.*

*Tell us how you got started in Sams.*

If anyone ever came in through the "back door," it was me. You would have had to know my mother, who was very definitely a character. She lived in Washington State for many years and

was a woman who never wrote a letter if she could get her hands on a telephone. The only problem with that was, she never, in all the years she lived out there, ever seemed to remember that there is a two-hour difference between there and here. Most of her phone calls came at midnight, it was NOT unusual for the phone to ring at midnight. You'd pick it up and say, "Hello," and you'd hear her say, "Guess what?" Now, that "guess what" could have been anything: She could have gotten married again (did that four times), she was going somewhere, she had bought something she really didn't need...

This time, however, the "guess what" was that she and her husband at the time had bought Rick, my son, a dog. She said they were having a shipping crate made and that the pup would be here in two day's time. She also said that when the dog was grown it would be about 70 pounds and have long, white hair. (She couldn't remember what the breed name was.) After reminding me that I should expect it to arrive at such-and-such a time, she hung up!

My son was then twelve years old. He was active in school and with hobbies and past the time of having any great desire for a dog. My husband didn't like dogs. We had no fenced-in yard. In fact, my husband was furious, absolutely FURIOUS, about this "gift."

The next morning, bright and early, I was on my way to the library to at least try to find out what kind of breed we were getting. I went through what books they had on dogs, trying to come up with a sled dog with long, white hair that would weigh 70 pounds. The Samoyed was the only breed that came close.

Eventually the pup arrived, after being lost in transit for about ten hours, a two-month-old Sam. My husband said, "Alright, we've got this dog, but he's not allowed anywhere but in the base-

ment, on the back porch, or in the yard. And I SUPPOSE I'll now have to build a fence!" He did a lot of muttering the first couple of days. The dog was lovely, seemingly very trainable as he caught on quickly that he was not to go past the basement landing and had to stay on the back porch or in the basement when indoors. In the meantime, my husband was ordering materials and readying things to get the fence put up.

The dog was here about two weeks when my husband came home from work one night and stated, "As long as we've got this dog, he might as well be part of the family. You can let him come upstairs if he wants." Of course the dog had him captured! HE was the one who spoiled the dog rotten, as he did with the dogs that came after the first one. But, understand, he doesn't LIKE dogs! Well, he may NOT like dogs, but he sure loved the ones we have owned.

Shar Khan (registered as Taymyr of Krisland) was perfectly normal until about four months of age. From there on, though, he just went out of his mind. He was growing rapidly and had tremendous strength. Oh, I could talk about seventeen hours about this dog, but...

We, honestly and truly, had a different kind of dog. He was a hyperactive, a very TRUE hyperactive. And this was at a time when hyperactiveness was seldom diagnosed by veterinarians because they didn't know much about the syndrome. (This was back in 1958). Obedience trainers didn't know much about the problem either. They said such a dog was too boisterous or aggressive, and tried to train them with methods normally used to curb that type of behavior. There were many, many strange things about the dog. From four months of age on, anything that was portable, that he could get his teeth on, was eaten. However, in his whole life he NEVER touched a piece of furniture. He ate the bark off the trees, he ate the flowers, tin cans, books, socks, cigarettes, shoes, throw rugs, rubber bands, buttons and everything else. You name it, he ate it!

He was getting bigger and bigger. I laugh about his size when I think of it today. In 1958, a 23 1/2" Samoyed was a BIG, BIG dog; today, many bitches are that size. Nevertheless, he was tremendously powerful, much more powerful than his weight or bone structure would make you think he could be. He was getting more and more rambunctious and we simply couldn't handle him. Taking him for a walk was actually taking him for a RUN, going where he wanted to go ... and he wanted to go everywhere. He was also being SO destructive. The training methods I read about in books were just not working with him.

As a last resort, because we were losing BOTH our house and our sanity, I enrolled him in an obedience school. Well, everyone wrestled him for the twelve weeks we were there. Between all of us, we got a certain amount of training into him. On top of the hyperactiveness, and this is sometimes some-



"Shar Khan" - Taymyr of Krisland

thing that goes along with it, we were also to find out he was an EXTREMELY intelligent dog. Now, I KNOW everyone says THEY have the smartest dog in the world, but this dog had an intelligence of such a degree that it made for a great many problems throughout his life. He could outthink you, outtime you, out ANYTHING you.

Anyway, we got a minimal amount of training in him, at least enough so we could take him out on a lead. NEVER, NEVER in his life could he EVER be left off lead outside a building or fenced-in yard. Never in his life did anyone ever get complete control over him. He did, however, gain a sufficient amount of manners to make living with him possible. The main thing was, I got the training that was necessary to continue to work on his many problems, AND I found myself so fascinated by the whole obedience training thing that the next logical step was for me to consider joining an obedience club. I took that step,

and, within a year, I was apprenticing to learn how to be an instructor myself. From there, one thing just progressed into another, and, from the end of 1959 to about 1967, I was primarily active in obedience work. At this point I have to digress a bit.

I am a service-oriented person, have always been a service-oriented person. I have belonged to a lot of different clubs in my life, and in every one of them I seem to end up in organization-type work. If there is something new to be tried out, or a stinking, rotten job that has to be filled, they often let Peggy do it! (Or Peggy just upped and volunteered to do it!)

Over most of these past twenty-one years, I've never had the same kinds of interests the majority of avid dog fanciers have. In fact if you were to set forth my credentials, the kind a dog fancier is usually judged by, how many litters you have bred, how many champions in them ... well, based on that, it would

be utterly ridiculous for you to be sitting here interviewing me. I have never put a title on a dog, I have never personally bred a dog, I haven't even been in the show ring for seven or eight years. I have done literally NOTHING with my own dogs. No, I take that back. I do have one leg on a C.D. with my Shar Khan, a leg earned when he was ten years, three months and two days old. As far as I know, that may be a record, because he was trained for obedience work when he was nine months old - and it took me that long to get the first leg!

I don't mean to imply that I kept showing him regularly for nine years to get the leg. I didn't. Shar was really something to watch in the obedience ring, until you got to the "sits" and "downs." The times he was entered in trials, he was never working on less than a 195 score when we got to the sits and downs. We just never figured out how to make him stay! He was worked by every well-known obedience trainer around in those years, and none of them ever came up with a solution because another quirk about Shar was that he absolutely had NO FEAR of any kind of punishment. When he broke, it wasn't to come to me - he wouldn't have come to me in a thousand years - it was to VISIT THE OTHER DOGS. He visited every single dog in line, while stewards and judges were trying to grab him! He did this year after year, even though he was never entered in trials until we THOUGHT our latest problem-solving method had ended the bad habit.

By the time he was seven years of age, I had given up on him. In April 1968, I had to go out to the training school one night and I decided to take him with me. I walked in just as the class was getting ready to practice sits and downs, and the instructors were delighted to see us. Shar Khan was valuable in training classes because he served as a test for how steady other dogs in the class were. If they didn't break with this idiot dog running up and down the line greeting and smelling them, they were pretty steady dogs. So, this night, I, of course, had to put Shar in line with the other dogs. Would you believe he stayed both on the sit and the down? No one could believe it. I took him back the next week and everything was the same. Well, there was a local trial coming up in May and I hurriedly put an entry in. He went to that trial with no practice except for a couple recalls. He was showing signs of arthritis and had some days when he would limp a little and I didn't want to put any pressure on him, or take a chance of getting excused. He earned his leg that day, and with a score of 190. I stood in that ring and bawled like a baby when I realized he was going to pass. It was the only leg he was to get because six months later he was dying of lung cancer and had to be put down. So, for whatever Shar Khan was, or wasn't, if it hadn't been for him, we wouldn't be sitting here today.

I started out as an instructor in Novice training. Within two years I was the Director of Training of the club and I held that job for four years. I edited a monthly obedience bulletin for the club for seven years, served as trial secretary a couple years running, held a couple other offices, and wrote lots of obedience articles. I can't remember all the things I did, but those years in obedience work were invaluable. They gave me a far broader education about dogs than I might have gotten otherwise.

One of the smarter things I did back in the beginning - and there aren't too many things I have done that were very smart - was to join the Samoyed Club of America. Sams were quite rare in the St. Louis area back in 1958, you certainly didn't see too many of them out in public. When the word got out there was a Sam in a training class, a few Sam owners were interested in getting a look at this "new dog in town" and dropped by the training class to take a look. One of the gals was most helpful in giving me what information she could about the breed - you sure couldn't find much about the breed in books - and she was a member of SCA and suggested I join when she realized I really was interested in knowing more about the breed. It sounded very good to me. By then, I was also desperate for help in trying to find out what to do with this uncommon dog of mine. So, I joined the SCA in 1959.

I devoured every issue of the "Bulletin" when it came out. Every time I'd read an article written by someone who sounded like they knew what they were talking about, I'd sit down and write to them, trying to pick their brains for anything they might know that I didn't, explaining my problems with Shar and asking if they had come across any other Sams like him.

In a few years I'd built up a fairly good correspondence with other people around the country and some of that correspondence continues today. Some of these people are long since gone, but they did share their knowledge with me and, little by little, I was getting the education I so badly needed. Combining that with the career in obedience work was a pretty good formula. If you really want to learn about dogs, go into obedience training work. This is where you're going to learn temperament, structure, behavior patterns and everything else under the sun, and if you WANT to be a GOOD obedience instructor, which I definitely did, you study, study, study. You study breeds individually; you study breeds in groups. Obedience work, it's more than just training a dog. You've got to learn grooming and you've got to learn basic health care, because you have to be able to quickly spot if a dog isn't in good shape. The majority of people who are bringing their dogs in for novice training work are first-time dog owners and they often know very little about the basics. You may have to teach them about proper feeding, grooming,

health protection, et cetera - even basics about the breed they own.

Back to the SCA. I was learning a great deal more about my breed through the people who were willing to share their knowledge with me, people like Helené Spathold, who WAS Drayalene, Roberta Bickerstaff, who was very interested in health problems, Lila Weir (who was to eventually get me involved with the "SCA Bulletin"), and Dan Wynne, now dead, who was very active in obedience work, as well as a NUMBER of people here in the Midwest.

In 1964, back when the SCA had club divisions, I was asked to edit the "Midwest Bulletin." I did that for a year, and copies of it used to go to certain people in other divisions. When Lila Weir decided she wanted to retire as editor of the national "Bulletin," she asked if I would have any interest in taking it on. Of course, dumb me, I couldn't refuse a challenge like that, mainly because I'm a frustrated journalist, having, from the age of six years, always known that I wanted to do something in the writing and publishing field. In fact, when I was in high school, I had this vision of being one of those dashing foreign correspondents who traveled all over the world. (I watched a lot of movies in those days). I think the main reason I wanted such a career was because of the trench coats those people always wore ... Humphrey Bogart and that type of thing. What happened was, by the time I got out of high school, I wasn't in great health and the doctor said I was NOT to start college right away. He said I needed a year to try to build up my health and that if I didn't have a COMPLETE change, something terrible would happen to me. Well, something TERRIBLE did happen to me - I got MARRIED! (It took a second try to get that right!) I never did get to college, never did get to be that dashing foreign correspondent, but the frustration remained and anytime anyone mentioned the word "write," there I was, standing and waiting for an opportunity to try my hand at it.

When Lila Weir asked me if I'd be interested in the job, it was an elective job - there wasn't anyone opposing me and that's the only way I EVER would win an election. I don't win elections if there is competition, not even if the person opposing me is someone the voters never heard of before. I don't know for sure just what that means but I suspect my "charming" personality isn't one of my greater assets! Again, I digress.

Being unopposed, I got the job. Now there I was, faced with editing work for a national organization, and going to be doing a publication which by then was something more than a bunch of mimeographed pages of type. By then the "SCA Bulletin" was being done by offset press and carried pictures and advertising. There I was, with absolutely no knowledge about graphic artwork. I had a typewriter that was about thirty years old at that time, literally no graphic art equipment (I didn't have the foggiest idea

of what tools one MIGHT use) and, yet, I had the audacity to think that I could do the work. Well, that first year was certainly challenging and difficult. FORTUNATELY, the "SCA Bulletin" came out only four times a year and at that point averaged around 25-30 pages an issue. At that time it seemed GIGANTIC!

I was lucky. In getting prices here in St. Louis on printing work, I went to a place chosen only because it was close to home. It turned out to be an excellent choice as I got a printer whose prices were reasonable, whose printing work was good, and who turned into a friend as the years went by. The printer helped me a great deal in learning some of the basics of graphic art setups and in teaching me other printing knowledge that was essential. I went back to the library, too, to see what information I might latch onto there. Guess what? Hardly anyone writes books on graphic artwork. Even those people who go to college to train in graphic artwork don't have textbooks like you have in other specialty fields. Most graphic art training is done by the show-and-tell method.

Think about all this: Here is the general membership of a national club hit with a completely unknown entity who is going to serve for at least a year as the editor of their publication. Outside of those few people I was writing to, and the members of the Midwest Division who had already had me as an editor, the rest of the membership was undoubtedly asking each other, "Who in the hell is Peggy Borcherding?" About the only point in my favor was the fact that even back then there weren't too many people chomping at the bit to be editor, so I guess they might have been grateful that there was at least one person in the club willing to tackle the job. Anyway, I began editing the "SCA Bulletin" in March of 1966. I stayed with it until the end of 1972, then I gave it up.

#### Why?

My thought then was that it was time to do something else. I felt the membership was growing tired of me, and that there should be other places that I should go and other things I should do. So, I gave it up. Ten months later, I got it back. The gal who took over from me found after ten months that she couldn't continue and the club was rather desperate for someone who could quickly pick up the threads, particularly because it was time for the December issue to be produced, the biggest and most looked-forward-to issue of the year. The president at that time, Estelene Beckman, called and asked if I could possibly see my way clear to producing the December issue. Well, Baby came home, and Baby stayed!

I would have learned to live without the job eventually, but the ten-month layoff wasn't quite long enough to get it out of my system.

It's awfully hard to give up some-

thing you've done for seven years, especially when you have seen it grow and develop as much as the "Bulletin" did in those seven years. It went from 25-30 pages an issue to around 100 pages an issue. By 1972 it was also being put out six times a year, and the December issue was running over 200 pages. Editing it was an occupation that overshadowed everything else in my life. Today the publication is back to the four-times-a-year format which does help considerably. I now have a little time left over to pursue some personal life.

In 1973, when I gave it up, I only gave up the editing work, I certainly didn't give up any interest in dog activities. No one has to look too hard to find places where they can be used in the dog world if they are willing to expend time and energy. Before I knew it, I was writing two monthly columns for the two nationally-published obedience magazines, "Off Lead" and "Front and Finish." I also tried my hand at some free-lance writing. As you know, dog magazines very seldom pay for articles they publish, so it isn't all that hard to get articles published. I had no turndowns on any of the stuff I was writing then. I also took on some work within the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals and I was the obedience representative to the breed panel group headed by Vern Bower. With her untimely death, that has sort of fallen on hard times.

Hip dysplasia, its causes and cures, is something very important to me. Since 1958 I have had just three different Sams living in my house, and all three of them turned out to be dysplastic. This answers the questions on why I have never finished any champions or done any breeding. My own personal code of conduct with dogs was developed early, and hasn't changed much. I would never show a dog in conformation that I wouldn't breed, and certainly I would have never knowingly breed a dysplastic dog. I never had anything against showing a dysplastic dog in Novice obedience as long as the dog would not be adversely affected by such training and showing, but I would never show a dysplastic dog in Open or Utility, simply because I would never jump a dog with this type of hip defect.

I don't want you to think that I never cared that I have personally owned no champions, or bred any litters. I would have delighted in having such experiences, but I was never so dissatisfied by this not coming to pass that I ever thought of giving up dogs as a hobby. There are hundreds of people who can breed good dogs, maybe even thousands, just as there are many hundreds of people who can put titles on dogs, but people who are willing to do SERVICE work for other people and their dogs, well, there are too few of them. Since I am happiest and feeling most useful when I am doing something for someone else, I don't feel that I have lost too much by choosing

endeavors that go in a different direction than the roads most dog fanciers follow.

Perhaps one other thing that makes me different from a lot of other people is that what I consider hard work, and what someone else considers hard work, are sometimes two very different things. To me, if I put in ten hours a day on a job, I figure that's hard work. If I put in four hours a day on club work, it seems like a very normal thing to do. Granted, this feeling about what constitutes, or does not constitute, hard work may put me in a somewhat different category than the normal joiner or volunteer worker, but it by no means makes me unique. Almost no club is without its hard worker(s).

One other job I had for a few years was that of Chairman for the Juliet T. Goodrich Fund, an endowment fund left by Miss Goodrich for the benefit of the Samoyed breed.

*Would you like to elaborate on this fund?*

For starters, Juliet Goodrich left a certain amount of money for the betterment of the breed. As I recall, the original figure was something in the neighborhood of \$15,000. It was a certain percentage of her estate. A number of people understood that this money was given to the SCA. It wasn't. It was given to the group making up the Midwest Division of the SCA, and I was given to understand that Miss Goodrich very definitely wanted its administration to be retained by this group. However, shortly after Miss Goodrich died, the AKC mandated that the SCA strip itself of its divisional setup. At that point the membership of the Midwest Division was asked to select five people to administer the fund. These people were to have sole jurisdiction over the money and how it was spent.

My name was one of those approved to serve as a trustee and, when the person originally selected to serve as chairman decided she didn't even want to be on the committee, I was asked by the president to take her place. The first thing done was the writing of a constitution and by-laws for the Fund. This was approved by the Board of Governors of the Midwest Division, and then we got to the business of deciding how the money should be spent. Believe it or not, making decisions on how to spend someone else's money is not all that easy.

One of the first things that was done (and perhaps still the best) was to make up a small pamphlet covering the basics of the breed. This pamphlet was distributed free to area Samoyed clubs to dispense in whatever way they saw fit. It was sold to individuals at 12 pamphlets for \$1.00, and that included postage. Many breeders have used it to pass along to buyers of their puppies, and it has been given out at dog shows, demonstrations, et cetera. At the present time, the SCA is owner of the pamphlet. The Goodrich Fund is now too low in funds to continue

to distribute it.

Another project was the striking of a medallion, this to be awarded free to any SCA member achieving a title on his dog. If it's a dog co-owned by two members, both get a medallion. These medallions are still being awarded.

Since the by-laws of the JTG Fund call for special aids to the Midwest, it was decided to try to give some special help to the midwestern Samoyed clubs, but in a way that just wouldn't be a handing out of money all at once. Special packs of stationery were developed and given to all the midwestern clubs in operation at that time and they sold them with all profits going into their treasuries.

In 1968, the original, and privately-donated, annual awards for Top Winning and Top Producing Samoyed were called in by the people who had started that project, and the president of the SCA at that time, Buck Tiers, asked the Goodrich Fund to take over. The Goodrich Fund paid for and administered



those awards for a few years, but then, feeling this project should fully be in the hands of the SCA, turned the awards over to it.

Some monies were donated to charitable organizations.

I can't for the life of me now recall just when it was that the decision to sponsor a pedigree book was decided upon, but, once work began on it, most other actions of the trustees came to a halt until there was some idea of just how much the publishing of such a book would cost. The book was to take much, much longer to compile than anyone realized back in the beginning. And, with printing costs going up so rapidly during the years it was in the works, it was to end up costing nearly two times as much as originally planned. With other work taking up so much of my time, I resigned my position as chairman and, not too long afterwards, I asked that the trustees find someone else to take my place on the committee.

I must admit that I am not very good at committee work, especially in committees that have more than

three people. I believe if you have a one-man committee you can get the job done in six weeks, with three people it will probably take six months, and with more than that, you can go a full year without getting anything done!

As long as I am making admissions, I might as well make it known that the pedigree book was NOT my idea; it was not what I would have preferred to have done with the money. However, I don't want any misunderstanding here. The pedigree book produced by the Goodrich Fund is beautifully done, and I make use of it a great deal. I am very sure that many others who have purchased it also have gained much from having it. The unfortunate thing is, not enough Samoyed owners have seen fit to add it to their libraries.

This is certainly not a thing which is unique to Sam owners. You find it in all walks of life. People say they want more information, more education, more knowledge, but an awful lot of that is said only for appearance's sake. They don't want education if it is going to cost them money. Half the time they won't even take advantage of it if it is given to them free of charge. Today, an entry fee to one show will cost as much as the purchase of one very good reference book, but it sure wouldn't be any gamble in betting on which of the two things people would choose as the more important.

Wow, if I had a buck for everyone who told me they read every word in the various publications I have edited over the last thirty years, I'd be relatively well-to-do now. Yet, I have had it proven to me time and time again that people do exaggerate about how much they read, or even what they read, so if I've not learned anything else in my years of editing work, I have at least come to know what to expect from the readership of anything I am producing. I've broken it down. I figure 25% of the subscribers will read everything in each issue; 50% will read half of what the issue contains, and the other 25% will do little more than look at the pictures and read the advertisements. So, you just might publish something that could be quite important as far as educational emphasis is concerned and possibly end up with 75% of your readers not even looking it over. LORD KNOWS there are times when I'd love to discover a way to make sure all readers actually do read certain things, but... I guess you've got to put it on the front cover! (Some of them might not even bother to look at that!) Oh boy, look where I have gotten to. Back to the Goodrich Fund.

The Goodrich Fund people realized publishing of the pedigree book would use up the larger part of its funds but figured that sales would eventually recoup maybe half the expense and then allow them to take on some new projects. One thing I had envisioned doing before the pedigree book was decided on as a major project was the developing of more pamphlets, the kind

that, like the original one, could be given away, or sold to interested parties, pamphlets that would cover grooming, general health care, diseases, training dogs for the show ring and to make them better companions. Such information is available in book form, but the novice owner is less likely to buy a book, or even go to a library and pick up one, than to read a nice convenient pamphlet. If you can catch the novice early enough, before he starts to make too many mistakes with his dog, or give him help that he doesn't know where to go to get, I feel you are doing a real service for the breed. Eventually it can be a way, one way, to improve the breed.

*Many people in other breeds would give their eye teeth to have a pedigree book like you have in Samoyeds. Why are there two competing pedigree books in Samoyeds?*

Ohhh, you have hit a sore spot there! At the time the Goodrich Fund settled on doing a pedigree book, and even after work on it was fifteen months in progress, there was not the slightest idea that someone else was also working on one. When that news came through it was really quite a blow, especially since it was certainly no secret that the Goodrich Fund was undertaking such a project. At that time, work on the Goodrich pedigree book was going pretty slowly as the people who were doing all the research on it were donating their time, and it had to be very much of a spare-time project. I was much concerned about there being two groups working on a book of such a specialized nature and got the other trustees to agree to my contacting the other group to feel them out on the idea of us combining our efforts and having just the one book. Guess I wasn't a very good salesperson, as that idea wasn't received favorably, and, although I personally was willing to take the loss, dropping our own efforts, I was in the minority there. In fact, even later on when more time passed and the book still wasn't close to being completed, I was still wondering if the Goodrich Fund might not be better off to call it quits. Here were two groups putting out the same kind of book, one that certainly wasn't going to be a best seller (laughter), and even one book on pedigrees was unlikely to be much of a profit-maker. So, what it all boiled down to was having two groups of people having the same idea at the same time, each going its own way and not being able to get together for a cooperative effort. THAT'S REALLY A SHAME!

Okay, you now probably know far more about the Goodrich Fund than you really wanted to know when you asked your question. Something you have to learn: Sometimes asking me one simple question leads to an hour's answer!

What with editing work taking up more and more of my time, I gradually had to drop other dog-related activi-

ties I had. The six-issue-a-year publishing schedule finally became so god-awful time consuming that it was affecting both my mental and physical well-being and in 1977 it was cut back to five issues. Then, what with inflation, my husband's deteriorating health situation which called for my assuming more household duties, and a brand-new kind of competition, something called "The Samoyed Quarterly," I felt the best solution was to go back to the four issues a year that we had when I started out in 1966.

The cutting back made doing each issue more enjoyable as I had some breathing space between each issue, and for the first time in five years, I have even managed to consider some work for a different kind of organization, this time the American Dog Owners Association. I have been a member of this group from the time it came into existence. I feel the Association does VALUABLE work in areas where the individual dog owner, or even a club, cannot reach. Back in 1973 I did some research work for them, when they were building evidence to expose the organized dog fight competitions and betting that was going on in many parts of the country.

As much as the ADOA has accomplished, I have felt they have always done a lousy job in self-promotion and in the public relations department. And, another habit of mine, for good or bad, is letting people know how I feel about their products or methods of operation or what have you. I have on numerous occasions written to the president of ADOA, expressing my opinion that ADOA would have a much larger membership and do even more good if they would only get information about the organization and its activities into the right hands. Guess I wrote one letter too many, 'cause finally I got one back offering me the job of setting up a better communications department. It was sort of a "put up or shut up" situation. So, what could I do but tell them I would give it a try, with the understanding I had other duties that came first and the amount of time I could give them would be limited to what was left over after my prior obligations were taken care of. They accepted me on that basis, and at the present time I am still trying to get a basic mailing list put together. And, doing that has provided another interesting look into the world of dogs and the people who help to make it go around.

The first order of business was to draft and send out a form letter and simple information form to be filled in and returned. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was even provided for that return. These letters went out to every licensed and sanctioned dog club in the country, and this includes the all-breeds clubs, the specialty clubs and the obedience ones. Did you know there are about 2,400 of them?

*That's incredible!*

Yeah, you don't believe there are that many until you sit and make up 2,400 mailing labels. There's something else that's hard to believe: Those letters went out the 1st of July and now, in November, they are still being returned, so apparently lots of club secretaries are not too swift about answering mail. What is rather depressing is that so far only half of the clubs have responded, even though the form to be filled out is very simple. It asked only if the club published a newsletter, if so, how often, the name of the publication, the name and address of the editor, and if there was someone else information could be sent to if the club had no publication. Remember, even the envelope and postage for returning the form was provided.

*What do you want to do after you have the mailing list?*

It's all well and good that the American Dog Owners Association sends out a newsletter to members, but that isn't doing much to get the general dog-owning public familiar with its work. Besides, some of the stuff in the newsletters wouldn't be of that much interest to nonmembers. What I would like to see done, and why I feel we need a special mailing list made up of editors and professional writers, is to work up special news releases when something warrants one and get THESE to the people who can



spread the word. We would keep the news releases short and easy to reprint and, hopefully, with no need to edit them. It might well be, and I am sure this is so, that there are undoubtedly many people who are presently unfamiliar with the work of the ADOA, who, if they knew more about it, would feel the organization was worth joining, and the more members the ADOA has, the more it can do.

Anyway, this is something new I am trying to do this year, even though you might question my sanity (laughter) for taking on a project of this magnitude. I feel if you've got a sincere interest in dogs and if you are interested in dogs beyond your own, then you

must be willing to sacrifice something, be it extra time or money or both.

I dearly love the Samoyed breed, yet I sit here today with no dog at all. It has now been two years since I have had one for my own personal companion. I have no dog because I cannot as yet reconcile myself to another breed and the doctors say I MUST NOT ever again own a dog as large as a Sam. They have set limits on any future dog I own. It can be no more than twenty-five pounds at maturity. I have tried really hard to consider getting another dog. I can work myself up to the point of being almost ready to buy and then I can't take the step of actually contacting a breeder. Even though I may forever be denied another of my own, the Sam is MY breed.

A great many people have heard all this before, but I never pass up an opportunity to make mention of it because it has been so important in the life I have led for the past twenty-one years. I DO have a husband who is totally disinterested in most aspects of the dog world. He couldn't care less about a lot of things dog fanciers consider life-and-death matters. He couldn't help but learn a little something about the Samoyed after nineteen years of living with them, and, while I think he may have loved our three dogs even more than I sometimes did, I am still not sure he ever developed any great love for dogs in general. Yet, this dear man has probably done more scrungy work for the breed than a lot of people would ever consider doing. First of all, he has been putting up with me for some 32 years now! He has learned to live with the sound of the typewriter going day and night, to have lights burning into the wee hours of the morning. He has accepted living in a house that is half-filled with stuff belonging to some club and never having quite enough room to store his own things. He has sat and stapled thousands of bulletins together, lugged thousands and thousands of pounds of them to post offices in all kind of weather. He has accepted the fact that there will ALWAYS be at least one box of bulletins in the trunk of the car he is driving and that the telephone will ring and wake him out of a sound sleep, all because someone is not paying any attention to the listed hours for calling. He has paid for hundreds of dollars worth of equipment to make my work easier, equipment that so often the club's treasury couldn't afford. And year after year he brings home all sorts of gadgets and supplies that he thinks might help me in my work. He has been a help and a shoulder to lean on for so many years that I couldn't even begin to put a price on his services.

*I don't think most people realize what really goes into what you're doing.*

There is NO way that anyone who isn't familiar with the publishing business can EVER understand what

it's all about. I have, at this point, almost stopped trying to explain it because there's no way you can correctly explain methodology without people seeing it at work for themselves. Even then you might have to have them hang around for a week when a deadline is upon you before they would get the true flavor of things.

People are kind and complimentary, particularly if you're doing this stuff on a voluntary basis, whether they really mean it or not. It would be a rare person who would look you in the eye and say, "You do a rotten job." I appreciate their appreciation, but when most of them say "I KNOW the time it must take," they really have no conception of the actual time it DOES take. They see a finished product and can realize to some extent the kind of time that might have taken, but how can they "see" all the different kinds of bookkeeping duties, the keeping of inventories current, the letterwriting necessary to get many of those pages filled in the first place. Many people don't realize that even before you put one issue to bed you are already starting work on the next one, or maybe even on the one after that.

I have joked any number of times about the desire I sometimes have to publish some ad copy exactly as it is sent in. If not a very good way to keep the goodwill of an advertiser, but it might be a real eye-opener as to why it can take so much time to get copy into camera ready form. Some days you can work eight or ten hours and end up with only five pages of finished copy to show for that time. Then there are the deadlines that your whole life is guided by. I haven't read any recent surveys on the subject, but it used to be that the highest percentage of alcoholics in any profession was in the publishing business, and in every end of the business, be it publisher, reporter, pressman, even down to the printer's devils. Perhaps that picture is changing today, but I know that the printer I used to have was involved in a program to hire alcoholics going through a rehabilitation program.

*Do you think it's just the pressure?*

Certainly the constant working against deadlines, the pressures, the rush jobs, would all have to play a part. This is a thread that has run through this field for a long time.

I'm a reader, and I particularly enjoy biographies and autobiographies, especially by or about people in the arts. Read a book written by a reporter and seldom do you get very far before you find reference to favorite "watering spots," the daily gatherings there, and the number of co-workers who at one time or another had a severe drinking problem. The field of journalism is very specialized and hard for the people on the "outside" to relate to, but it is a field filled with many highs and lows. It's like when dog people get together, about all they ever talk about is dogs. Don't you

often feel like you are speaking in some foreign language when you try to talk about dogs with someone who has little knowledge about them, or who has never been to a dog show and may never want to go to one? How often does anyone ever enter a dog in a show without a consuming desire to win? Losing can be a very low blow. The tensions in the publishing business are much the same, but here you have lots of people waiting for the results of your actions, and, if you don't perform on time, you can lose customers, or, at the very least, have a disappointed bunch of people.

The trouble is, on an individual basis, all kinds of people don't think about YOUR deadline schedule. They figure if they are a little late meeting the deadlines you set for them, that won't matter too much. There you are tearing your hair out, because those late arrivals are going to make you late, but who is to know that you aren't to blame if the magazine arrives late? Famous words: "But I was only a couple days late in getting it in." The big thing about voluntary service work is that people generally take on such work, be it for a dog club, one for cats, African violets, a church, politics, or whatever, for one of two reasons: because they feel they have a duty to their club or they are looking at the work as a means of self-advancement. No, not all people holding down a job do it for those reasons, but a great many do. I have NO sense-of-duty feeling when I agree to take on such work in a club or another kind of organization. I take it on either because it offers some personal challenge to me or because I happen to like the particular job that needs to be done. I simply can't function well out of a sense of duty. It makes an absolute nervous wreck of me. And, since I haven't any special place I want to get to, making a name for myself is, consequently, of little importance. Besides, how many people do you know who ever make much of a name for themselves solely through service work, the volunteered, unpaid kind? Consider the people in the dog world who are the most highly respected, who are the BIG names. For example, stand me over on this side of the room, then stand a professional journalist on the other side, bring in a group of people who are familiar with the work we both do, and see where that crowd is going to head. It has little to do with one of us being any better than the other. It's just that if you get paid for your journalistic efforts, people naturally are more impressed and eager to make themselves known to you. It's the same with the professional handlers, even now that the AKC no longer issues licenses to them. Watch them at a dog show and watch people cater to them. The same way with judges; they don't make a living out of this endeavor but they do have that all-important decision power and they get plenty of special attention. They don't even have to be judging at

a show in order to have people give them this special attention. The person who has top winning or top producing dogs will be sought out regularly.

No, the club worker is not very likely to ever be anyone's hero, or have his name remembered after he leaves the scene. The very idea that I am doing the kind of work I do for honor and glory is absolutely STUPID. If I wanted honor and glory, I'd try to go someplace where there was a paycheck as compensation for my services, or I'd take a stab at writing a best seller (pure fantasy). Honor and glory doesn't apply here. I KNOW I'm not good enough to ever make any big-time scene in dogs. I was simply lucky to have gotten the opportunity to work at something I have never stopped enjoying, and something which offers new challenges. Sure, a lot of work is repetitive, but there is always room for improvement and always room to try out new things. Just the wide contact with people all over the world is fascinating in itself.

Good heavens, before I got into dogs, I was doing literally dozens of different things. I organized card parties, ran rummage sales, put on fashion shows, wrote and produced an amateur musical revue, put together a women's kitchen band. I was a lotto caller (or bingo), served as a section leader for United Fund drives, made doll clothes by the hundreds, put together about thirty handmade quilts all by myself. I did lots of different things, wouldn't you say? Getting into dogs was the best thing that ever happened to me as I finally found sort of a permanent niche for myself, or at least found something I have not tired of in the past twenty years. Tomorrow, though, I'll probably grow tired of it (laughter), because every time the deadline for the "SCA Bulletin" comes due and you are faced with all these problems of getting this thing ready... By the time you do your last piece of copy and take it to the printer, you are saying, "NEVER AGAIN, I'VE GOT TO BE OUT OF MY MIND. WHY AM I DOING THIS!" I think scrubbing floors would be easier! You think to yourself that you simply can't face another deadline. I go through this every three months.

*Sometimes it's almost like giving birth!*

How right you are! Maybe you're just transposing what someone else has already thought of, but it's still that thing. When it comes off the press, you see it and it's like holding a new life in your hands. You say, "WOW, I helped give this life," and you find yourself starting to look forward to beginning the next issue. The toughest part, I have found, is forcing yourself to set up for the next issue. You have to get all the equipment out and assign yourself a certain daily quota of work. That first couple days on a new issue, that's the hardest. Of course I have one other problem: I have no real talent, at least no artistic talent.

Oh, I can string words together, sometimes, and have them come out sounding not too bad, but I can't draw at all. While I can follow patterns, I would never be able to create patterns on my own. There are three things I guess I DO have: I like to work with my hands; I am efficient; and I KNOW how to organize to make the best possible use of time. I don't mind routine if it's a routine I've developed. Those things can get you quite a long way even without any real big creative talent. I can achieve the amount of work I do simply because I DO have a routine and efficient methods of operation. Perhaps I should also add one more thing to that list, and that is, I THINK I have a sense of humor. It may be a rather strange sense of humor but it has saved me many times when I have started to take myself and what I do too seriously.

There are many people in the world of dogs who do have a pretty good sense of humor of their own, but it has always made me just a little sad that so many people who take up dogs as a hobby seem to be strangely lacking in a sense of humor. If they had one when they started out, they lost it somewhere along the way, some of them. Yet, is there any hobby where a sense of humor is more important? Take yourself too seriously and you end up being the big loser. It doesn't make any difference how good you think you are at what you do, there is almost always someone waiting in the wings that can do it better. I think about this sometimes. What was considered a good specimen of the breed (any breed) twenty years ago, might have a problem winning anything today. Names of dogs are remembered longer than the people who have them, and then only a few out of the thousands of dogs born every year are remembered five years after they are off the scene. Overrating one's own importance, or not being able to laugh at oneself now and then, or being unwilling to poke a little fun at this business we are in, that does make Jack a very dull boy.

It's just like the dogs, the breed. I cannot find within myself the willingness to go to another breed, yet I've NEVER overrated the Sam. I don't believe it's the most intelligent breed in the world, I don't think it has qualities that can't also be found in other breeds. The Samoyed does have its own special look, and its charms certainly outweigh its lesser desired features, but I DO NOT, and NEVER have, set the Samoyed up on a special pedestal. Perhaps my greatest fault with my own dogs was that I faulted them too much.

Of course one of the reasons why I might have been tolerated by the SCA membership as long as I have is because I don't offer any competition to anyone in the ring, or as a breeder. I can be more objective in looking at the breed than someone who is totally involved with showing and breeding. There is no particular style of dog or bloodline that I think is far superior to any other.

I hope I can appreciate the value of the breed on an individual basis, from dog to dog. I really am convinced my job is somewhat easier than it would be if I were out there as a competitor for points, or as a seller of pups and stud services.

While the lack of activity as an exhibitor or breeder makes the job easier in one way, there is another dark side to it, ONE really, really big drawback ... and one I haven't ever talked too much about in public. I'd LIKE to think, because I've studied so hard and put in a lot of sweat and toil, that I KNOW a fair amount about the breed. As I have mentioned already, those years in obedience work greatly furthered my education about dogs in general, and no one ever learns all there is to know about his own breed without studying other breeds too. You are only kidding yourself if you think that isn't necessary. During this learning process I have read books on every possible subject relating to dogs. Back in those salad days I often read a dozen books a week, just on the subject of dogs. (This was not as great a task as you might think as I read about 1,500 words a minute, so could get through many of them rather quickly.) Eventually, I learned to be more selective in subject material as well as in separating really knowledgeable authors from those who were really not writing from personal experience or research. Three areas were eventually to be specialized in: dog structure and movement, temperament, and health care and diseases.

In spite of the knowledge I have tried so hard to attain, as soon as people find out I have never finished a champion or bred any dogs, they begin to think my knowledge is probably second-class, if of any value at all. How can anyone know diddly poop about the breed if they own no titled dogs or have done no breeding? I just realized something. Now that I have emphasized all the things I have never accomplished in this magazine, my credibility might even be worse off than it was before. See what can happen to you if you get too honest?

Actually, I went through the questioning business first in obedience. In obedience there is a very large belief that you should not be instructing in ANY stage of training until you have finished titles on a couple of dogs. In other words, you don't instruct in Novice until you have a CD, or in Open until you have a CDX, and so on. Yet, if I'm ever going to brag about talent I possess, or did possess, it would probably be what I was able to do as an obedience instructor. It even surprised me a little as I never realized before that I might have the makings of a pretty good teacher. I seemed to be able to get through to people, perhaps because, when it came to other people's problem dogs, I had already been there, and been there, and been there, with one of my own. I was never an "easy" instructor; one guy told me that his top sergeant in the army was a pussycat compared

to me. Time and again, students would hate my guts after the first couple sessions. The only reason they wouldn't drop out of class was because they were going to SHOW ME that they could become better handlers than I was giving them credit for being. Strangely, in case after case, on graduation night after these dogs would do well and be given their diplomas, the owners would come to me and express their appreciation for my having driven them so hard. They would tell me how much they didn't like me during a certain stage of training but how that feeling started to change when they began to get control over their dogs and the dogs became better behaved and performed obedience exercises with enthusiasm and more precision.

After awhile I lost count of the number of dogs going through my classes that earned obedience titles, and that earned class placings while getting those titles. I can remember with pleasure that many of those dogs finished in three straight shows, and very few of them needed more than four or five shows at the most to achieve the title. So, even if I never put an obedience title on a dog myself, just maybe I was a little bit responsible for some of these other dogs that got them.

No, I have never owned a champion myself, but there are a few people who DO own champions because I had enough knowledge to send them to places where I knew they could buy dogs good enough to earn that particular title. The championships of a few dogs might have come a little faster because I had the knowledge to show people how to groom and train their dogs so they looked good and behaved properly when they went into the ring. I like to think that the many dogs I have evaluated for people over the years were evaluated properly as to their potential as show animals or decent breeding stock. Maybe I have helped a little in setting up some good breedings, and maybe I have helped in keeping some poor quality litters from being born. Goodness knows I have given out a lot of instruction on how to groom a Sam properly and how to tape the ears when they are slow to come up. I have also gotten dogs on proper diets, diagnosed health problems some people didn't know their dogs had, encouraged many people to get their unmanageable dogs into training classes and gotten others into the hands of good, reliable veterinarians. Yet, that BIG question still remains in the minds of so many people: How can you know very much about the breed if you don't exhibit or breed? One can't really knock people for feeling that way. Let's face it, exhibiting and breeding is where the action is!

Going back to people who make money in dogs, and how they are more often catered to than the do-it-for-free bunch. A number of years ago I met the owner of one of the most famous animals in the United States. I was to spend a whole evening in his company. This was undoubtedly the rudest, most ignorant, obnoxious person it has ever been my

misfortune to come across, yet he was being catered to by everyone there that evening. He was in St. Louis to promote a product so the people from the company making the product may have been forced to suffer in silence and endure this rude, foul-mouthed, unknowledgeable man, but... It wasn't until later that night when I was driving home that I realized the WORST thing of all - I had nothing to gain from this man, and by all that was holy, he should not have gotten away with everything he was doing that evening, but I had sat all evening, and, with the exception of disagreeing mildly with him on a couple of his pieces of misinformation about dogs, I did nothing else to indicate my displeasure with his actions. Why didn't I speak out? I sat there embarrassed and disgusted, but I said nothing because he was FAMOUS, a big NAME. I have never forgotten that and it is a great reminder when one gets overly impressed with one's own moral code and sense of ethics, or gets on a soapbox to encourage others to be more like you are. Maybe we aren't quite as honest, moral and upright as we sometimes like to believe we are. Sometimes you aren't one bit better than the guy next to you when it comes to having occasion to honor what might be a false prophet.

Again, I don't think we retain quite enough of a sense of humor when it comes to passing judgment on others. How can something be pleasurable if there is little or no fun involved? Seeing the funny side of things can keep you from getting too pompous, or putting too much value on your own importance in the scheme of things. Perhaps I am lucky in getting the wind taken out of my sails as often as I do - like having someone in the club call my number for information, a club member that is, and having that person not even know that I am the editor, or getting a letter that addresses me as "Dear Sir" from a club member. If members are paying that little attention to your name, you had better learn that getting your name in print isn't quite as important as you might think it is.

*It does mean a great deal to a lot of people though.*

Which way do you mean that?

*You're a powerful person in Samoyeds.*



"TORY"

I DO NOT believe that. I feel absolutely, and this is TRUE, NO SENSE OF POWER WHATSOEVER. I feel a great deal of fear. Perhaps, with another person, this could be true. I am not saying that the position couldn't be USED FOR POWER, but I've bent over backwards for thirteen years, sometimes almost to too much of an extreme, to never cater to any particular group (and in dog clubs, as in anything else, there are cliques). It doesn't make any difference if you're my best friend, you don't get treated one single bit different than anyone else when it comes to the "SCA Bulletin." I will say this, in the years I've been doing it, there were times when I've had to withstand a great deal of pressure by some rather powerful individuals who would, at times, want to use the "Bulletin" for their own specific purposes. I've had sleepless nights when that kind of thing occurred. I feel that any person who joins the Samoyed Club of America is equal to any other person as far as it relates to the "SCA Bulletin." They all pay the same kind of money, they should have the same rights and privileges. I will not allow myself to be used, at least not intentionally. I will not USE or BE USED. Maybe the other thing is that I am an extreme worrywort. To this day I probably write dozens and dozens of letters I don't really have to write because I don't take it upon myself to change things that people do send in without trying to let them know about the changes before the copy goes to press.

If someone asks for a special style of lettering in an ad and I can't provide it, I just don't substitute without writing a letter to the advertiser and letting him know about that. I can't ALWAYS manage to do it, but I try to give, to the greatest extent I can, whatever it is that people do want. This power you talk about, if it is there, hopefully I'm not using it. JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE IN A POWERFUL POSITION DOESN'T NECESSARILY IMPLY THAT YOU USE THE POWER AVAILABLE.

I never think of it in that light. I never think that because I am THIS, this SHOULD be like THIS or I'm going to PUSH to make it like THIS because I'm in the position I'm in. It quite literally is something that doesn't cross my mind. I've a very strong mind and am very opinionated, with a sharp tongue, and I speak my mind. THAT is all there, and that I probably will not change. If I feel I'm right on something, not you or the greatest force in the world will change me. It doesn't mean I'm necessarily right, but if I THINK I'm right, I'm also a fighter. Don't back me into a corner because you'll have a tough time knocking me down.

People have tried to do it by knocking the character or making false accusations or insinuations or innuendos, or stuff like that, and it hurts a lot, but you TAKE this anytime you're in a position of being in the public eye. You have to take a lot of it and it'll hurt like heck, but it's NOT the way to get

to me. If you want to knock me out of the race, that isn't the way you get through to me. I'm rock-hard stubborn in certain areas and I do fight for survival. I've got a certain code I live by and a certain set of ethics. Hopefully, in the ethics department, while I might be very strong in trying to adhere to them myself, I am today better about not trying to ram MY ethics down someone's throat. Besides, this is a very little pond after all, this being an editor.

*To the people in the pond, it's the most important pond in the world. You know as well as I do that there are a lot of people out there who feel the most important thing in their lives is getting in the "Bulletin."*

They say so; I don't really know. I'm never satisfied with the "Bulletin," that may be it. I look at it and keep thinking about how much better it could be. I'm always horrified by my bad typing. I would say, if I've got an issue or one issue out of every six that I am even reasonably pleased with, that's pretty good. For the most part, however, I'm NEVER satisfied with my efforts. I think people have the wrong conception of what the "SCA Bulletin," or what "The Samoyed Quarterly," will do for them. They keep using this word "education." I don't think SQ really educates, I don't think the "SCA Bulletin" really educates. Both publications INFORM, but you don't get educated about a subject by reading one article on it. Maybe if you read a full book about it, but... We inform, we try to give people knowledge they didn't have before. THAT is education, true, but it isn't in-depth education, it's just a surface thing, a once-over-lightly. In a magazine (and I feel in all respects, shape and form the "SCA Bulletin" is pretty much in the magazine category), you've got to cater to a lot of different tastes so the magazine's going to cover a number of different subjects. This is why people don't read everything. At least some people are honest about this, yes. There are a FEW who admit they never read an obedience column or one about sledding, or any of the regular special feature columns that do appear. You are always getting people coming to you and telling you there aren't enough articles on breeding, grooming, health, or whatever, because they, of course, would like to see their own special interests covered in greater depth. The individual reader doesn't always stop to think that there are 1,200-1,300 people reading this magazine and that among this number there are lots of different interests and tastes. The best you can do as editor is try to have a little something in there for everyone. You can't possibly satisfy the needs or desires of people with specialized interests. Unhappily, all too often the articles you print that have the most meat in them turn out to be the articles that a lot of people will skip over. We continue to have far too many people looking to publications such as SQ or the "SCA Bulletin" as their primary source of education and that's bad. If you really want to learn

about dog structure, then you have to read as many BOOKS as you can that are devoted to that subject. You go out and spend a lot of time looking at different examples of the breed; in fact, you go out and look at a lot of dogs of different breeds. You ask questions. You do what you can to find people who really do know dog structure and you get them to point out the right and wrongs in dogs' gaits. One article in a magazine, even if it has a few sketches to go along with it, isn't going to teach you much about gait, any more than a couple articles on grooming aren't going to teach you how to become an expert in that department. You have to watch the experts do it, ask questions, and then do a lot of practicing on your own. For the most part, all single articles can do is whet your appetite enough to make you want to learn more.

I don't see the "SCA Bulletin" as any deep educational tool. I see it as somewhat informative, but it only provides surface knowledge. It can't really BE any more than that and still be reasonably satisfactory to the number of people it is being made up for. Someone has suggested that we should do special issues, the kind that hone in on just one special subject at a time, breeding, training, nutrition, et cetera. That format would undoubtedly delight about a hundred members at a time, but would probably make another eleven hundred scream to high heaven. You do the best you can. This goes back to people not understanding the concept of magazine publishing.

At this year's Specialty, one person came up to me and very flatly stated that they didn't read one person's columns and one person's ads. Yet, at the same specialty, I had other people come up and say how very much they enjoyed and looked forward to reading these particular items. Almost from the beginning of time the human race has been telling each other that you can't please everyone at the same time. Nowhere is this any truer than in the publishing business.

In this whole, silly life I lead, I keep going from the sublimely ridiculous to the sublimely ridiculous! I've only personally owned three dogs. This was, first of all, because Bob, the husband, did put his foot down on having more than one dog at a time, and I figured the one thing around here that maybe should stay in relatively good shape was my marriage. Certainly my back wasn't staying that way, and eventually that physical problem became severe enough so I could have never managed more than one dog at a time anyway. Then there was the heartbreak each time x-rays diagnosed hip dysplasia in each of those three dogs. There was that highly intelligent but "very difficult to live with" dog. My veterinarian, who had Shar Khan for a patient most of the dog's life, always thought I should write a book about him. Here was a hyperactive and highly oversexed (which often goes along with being hyperactive) dog, and here was a dog with absolutely NO

aggressiveness in him at all. You couldn't make the dog fight; I think he would have allowed himself to be killed before he'd fight with another dog. You could be cruel - and sometimes for his own protection you had to restrain him in manners you would never use with a normal dog - and after such a time, all he would do would be to wag his tail and lick your hand, not out of fear, but to let you know he bore you no grudge and to let you know he was ready for more fun and games. He was forever full of contradictions. In every aspect of his life he was this way, and as frustrating as this could be, it also made him constantly interesting. I don't think there was anyone who ever worked with him who wasn't frustrated by him, but who didn't end up enjoying being with him. When you saw him, you didn't easily forget him. He had a personality that constantly sparkled; he was so terribly alive that he just lit up any place he was at. If I took him to a demonstration, which I sometimes did because he was lovely to look at, he might totally goof up what he was supposed to do, but after the demonstration was over, where did people go to do more looking, feeling, or to ask questions? Not to the people with the proper-working dogs, not to the people with dogs that had given the good obedience performances, NO, the people came to see Shar Khan. I could never live with another dog like he was, I'm too old now, MUCH too old for that kind of living, but he taught me so very much about people, about life, and he set a pattern for everything that was to come after him.

Talk about sublimely ridiculous, or extremes. The last dog I owned was mentally retarded. Yes, you heard right. I thought I was so smart about behavior, training, and everything, and the dog was nearly six months old before I really started to grasp the idea that something was very much off-balance with his mental equipment. Yet, here was a dog that if owned by someone just getting into dogs, might have gone his whole life with the person not suspecting THAT could be the problem. Mental retardation in a dog can be a very subtle thing, and sometimes a dog with this particular problem can be almost a PERFECT dog as far as living with it is concerned. Certainly this was true of Tory. He never touched anything he shouldn't have during his whole seven years of life. He almost never did anything he had to be corrected for. He was exceptionally loving, never got in your way, was totally dependable and you never had to wonder where he was or what he might be doing. With mental retardation in people no longer being something "unspeakable," we have now learned from families about how often a retarded child can bring them closer together, that these children or adults have a very special way about them that makes members of the family have very special, tender feelings towards them. They want to care for them, give them extra love and extra protection. Through Tory, I

think I gained some small understanding about such feelings. Perhaps some of it comes because they are so dependent on you and yet ask for so very little for themselves. They can help you develop a kind of patience you might never before realized you were capable of having. Certainly you came to realize that often the words "mental retardation" are scarier than the problem itself.

Of course, when it comes to having owned two dogs, each of them with screws loose, in a different way, you could look to the heavens, shake your fist, and cry out, "Why me?" I would be lying through my teeth if I didn't admit that I would have preferred having normal dogs to those I had. But, on the other hand, I have had the opportunity to study and deal with, on a daily basis, those kinds of problems which are still somewhat mysterious to even people who are very well-versed about dogs, and I am not sure in the long run that the things those two dogs did give me were not worth half a dozen times.

There is one interesting thing, and this is so fascinating that I just love it! You can say a dog is cowhocked, or has the worst front-end you've ever seen, or the ugliest head in the world, you can say ANYTHING you want about the dog's physical features, but you can never, never, say a dog is DUMB! If you say a dog is "mentally retarded," and people realize you are not joking when you say it, you throw them into absolute nervous fits. NOW, who don't you say this to? You don't say it to anyone. You don't say it to the most knowledgeable people in the world, you don't say it to obedience instructors, you don't say it to breeders or exhibitors, you just don't say it to anyone at all, because no one in the whole, wide dog world wants to hear that there is such a thing as a dumb dog! I never made a secret of the fact that Tory was mentally retarded. I could prove it to people if they were willing to spend a number of hours around the dog. Seeing him for just a couple hours wasn't enough, you'd never know anything was wrong, but if you were with him over a day's period, or if I demonstrated his reactions to certain kinds of stimuli, you could begin to see for yourself that something wasn't right.

After I was sure that I had properly diagnosed the reason for Tory's many unusual idiosyncrasies, I sometimes very deliberately brought forth his mental problems in the course of conversations. You mention retardation in a dog and you see this look of horror appear on people's faces. Then you will be likely to hear, "Oh, he's just got you fooled by acting that way. He is probably doing it to test you or to get his own way." Did I hear these comments coming from people who didn't know much about dogs? Not on your tintype! Those words sometimes came from people who had been in the dog game for thirty years, or who had been obedience instructors for years on end. Only once can I remember anyone ever saying to me (and

this came from a guy with a mixed-breed dog), "You know, I think I own the stupidest dog that ever lived!" I almost fell out of my seat when I heard him say that!

We have almost complete resistance to the idea of mental retardation in dogs. Even people who certainly should know better have great difficulty in accepting the idea of there being such a thing as a "dumb" dog. Why should that be? Why shouldn't dogs, just as people, be given the right to be smart, normal, dumb or retarded? Do they not have the right to be less than perfect in the mental department? I suppose we are scared to death that by saying that a dog is dumb we are bumping the pedestal we keep putting the dogs up on.

*People often deny that there is a problem in a breed, or in dogs in general*

It is a hobby. There is a lot of self-imposed blindness about dogs.

*Isn't that the truth!*

I've been in dogs long enough now to have met people from every walk of life. In obedience work you especially get a wide-ranging mixture of people. You have a whole new set going by you in each twelve-week course of training and when you see these people for the first time you don't know if you are dealing with doctors, lawyers, merchant chiefs, or a richman, beggarman, or, even maybe, thief. In obedience work you certainly never consider WHO the person is, your primary interest is how well this person will take instruction and whether or not he will have an easy or difficult dog to train. Yet it is always interesting to try to figure out why certain people are attracted to certain breeds of dogs, and usually over those twelve weeks of training, you would learn the person's profession somewhere along the way.

Often, with Sam owners that I have contact with, it can be a long time before I might learn what their livelihoods are - and maybe I never find out, because one can talk for hours at some gathering without one's regular profession being mentioned. Nevertheless, I am also growing more interested in the kind of people who do select the Samoyed as their breed. Our breed seems to draw a great many teachers. Wonder why? We also have a lot of doctors and nurses owning the breed. Maybe I only THINK there is some special relationship between those professions and picking a Sam. I think it would be interesting to do some research on that subject; after all, it is said that people DO relate to breeds based on occupations or certain ways of thinking. Here is something else I will throw in the pot which might be a nice controversial bit for debate: I have the feeling that the Samoyed probably attracts a larger percentage of introverted, somewhat insecure people than many breeds might do. The pure beauty of the dog could be a very good reason for drawing those types of people. The dog's beauty can

attract a special kind of attention which the person is unlikely to be able to achieve on his own.

*It's outgoing.*

You DO get this type of person who HAS to have an extension of himself if he is to get the attention he so desires but can't seem to achieve because of his lack in personality.

*I've noticed Borzoi people tend to be romantics while Samoyed people tend to be the salt-of-the-earth type of people. They are honest people, real people. They're both delightful, but very different. I don't think there's any question that people tend to be attracted to dogs that are somehow like them.*

That look like them. Obedience is just fascinating for this kind of thing. I can't tell you how many times it happens, but there have been three or four cases that stood out so greatly that I still remember them clearly. There was the guy with his Rottweiler, for instance. They both had the full face, the round, very dark eyes, and they looked enough alike to be brothers! Then there was the girl with a longhaired German Shepherd that was gray and black. Their hair was the same in coloring, their noses shaped the same, and the whole length of their heads had a lot in common. You are standing in front of your class and these similarities become a distraction. (Laughter.)

I think if I were going to fault Sammy people for doing things that are detrimental to the breed, it would be that they have romanticized this very hardly, northern breed into an animal that it isn't and SHOULD'N'T BE, particularly as it applies to temperament. I don't know where this idea that the Sam has very delicate feelings got started.

*What do you mean, "delicate"?*

Delicate in that you can't put pressures on the dog, you cannot give it firm, hard correction as you might a German Shepherd or a Doberman, you cannot train the dog firmly, but must be very gentle at all times. This is probably because of the dog's normally gentle temperament. That's where some of it started. If I were to think the breed had a really unique quality - and so far I have never found any breed with qualities that make them TOTALLY different than another breed - I would at least give the Sam very high marks for having a greater amount of acting talent than some other breeds have. My, yes, the Sam can certainly impress you with some of his performances. It can demonstrate the physical appearance of "broken spirit" faster than almost any other breed I have dealt with; the ears lay back, the tail does down, the belly is only an inch off the floor and you have this dog looking at you (if it will deign to do that) with a look that says, "Now you've crushed my spirit forever and I'll never again be able to stand up straight, or at least I won't ever be able to do it if you jerk on my collar one more time." The thought of crushing a Sam's spirit is the most

appalling thought in the world to many owners, so they just go through life making sure they never, ever, jerk on that collar again. The dog in the space of two minutes time has trained the owner to one-hundred percent perfection!

For all its gentleness, the Sam also has a streak of stubbornness that is as strong as steel. Here again, the Sam can be pretty tricky. It doesn't necessarily spit in your eye and say, "I absolutely won't!" It plays fun little games with you. It can be the crushed-spirit performance or a silly performance, with lots of tail wagging, coaxing, happy-seeming nonsense. But, underneath, their object is not to have to do something they don't want to do. The breed as a whole has never achieved as much distinction in the obedience ring as it might, not because the breed lacks the capability of doing first-class and consistent work, but because far too many Sam owners are taken in by the idea that the dog will fall apart if it has to be "forced" to do something. Oh yes, the temperament of the breed is changing, and not for the better I might add. I have been a ringside witness on that score for a long time now.

*What do you think the temperament should be?*

I don't think the breed is as bright and gay and effervescent as it once was. I think, in a lot of ways, the breed is becoming TOO placid. We are seeing more and more sparkless dogs. It's not really bad, bad yet, but it's certainly not what I consider good for the breed. I think we HAVE actually bred down on intelligence in the breed. That's one thing. Definitely we are seeing that the dog is NOT as willing a worker as it once was. You go talk to people who are into sledding and you find that many of them cannot run all-Sam sled teams anymore because too much of the "Get up and GO" spirit is gone. The breed is developing too many Indians and not enough chiefs. Too many aren't leaders, only followers. Certainly the breed might be an easier one to handle than it once was, at least where the placid attitudes prevail, but if you have a dog that is too placid you can have a real devil of a time ever getting it animated to that point that is needed to do well in the conformation ring.

Opposed to this placidness, you also have Sams with totally nasty temperaments. The breed doesn't get along together nearly as well as it once did. More Sams are developing a real viciousness; they don't have to be provoked to attack. And I am not talking about the type of aggressiveness that has always been there to some extent within the breed. With some of these dogs today, it is almost like sitting on a powder keg. They would be willing to tear another dog apart if given even the slightest opportunity to do so. Today more Sams are having to be put down because of severe temperament flaws than was ever necessary in the past.

*What has happened?*

It's quite simple. We have paid far too little attention to temperament flaws, either because we didn't recognize the flaw, or we figured it wasn't something to worry about too much. You breed the placid to the placid and you get wonderfully easy dogs to live with, but dogs without much natural animation. Of course Sam owners are no more guilty in ignoring temperament flaws than people in other breeds have been. I know you have heard the word "expression" used a lot. After all, "Sam expression" has always been touted as one of the breed's outstanding attributes. Well, take a really good look at our breed today. Fresh off this year's Specialty, it was again shown to me how much we are losing in that department. The true Sam expression, the lighted-up face, the sparkle in the eye, that type of thing, you are seeing less and less of it. Oh, you're still seeing beautiful dogs, but take a good look at them head-on. There is no light in the eye. The dog may appear to "smile" if it is panting, but there is no brightness. That very special look was such a tremendous asset in the breed. The Standard itself calls for this expressiveness. Too many of our dogs today have a dull look to their heads. Some of that dullness is, I believe, due to changes in temperament. Too much of the bright glow and zest is gone.

*Do you think that's something the judges should look for?*

I think it's something they should LOOK for, but I can't really say a lot of judges would truly know what they are looking for. After all, the breed is changing in structure, size and weight, as well as in movement, from what the breed was supposed to be, from what the Standard still says it should be, and if judges can't recognize the right and wrong in those things, it is unlikely they are going to be able to recognize a somewhat more ethereal quality in the breed.

When you've got a breed where there is a Standard that states the ideal for size in a male is between 22 and 23 1/2 inches and you reach a point where a person owning a male less than 23 1/2 inches considers his dog to be small, or when you have 24 and 25-inch males being a very common sight in rings, and the same above-standard size applies to bitches, you know that somewhere along the way judges have stopped paying too much attention to size when it comes to passing judgment on the breed. Would we have so many badly overweight Sams in the ring today if judges really recognized a FAT Samoyed when they saw it? There has GOT to be an awful lot of judges who cannot by eye or by feel correctly determine a Samoyed's height or weight. Either that, or they just don't care what our Standard does say.

Now, I don't get to too many shows these days, but when I do go, I try to get a good ringside seat. We talk about reach and drive. Look at all the

ads that emphasize "reach and drive." Well, I listen to Sams moving, and today you don't have to strain your ears too hard to hear a lot of their moving. I wish every person judging Sams had the opportunity to hear what I can hear when I am sitting right next to the ring. We've got a lot of dogs in the ring that look okay as they move around the ring, but if they were to hold that pace for more than a half of a mile they would poop out. Listen to the BANG, BANG, BANG as they pound around that ring. Our breed isn't supposed to pound the boards like that when it is moving. Judges look at these big dogs and this reach and drive many of them have, and they sure look powerful, but they don't see that lightness of foot and free flowing action. It's gone. When you hear all this thumping, you know darn well the dog's endurance capabilities would be very short-lived. Here is a northern breed, and what is supposed to be a working breed, but many judges seem to ignore, sometimes totally ignore, both of those features of the breed when they select their winners. So, again, if they are ignoring those important aspects of the breed, or don't understand that those aspects are very important, then facial expression is not too likely to be a great big thing with them either.

A question that can be twice as hard to answer is how in the world some dogs become champions when they show structural faults so highly obvious that even someone who has no knowledge of the breed or of movement can tell the dog is moving "funny." What kind of standard are judges using when they grant these dogs a sufficient amount of points to qualify them as champions? If we are going to continue to have judges who will ignore such faults, or not see the faults, or believe that the dog's other attributes are sufficient to offset those extremely obvious structural faults, how can we convince ourselves or others that they are faults we must try hard to breed out of future generations of Samoyeds?

*For example, what type of fault are we talking about?*

Mostly, I am talking about some of the really bad front faults that are around today. You don't have to go to many shows before you can spot almost anything in the book - loaded shoulders, a chest too shallow or one too wide, straight shoulders (we have lots of those), a pigeon breast, not enough elbow letdown, very weak pasterns, the whole smear. I am not talking about a small weakness in the fault department, I am talking about a GROSS example of one of these faults. And I am not deliberately bypassing rear faults, we have those still to contend with too. It's just that the worst of the structural faults seem to be in the front-ends these days, and it is not easy to understand why some of them have so little attention given to them. Am I placing too much stress on just a very few dogs maybe getting undeserved championships? Maybe, but maybe not. Let's say you

were to select ten people, all who were pretty objective about dogs, all who lived in different parts of the country, and all who have been attending shows for about five years. I bet you most anything you want to bet that every single one of those ten people could come up with at least two examples of the kind of dogs I am discussing.

I am straying off the subject at hand AGAIN, but there is something I find interesting, and have tested out on a number of occasions. We ask, "What is wrong with judges today?" Some of the problems we have is probably because one can become a judge today without having quite as much thorough grounding in dogs as the people coming up twenty to thirty years ago might have had. I don't mean to imply that all judges being approved today don't know their business, or that all of the old-timers were great, but some of today's judging is certainly erratic. I have been contending for quite some time now that perhaps one of the reasons for some of these strange selections judges make is quite literally because the judge can't SEE. Yes, I said he or she literally can't SEE. There is this thing called peripheral vision which is terribly, terribly important to have if you're standing in a ring watching a group of moving dogs. Some people are unable to see well out of the corners of their eyes which makes for a kind of tunnel vision and it makes it difficult to compare two or three moving objects at the same time. Some people also have difficulty in concentrating on all parts of even one dog. Consequently, even though it appears the judge is thoroughly studying a dog, the judge may be only seeing or concentrating on no more than half the dog. It also follows that if a judge has any problem with this type of vision, the more dogs he has in the ring, and the small amount of time given to him to check over each of them, the more likely it can be that he is going to miss either faults or attributes which you and I can quite readily see. I held a number of seminars for obedience instructors. I should add that these were not just apprentice instructors, most of them were people who had been on the job for quite some time. To find out just how good an eye the instructors had, I would put a group of eight or nine handlers out on the floor, each handler having been told in advance to make one kind of handling mistake, consistently and as often as he could. We then set a time limit on picking out each handler's mistake. Well, we were to find that a third of our instructors simply could not pick up on certain kinds of handling errors, not even if they had to watch just one handler and dog making the mistake. If there are things an experienced obedience instructor can't seem to see, then why shouldn't it follow that a conformation judge just might have the same kind of problem in his line of work?

*How can this be changed?*

Good question! I must admit that I don't even know for sure what kind of qualifications a person must have today to become a judge. I know for conformation they want someone who has gone the exhibiting and breeding route, but I don't know if they want any set number of champions produced. I believe that the AKC wants there to be some club affiliation, for the person to have been involved with the production end of shows, stewarding, maybe show chairman or secretary, and judging at fun matches. And, of course, the person is to be in decent physical shape. When you stop and analyze some of these things, you do see that they may not really have too much to do with the actual physical judging of dogs. Using obedience again as an example - and I sure do that a lot - I know a number of people who do marvelously well when it comes to training and showing their dogs, but they make absolutely rotten instructors. A conformation judge often works under a lot of pressure, especially if he is dealing with a pretty big entry. Judges have to grow weary as a day progresses, and when you are tired you can lose part of your concentration. I don't know how you would set up tests to determine a person's ability to concentrate, or to test the quality of a judge's vision. Maybe it would be asking for the impossible, but as long as only one person has the power to make a judgment on a group of dogs on any given day, I would like to feel this person is seeing everything there is to see, and recognizes it correctly for what it is.

Remember, we breed to what we think judges will like. We don't breed as much to the Standard as to what is the going thing now.

*People are breeding to win.*

That's right. If a judge doesn't closely adhere to the standard for a breed, or ignores it, or even doesn't understand the standard correctly, and that judge gets quite a few assignments, that can definitely have some affect on the breed. Maybe not just one judge, but we seem to have a number of judges who, for one reason or another, do not adhere closely enough to our Standard in making their selections.

*Do you think parent clubs should do something in terms of educating judges, or is there anything that can be done in terms of educating judges? For example, with regard to the expression problem or the size problem, what can you do?*

"You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." You could push out all the information in the world, but if the judges don't read it, or read it and don't act on it, what have you gained? Judges are not, I think, any different than other people when it comes to reading material. If a judge doesn't have a sincere interest in learning just as much as he possibly can about all the breeds he is going to judge, we could spend literally thousands and thousands of dollars and not

accomplish much at all. The SQ is sent out to all judges. The "SCA Bulletin" is now going out to all judges. While it is being done more to gain advertisers than to increase a judge's knowledge - and who are we kidding if we say otherwise - does anyone have any true idea of what percentage of judges go through either publication and read the articles in them? The more I think about it, the more I doubt if even a survey on that subject would bring forth completely honest results. Judges certainly aren't going to admit their judgments could be swayed by a piece of advertising. Some would even prefer not to admit they look at some of the magazines they get, just so that they could not be accused of being swayed by anyone's advertising.

There is this too: Think of the all-breed judges, or those who are approved to judge more than one Group. Can you imagine the number of bulletins and magazines that must arrive in their mailboxes EVERY month? Unless the judge is retired, doesn't get many judging assignments, or is a very fast, or very avid reader, where would he find time to go through each of these publications with any degree of thoroughness? How many judges are looking through all the publications they get and how many of them just pitch them in trash cans with never opening the pages at all? I think about my own situation in regard to mail order catalogs. This year I seem to have ended up on EVERYONE'S list. In a two-month period I received close to 140 different catalogs. More than 50% of them were given away without my looking through them, and others were simply dumped in the trash without my bothering to go through them except very superficially.

We COULD, "we" meaning a club, work up the best kind of series of articles we could, on each aspect of the breed (any breed club could do this), bind them into booklet form and send the booklet out to all the judges involved with our breed. Perhaps a judge would spend some time looking that over. Maybe some of them would even study it very carefully. The Samoyed Club of America does send out copies of its "Illustrated Standard" to each person approved to judge the breed. Perhaps what breed clubs should do is make a survey of all judges approved for their breed and inquire about what kinds, if any, of additional information the judges might find valuable. Let's say you did work up a series of well-written articles about all the various things that go into making up the breed. If judges read it and accepted it as truth, at least they might be a bit better grounded on THEORY.

*At least they'd know the Samoyed should have good expression!*

Right. Or, at least, that that is something you should LOOK for and weigh against the dog's other attributes and faults. This judging business it something you could bat around and around. I don't know but that sometimes good

judges aren't just born, and are hard to make.

*What other changes have you observed in the Samoyed breed over the years? In bone, for instance.*

Oh, the bone has gotten considerably larger. All you have to do is look at the Wards! THE COMPLETE SAMOYED, a good book which is loaded with pictures. Look at the dogs that lived before 1960 and those born later. Look at those pictures of the old-time Sams. There is a noticeable difference in size of bone. In many lines, dogs are carrying much heavier bone today than they did twenty years ago. It was in the 1960's when height, weight and boning all started their upward trend.

*What do you think the original purpose of the breed was? We have a very interesting controversy as to whether the Samoyed was primarily a herding dog or a sled dog.*

I am not the right person to ask that question, but I think they might have primarily been SLEDGE dogs. I think they were probably used a lot as DRAFT animals. Because they happened to be used in Antarctic expeditions they became noted for endurance, not really for speed. They couldn't pull GREATER loads or pull them FASTER, but they did hang in there longer than other breeds. The Sam was a survivor. Maybe we should be reminded of that more often, then perhaps we wouldn't cater and cuddle this magnificent breed and turn it into something it was never intended to be. We may love the breed, but I don't think we give it enough respect. I suspect the controversy over the dog's original purpose may never be resolved. Maybe the dog did enough of both herding and sled work to make no one either all right or all wrong. Don't forget the dog was even used for food for human consumption. We don't like to talk about THAT but it is also part of the breed's heritage.

*There's also some controversy in the origin of the Sam. Do you think they're descended from Arctic wolves?*

When you look at a good head-on picture of an arctic wolf, I find it hard to believe some hanky-panky didn't go on somewhere along the line. Some of their similarities in looks and actions make it hard not to believe that they didn't have a meeting somewhere along the way. Shar Khan was something of a throwback in looks to dogs three and four generations away in his pedigree. He was longer-bodied and he didn't have the broad, broad head. Original Sams didn't usually have these big, heavy, broad heads that many Sams carry today. The head was more refined. The necks were longer too. Frankly, I don't right now much care whether the Sam was mixed with wolf, fox, jackal or anything. That was a LONG, LONG time ago and throwbacks to what once was aren't very common any longer. I am far more interested in what this breed was like when it first got official recognition, and when a standard was set for what

the breed should be like. History is fine, knowing where one's ancestors came from is nice, and, golly, yes, I would find it most interesting to know what my dogs' 1,000 year-ago ancestor looked like and how it acted, BUT, if you really want to do me a big, big favor, then give me the full story on what the last six generations of names in my dogs' pedigrees were really like. Did any of them go blind? Were there any congenital defects? Were any diabetics or epileptics? Were any of them highly prone to infections? Were any of the males victims of early prostrate problems, or were any bitches troubled by uterine difficulties? Was there any sign of oddball temperament, and if so, how did it manifest itself? What was the average size of litters these ancestors came from? Can you tell me anything about any of the littermates of these ancestors? The more I know the more-up-close ancestry of the dogs I want to breed, the better my chances will be of breeding sound quality for the coming generations of Samoyed owners, and there are few services that are more worthwhile, or more important than that.

*What do you think the worst problems are today?*

In the breed itself?

Yes.

I am concerned about temperament, very much so, and, surprisingly enough, not as much about the aggressive type of temperament as the too-shy type. I think this is one of the most "undertalked" about problems we have. I am all too well aware of the great dangers of an overly-shy temperament. Give me an overly-aggressive or an overly-shy dog and I can do more to get the over-aggressiveness under control than I can to control the shyness problem. Most animal behaviorists will tell you the same thing. With the aggressive dog, you know you have dangers to watch out for and so you guard against them and stay on the alert. The overly-shy dog can pose just as much danger, sometimes more so, but it is a danger that people are less likely to prepare for. Consequently, a great many more dog bites are inflicted by dogs out of fear than from pure viciousness. We have in the Sam a problem that is still not out of control but which does appear to be growing. As I have sort of mentioned before, we have these dogs that are no problem at all as long as they live in a routine atmosphere with fairly easy-to-take surroundings; take them out where any pressure is applied to them and they have a tendency to fall apart.

The patterns of breeding and interchanging bloodlines have changed very much in the last twenty years. You put your dog on a plane and ship it to a stud two thousand miles away. Through greater use of advertising, more shows, and more handlers making broader circuits of shows, dogs are seen much more often than they used to be, and they build up winning records that are

very impressive. Today we also recognize the fact that a bloodline other than our own particular one can be very good, and sometimes we very much need what that bloodline is likely to have to offer. The upshot of this is that at the same time we are crossing bloodlines to attain something needed, we also can be crossing two totally different kinds of temperament, and, if we breed this introverted, rather insecure type of temperament to the very outgoing type, or, at times, to the overly-aggressive kind, we create a bit of a time bomb that can go off when we least expect it. From what I have seen for myself, or have been told about firsthand, the surface temperament of such a dog is usually very pleasant. The dog is easy to live with, loving and rather quiet. But, when this dog is put under pressure, instead of just quietly falling apart, the aggressive side takes over, but is all mixed up with the fear side, and so the dog lashes out at anything and everything. Sometimes it will attack either a person or another dog for apparently no reason at all. You can't seem to train enough of the fears out of the dog for the aggressive instincts to lessen, so you can not ever be sure what will set the dog off, or that he won't inflict injury on you and anyone who is in the vicinity at the time the dog goes off balance.

How many people do you know who won't breed an otherwise good specimen of the breed if that dog has demonstrated definite temperament flaws? There just aren't too many of those people around. There is little doubt that there is more kennel blindness when it comes to flawed temperament than there is for physical faults.

One other thing that I have seen as a problem, too much size in the breed, might, just might, be starting to wane a little. It seemed to me at this year's Specialty that some of the younger dogs might mature well within the Standard, or at least not go quite as far over the Standard as was the case three and four years ago. I think some of the breeders are really waking up to the fact that, even though judges will put up these oversized specimens, those very large, and often very coarse dogs, just don't turn too many people on. Too many of the really big ones just don't have the grace and the beauty that the breed should typify.

Of course, as has been true for quite some time, this year the bitches once again overshadowed the males with their superior qualities.

*How important is coat and grooming to winning?*

I am glad to see that grooming is more important. Here again, I've been in the breed long enough to know that up until the late 1960's not enough Samoyed exhibitors were paying enough attention to grooming their dogs. I would credit Californians for being the leaders in getting the majority of exhibitors in other parts of the country on the right track. The first really good

example of this that I saw was back in 1967 at the National Specialty held up in Madison, Wisconsin. Many of the dogs in the ring at that show really were very inadequately groomed. There were three dogs there from California, and one from the East, whose grooming far surpassed almost any of the other dogs. I might also add that the handling by the California exhibitors also stood out like a beacon. Again in 1971 in the East, the entries from California were again better groomed and better handled. You really cannot believe the total difference in both the appearance and the handling of the dogs between 1971 and 1975. At this year's Specialty both grooming and handling was so good that I doubt anyone who didn't know the people on the end of the leads would not have had a hard time picking out many of the owner-handlers from the professionals.

Grooming is highly important in any breed that carries a long coat, especially a long, WHITE coat. In today's conformation ring a poorly groomed dog would stick out like a sore thumb, maybe even more than the splendidly groomed dogs stood out back at that show in 1967. I am sure that, today, judges of Samoyeds expect to see very well groomed dogs in the ring and would be put off on any dog that wasn't.

I have always had a real THING about grooming. I would never take a Sam out anywhere without first making it presentable. I have never been able to accept the excuse "I haven't had time to groom my dogs." My own formula would be that you don't own more Sams than you have time to keep presentable. If you have to stint on any of your dogs, or if they have to go more than ten days without a thorough grooming, then you own too many of them. Regular grooming is important for all dogs, but especially for the Samoyed. With that heavy coat a lot of skin problems can get started and become quite serious without your discovering them if the dog isn't groomed regularly. Grooming regularly will bring tumors or cysts to light earlier. All too often we do not stress good and thorough and regular grooming to the pet owner as we should. Time after time novice owners bring their dogs to me for evaluation, and the first thing one discovers is that the breeders of their dogs gave them no instructions of any real value on how to take care of grooming needs.

I am a fanatic about toenails, and I have seen any number of Sams that have grown to a year of age without ever having had their toenails cut. There, I blame not only the breeders, but the veterinarians. They should check toenail length when a dog is brought to them for its basic shots.

*What do you think about the people who spend six hours with thinning shears and play the game of "create a Sam"?*

I don't care for that. It goes back to my thing that if a Sam isn't really good enough to win on what he has, if you have to create a false image

to make him look better, then you are cheating, not only others but also yourself. However, I do believe that dew claws should go at birth, even if they are considered to be a "natural" appendage. Have you ever seen a ripped-out dew claw? Well, I have. At one time dew claws, at least front ones, might have not posed quite as many dangers, but today, with more and more dogs living confined and in environments where they can more often be excited, the dangers of those dew claws getting caught on things and torn off has greatly increased. What I am going to say now may sound like a contradiction. While I don't believe in trimming a coat to give a dog the look of an attribute the dog really doesn't have, I am not opposed to certain kinds of coat trimming. I think it's alright to show off an attribute a dog does have which is disguised by too much coat. The trimming of hocks is a good case in point. Some Sams grow a ridiculous amount of coat on their rears and hind legs. At times that coat makes a dog look faulty in the rear when actually there is nothing whatsoever wrong there. I don't think there is anything false in wanting to make sure the judge knows that you do have a sound dog. Some people may trim hair on a Sam's foot for aesthetic reasons, but my dogs' feet were always kept trimmed for health reasons, to help keep the feet clean and drier and to give them better footing on slick floors.

I have to question trimming that is done to deceive, just as I question bleaching if a dog's color is not what the Standard allows for, or coloring the nose to give it a blacker look. The controversy over cutting a dog's whiskers has gone on for many years, and I somehow doubt if judges give that too much thought one way or another. One of my dogs had such long whiskers that they were really a distraction and he looked silly when they were full length, so they got whacked off every so often; the other two dogs always remained very "natural" as far as the whiskers were concerned.

*Have you seen any changes in the pigmentation?*

Very definitely. Eyes in many bloodlines have grown lighter through the years. You now see lots of yellow eyes. But then eye coloring is also far more noticeable today because of so many dogs in the breed having the round eyes and a very fine line of pigment around the eyes that often is a faded grey-looking pigment. One thing the breed has most definitely lost is a good, and correct, eye shape. Almond-shaped eyes are becoming more the exception than the rule.

*How about lip pigment?*

Lip pigment, the Dudley nose...

Today, a lot of the pigment is getting lighter in color, and lip lines are thinner, as are eye rims. The lip line breaks have been around for quite a long time. You can have a dog with very black pigment, wide lip line pigmentation,

and heavy, black eye rims, and still the dog may have one or two lip line breaks that are large in size. I doubt if we will ever get rid of that. Of course the lightening of the pigmentation around the eyes does nothing for this "expression" we have talked about, and those round eyes don't help either. I can't really tell you much about body pigment because there you have to get the dog down to see how much of that it might be carrying. Good black pigment is one of those "fringe" benefits that does so much to enhance the whole look of the head. It is like the stop. Even if a head is pretty well proportioned in other ways, a stop that isn't well defined turns that head into something that is not too attractive. I know about that. I co-own a bitch who in all other respects except for her head is really very good. With more stop and darker eyes she might have finished her championship is only half the shows it eventually took her to get that. Neither of those faults are truly major ones but, combined, they took just enough away from her to often make judges go to a prettier dog for Winners Bitch, even though Chaser might have been superior in structure and movement. Unfortunately you don't always get everything you want all in one dog, but since the word "beauty" is synonymous with the word "Samoyed" we can't afford to lose too many of these "fringe" benefits, just as we can't afford to concentrate only on these things and let sound structure be a secondary thing.

*You've been in kind of a unique position in that you've been able to observe dogs and people over a relatively long period of time. Objectively, what does it take to be a success in dogs?*

You can do it in a number of different ways. The most easy way to attain success is to have plenty of money. (I assume you're talking about breeding and showing success in dogs.) Give me enough money and I can be well-known. Now, "successful" and "well-known" doesn't necessarily mean the same thing, but money will get you a long way down the road on either. Of course, money has ALWAYS done it for you in our breed. You go back to the early people in the breed and you find that a good percentage of them were monied people. They did the importing of the quality stock, they hired whatever help was needed to care for, train and show their dogs. They had big kennels and they could afford to experiment with breeding programs. Today, great wealth isn't as big a factor as it once was, but you still find that the more modest families are sometimes spending a very large portion of their income on the showing and breeding of dogs, often more than seems logical.

The dog game does have a number of overnight successes too. Sometimes just by the "luck of the draw" you get a really superior dog. That one dog might be about the only good thing you ever have, but sometimes you can ride for

a very long way just on its reputation. The same thing can happen with a breeder. You can get one of these breedings (maybe even two or three litters, if you repeat the same breeding) that will produce some exceptional animals. There have been a number of breeders who have become famous just through one or two litters they were fortunate enough to have produced. Some of those breeders have also managed to run their kennels into the ground in less than six or seven years because so many people knock at their doors for awhile that they breed anything and everything to try to fill orders for all the dogs people want to buy from them.

However, if you want to be both a successful breeder and a respected breeder and still be in business 15 to 20 years after you begin, then you have to take it slow and work at it very hard along the way. Your greatest stumbling blocks may be ones that you set in your own path. No one remains a successful breeder for too long who cannot keep an open mind about his own dogs and dogs other people own. No one remains a successful breeder if he becomes afraid to experiment. Sometimes I think that today half the people exhibiting and breeding are so hipped up on being overnight successes that they lose sight of all kinds of very important things. All too often they are burning themselves out in their mad dashes for success, burning themselves out very quickly, and after it is all over and done with they just don't have much to show for all that time, money and effort.

What does it take to be a success in dogs? You can get there by luck, with money or with patience, study and lots of hard work. With the first two, the success might be relatively short-termed, but, with the latter, it's different. Those successful people will probably be names that still are around and still spoken about in kindly terms after they have been in the game for twenty years.

*Do you believe that animal husbandry works? Do you think there are some people under whom dogs seem to thrive and other people dogs don't thrive with?*

Yes. It's love of dogs. There are a great many people who own dogs today as assets, items like television sets. Dogs are a status symbol. There's just no two ways about it, dogs ARE one of today's big status symbols. There are people who own them primarily for what the dogs will be able to do for them. They are little more than commodities, stocks if you will. If they do well you hang onto them, if they don't give you quick dividends you unload them as soon as possible. Because these dogs ARE possessions and they are important to the increasing of stature, they will probably have all basic needs covered and they won't be ill-treated, but the dogs will never develop a sense of belonging. This difference in attitude people have about the dogs they own is really a hard thing to capture in

words. Sometimes it is more of a "you have to be there" thing. You can go into the houses of two different people who own dogs, one house where the dogs are truly loved and respected, the other where the dogs are there mostly to serve an image, and even though both sets of dogs will show the same degree of physical care, the two places will have totally different feelings radiating out of them. The well-loved dog is usually more relaxed and, quite often, the better-mannered dog. And you often find that people who care a great deal for their dogs do not gush over them in public.

Also, we do have a lot of people who love their dogs but they don't really respect them, at least not as a dog. Far too many dog owners treat their dogs as if they were human and that can be quite detrimental to the dog's well-being. A lot of people actually place far too few demands on their dogs simply because they are afraid people will think they don't love their dogs enough if they use a firm hand on them, and that firm hand is needed.

One thing you see happening today is a buildup of too many dogs in one household. You start out with one dog, really loving that dog, and then figure if one is great, two would be double the pleasure. Then, if you get into the breeding end, you end up keeping something for yourself. It might not take too long before you have five, six or seven dogs. Unless you have adequate time, money and space for that many dogs, you also find one day that you vaguely resent all the effort required to manage that many dogs. You can't quite bring yourself to getting rid of any of them so you are more or less trapped into a life-style that might not be quite what you had originally envisioned. And, little by little, your dogs mean less to you. I know quite a few cases where people breed more litters than they should simply because they need the money to support the number of dogs they are trying to keep.

Sometimes you wish that people would give up a little of that love they have for dogs and try to replace it with a little more respect. The show world in a great many ways is a very artificial world for the dog to live in. In fact, one's respect for a dog should be increased simply because it does stand up as well as it does. A lot of times it lives in an atmosphere that is foreign to the dog's basic nature. What with the proliferation of dog shows over the past twenty years, the increased spirit of competition and the great emphasis not only on having titled dogs but having numbers of titled dogs, more and more dog fanciers have little time left over to just sit back and enjoy their dogs as companions. No wonder there seems to be a lack of humor within the dog world. Lots of people no longer seem to have any time or energy left over just to have a good laugh.

Do you think it has all been worth it?

If I had it to do over again, I'd do it over again. I have already told you that I've been involved in a great many different activities over the years, different hobbies, different interests. I never found any of these other things to be as compelling, as time consuming, as constantly amazing and ever-changing. It is a place where, regardless of how hard you may try, you can never know it all. Yes, I most certainly would do it all over again.

*Give us some background on you and your husband.*

I was born in Dubuque, Iowa, but raised in Wisconsin. I was an only child living a very mixed-up childhood which undoubtedly has a lot of bearing on why I am like I am. I've been married twice and my son, also an only child, is from my first marriage, although he has never known anyone but Bob as his father. Bob is a native St. Louisian; we were married in 1947.

My son has a Doctorate in Nuclear Physics, earned at Notre Dame University, and he still does research work there. He also holds down a teaching job at St. Mary's College, which is just across the street from Notre Dame. He is married to a rather fantastic young woman whose capacity for work far outshines what I do. They have no children so I don't have to go through the "grandmother" bit.

*What does Bob do for a living?*

He is Manager of Engineering for the Hubbell Division of National Steel. Actually, he is something of a jack-of-all-trades, not only in his job, but here around home. He's the neighborhood repairman, and most of the extras we have in this house came from his ability to do most anything. He enjoys gardening and developed a late interest in photography. I suppose both of us are, in many ways, workaholics.

*How long have you lived here?*

If you mean in this house, 30 years. All in all, we are rather a dull couple. We don't go out much and we entertain very little. Bob's job calls for a certain amount of traveling so he appreciates peace and quiet after those trips. We are also people who enjoy our home and never have too much trouble in finding things at home to keep us occupied. We grow quite a bit of foodstuff these days so a lot of my summer gets used up in freezing and canning the produce. I have developed what can almost be termed a passion for pulling weeds (told you there is good reason to have my sanity questioned) and keep them removed from our yard as well as the yards of two neighbors.

Needlework is something I do for relaxation. I also read quite a bit, although not nearly as much as I used to, and I have an insatiable appetite for Double-Crostics. All in all, we live a very routine life, one that a great many people would consider terribly dull.

Although I am not really sure that "age brings wisdom," I think sometimes it does give you a little better perspec-

ive. At this stage of life I have no desire to try to "keep up with the Joneses." The years left to me are now dwindling down and I am growing more selfish about wanting to use as much of each year as I can in doing what I really WANT to do. It is sort of nice if things you WANT to do also happen to be things that just might be of some benefit to other people.

If I can have a few more years to do things that bring me pleasure and still provide some kind of service for someone else, I don't think I can ask for more than that. One bit of wisdom that age has brought with it is that you had better take what you can get today, because tomorrow there are probably going to be very, very few people to remember you existed. Nothing is deader than yesterday's newspaper, and nothing is deader than yesterday's editor, publisher, dog exhibitor, breeder, judge and so on. In our business, dogs' names really do stay remembered longer than the people who bred and owned them. With the constant changeover in the people who do make up the World of Dogs, with there always being someone else who can probably break any record you might set, with that "perfect" dog quest a journey that may never have an ending, we seldom, if ever, are quite as important as we might like to think we are. I bind each year's collection of "SCA Bulletins" into volumes. With that protection, perhaps they will last longer than I will. They may not bring any new knowledge forth twenty-five years from now, but I wouldn't mind if they gave someone a good laugh, even if the laughter was over the crude way they were put together. Chances are, looking for the name of the editor to find out who produced these volumes wouldn't be done by most people looking through the OLD BOOKS. And, even if they do look for the name, chances are it would be forgotten the next day.

Here I am talking about immortality when that certainly isn't something on the minds, at least not consciously, of most people in the dog game. However, it is human nature to want to be remembered in some way for your efforts, if those efforts have in some way exceeded what it considered the norm for whatever activity you are engaged in. Since having one's own name endure is something only a very few people ever achieve (and in the dog world that is even harder than in some other walks of life), perhaps the goal most of us should shoot for is just trying to do our best, to take time to help the other guy when he could use some assistance, and try awfully hard never to do anything to harm or weaken the breed that got you into this crazy, mixed-up business to start with. Also, you might do well not to forget to stop now and then and take out a little time "just to smell the flowers."

*Thank you very much.*

