

The
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QUARTERLY



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SAMOYED PEOPLE



The Samoyed Quarterly Talks With
JEAN BAER
Martinton, Illinois

This interview was taped at the home of Jean Baer during the Summer of 1977 by John & Kathy Ronald, who also took the photos of Jean that appear in this interview.

Jean, how did you get started in Samoyeds, and why did you pick Samoyeds?

I've had dogs all my life, and it's quite a lengthy story about how I got into Sams. I met my husband through a Sammie and he won me by way of his dog, who happened to be a gorgeous Sammie. That was Stutz I, unregistered. And, when he was killed by a train some years later, my husband acquired one for me. That was my first Sammie, and just a pet, never used for breeding or anything like that. But I did a lot of learning with that dog.

How many litters have you bred, and did you have any long range breeding plans when you got started?

When I got started I didn't have many plans of any kind. Just that first litter. One doesn't look beyond that. Everyone looks forward to that first litter and you don't really think beyond that. It's

an exciting thought, planning it, waiting for it, and will you get to keep one, will your husband let you keep one? That sort of thing.

As far as long range, I got into that much later. But starting, I had the first litter and there were only three survivors. I did most of my learning, as I said, from my very first dog, the pet named Stutz. He was named after the car, by the way. He taught me a lot and from there I just played it by ear, you might say. I studied him for almost ten years. It was ten years before I had my first litter. So, actual breeding, producing puppies, I was a breeder, am a breeder for 16 years. I have produced 148 puppies in 32 litters. So you can see they were small litters.

Who were the sire and dam of the first litter you produced?

The first litter I produced was out of Zanzelda's Sweet Sue, a bitch that I acquired for the purpose of breeding and as a companion to Stutz I, in that he had had a stroke and this was the recommendation of the vet, to keep his interest up, and keep him alive for a few more years. We bred her to a male who was produced and governed, you might say, by Claire Marshall of Samara Samoyeds. The dog was actually owned by a lady who was in a nursing home at the time and Claire Marshall had legal



control of the dog. That was my first litter, bred at the vet's.

Do you have any particular litters that you look upon with fondness, or of which you are especially proud?

I think so. I think that anyone who has produced a litter out of Ch. Honey and Ch. Maur Mik's Kim, where there were six puppies and four of them are champions, two Group Winners, one a number one dog in the country, and Best in Show winner and compiled the record that Ch. Bopper has compiled. One would have to be very proud of that particular litter.

As far as outstanding individuals, I think my Ch. Stutz will always be my most outstanding because he was my first homebred champion. I campaigned him to a championship myself. And, he had a temperament that was just unbeatable. He was known for his sweet temperament. And, even later on when he was with Sally Terroux out in Colorado, her main comment of him was "He is such a sweet dog". And, I think that's come through; you know, in so many of the offspring, grand-offspring, great-grand-offspring and so on.

Did you stick to line breeding in your program?

There again, we are going to touch on something that is, has been in the past, controversial. The Sammie world as a whole is kind of coming around to the same thinking now. I have always had a theory that there was absolutely no such thing as an outcross in Sams because of the fact that there was only a handful that were brought to this country originally. They all come down out of that, out of those half-dozen or so. Some of the imports that were brought in later were from the same kennels, from the same stock. There were only so many dogs brought out of Siberia. So, in my opinion, there cannot be an outcross in the Sam breed.

Actually, years ago I was accused of outcrossing. Whereas actually, I was never outcrossing. My first champion produce, who was Stutz of Baerstone was out of a line that had, I believe it was Ch. Snow Chief of the Arctic in his pedigree, I think it was . . . ten times in eleven generations. But, I'd have to check that to be sure.

What about inbreeding?

Yes, I do inbreeding, not incest breeding.

What do you consider incest breeding; where do you draw the line?

Incest to me is mother to son, father to daughter.



Ch. Baerstone's Kasija at 9 months



Ch. Honey Babe of Gro Wil



Ch. Sulu's Karbon Kopi O' Baerstone

litter mates, and that close. Close linebreeding which I am known to do -- this is half-brother to sister, has produced some fine animals with this kind of a breeding. But no closer than that.

If you had anything to do over again, would you do anything differently in your breeding program?
I don't think so.

Is that because you have a particular Sam in mind that you have been able to breed? I think a Baerstone Sam is fairly recognizable. Have you tried to breed toward a particular type of dog and have you achieved that standard?

Well, yes. There is a type that . . . we all have a goal. We all have our mind's eye picture of the perfect Sam, as we interpret the standard. And yes, I have always liked a pretty dog. I have always liked a typical "bear" type which is another controversial word. But in my ads I'm calling it "Baer-type" now. Yes, the goals have been reached to a point. There is a refinement to be done. That is, of course, other goals.

Specifically, where?

A lengthening of leg, maintaining and retaining coat. Structure, head. I would like to improve the movement, and most definitely the fronts. Sammies are notorious for bad fronts. It has gotten to the point that the judges just ignore the fronts on the Sam anymore. If you've got a good rear, you've got a good dog.

As a breeder, are there any particular dogs, or particular moments that stand out in your memory?

There are always the exciting moments, of watching a youngster grow up and making his mark in the show ring, and in the breed. There is the excitement of the phone call after the shows, like when Bopper won his Best in Show, and I can assure you that the roof was raised on this house. The moments of Kopi's victories, his Group I. His many offspring and their championships.

Then, the moment of acquiring Honey back, Ch. Honey Baerstone of GroWil, when I had sold her as a puppy and being able to get her back as an adult after she had produced a lovely litter including Ch. Babe, Ch. Honey Babe of GroWil, number one winning bitch in the country for '68 and '70, multi-group place winner. Then, taking Honey myself to a Group 2 in Dubuque, Iowa. That was a big thrill.

Acquiring the other daughter, Sonnet, dam of Ch. Kopi, who was a lovely producer and just a fabulous brood, with a big coat. She was a big bitch with a loving, loving disposition.

Then we'll backtrack for a moment to Ch. Babe, who I was honored to handle at a couple of shows to a Group 3 and a Group 4. That was a thrill. This was before, of course, I had acquired her later on.

Jean, do you have any particular philosophy regarding the care and treatment of your puppies before they leave home? What do you look for in a good puppy? How do you send them to the buyers and how do you follow up on them after they are placed?

Well, initially, I grade my puppies at eight weeks of age. My particular line are miniatures of what they will be as adults at eight weeks. Except, of course, the ears are not up and little things like that which, of course, you allow for. I try to screen my buyers. I'm not always successful. You try to be as selective as you can. You lose control of the animal once it is purchased.

The buyer has the right to name the dog according to AKC rules. Rightly so. Also, the buyer has the full right to do as he pleases with the animal. So, you do lose control. But, by careful screening you can generally evaluate the type of person who will follow through with your recommendations. My puppies leave me with a full diet chart, specifically, and spelled out from eight weeks of age through a year and beyond. They leave here with a full health certificate, health guarantee. The puppies are checked by the vet, even with a stethoscope. They are sent out with a full written guarantee against any hereditary defect that would make them unfit for showing or breeding. This is on the show quality, breeding quality puppies. Pet quality does not go out with that kind of guarantee.



Ch. Bopper El Toro of Baerstone - BIS Winner



Ch. Honey Baer-Stone of Gro-Wil

Now the guarantee... It is a guarantee specifically pointed toward hip dysplasia although all the hereditary defects are covered. In my guarantee I forbid expressly palpation of my puppies or the fulcrum type x-ray.

There will always be an outstanding puppy and most of the time you can go with the one that is outstanding from the beginning, from the say, three week stage to eight week stage. It's not a rule of thumb. Because often, that outstanding youngster will have a structural defect that is slightly less than perfect, and you would subsequently place it

down further in the litter. Maybe one that is not as outstanding personality-wise has got the best structure. That is what you have got to go with.

If you were judging two dogs in the show ring and you had one that was, in temperament, all glamour and pizzazz and just begging for it but had a slight tendency to toe out in the rear, say. If you have another one who was also catching your eye who was considered by some to be a deadhead type. Just stood there, not really doing anything but structurally had it. You would have to go with the structure if you had the breed and the furtherment of the breed at heart. Simply because the structure is what will be perpetuated and carried on, whereas the pizzazz is a today winner, gone tomorrow, never to mark the produce with anything other than the pizzazz of its qualities. As a general rule.

Let's get into structure and breed characteristics, such as coat, pigment, movement, etc., and what emphasis you place on each.

Every Sam should have them ((laughter)).

But seriously, I feel a dog should have a good head. I don't like an anteater type of head, nor too chow a head. The standard calls for a good wedge, with good breadth and depth. And, I've seen some Sams that lacked many things, including these.

Pigmentation, Sammies have to have pigmentation, otherwise they border on the albino. I know a lot of people who write requesting puppies with no bisquit. In my experience, I've found that bisquit will keep mosquitos away. The darker the pigment



Ch. Stutz of Baerstone

on the dog, the less you will find mosquitos buzzing which is an important factor today with our health problem with the heartworm thing. The bisquit, of course, points to good black pigmentation, and this is the factor that I have found that does keep mosquitos away.

It would be interesting at this time to refer to the American Kennel Club's scale of points for the total Sammie as described in the 1961 edition of the *All Breed Dog Book* published by them.

The general appearance on the scale of points was set as 20 out of 100. The head, 15; coat, 10; size, 10; chest and ribs, 10; hindquarters, which is interesting because this includes the movement, points to movement, is only 10; the back, 10; feet are only 5; legs are only 5; tail is only 5. For a total of 100 points.

The general appearance, of course, is depicting what the eye sees, how pleasing it is to the eye. The whole picture, or type. This gets down to your and my interpretation of type, according to the standard. Everyone has their own idea of type and there are as many types as there are breeders in the country, I do believe.

I've already elaborated on head which I feel is a must. Head on a scale, of course, gets 15 points. Next in line is coat. Let's touch on that just a little bit. I do have good coats, yes.

An interesting thing happened to me a few years ago. I had a man visit who was a Russian. He had not been in this country too long. You could understand him, yes. He came to see my dogs because he had had a Sammie in Russia. He guided a river boat and the dog was with him all the time. So, of course, I was very proud to be able to show him my dogs with their gorgeous coats. He took one look and hit me below the belt. "Where's your coat," he said. His dog had a coat that would measure 12 to 15 inches around the ruff, each guard hair, was the description he gave me. So, needless to say, I was put in my place very quickly.

He had related a story to me which I found interesting. When he was guiding the river boat, the Germans were patrolling. He was forced to jump overboard in the winter time. He made his way to shore not knowing whether his Sam had followed him or not. He gets to shore and makes it to a cabin and he was literally stiff and freezing. They got inside, the dog shook out and was bone dry. He was wet to the skin and nearly frozen. This, I find interesting because there are some breeders and exhibitors who are nonplussed with the heavier coats of the Midwest dogs. Saying simply that too much coat, the dogs get snowbound in the wild, and freeze to death. Let

me point out here...Dogs that are in the wilds and it has always been so, are not bathed as our American show dogs are. If they were, they would not have the waxy buildup on their coats which does resist snow and ice. They cannot freeze to death, their coat cannot even get wet down to the skin.

All right, let's go to movement next. A dog should move light and free, be well-balanced. The key here, I think, is balance. AKC in their point scale gives the hindquarters 10 points, they give the legs 5 points, they give the feet 5 points. I think there is possibly an injustice here. I think size could be tabled down to something less than 10 points in importance with more importance being placed in the structure of the limbs that propel the animal.

Getting into size, I think it is a matter of preference. Type is of the utmost importance, and should be considered over size. Your movement, of course, structure, etc. fall in line.

Would you breed to a dog with a bad fault if he had other outstanding qualities? Are there any faults you would not breed to under any circumstances?

There are faults that we breed to all the time since there is no such thing as a perfect dog. Yes, we do breed to faults. Serious faults have to fall in their own category, be assessed according to their deviation from the standard. Yes, there are serious faults I would not breed to: lameness, hip dysplasia, PRA, a very untypical, untypical Sammie.

Do you feel that people with a confirmed dysplasia or PRA carrier should continue to show their dogs?

If they don't evidence this in the individuals themselves, and if the owners find pleasure in showing and exhibiting their dogs. This is for the most part what the people have the dogs for in the first place, to have pleasure from them. Not everyone who owns a Sammie is a breeder. And, there are many who buy dogs strictly for the pleasure of owning and showing that dog and yes, I feel that they are entitled to show.

Has the incidence of hip dysplasia in the Samoyed had much effect on your breeding program?

It has had an effect in that it has kept me on my toes these 16 years. My very first Sam, the pet, was in fact x-rayed, x-rayed clear. I was one of the early promoters, shall we say of OFA. Having early contact with Dr. Riser who had been screening x-rays for a while, he sent me the information pertaining to the organized group which is now called OFA, which letter of course I sent to Peggy Borcharding, for the publication in the *Bulletin*. And, subsequently, we have gone from a small handful of enthusiasts to something over 3,000 dogs, and this I find very rewarding as there were rumors flying way back then that we wouldn't even have 50 dogs clear OFA. It would only be the studs, and that was to promote stud service, etc.

What about PRA?

I am obviously aware of it. I think I know what to look for. My dogs have not been checked for PRA. From the earliest dogs that I've owned I have not yet had one walk into a brick wall or become disoriented in the dark, or walk into a wire fence, until one that was given to me a year ago, and recently I have noticed her doing this. Fortunately, she has not been bred, or produced anything and subsequently, will not. And, I am very happy to say, she is not my breeding.

I am a proponent of the PRA program to eradicate it from the breed, of course. I have been able to keep close contact with my earliest dogs and I've never found it necessary to even question their vision, let alone put them through a test for the

PRA. If it ever came to doing this, or course I would. I just have not found it necessary. As I said, I have done a lot of inbreeding and line-breeding, sticking very closely to my own line which I know is clear. And, this is one of the reasons I do it in fact.

How important do you feel diet is in raising a Samoyed? What do you feed your dogs?

Oh golly! Diet is all important. This is why it is so important and urgent really for a buyer to follow the diet schedule given to him for his puppy by the breeder, and to follow through with it. I think that diet is far more important than the scientists give it credit to be. In eradicating HD, who knows what all it touches, maybe even PRA, because our whole bodies are nourished by what we eat, including the eyes.

As far as what I feed mine, I feed them a good stable kibble that doesn't read "such and such percentage" of protein one month, and the next month something else. That is what I mean by stable. A brand that you can count on. Kibble plus meat they get twice a day, and according to their needs. They are supplemented too, according to their needs.

Bitches, naturally, who are about to be bred are prepped by additional supplementation. I like Pet-Tabs myself. I've found it very successful. Calcium supplementation of the bitch in whelp begins the day she is bred. I use a Diostate-D which is a human product made by Upjohn. It has to be acquired at the drug store and you run into a lot of trouble trying to get this particular product because the druggists prefer to promote their own brand which I have tried a number of times and found them sorely lacking. They are carried on with the supplementation through the gestation and whelping and afterwards they receive one calcium tablet for each nursing puppy plus one for themselves, every day. I wean the puppies according to the bitch when she is ready to wean. Unless she goes beyond six weeks, then I start to wean them. I will start dish training or hand feeding when they are about three weeks of age, to get them used to nibbling, or licking or lapping. Getting them used to taking food from a human, rather than from their own mother.

Do you have any limitations, age-wise on breeding a bitch, or using a stud? And, do you help your breedings along?

Yes, I do have limitations on the use of a bitch. Seven years is the absolute maximum. You'll get the end of your best litters at six years of age. As far as use of a stud, he is good as long as the vet says he is. There you have to listen to your vet, according to the condition of your stud.

Helping a breeding, oh yes. I never entrust a bitch and a dog to handle it themselves. There are a lot of them that want to do it their way, but they do need supervision to prevent harm to either the bitch or the dog. And yes, I believe that the bitch can be harmed just as much as the stud.

As far as helping in whelping, yes, generally you will have to break the first sac, if not all of them. Bitches will vary, some prefer help, some will allow you to help, and some will not.

Do you feel having a dog in the Top 10 means anything? Do you see any value in campaigning a dog after its championship?

Having a dog in the Top 10 course is quite an honor. The dog earns it; you earn it. It's a thrill naturally, because it is a national thing. Campaigning a special, if it is a good one, yes. There are many, many dogs, champions, who are not worthy to be campaigned as a special. They win on glamour points of the moment that they outgrow. Or, other minor faults turn into greater ones as they mature out to where they are not really worthy to compete in

the Working Group. And, that is where it's at.

To campaign a special you have to keep your eye on the Working Group because you win breed and then go to compete against the working breeds, and yes, it is a great thrill to have a good Sam in the Working Group, and be in there on a consistent basis. Yes, it is a challenge.

Does having a handler give you an edge?

At times, yes, more so now than in years past. Because there are so many more dogs and so many good ones in the working breeds. Economically, in the long run, yes, very much so. It's advantageous to have a handler. But, a good handler for a Sammie is hard to come by. They are few and far between. Not all handlers like Sammies.

How many dogs have you kept in your kennel at one time, and do you believe in keeping adult Sams together in the same run?

The answer to the first question is 30. Seventeen of my own, no, sixteen of my own. The answer to the second question is no. I do not run my dogs together except in the exercise yard where they run and play. Kenneling them together only leads to misunderstandings between individuals, loss of coat, scar tissue, etc.

Is there any other subject you'd like to cover?

There is a subject I would like to touch on. There has been so much play on breeder responsibility, buyer responsibility. How about ethics of the breeder? This is something that has been a sore subject with me for quite a long while. For years, in fact. The integrity, the honesty of a breeder, on a breeder-to-breeder basis. If you wanted to use, for example, a stud from another line, owned by another breeder, you would want specific data, honest facts, and it is very hard to get these days. It has been for quite some time. I would like to see more of this honesty. Total and complete honesty among breeders is the backbone of the breed. Where that goes, so goes the breed. Now, we have to ask ourselves, is the breed going downhill???

SQ

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Malamute book done by the same author; there are indeed errors. First - Polar Star's Nika Chum's brother is Polar Star's Akhun, not Akrum. They were never owned by Georgia Gleason - they were owned by their breeder, Bernice Cooper of the Polar Star Kennels. Stormey Weather is the sire of these two and he was owned by Georgia. The Gleason's Kennel name, by the way, was Glee-Sam.

Akhun appears in few pedigrees, but of course, Chum is the sire of Can. Ch. Polar Star's Nika Tillicum who is in turn the sire of Ch. Noatak of Silver Moon. Chum is also the sire of Ch. Polar Star's Nika Frost and as such appears behind some of the pedigrees of Silveracres of McLaughlins.

When Bernice sold out her stock, all remaining Polar Star Samoyeds went to Carol Powell. Chum had 8 or 9 pts, but was never finished. Nika Tillicum also was shown and had points on his Am. Ch., but unfortunately was never finished. He was a lovely dog that never reached his full potential as a show dog or stud. I have never seen a picture of him that does him justice.

Bernice Cooper was responsible for a lot of people purchasing their first Samoyed. The Polar Star kennels were adjacent to the highway and the Greyhound bus stopped there for the passengers to view the dogs. Bernice trained all of her Samoyeds to harness and used them in many exhibitions. It is too bad that so little has been written about the Polar

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