

In The Beginning

History of the German Shepherd Dog Club of Minneapolis and Saint Paul

By Helen Miller Fisher

PREFACE

Back in 1966 I was asked to write a history of the founding of our club, I hesitated. It would be a lot of work and fifteen years is a long time to cover. Since there are still people around to help me remember our beginnings such as Ed Saltzman, Jack Sinykin, and Marion Lundquist I decided I would attempt it.

1950-1951

Actually, the origin of this club began at a dog show but let me go back to February 14, 1950.

It started with a purchase of a six-week-old puppy for a valentine's gift. I was debating between a Collie and a German Shepherd. I had called Jack Sinykin of La Salle Kennels and arranged an appointment with him. I visited some Collie puppies first and then went out to La Salle. Needless to say with Jack's salesmanship and the appearance of the pup I chose a German Shepherd.

Well, like all new German Shepherd owners I was out to the kennels at least two dozen times that summer showing off the pup to anyone who would look at it and pestering Jack on, "What did he think?" There were several other people in the same boat and during that summer we became acquainted. Ed Saltzman, Roger Hinckley, and Wally Linder were among them.

That August there was a dog show at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds held in the poultry building. By this time my puppy was 8 months old and I was convinced he was tops. I entered him in the show and much to my chagrin I found that I had the only long coated, monorchid German Shepherd there. There were eight entries, which made it a three-point show. The show was benched and hot and dirty. Jack Sinykin took pity on me and groomed my puppy stripping out as much hair as possible behind the ears and on the pants. Nothing helped however and I went third in a class of three. I was crushed and went home in tears (Note; they didn't examine dogs very closely in those days, also at that time monorchism was not an AKC disqualification yet on any dog).

The show did give me an opportunity to meet Don and Betty Peddie (Don owned the only other stud dog in the area besides La Salle) and Don and Lois Schaefer. Don and Lois Schaefer had been very active in another shepherd club in another state and had moved to our area in 1949.

As we sat around with our dogs at the show the idea jelled of forming a club. Now this was in August 1950 at the State Fair and it took several months of telephone calls and informal meetings to get going. We had our first official meeting November 11, 1950 in the basement of Roger Hinckley's home. Jack Sinykin was unable to attend but had given us tremendous help by introducing me to Mrs. Vida Shaffer. Mrs. Shaffer had been secretary to a German Shepherd group that she and Jack had been active in a number of years before.

The ten people who attended our first meeting were; Roger Hinckley, Wally Linder, Don and Betty Peddie, Howard Dillingham, Helen Miller, Ed Saltzman, Vida Shaffer, and Don and Lois Schaefer. Between August and November of 1950 Don and Lois Schaefer, along with Vida Shaffer had completed an initial set of By-Laws and Constitution that we adopted at the November meeting. We then sent them to John Gans President of the German Shepherd Dog Club of America.

On November 22, 1950 our acting secretary Lois Schaefer received a letter from Mr. Gans with comments on our By-Laws. I won't go into the entire letter but what is interesting is that we had proposed our name be, "The German Shepherd Dog Club of Minnesota." His reply was that state wide territory wouldn't be approved by the American Kennel Club and suggested Southern Minnesota or just Minneapolis. Secondly he commented on our "interesting set-up," quite different from the usual, in having all decisions made directly by the membership

instead of the customary "Board of Directors." Mr. Gans suggested an important addition to our By-Laws, we had nothing in about nominations and election of officers. Frankly we hadn't thought about it. We are using the method today suggested by Mr. Gans with nominations made and closed prior to the annual meeting.

The second meeting was held at Wally Linders on December 5, 1950, at which time we adopted the corrected By-Laws and officially named the club, The German Shepherd Dog Club of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Elected officers were; Don Schaefer as President, Don Peddie as Vice President, Lois Schaefer as Secretary and Jim Dorgan as Treasurer. Marion Lindquist became program chairman and Vida Shaffer was publicity chairman. We elected twelve people to membership (including our officers) and four guests attended the meeting.

Interestingly enough, the four guests were wives of member husbands, and they always came and were always welcome, but never joined. This was a common occurrence those first three-four years. In my own case my husband Dr. Miller was the guest and I was the active member. We often had twenty people at a meeting with ten active members. This occurred because many of us were social friends as well as "dog friends" during those beginning years and since little time was spent on business and much time on socializing husbands and wives would attend the shepherd meetings for the fun of it.

The third meeting was held January 4, 1951. Although we were very much novices we decided to tackle the German Shepherd Standard. Jack Sinykin was with us at this meeting and he was a great help in teaching us what was what and how the German Shepherd Dog was put together.

I have purposely not mentioned too many names up to this point other than the originators and a few people who are still active, but one name enters the picture at this point in history and with humor. Delores Bliss (yes, Bill's spouse) joined the club at this time. She was the active one in the family and Bill had purchased a puppy for her named King. Whereas most spouses attended the meeting, Bill would have no part of it. He brought Delores to the meetings and left to go bowling. He thought all dog people were nuts. It wasn't until nearly a year later when Delores had their first child, Mary, and Bill became interested in training King in obedience that their roles reversed and Bill decided we weren't nuts after all.

In those early days the Minneapolis Kennel Club had a spring show and since our German Shepherd club was so new we figured the best way to meet people was to set up a booth sponsored by the German Shepherd Dog Club of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The All Breed show was to be held April 29th and we decided that our booth would have a playpen with dogs and children in it. The backdrop would be a black cloth with a huge German Shepherd head in the center surrounded by pictures of members with their dogs. We had ambitious plans for a club only four months old but we all worked together and took one-hour shifts as the booth.

Our program at our fourth meeting was on the care and feeding of a German Shepherd and we had our first film. Even though most of us were conformation directed we realized even then that Obedience was a necessary part of the German Shepherd Dog Club of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. So, at our fifth meeting we had Mrs. Thomas Ennis as a guest to explain obedience training and how obedient titles were obtained. The program proved so interesting that eight guests became members right then and there. Training was to begin when nice weather allowed it and the place was 28th and Dupont at the Park Board Warehouse in Minneapolis.

During April 1951 we had our first major problem with the resignation of Don and Lois Schaefer as members and officers. Lois had a nervous break down and was very ill, she was hospitalized for some time. After her return home she was advised by her doctor not to become involved with the dogs again. This was a gal who became so emotionally involved and broke her back trying to do everything all at once in organizing and operating the club that it took its toll. We were sorry to lose them as they left that summer of 1951 for California. This left the club with a huge gap with the president and secretary gone. Don Peddie filled in temporarily with wife Betty acting as secretary.

At this time we had \$88.00 in our treasury and after paying expenses to Barbara Dillingham who worked her fool head off at the Minneapolis Kennel Club show on our booth we had a total of \$81.75. Weren't we rich! Whether because we wanted to thank her (some thanks) or because she was a glutton for punishment we

made Barb the Secretary with Don Peddie moving only up to President and Roger Hinckley was then made Vice President. With only twelve members present it was easy to decide things like that. We had our first training session on June 13, 1951 for forty-five minutes before our regular meeting at the home of Vida Shaffer with Dorothy Ennis training. Each member with a dog paid 25 cents per evening. During that summer Dr. Charles Peluso joined us and he and Roger Hinckley were trying to line up Al Johnson for us as a German Shepherd Club trainer. Meanwhile, those of us who were interested in obedience were attending the Twin Cities Obedience Training Club training sessions.

Jerry Carnes asked the club for a donation in his campaign against dog poisoners but we had to decline because by this time we had donated two trophies to the Saint Paul KC show and were down to seventy-five dollars. We had a long debate on whether to get official stationery and decided we couldn't afford it. Ed Saltzman had the only real Obedience dog in our club in the summer of 1951 but did us all proud by giving a performance as a representative of T.C.O.T.C. He had the only shepherd in the show. Not only was Ed a promoter of the Breed with Princess an all black shepherd, but he wanted to promote the club too. He designed bumper plates, which were attached to the license plates. They were very attractive; I wish we could resurrect them for us today. The members bought them for One dollar a plate. About this time the allowed one year time was drawing close and we all were getting nervous about becoming a recognized club. So far we'd been operating "in limbo" but we couldn't put on sanction matches much less a specialty show until we were a recognized club. We wrote on October 31 to John Gans to obtain his help in persuading the American Kennel Club that we should be recognized. His answer to us on November 30, 1951 that other than a few details there was nothing standing the way excited all of us. We complied with sending in an up to date membership list with counties listed and new officers and corrected By-laws. The Parent Club and the AKC officially recognized us on December 5, 1951 one year after our application for recognition on December 13, 1950.

The fall of 1951 was rather hectic with our secretary Barb Dillingham resigning, the second one in a year! Her husband was transferred so we lost a real hard worker. Betty Peddie filled in again. We were at a low time now with eleven dollars and forty-five cents in the treasury. We hadn't sold enough bumper signs to make up for their expenses. Obedience training had petered out so it was decided to drop it until the Spring of 1952. More trouble when Betty Peddie decided she was unable to serve as even a temporary secretary so Wyman Koone was elected. He had only been a member for two months but since none of us were "old members" it just didn't matter. We were thankful to find someone to take over. Our requirements then were not as they are now. Length of time in the club had nothing to do with it. Luckily those first few years we had members who had experience serving on Committees and Boards in their own businesses and were able to help us through our growing pains.

Instead of an annual dinner held in January we had a Christmas Party, our first, at the Club Napoleon. We'd finished our first year, we'd been recognized, now we were on our way.

1952

We had accomplished a lot in the first year as the German Shepherd Dog Club of Minneapolis and St. Paul but we felt that 1952 should solidify our position as a Club.

With this aim in mind we wanted to do two things, first, get a set of officers that would stay for a year, and second, try and get our qualifying Sanction Matches out of the way so that the American Kennel Club would let us hold a Specialty Show.

Even though our By-Laws had just been okayed by the AKC we ignored them in January of 1952 to facilitate matters. A nominating committee made up of Don Peddie and John Lundquist nominated a slate and it was voted on and passed all at the same time. Our new officers (and permanent we hoped) were President Roger Hinckley, Vice President Marion Lundquist, I became Secretary, and Jim Dorgan was Treasurer. Ed Saltzman was our Program Chairman and a fine job he did that year (Note: any program chairman of the future should take notes of the programs as I mention them through the years, it will make your job easy). This January meeting we had George Smeltzer to discuss how to put on Sanction Matches. All of us were green and he had valuable information for us.

The January 1952 meeting was an exciting meeting as we set down definite breeding goals. Members were to follow these:

1. Not accept a pup as a fee for breeding
2. Male and Bitch price to be uniform
3. All abnormal pups to be culled from litter
4. Minimum price per puppy - \$75.00
5. Breed only to AKC registered dogs. (Note: there were other registers then)
6. When pups were sold, to encourage the new owners to become Club members
7. Any member of the Club who sold a pup as a result of reference by another Club member, shall pay into the club treasury 10% of the sales price

As you can see we were a hungry Club and we were trying to make money any way we could. This last recommendation was eventually defeated however when we tried to practice was we preached!

Another reason was that Betty Peddie (we were at their home) lost her 3 carat solitaire diamond out of it's setting out in the snow, so we all pitched in bringing bucket after bucket of snow and melting it. It's a wonder we didn't all catch pneumonia as we ran in and out hauling snow with a few snowball fights thrown in for good measure. Luck perseverance and cooperation paid off and we found the stone for her. This was one of the few times drinks were served at a German Shepherd Club meeting.

We decided this year instead of putting money into a booth at the spring MKC show we'd use the money for film to be taken at the show of our German Shepherds in the ring. Wyman Koons had a friend who would do the filming. I have the films and have shown them a dozen times in the past eighteen years. At this stage Bill Bliss became an official member as of February 1952 although he attended a few meetings before as a guest. Also, the Elgert sisters, Jane and Shirley joined at this meeting.

We had Dr. Mather from the U Of M Vet School, talk on Intestinal Parasites (program chairman takes notes) The AKC was giving me, as Secretary, a difficult time the next few months but we did get August 17, 1952 okayed as our first Sanction Match. Bill Bliss was immediately chosen for trophy chairman. For those who have seen the film you remember it was Bill Thompson we had for judge. In March we had Marie Leary's film "The German Shepherd Dog" and ordered official club stationary.

By this time we felt we were growing with 25-27 people attending the meetings so we felt that we would try and move out of homes and into a central meeting place (sound familiar). We did this for three months and decided to go back to homes. We met in the downtown YMCA.

Lew Kolstad started our German Shepherd obedience training classes on June 26, 1952 at the Lyndale Farmstad. We had ten people training. Our programs continued with a showing of the films taken at the Minneapolis Kennel Club Show. Also, we had films of the Morris and Essex Dog Show (now discontinued). Jack Sinykin using his dog Alarich, talked to us on the conformation and skeletal structure of a good show dog.

We got through our Sanction Match with flying colors and lousy dogs and were informed we had to wait six months for the next one. Since this was the case we decided to wait until spring of 1953 when we could hold it outside.

In October we appointed a nominating committee. We were going by they book this time. But we went from the ridiculous to the sublime. From the year before of two people this year we had eight people on the nominating committee out of a membership of thirty.

Johnny Demuth who was a professional handler talked on "Ring manners, you & your dog" at this meeting. Also the obedience training was dropped, as the weather was cold by then and it was decided to start them next spring so meanwhile we trained at Twin City Obedience Training Club during the winter. Ed Saltzman and I completed CD's on our dogs that fall he with Princess and me with Chief (my long-coated monorchid).

We celebrated closing our second year with our annual dinner in December at the Flame Room at the

Radisson (Note: sometimes I wish we'd go back to December annual dinners everyone is in a holiday mood at Christmas time and we never have any business anyway).

1953

The new officers were Roger Higckley as President again, I moved up to Vice President, Virginia Brunson was Secretary, Wyman Koons as Treasurer, Shirley and June Elgert decided to share the responsibility as Program Co-Chairman and Ed Saltzman was Publicity Chairman. We appointed our first Columnist for the German Shepherd Review, Betty Andrews.

We ended this second year with a slight feeling of frustration (one always does when dealing with the AKC). We'd only had one Sanction Match, however we'd had good educative programs, our obedience had gone well, our officers stayed the year and worked well, and we had put on our first match. So, with an optimistic outlook we got ready to face our third year. We started our third year 1953 with three things in mind, we resolved to have our second Sanction Match and first Specialty show, to have a full scale obedience training with Lew Kolstad, and to collect all unpaid assessments.

This last project caused the first trouble in the club. You see, we had no money in our treasury except for dues paid by the fifteen to twenty members and we were putting on our first Specialty Show. Our dues were five dollars at that time so we assessed each member an additional three dollars and some of us made loans to the club.

Although this had been agreed upon by the members present at an October meeting in 1952 when it came to collecting it that was a different story. Some of the members not present at the October meeting resented the discussion to assess members. As a result Don and Betty Peddie sent their letter of resignation on February 9, 1953. Virginia Brunson our secretary at the time answered their letter for the club with a nice note to the effect that our by-laws stated that questions should be decided by voice vote of members present or by proxy and that they had been entitled to a proxy if they wished. If they did not avail themselves of this privilege the members had no way of knowing their opinions, the incident was closed.

In February we appointed Delores Bliss as Match Secretary and set the date for our second match at May 10th. We also started thinking about holding our first Sanctioned Obedience Match. Ed Saltzman and I were to work with the trainer Lew Kolstad on this.

Our by-laws were only two years old and already we could see that some changes were necessary. Since I was Vice President at that time I was given the rewarding job of heading the committee on this. We had a total membership of eighteen at this time so everyone had to pitch in on everything. We had learned a lot from our mistakes at the first match so we were more organized at the May match. We had an entry of eighteen dogs and we had to scrounge to get those. When you look back at the pictures of those German Shepherds at that match you can appreciate how far this club has come in the quality of dogs that the members have now.

I want to interject some personal history here but only on members still in the club. Jack Sinykin had imported his Alarich von Ermsleben the year before and was busy finishing his American Championship title. Since he was the only breeder in the area all club members bought most of their dogs initially from him. As a result winter and summer would find his place out on Wayzata like one grand central station. We'd all go out to compare and talk dogs but mostly to listen and learn from Jack. How he ever got any work done on Saturdays and Sundays with a gang of us around I'll never know. As a result most of the Club members were very close.

Bill Bliss made the fatal step towards eternal dogdom and bought his second dog, which he named Tut. He supposedly bought it to keep his first dog, King, company but it was really because the dog show bug had bitten him and he hoped to show Tut. As for myself I finished my first dog Chief with his CD, CDX, and UD and like Bill had purchased what I had hoped to be a conformation dog, his name was Cheyanne. He did well in puppy matches but at about nine or ten months I knew I had another obedience dog, I got through his CDX. Meanwhile,

Dr. Miller and I were anxious to have a show dog and with Jack Sinykin's help imported our first two show dogs, Falko von der Diederichstiftung Sch111FH, was brought over first and then the great CH Cuno von der Teufelslache ROM. Many of you remember Falko as my housedog since he lived until he was fourteen. I completed his CD, CDX, and acquired 8 points on him. Cuno however was a different matter. We completed his Championship in three five-point shows. We found ourselves blessed with one of the great dogs of all times. So started my show career.

In June we received the report from the American Kennel Club that our second match was "qualifying" and we raced around to start planning our Specialty Show in Nov. Here again through ignorance and inexperience we **really** got into a jam with the American Kennel Club. We obtained Virginia McCoy of Long-Worth kennels as our conformation judge but meanwhile, since we were also part of their show; the Minneapolis Kennel Club had already assigned Shepherds to someone else. Well let me tell you letters and phone calls were the order of the day. We finally were excused because of ignorance and got Virginia McCoy as our judge. Here we hadn't even put on our first show and the American Kennel Club was about to put us out of business.

My son David was delivered on June 2nd but I didn't miss the June 21st meeting where we had Elmer Leach speak on Superintending and had an Army film on "Training War Dogs." At this meeting Sol Fisher officially became a member although he had been at the April and May meetings and had helped us with our Sanction Match. Sol had been a long time friend of Jack Sinykin and an admirer of Jack's famous CH Lump von Piastendamn. In fact, he had been to shows in the area before our club was formed when shows were held in tents. He bought his first German Shepherd however, from Jack in the summer of 1952, a daughter of CH Quell von Fredholtz ROM. He purchased his second dog in January 1953 and he was hooked like the rest of us.

All summer long we were busy getting ready for our show. We had several outdoor programs, and at one meeting Dr. Spurrell talked to us on genetics. Again, for the second time we made an effort to change our name to German Shepherd Dog Club of Minnesota. The American Kennel Club turned us down again two months later.

That summer there were quite a few of us going to shows and we went in caravan style. Bill Bliss teamed up with Dr. Miller and myself and we hit all the nearby shows, as well as those in Iowa and Wisconsin. Ed Saltzman was showing both obedience and conformation. The Roger Hinckley's and Wally Linders were in conformation so we already had four station wagons. Dr. Peluso joined in when he could he even went on down to the Milwaukee show. The Elgert sisters were always along entered in both obedience and conformation. Jack Sinykin who was the pioneer in showing was also always entered. Neil Muller and Sol Fisher were new at that time but they got the bug also and often joined us at shows. Many times we'd have seven or eight cars and station wagons going to a show and no one had air-conditioning at that time. Of course this is when it took twelve hours to go to Milwaukee and ten to Des Moines and four or five to Duluth so it **really** was a trip, but we had fun all stopping to eat together and exercising our dogs.

Our November show was a success. The St. Paul Kennel Club held their show on Saturday and Minneapolis Kennel Club had theirs on Sunday so we ended up with a five-point entry at both shows. A special note of interest is that we had advertised on the flyers for the show that we had trophy and cash prizes worth \$400! This was in 1953 with only eighteen members and no money coming in from obedience. In those early days many members not only contributed time, but money and more money.

At the November show a group of breed clubs decided to try and put on a spring show as a "Combined Specialty." We decided to join in as even in those days German Shepherds had the largest entry. Mrs. Laura Montank (Cocker Spaniels) was chairman and R. R. Smeltzer (Boston Terriers) was secretary-treasurer.

At our December meeting we had our nominations and decided to hold the annual dinner in January. Since we went in a hole on our November show a group had to make loans to the club again to get ready for our May Combined Specialty. We had hoped that by combining together we would at least break even so with only five months to get ready for our second annual specialty show, twenty members to do the work, and ninety dollars in the hole, we started our fourth year.

1954

Several things stand out in my mind about that year. Two things we failed miserably at were the obedience training programs. Several of us were still doing obedience work at T.C.O.T.C. but we just couldn't get our own group going. Programs were at an all time low. We had several vets, a few films, Jack showed us some handling tips, but after 3 years of good programs we seemed to be at a loss.

We had many things to the good side going for that year. We stuck with the Combined Specialty on May 9th, 1954 and had Langdon Skarda for our judge. This was the first time Lang judged up here and as a favor he came for a very nominal sum not even covering his expenses. We had a real good show with entries.

Another good thing happened to us was that our LaVonne Thorsrud came as a visitor to the March 1954 meeting and apparently liked what she found because she joined a few meetings later, lucky for us. She has donated much of herself to the German Shepherd Dog club of Minneapolis and St. Paul and today finds her doing the same thing as Show Secretary and Vice President. One of the delightful things that stands out in my mind about this years was that we were solvent for the first time, yes, we had between \$150-\$175 in the bank after all bills were paid. After four years of financial disaster it was a relief believe me!

We were quite active as a club that summer. Under the direction of Ed Saltzman, Shirley Elgert, Bill Lucke, and myself participated in the Minneapolis Aquatennial giving a Precision Drill demonstration of our German Shepherds. We also initiated our first picnic. This was a family affair held in July at the Raaks place and what a success it was. Every family brought its own food but the Raaks supplied a lake, a boat, and horses and wagon for a hayride. It started at 11:00 am and went all day until 8:00 pm. This was really a family day all the kids had a ball while parents relaxed, ate, talked dogs, and even played baseball. This tradition lasted only a few years changing to the "adult only" steak fry in the fall but it was fun while it lasted.

After our successful second annual show that spring we immediately started planning for the next one. We were undecided as to whether to stay with the Combined Specialty or to go off on our own.

We had a Sanction Match in August with Bill Bliss winning BOB with his Yukon (a Cuno son) and me going BOS with a new bitch import, Bella vom Louisenschloss. Yukon was a beautiful animal and Bill made the decision to send him out with a handler that winter. The dog did well but contracted a fatal disease while on the circuit and Bill got him home just in time to have him die. It was a real heartbreak for all of us.

Another heartbreak that occurred that year happened to Jack Sinykin. Even though some of you weren't in dogs you probably read it because it hit the headlines. This was undoubtedly one of the most horrible tragic things nationwide that ever happened to dogs or any animal for that matter. On August 12, 1954 someone threw strychnine packed wieners into all the outside and available pens at LaSalle Kennels. Over 30 dogs were affected with 8 being killed. Two of these eight were bitches due to whelp. Jack's estimated loss was \$20,000 and with his greatest loss being his 2½-year-old Champion, CH Sir Lancelot of La Salle. This was truly a vicious thing and the response from all over the US and the world indicated the horror that people felt. Two of the dogs killed had neared their completion for the Master Eye Foundation and were ready to be placed with blind persons. Others that were killed or sickened were in various stages of guide dog training that Jack did. Immediately money came pouring in for the help in the search for the poisoners. Beacon Wax of Boston sent \$500, a Kansas City Meat Packing company sent \$500, the Minneapolis Kennel Club gave \$500, and we as a club gave \$100, even the AKC and US Humane Society even contributed. A reward was set up which finally reached \$2500. Lie detector testes were given and 50 volunteers went from house to house in that area to see if any information could be found. No clue was found and the money was left as a permanent reward fund. The loss to Jack was considerable in a financial way but the worst hurt came to the heart. Sir Lancelot was one of his favorites and we all know what it feels like to lose just one animal, but eight of them.

We spent the end of 1954 getting ready for our 1955 Spring Specialty, having our nominations and planning our annual dinner. End year 1954.

1955

So, on to the year 1955. We stuck with the Combined Specialty that year and had Curt Allstad as our judge. We had a total entry of 54 dogs, our biggest entry so far compared with 12 in 1952. Curt over here from Germany did for the first time in this area a Kor "rating" of all of our dogs, which was very educational and interesting. An interesting note is our trophies cost us \$116.12 that year. We lost only \$63.00 on the show.

I was President for another year with Ed Saltzman as Vice President, Virginia Brunson as Treasurer, and Neil Muller as Secretary. We nearly lost LaVonne as a member; she didn't come to the first three meetings and had planned on dropping out. She reconsidered however and decided to stay with us. Our programs were better, we had Dr King talk to us on prenatal care and whelping of bitches and for the first time hip dysplasia came to public light. Dr. Cutler did his best to explain what it was all about.

After our Spring Show the Minneapolis Kennel Club asked the Combined Specialty to join them for a fall show. So, for the first time we tried a spring and fall show. We scheduled it for November 1955 and asked John Seiler to judge.

Meanwhile, we had another Sanction Match in the summer with Bill Thompson judging. We even lost \$3.07 on that however we had \$210.00 in the treasury due to increased membership and loans. We now had 30 members.

That summer Dr. Peluso brought in his first import through Jack, his Ch. Lesko. Bill Lucke attended his first meeting on July 20th 1955 and we had our second annual picnic at the Raak's.

In September with the growth of the club we began discussions on having a Board of Directors. After 3 months of hassling it around it was turned down. So began my 13-year drive for a Board.

Jack and Donna Reed were guests for the first time at that September 1955 meeting. It was at that meeting that we decided to increase the dues to \$10 per year starting with January 1956. Up until then we had a \$5 initiation fee plus a \$5 per year dues.

LaVonne Thorsrud and Virginia Brunson stewarded for the first time at the fall show with John Seiler. We really pushed it that year. Here our show was in November and we had to turn right around and get ready for a May 1956 show. The other point of interest that year was that the German Shepherd Breed Survey was introduced to us. We were approached twice on having a survey here and both times felt it was wrong for us and turned it down.

The year 1955 ended with not having either loss or gain yet we had to get ready for our May 1956 show. Nominations were made, I decided to back off for a few years after Secretary one year and President for two years I wanted a rest, that's a laugh.

Sol Fisher furnished the Variety Club Rooms for our annual Dinner so with four Specialty Shows, money in the bank, and more members than we ever had, we felt we were a successful club.

1956

After our fling at two Shows in 1955 we backed off and confined ourselves to one Spring Show in 1956. It was just too hectic to put on two shows and our trophies were costing so much we were losing twice the amount of money. Dick Ayers judged the spring show and we lost \$100, not because of his fee, which was very reasonable, but because we were still going overboard on trophies.

Virginia Brunson was President that year with Wally Linder as Vice President, Shirley Elgert as Treasurer and Jack Reed as Secretary. However Wally had to leave for California in June of that year so Betty Lucke was

elected to fill out the term.

Dick Hawes came as a guest to the March meeting and decided to join. We also regained two of our original club members, Don and Betty Peddie, much to our delight.

That summer we celebrated having an "outsider" judge our sanction match. Tony Kurtz of Kurtz Home Shepherds in Wisconsin was a good friend of a few of us, Bill Bliss, the Luckes, Jack Sinykin and myself. Because of this he came all the way from Milwaukee to judge a **Sanction Match** for practically nothing.

This is quite a common thing today to get outsiders to judge matches and pay their expenses, just like a regular show. I've judged two matches this year out of the area for expenses and the clubs make money because entries are getting so large they can afford to operate like a regular show. In those days, however, when we even lost money on sanction matches it was really something to get a well-known Shepherd breeder like Tony to come up and judge our match.

We had our first Adult Steak Fry on October 20th. It was still warm in those days before our seasons became fouled up. It was a huge success. We had thirty people attend it in Minnehaha Park with enormous steaks, pile of potato salad and beans, lots of beer and booze and finished up at 1 am with a marshmallow roast.

In spite of the good turnouts at our Specialty Show, Sanction Match, and Steak Fry our membership dropped to 15. This was due to the fact that we just couldn't get any programs going. The meetings were dull and unless you were an officer or a hard-core shepherd person, you just didn't go to meetings.

We donated our first obedience trophy in the fall to the Minneapolis Kennel Club to the Highest Scoring Shepherds. We were trying but our obedience was having a hard time getting off the ground.

We had considered going with the Wayzata show in the spring but decided to stick with the Combined Specialty one more year.

We changed our by-laws that elected positions of advertising and program chairman became appointed positions, but I don't believe we informed the AKC of our action. We were still casual and informal in those days.

1956 was a really low ebb year we only had \$58.59 in the treasury at the beginning of 1957. We had spent \$407.73 that year and most of it going for trophies. We decided that 1957 was the year to shape up.

1957

In 1957 on programs alone we had a tremendous improvement. We had Al Johnson speak on St. Paul Obedience Training Club, Dr. Mather on eye disease, two Parent-Club films, a Gaines film, Dr. Mather and Dr. Bea Hanlon, along with the Police, talk on the need for Police trained dogs. Betty Lucke was President that year with Dick Hawes as Vice President, Shirley Elgert as Treasurer, and Donna Reed as Secretary.

We made money on our Spring Show that year. We had Lloyd Brackett of Long-Worth Kennels judge on April 28, 1957 and when the book on the show expenses were closed we had made not lost \$33. Lloyd spoke to us at a dinner after the show with a critique on all our dogs. LeVonne Thorsrud had acted as his secretary in the ring. It was a wonderful and educational dinner speech. He was patient with all of the questions that were fired at him and everyone enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

With our programs perking up so did our membership. We jumped to 28 members by June and held them all year.

We were very **social** that year, this brought the membership back also. We had two Sanction Matches. I judged one and Bill Bliss judged another. We had dinners before both of these Matches, also, a pre and after show

dinner in the spring and our second annual steak fry. The club was becoming close working again so we tackle our **first obedience sanction match** on August 18, 1957.

The Bloomington Obedience Club lent us their equipment and Al Johnson was our judge. We had ten entries and considered ourselves very lucky. Since we were on the rise again financially and membership-wise we decided to break with the Combined Specialty and go on our own. Since this was going to be the first time that we did **everything** ourselves. We decided to give ourselves plenty of time so we went to a fall show. We had our last show in the spring of 1957 and after consulting with the Milwaukee Club decided to make our first solo effect on the second Sunday after Milwaukee in 1958. This gave us a chance to attend the Milwaukee show and personally get entries for our show 2 1/2 weeks later, and believe me, Bill Bliss and I did just that obtaining 10 - 20 entries at the Milwaukee show. With so much work and business connected with getting the Specialty Show under way I proposed that we have a Board of Directors to manage Club affairs so that we wouldn't spend meeting after meeting talking about ordering ribbons and arm bands, etc. However, I was defeated again. The majority seemed to want to be in on every little detail concerning club business, show, or otherwise and yet we couldn't keep members because they were bored at the meetings.

We lined up Noah Bloomer for our judge for our fall show and tried to find a location agreeable with the AKC and the members.

1958

The year of 1958 stood out as the "year of distinction." We were going to put on our first self-superintended show. This was a year to remember let me tell you! In spite of good organization headed by LeVonne Thorsrud as President, Harry Maudsley as Vice President, Donna Reed as Secretary and Jerry Olson as Treasurer we had all sorts of difficulties.

We successfully completed our second Obedience Sanction Match on April 27, 1958 and went on the presumption that we would be able to hold an obedience trial along with our conformation in the fall. We asked Mrs. Bea Kay to judge obedience and Noah Bloomer for conformation. In June, just 3 months before our show Virginia Brunson had to resign from Show Secretary for reasons of health. This near catastrophe was averted when Sol Fisher jumped into the breach. The first bad news that hit him head on was that AKC had decided we were **not qualified** to have an obedience show. Both of our matches had been successful and had qualified but because of the small number of entries the AKC thought it best to wait. Sol got on the phone to the AKC and talked fast and furious, told them that we **were** qualified that we were planning on it and had already asked our judge. The AKC finally consented and that emergency was over. Well we went from the frying pan to the fire after finding that Bea Kay could not judge Utility yet. We decided to ask another judge who could do all of obedience so we proceeded to ask Mr. Abby in Wisconsin. As you might expect we got our wires crossed and ended up with **two** obedience judges. Bea Kay thought she had been asked and had accepted and not taken any other assignments. Well, this time LeVonne saved the day and straightened it out with Mrs. Kay. The Club felt bad however for the mix up and the only honorable way was to have both Mrs. Kay and Mr. Abby and with an entry of 16 in obedience. This mistake taught us a real lesson in writing request letters.

The next thing that happened was that we had to change our location and luckily Sol owned the Bloomington Drive In Theater and offered the Club the area and this became our show area for the next 8 years. Another minor item which didn't seem minor at the time, is that we found our conformation judge Noah Bloomer felt he really hadn't accepted or been asked to do the assignment. LeVonne got him on the phone, got Noah out of bed to settle it, and sent him copies of the letter exchanged and found he had been asked and he had accepted. So that was settled. It's a wonder we all didn't get ulcers that summer. Everything that could happen badly, did. We ran short of money because of the expense of the two obedience judges so we cut back to **trophies to 1st and 2nd place only**. However, all's well that ends well, as we had 75 entries in conformation and we made \$36.80 on the show.

Our membership stayed stationary during the year. We had Shirley Elgert's sister, June, join the club in June

and with all the trouble with the show it's a wonder she stayed, but she did and for several years the Elgert sisters were serious breeders and exhibitors. The late Dr. David Peterson joined that year in July also.

As head of the By-Laws Committee, I tried to establish a Board again with no success. We were quite social that year with our Sanction Matches and dinners afterwards and our fall steak fry and the big event of the year and a testimonial dinner for Jack Sinykin. The club presented Jack with the Dog World Award at Brookview Country Club. It was a huge success for a man that had served his club and Breed so well. We had newspaper and radio coverage and he was presented the Dog World Plaque by LeVonne. We might do well to revive some of these earlier club customs.

The Minneapolis Kennel Club announced that they were going to go to a fall show in 1959 and wanted us to think of taking a Saturday date the day before theirs. It wasn't so hard to change your date in those days. For the first time the club felt it had enough money to have a separate account for Savings and Checking. We made our first deposit of \$500.00 into the Saving in November 1958.

1959

1959 was a nice calm year and we needed that! LeVonne continued as President and Donna Reed continued as Secretary. Jack Reed became Vice President and Virginia Brunson, having recovered, was able to take Treasurer. All these people had served in office before and having gone through the trauma of the year before. We started in January 1959 to plan our September show. We decided to try the Saturday show the day before the MKC show. We obtained Virginia McCoy as conformation judge and Harper Wilcox for obedience. We had the Bloomington Drive-In lined up for our location and had our trophies picked out by March of that year. Sol Fisher continued as Show Secretary so with he and LeVonne at the helm thing proceeded very smoothly.

We had several other Specialty Clubs approach us about sharing our grounds for their own Specialty Shows the day before MKC show. This idea was voted down, as it would be our responsibility to clean up the place. We gave complimentary tickets for the first time to anyone placing an ad in the catalog. We also wrote thank you notes to the entries after the show. In other words, we were polishing up the rough edges of our inexperience. We acquired insurance to cover our shows that year for the first time also.

As a result of the well-oiled machinery putting on the show we had plenty of time for programs. We even began our first conformation training. Fritz Lender, a member of the club who had recently arrived from Germany, undertook the job of conformation training. It was started a little late in the year and really didn't take hold until the next summer but we had about 5 or 6 sessions.

Elmer Leach showed us a film on a dog show made 25 years ago at one meeting. Bob Gates spoke on the St. Paul Police Force German Shepherds. We had a film on the Army Dog Training Center in Fort Benning, Ga. We had films on our first outdoor Specialty also a film comparing Labrador and Shepherd hunting abilities. Dr. Cutler spoke two time that year, really, he has been a vital part of our club since we began either as a speaker or Vet at our show. We really should present him an award or make him an honorary member.

We were still trying to find a location other than the homes for the meetings, not that it wasn't nice in the homes, but there weren't enough homes large enough to handle 30 - 35 people. We rented Master Eye Foundation Hall on University for a few meetings and at a very nominal fee because of Jack Sinykin, but attendance fell off, and we went back to the homes. Our fall show gave us a profit of **\$28.92** with **106 conformation** entries and **24 obedience** entries.

We had Bernice Dostal join us in October of that year, Joan and Paul Johnson and Judy Melquist also joined in December 1959. An interesting thing is that Heinz Ritter came as a guest in January of 1959 but never came back for about 1½ years. That year we donated to an out of town Shepherd Specialty for the first time. We donated a \$10 to Topline GSDC. In return they donated one to our show. We spent \$360 for 75 trophies that year and gave money for Best of Breed. We offered \$20 instead of a trophy. Virginia McCoy, our judge, donated a

trophy for Best of Breed. This has always been her policy and she does it to this day.

In retrospect, this year of 1959 was probably one of our better years as a club. We had good officers, an experienced Show Secretary, well planned and numerous programs, lots of social life, money in the treasury, profit on a well run and successful show and an increase of active membership to 42. It was an especially good year for me as I had done some winning with my CH Meadowmill's Appollo, and finished it off with winning our Specialty Show.

1960

We started out 1960 with \$800 in our treasury. After 9½ lean years we felt like splurging. Like all newly rich people, the money burned holes in our pocket. The club promptly decided to give some richly deserved awards. A "Devoted Service Award" was presented to LeVonne Throsrud for her work as an officer and Show Secretary and Lady of Many Talents. Donna Reed was awarded the first annual "Outstanding Service Award" for her work as club secretary for 3 years.

Jack Reed was President that year and even though I had served 4 years as Secretary, Vice President and President in 1952 through 1955, they couldn't find anyone else, so I was elected Vice President again. Mary Larson relieved Donna of the Secretary's job and Fran Lainsbury became Treasurer. Yes, you guessed it, LeVonne was Show Secretary again.

We started planning for our fall show still holding it 2 weeks after the Milwaukee show. The date fell on September 25th, 1960 it was the last good year for this fall show date. After this we experienced snow, rain, and severe cold for several years forcing us to go to our present August date. But at that time we were still reasonably sure of beautiful Indian summer weather. Dick Ayers, who had judged for us in 1956, had mentioned to LeVonne that he was to make a business trip around our show time so we grabbed the opportunity and asked him to judge Conformation. He accepted and charged a very reasonable fee. We had invited Barbara Spencer as our obedience judge and were then approached by Bob Gates who was trying to work his way through the obedience requirements and wished to do Novice A at no charge. LeVonne checked it out with Barbara Spencer and once again we had two obedience judges. We must have had some second thoughts about our money because in May we put a limit of \$300 on our trophies for the show.

The Fosters, both Ruth and Bob had joined in February 1960 and immediately became interested and helpful in our obedience program.

This year was destined to be an upsetting one after our nice calm 1959. I won't go into details or names but charges by one of our older members were brought against two of our newer members on misconduct and a real hassle followed with suits threatened and attorneys involved. Resignation by the two newer members resulted, and things quieted down for the summer. We had two fun matches that summer, one in June with \$36.66 profit and one in August with a \$22 profit. Sol Fisher, who owned theaters at that time, set up a movie premier with a Pancake Dinner to follow at only \$1.50 per person. We had a good turnout with 27 members and guests attending. We started having conformation training at my house on Saturday afternoons and many times the coffee and donuts sessions & talking dogs lasted until 7p.m.

The annual steak fry was in October. It happened to fall on my birthday and for obvious reason I remember the date, I couldn't sit down the next day!

At our September meeting we announced that our October meeting would be closed as we would be working on a By-Law revision. Here again is another example of the whole membership wasting time doing what a committee or board should do.

It so happened that a member from the St. Louis Club was in town and he was invited to this closed meeting. Well, all hell broke loose, when he took it upon himself to criticize our club. Not only did he make verbal

comments, but followed with a 5 page letter on what was wrong and how we should correct it. This man was a novice in the game himself at that time so it made it doubly cruel. Since obviously he didn't understand the reason for this one closed meeting or why we didn't have a Board as he recommended. We simply answered his letter with a thank you note for his interest but it sure raised everyone's hackles at the time. As a result of the meeting our dues were raised to \$10. Again, this was one of those By-Law changes that never went to the AKC.

Mary Jane Buckman and Grace Fangmann joined us in November 1960. As far as programs were concerned Al Johnson started us on organizing a Drill Team, Dr. Rosell talked to us about joining the Breeders Association. We saw the usual movies including Westminster 1960 and had the usual live dog programs. We came out about even that year with a good show and lots of social gatherings, but with few imaginative programs, and hassles among the members.

1961

On to 1961 - this year I was President - again, LeVonne, Vice President - again, Mary Larson, Secretary - again, and Sol Fisher, Show Secretary - again. We did have one new face; Bob Foster became Treasurer and did a tremendous job.

The "Outstanding Service Award" was given to Mary Larson. The January meeting was marked by two events, first - Roger and Betty Hinckley, two of our earliest members, returned from South America and were guests. It was delightful to see them again. Second, Heinz Ritter attended, and I guess this time we made a better impression because he soon became a member.

The Hip Dysplasia Program was coming into being at this time and Dr. Bea Hanlon of U Of M Vet School asked that our club cooperate to bring our puppies for X-ray at 2 and 4 weeks. I don't know how many Jack Sinykin took to the "U" to help the program but I know I had two litters that year that I ran over at 3 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, one year and 18 months.

We had our usual Fun Match in February as part of a club meeting with Bill Bliss judging.

In March Larry and Joyce Wille entered the fold and became avid members. We passed another by-law change, again without sending it to the AKC, and lowered the dues to \$5 again.

Another Fun Match was held in July and we paid Denny Kodner \$30 to come up and judge from Chicago. As luck would have it we had horrible weather and lost \$11.52. I was still holding conformation classes every Saturday in my front yard and coffee sessions in my kitchen afterward.

Heinz Ritter, as if to make up for his first disinterest, came on strong with a training program with protection dog work included. We even sent to Germany for an attack work suit with Heinz paying \$25 and several members contributing the other \$25.

Fall brought our show with freezing weather. Sol Fisher provided Lang Skarda, our conformation judge, with boots, parka, etc. as Lang was from New Mexico and brought nothing very warm with him. Bea Kay was our obedience judge again. Although we had 90 in conformation we ran \$188 in the hole due to bad weather and overboard spending on trophies. It was at this show that Heinz donated the beautiful gold leaf collars from Germany to be awarded to Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex. We stopped training in my front lawn and moved indoors to the Lake Elmo Garage.

Joan and Paul Johnson had been active in obedience but were showing signs of adding conformation to their activities. This was all the club needed. We made Joan Match Secretary for our November Match. This was a Sanction Match as opposed to the Fun Matches we'd been having so Joan was initiated good!

At the close of the year we were down to \$580, which was the lowest, we had been in 4 years. We had spent

too much money on trophies and had lost on the show. We had also lowered our dues again, which cut our income in half. The club tightened its belt, resolved to be more economical on our show expenses, and made a big push for new members. So 1962 was to be a fresh start. We'll see...

1962

1962 started off with the club re-electing me as President, Larry Wille became Vice President, Armie Hawes was Secretary, and Bob Foster was re-elected as Treasurer. Paul Johnson was our Show Secretary.

Since I'd never been able to put across a Board of Directors to the Club in 12 years, I started at this point to have what we termed an "Officers Meeting." We actually acted as a Board, in culling out the chaff, so that our regular meetings would be short and concise. However, we had no authority to pass anything but at least this was a start. At the first Officers meeting we put together a slate of 5 conformation judges and 2 obedience judges for the Club to choose. So at the February meeting the Club chose Ernie Loab for conformation and Mr. Arby for obedience. It was a good thing we started early because both judges turned out to be too expensive for us that year. Paul Johnson then wrote our second choices, Manual Lombardo and Mrs. Treen became our judges. We were still stuck with our late September date with the weather becoming more unpredictable every year. We were still trying to combine with LaCrosse or Duluth for a summer date but couldn't get any cooperation from either club.

For the first time in many years we sent the updated By-Laws to the AKC, the ones that we had changed back and forth about 10 times (without sending them in) but the AKC recorded them as just one change!

Social life in the Club went to a low ebb that year. We had just the two Fun Matches, one in April with Larry Wille judging, and one in July with Jack Sinykin. We didn't have a before or after get-together as we had in the past. Our annual steak fry died out never to be revived. I didn't have training at my place anymore so we didn't have those informal fun coffee sessions afterwards and we had just on dinner in connection with our annual show.

I'm afraid as President I was probably responsible for this low ebb, but I had left one job, and entered the restaurant business with Sol Fisher and this turned into a 60-hour week. I'm afraid the Club and members suffered that year.

Our show was the high point of the year. For the first time a subscription to the German Shepherd Review was given to the member who obtained the most ads for our catalog. Paul Johnson did a fine job in early preparation and putting on the show but our late date and cold weather finally licked us. We had only 60 conformation and 15 obedience and ended up losing about \$80 on the show. We had obtained our judges at a very reasonable fee, we kept our trophy expense down, but more local shows were coming into existence as the years went by and farther south than us, all having an effect. The Minneapolis Kennel Club had debated about moving up to an earlier date and combining with us. So after 6 months they came to a decision, and moved up to a September date and we went to a Saturday show in hopes that having 2 shows would build up our entry again.

Obedience and conformation training were having a hard time. Location was the problem. No indoor place could be found so the park board area in back of the Minneapolis Armory was used. We tried Wednesday evening (our meeting night was still Tuesday at this time) and then Saturday mornings. Dick Hawes and Paul Johnson were doing the novice work and Joan Johnson took Open and Utility. Bill Bliss and I tried conformation. Heinz Ritter was Director of Training. We ended up switching back to the Bloomington Drive-In Theater on Saturday mornings.

We made our first request to the Parent Club to host the following years Futurity. We were turned down but this put the bug in everyone's bonnet and it was decided next year we would try again.

One special interest item was a special "Get Acquainted" session we had. After our show we took the names of

all the non-members and sent a beautiful invitation written by the Secretary to invite them to a social hour at the Variety Club Rooms at the Nicollet Hotel. It was not a meeting but we did have Dr. Bea Hanlon from the University of Minnesota as our speaker. It was a huge success and fun for the club members too.

Programs that year ran to Vet speakers and movies of shows, although I also did conduct two live dog demonstrations, dividing it into two parts as I have done several times since.

I had been a member for twelve years, held office for 7 of these years, and had been President 4 of those, but I'm afraid I didn't do much for the club during 1962. We just sat still accomplishing only our show. Moving forward neither in programs nor training. I'm afraid I had other things on my mind. As I mentioned before, I had gone into the restaurant business with Sol Fisher and really became involved, in fact so involved that it resulted in marriage in December of that year.

1963

In 1963 Larry Wille moved up to President, Bob Foster took on a double load with Vice President and Treasurer, Armie was Secretary again, but we got some new blood in with Bernice Dostal tackling the job of Show Secretary with LeVonne as her assistant.

The club surprised Sol and me at the annual dinner with a wedding cake. We were delighted at this unexpected token of congratulations.

Again, the show was the big thing, mainly because we were combining with MKC and wanted to get a specialty judge for our show that could judge something for them the next day and split the fee with them. We didn't have much trouble deciding on Marie Leary for our show that could also do Obedience for the MKC show. We had Bob Gates for Obedience for our show.

Lots of nice things happened that year. Our Newsletter the Shep-O-Gram got off the ground under Lois Thornton's direction. We had 3 Fun Matches with Larry Wille doing conformation and Grace Fangmann doing obedience. Our car license plate GSD badges were brought into being assisted by Duane Johnson. We had Carol Van Heel, Pat and Chell Peterson and Joy Phillips join us. We applied for the 1964 Midwest Futurity and were awarded it by the GSDCA.

Heinz Ritter, our Director of Training, really went all out for the club that year. We went back to Thursday night training and decided to charge for the first time. The price was set at \$5 for a 10-week period. He was also trophy chairman and came up with the most unique trophies, particularly in obedience, I've ever seen. They were replicas of the high jump. Then he decided we should have a special revolving trophy for Highest Scoring Dog and designed that. Then Chet Noice designed and made up a club Banner with Blue and Gold colors and presented it to the club. We used this banner for a number of years at shows, dinners, and club functions, but it was lost unfortunately several years ago. I wish we could get another one made.

The situation was pretty desperate financially by August. Here we were getting ready for our show and had a total of \$254. The obedience charge hadn't started to pay off yet and even though we had limited ourselves to \$260 for trophies we were in rough shape. Larry Wille, Bob Foster, LeVonne Thorsrud and Sol Fisher formed a committee for fund raising. Besides worrying about our own show, we had to start thinking about the Futurity to be held in the Spring of 1964.

I had been on the Board of Directors of the GSDCA since 1961 and was present, of course, when the vote was against us in 1962 for the 1963 Futurity. So in 1963 when they turned and point blank asked me at a Board Meeting if I felt my Club could handle the 1964 Futurity I could think only of how broke we were. But local pride entered in and I assured them that of course we would handle it. The Club submitted 3 choices of names to the Parent Club and Gene Tenges was chosen.

Well, our show that year was a turning point. We made money and with the money coming in from training we were able to re-establish our savings account up to \$500 and have some left over.

Ruth Foster was able to help us obtain the training quarters that we now have. So for once we had a permanent indoor training place where we could hold meetings also. Training boomed both obedience and conformation and the money started piling up. Believe me, when I saw the financial statement that Bob Foster had at the end of the year I breathed freely for the first time since I had committed the club to a Futurity.

Programs were on their way up with different things like Ring Stewarding and How to become a Handler for talks. We had more live dog programs as Larry had carried on my policy of "Officers Meeting" but held them every other month instead of monthly. With this he was able to keep the business meeting short and allow time for the program. We were getting many new members as a result of our training programs and it was essential that we spend time on the programs not business.

The irony of it all is that someone at the meeting at the end of the year when we make nominations and I don't remember who, but someone suggested "Why don't we have a board?" Obviously it was someone new to the club and didn't know of the previous attempts. But this person could see the obvious, that you can't spend the whole meeting on committee subjects when new people want information about dogs.

So we ended 1963 in sound financial shape, with a good training program with a permanent place, new members with ideas to contribute and all in a dither about putting on the Midwest Futurity.

1964

We entered 1964 really riding high. Everyone was excited about the Futurity, as this was the first Parent Club function our members had attended. Larry Wille carried on as President, Heinz Ritter became Vice President, Armie Hawes was Secretary again and Bob Foster was Treasurer again. By the way, in the 5 years that Bob was Treasurer he did a fantastic job. His monthly reports as well as special ones on the Specialty Shows, Futurity and Sanction Matches were clear and concise. It was very easy to determine where we were making money and where the losses were. Carol Van Heel took on the load of Show Secretary. Since Heinz moved up to Vice President, Ruth Foster took over Director of Training.

The first Achievement Certificate in Obedience was given to Barb Pearson, Joan Johnson, Judy Melquist, John Abbott, and Rose Foster at our annual dinner. Three things stand out in my mind about 1964.

The first was that the Parent Club was unable to hold a National Specialty that year. There had been unrest between the Parent Club Board and certain regional clubs and fighting between two prominent German Shepherd breeders and the AKC didn't like it. So we got our hands slapped and were not allowed to have the National. When I speak of we, I mean the Board of the Parent Club, as I was a Board Member at that time. All regional Clubs felt the impact of not having a National and our own GSDC of Mpls & St. Paul was no exception.

The second thing was that the GSDC of Mpls & St. Paul was to host the Midwest Futurity and we wanted to do it up right. We had a dinner dance at the Boulevard Twins the night before and hired our own orchestra. Luck was against us on our weather and it rained on Sunday, even in May. We had a lovely after show banquet at the same place. The Futurity was a huge success although we made only \$46. But it accomplished its purpose in bringing people to this area who had never been here before. And seeing that it wasn't so far after all they returned for our Fall Specialty and have been coming ever since. I had judged the Midwest Futurity held in Milwaukee the year before and it was interesting to see Gene Tenges put up my Best of Futurity as Best of Maturity under him a year later.

The third thing was our Demonstration Drill Team. Ruth Foster was the backbone of this and for the years 1964-65 we worked on this and were very active. I participated only as a commentator. We put on exhibitions many places including; HarMar, Apache Shopping Center, and Dayton's. Joan and Paul Johnson were very

active in this, particularly Joan with her dog Pam. Pam was very special, not only as an obedience dog in the normal sense, but as a ham actor as well. Pam was well up in years even at this time, and it was really comical to see her carry her dumb bell hooked on just her canine teeth. She made headlines later in the year in connection with our regular Specialty Show. The Club was given the front page and 3 inside pages in the St. Paul Pictorial section and Pam was on the front cover, in color, photographed, climbing a tree. She really made history.

Because we were so busy that year with the Futurity and our own Specialty Show in the fall we didn't have much time for other activities. We worked in two Sanction Matches, one in June, and one in December. I'm afraid we neglected our programs, although we had several Vets speak to us and some live dog demonstrations. Dan and Barb Pearson joined in February of that year.

We decided to increase our training fees from \$8 to \$10 for members and \$12 for non-members. At this time we were having a tremendous increase in membership and associate membership, which was to cause problems because people were joining as associate members just to get the reduced training fee and yet they had a majority on any voting question. Most of those people rarely attended a normal meeting so a problem was brought about. We didn't realize we had created a problem at that time and were happy for the increase in membership.

We changed our meeting night in July of that year to Thursday so that we could retain Wednesday night training. 80% of our meetings were also held at the training center (TCOTC). We had many problems connected with the training program. It was difficult to get trainers and there was the problem of cleanup afterwards. We still have these problems.

Our fall Specialty was to be our last fall show. Ed LeCocq (conformation) and Harper Wilcox (Obedience) were our judges and the weather was bitter and windy. The show was a success as it brought back many people who had visited in the spring and we made \$92. The Club made the decision to appeal to the AKC for an August date we had really had it with the weather.

In retrospect, we can judge the year as a fruitful one. We had a successful Futurity and Fall Specialty and our training was really motivated. Our own members were participating in acquiring awards and being part of an Obedience Drill Team. Membership was at an all time high and we had over \$1000 in the treasury. We felt there were no more problems.

1965

Heinz Ritter became President in 1965 with Paul Johnson as Vice President, Carole Van Heel relieved Armie Hawes of her Secretaryship and Bob Foster stayed on as Treasurer. Ruth Foster continued as Director of Training. Although Barb Pearson was a member of less than a year she willingly undertook the hard job of Show Secretary. LeVonne Thorsrud was to assist her so she had a real Pro to learn from.

Because we had so many new members, whom we had obtained through training, and because so few officer meetings were held, many of the meetings that year were getting bogged down in details of show preparation. The newer members wanted to know the whys and wherefores which was natural and because we didn't have a "Board" per se, all rulings had to be decided upon after much discussion at each meeting. It was bad on both sides, both for our club, which was trying to get things done, and for the new members who asked the questions, then became bored because of the detailed answers and never returned. As I mentioned before our increased membership was to cause us many problems and this was one of them.

We gave our first revolving trophy awards that year in conformation to Dick Hawes and Dr. Charles Peluso and to Chell Peterson in Obedience. Our Drill Team was still going strong and we added to the uniformity of it by having a uniform of white shirts with a German Shepherd painted on the back and our names over the pockets. The team was really impressive and it was a pleasure to see the members and their dogs work. Marlys and Tom Haggberg joined us in September of 1965 and both have worked hard for the club ever since.

We had 3 Sanction Matches that year, one in April, with Paul Johnson judging and I judged one in June and Larry Wille did one in September after our show. Our show that year was held in August after much haggling with the AKC and we had Virginia McCoy and Bea Kay, both who had judged here before. The club had decided to have just one dinner that year, an after show dinner, which we had at the Boulevard Twins. It was a very pleasant and beautiful show and for once we didn't freeze, in fact, just the opposite. We were so worried about the heat in August that we had ice in pails for the dogs and water buckets stationed around the ring and even rented another tent. What a change!

Because of the membership problem and the inability of the Officers to act as a true Board the first real complete change of By-Laws were in-acted. These were to be revised twice more before sending them to the AKC. The year was climaxed by awarding Honorary Membership to Jack and Donna Reed, Jack Sinykin and LeVonne Thorsrud for outstanding service to the club.

EPILOGUE

Although this completes the history only up through 1965 this will be the last installment. Perhaps in 5 years I or someone else will write the next chapters. Since I have had to miss meetings in the past few years due to increased participation in the GSDCA Board and also judging assignments I have separated myself from the heart of the club and therefore not be able to report correctly on the club's activities.

My attempt has been to briefly summarize the important facts since the GSDCMSP was founded in 1950. An earlier club had tried and failed but we were lucky. If I have left out anything or anyone my apologies.

I hope this series of installments written in 1966 will give the newer members a better idea of how their club evolved. It was a lot of work, great challenge to start, and build this club, but it was great fun and now in 2008 I will resurrect this document and republish it. I had hoped when I stopped someone actively involved would pick up and continue to document the club's continuing evolvement. I'd like to see us have a club historian to follow up and document the last 25 yrs. Unfortunately I'm the only one left of those original 10 members. But we are fortunate have our LaVonne Thorsrud (retired) still living in Lilydale and Betty Hinckley, Roger's wife, still living in West Virginia both of which I keep contact with. Helen Miller Fisher dated 3/5/2008