The Siberian Husky
Illustrated Standard

Presented by the
Siberian Husky Club
of America, Inc.

1999
Please Note

This publication is produced by the SHCA, for Siberian Husky fanciers and judges who have been without any kind of Illustrated Standard for the breed, for a number of years, since the latest version went out of print. The illustrations contained herein are from that 1981 Illustrated Standard, and the Standard itself is the current version, approved by the AKC in 1990.

Production of a new Illustrated Standard was put on hold for some time, awaiting the outcome of a possible revision to the standard. That proposed revision was not approved by a vote of the membership, so again, the Illustrated Standard Committee resumes work on a new version. This publication is offered as an interim measure only, until a new Illustrated Standard is completed, for the education of all who are interested in learning more about the Siberian Husky.

The Illustrated Standard published in 1981 contained the version of the Standard which was approved by the AKC in 1971. The Breed Standard was revised in 1990, but no new Illustrated Standard was developed at that time. The text of pages 2-5 is from the 1981 Illustrated Standard, as are all of the illustrations. The artwork was done by Richard K. LaBranche

Published by The SIBERIAN HUSKY CLUB of AMERICA, INC.
Breed Standard approved by American Kennel Club 1990
Illustrations 1981 © by RICHARD K. LA BRANCHE
The Siberian Husky

Text from 1981 Illustrated Standard

The breed of dog recognized by the American Kennel Club as the Siberian Husky was developed by the Chukchi people of extreme northeastern Asia. When climatic conditions and the encroachment of unfriendly tribes forced them to base their economy upon a wide-ranging hunting existence, the Chukchis responded to that challenge of nature and man, by developing a unique breed of sled dog, tailored to their specific requirements and upon which their very survival depended.

The Chukchis needed a dog with a structure designed to provide maximum speed and strength over a great distance with a minimum expenditure of energy. From the Chukchi breeding there gradually evolved a sturdy but graceful dog having moderate bone, medium length of leg and a fairly compact body. The key word for the Chukchi dog was ENDURANCE, and it is this same look of solid capability and easy grace that we cherish in the Siberian Husky today.

Shortly after the turn of the century, the drivers of the big Alaskan freighting teams began to organize sled dog racing as a competitive sport. The All Alaska Sweepstakes, running a 408-mile course from Nome to Candle and return, was designed to test the stamina of dog and driver alike. In 1909 a Russian fur trader, William Goosak, entered a team of unusual looking dogs from Siberia which were generally smaller, lighter boned and more fox-like in appearance than the native Alaskan dogs. They astonished everyone by placing third. Soon after, Charles Fox Maule-Ramsay, a young Scotsman in Alaska to supervise his family's interests in the gold fields, chartered a schooner and crossed the Bering Sea in search of those fabulous Siberian "huskies." His voyage took him up the Anadyr River to the village of Markovo where the Chukchi people often gathered for trading.

Ramsay returned to Nome with more than fifty Chukchi dogs. He trained three teams and entered them in the 1910 All Alaska Sweepstakes, winning first place with the team driven by John "Iron Man" Johnson and second place with a team driven by himself. The fact that these dogs were gentle and easy to manage in a team, had very tough feet, ate a comparatively small ration, and had endurance as well as speed, appealed to the dog drivers of the North country.

For the next decade the fame and popularity of the Siberian Husky grew, and under the legendary driving skill of Leonhard Seppala they
dominated the Alaskan long-distance racing scene. The endurance capabilities of the breed were ideally suited to the distance, terrain, and elements of the Alaskan races of that period.

Today sled dog racing has changed. It is an extremely demanding sport, but the shorter courses place much more emphasis upon speed. Many racing drivers in the United States use Setters, Pointers, Hounds, Indian dogs, huskies from Alaska, or any mixed breed built along high-speed racing lines. Rising to the challenge of the trail with a different, more suitable dog is far more sensible than trying to modify the conformation of the Siberian Husky to meet the current demands of this changing sport.

There are many teams of registered Siberian Huskies giving a good account of themselves in organized competition today. Fanciers all over America, Canada and in Europe are determined to preserve the traditions of the past and to prove the working ability of the breed. The Siberian Husky Club of America encourages club members whose dogs’ performances on the trail and in the show ring best exemplify the dual capabilities of the breed.

The Siberian Husky was never intended for heavy freighting work. He is capable of pulling considerable weight, but his forte lies, as already explained, in his ability to cover great distances with a light load at a moderate speed. It is not correct to assume that greater size, heavier bone and coarse build will better enable a Siberian Husky to perform his function in harness. On the contrary, these are liabilities, not assets, to the working Siberian Husky. It is also true that a Siberian Husky that is at the lower limits of the breed is just as capable and therefore just as correct as one at the upper size limits.

Those special qualities which distinguish the Siberian Husky from other Northern Breeds we call "breed type." Size, weight, balance and proportion must all be considered here, as well as outline, coat, movement, temperament, carriage and expression. The heavy bone of the larger Arctic breeds is not correct for the Siberian Husky; nor is the massive head with domed skull, wide-set ears and broad muzzle. The typical coat of the Siberian Husky consists of an outer coat of medium length guard hairs supported by a shorter, soft, dense undercoat. A very short coat, an extremely long fluffy coat, or a coarse shaggy coat are all incorrect. An improper tail is extremely offensive to the knowledgeable Siberian Husky breeder and exhibitor. The typical Siberian Husky must appear light, agile, graceful and yet capable; his head must show refinement and that "foxy" look so dear to the hearts of breed fanciers.
Recognition and appreciation of this true breed type, regardless of color and markings, grows with one's association with the breed.

The characteristic temperament of the Siberian Husky is friendly and gentle, but also alert and outgoing. He does not display the possessive qualities of the guard dog, nor is he overly suspicious of strangers or aggressive with other dogs. Some measure of reserve and dignity may be expected in the mature dog. His intelligence, tractability, and eager disposition make him an agreeable companion and willing worker.

Proper movement is essential to any dog for the efficient performance of his specific work, and it is especially so to the long-distance sled dog such as the Siberian Husky. Structural faults, not so apparent in the motionless dog, are often revealed when he is gaited in the show ring. At the usual brisk trot the Siberian Husky definitely tends to single track; as the speed increases both front and rear legs will angle in so that the feet fall on the center line. With sound structure, good balance and proper training, the graceful Siberian Husky should be able to maintain his smooth, free-flowing gait with effortless ease.

After Leonhard Seppala gained national prominence through his participation in the humanitarian serum run to save the diphtheria-stricken city of Nome in 1925, he was invited to compete in sled dog races in New England where the sport had already been introduced. In these arduous point-to-point races, the superior ability of Seppala's Siberian Huskies quickly won the hearts of Yankee sportsmen. It was through the efforts of pioneer fanciers like Mrs. Elizabeth Ricker and Mr. and Mrs. Milton Seeley that the breed was established in New England. When breed recognition was granted in 1930 the first Siberian Huskies to be registered with the American Kennel Club were the pure white ones from the Northern Light kennel of Julian Hurley, a federal judge from Fairbanks, Alaska. Sled dog racing and Siberian Huskies continued to flourish in New England and in 1938 the Siberian Husky Club of America was founded with Dean C.F. Jackson as its first president.

As more and more people are attracted to Siberian Huskies and the sport of exhibiting in competition, it is not unusual to find that they have one of the largest entries of all breeds at a show. This puts a greater burden of responsibility than ever before upon those who are approved to judge our breed at such events. Because a surge in popularity may sometimes lead to a breed's eventual downfall, the quality of Siberian Huskies in the show ring must keep pace with the increase in quantity. It should be remembered that, as sled dog driving proves the working ability of the breed, show ring exhibition proves the worth and
standard quality of the breeding stock, and therefore exerts a tremendous influence upon the future of the breed.

Today the membership of the Siberian Husky Club of America is composed of many breeders, exhibitors, owners and drivers who are united in their devotion to the breed in its original image. Striving to maintain the original form has become more than just a demonstration of pride in the past and a respect for tradition. We do not visualize our dogs as relics of a forgotten day, but rather as useful, enjoyable and beautiful creatures of a modern age. We shall always remain dedicated to the preservation of our own special breed qualities and to the perpetuation of the Siberian Husky as an original, capable and natural breed.
STANDARD for SIBERIAN HUSKIES

Approved by the American Kennel Club
October 9, 1990

GENERAL APPEARANCE
The Siberian Husky is a medium-sized working dog, quick and light on his feet and free and graceful in action. His moderately compact and well-furred body, erect ears and brush tail suggest his Northern Heritage. His characteristic gait is smooth and seemingly effortless. He performs his original function in harness most capably, carrying a light load at a moderate speed over great distances. His body proportions and form reflect this basic balance of power, speed, and endurance. The males of the Siberian Husky breed are masculine but never coarse; the bitches are feminine but without weakness of structure. In proper condition, with muscle firm and well developed, the Siberian Husky does not carry excess weight.

SIZE, PROPORTION AND SUBSTANCE
**Height:** Dogs, 21 to 23 1/2 inches at the withers. Bitches, 20 to 22 inches at the withers.

**Weight:** Dogs, 45 to 60 pounds, Bitches 35 to 50 pounds. Weight is in proportion to height. The measurements mentioned above represent the extreme height and weight limits with no preference given to either extreme. Any appearance of excessive bone or weight should be penalized.

**In Profile:** The length of the body from the point of the shoulder to the rear point of the croup is slightly longer than the height of the body from the ground to the top of the withers.

**DISQUALIFICATION:** Dogs over 23 1/2 inches and Bitches over 22 inches.

HEAD
**Expression** is keen, but friendly; interested and even mischievous.

**Eyes:** Almond shaped, moderately spaced and set a trifle obliquely. Eyes may be brown or blue in color; one of each or particolored are acceptable.

**Faults:** Eyes set too obliquely; set too close together.

**Ears:** Of medium size, triangular in shape, close fitting and set high on the head. They are thick, well-furred, slightly arched at the back, and
strongly erect, with slightly rounded tips pointing straight up. **Faults:** Ears too large in proportion to the head; too wide set; not strongly erect.
**Skull:** Of medium size and in proportion to the body; slightly rounded on top and tapering from the widest point to the eyes.

**Faults:** Head clumsy or heavy; head too finely chiseled.

**Stop:** The stop is well-defined and the bridge of the nose is straight from the stop to the tip.

**Fault:** Insufficient stop.

**Muzzle:** Of medium length; that is, the distance from the tip of the nose to the stop is equal to the distance from the stop to the occiput. The muzzle is of medium width, tapering gradually to the nose, with the tip neither pointed nor square.

**Faults:** Muzzle either too snipy or too coarse; muzzle too short or too long.
Nose: Black in gray, tan, or black dogs; liver in copper dogs; may be flesh-colored in pure white dogs. The pink-streaked "snow nose" is acceptable.

Lips: Are well pigmented and close fitting.

Teeth: Closing in a scissors bite.
Fault: Any bite other than scissors.

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

Neck: Medium in length, arched and carried proudly erect when dog is standing. When moving at a trot, the neck is extended so that the head is carried slightly forward.
Faults: Neck too short and thick; neck too long.

Chest: Deep and strong, but not too broad, with the deepest point being just behind and level with the elbows. The ribs are well sprung from the spine but flattened on the sides to allow for freedom of action.
Faults: Chest too broad; "barrel ribs"; ribs too flat or weak.

Back: The back is straight and strong, with a level topline from withers to croup. It is of medium length, neither cobby nor slack from excessive length. The loin is taut and lean, narrower than the rib cage, and with a slight tuck-up. The croup slopes away from the spine at an angle, but never so steeply as to restrict the rearward thrust of the hind legs.
Faults: Weak or slack back; roached back; sloping topline.

Straight and Strong
Excessive Length

Neither cobby

Weak or Slack back
TAIL
The well-furred tail of fox-brush shape is set on just below the level of
the topline, and is usually carried over the back in a graceful sickle
curve when the dog is at attention. When carried up, the tail does not
curl to either side of the body, nor does it snap flat against the back. A
trailing tail is normal for the dog when in repose. Hair on the tail is of
medium length and approximately the same length on top, sides, and
bottom, giving the appearance of a round brush.

Faults: A snapped or tightly curled tail; highly plumed tail; tail set too
low or too high.
FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders: The shoulder blade is well laid back. The upper arm angles slightly backward from point of shoulder to elbow, and is never perpendicular to the ground. The muscles and ligaments holding the shoulder to the rib cage are firm and well developed.

Faults: Straight shoulders, loose shoulders.

Forelegs: When standing and viewed from the front, the legs are moderately spaced, parallel and straight, with the elbows close to the body and turned neither in nor out. Viewed from the side, pasterns are slightly slanted, with the pastern joint strong but flexible. Bone is substantial but never heavy. Length of leg from elbow to ground is slightly more than the distance from the elbow to the top of the withers. Dewclaws on forelegs may be removed.

Faults: Weak pasterns; too heavy bone; too narrow or too wide in the front; out at the elbows.
Feet: Oval in shape but not long. The paws are medium in size, compact and well-furred between the toes and pads. The pads are tough and thickly cushioned. The paws neither turn in nor out when the dog is in natural stance.
Faults: Soft or splayed toes; paws too large and clumsy; paws too small and delicate; toeing in or out.

HINDQUARTERS
When standing and viewed from the rear, the hind legs are moderately spaced and parallel. The upper thighs are well muscled and powerful, the stifles well bent, the hock joint well defined and set low to the ground. Dewclaws, if any, are to be removed.
Faults: Straight stifles; cowhocks, too narrow or too wide in the rear.
Rear
Too Narrow

Rear
Too Wide

Moderately spaced

Well-Bent Stifles

Straight Stifles
COAT
The coat of the Siberian Husky is double and medium in length, giving a well-furred appearance, but is never so long as to obscure the cleancut outline of the dog. The undercoat is soft and dense and of sufficient length to support the outer coat. The guard hairs of the outer coat are straight and somewhat smooth lying, never harsh nor standing straight off from the body. It should be noted that the absence of the undercoat during the shedding season is normal. Trimming of whiskers and fur between the toes and around the feet to present a neater appearance is permissible. Trimming the fur on any other part of the dog is not to be condoned and should be severely penalized.

Faults: Long, rough, or shaggy coat; texture too harsh or too silky; trimming of the coat, except as permitted above.
COLOR
All colors from black to pure white are allowed. A variety of markings on the head is common, including many striking patterns not found in other breeds.

GAIT
The Siberian Husky's characteristic gait is smooth and seemingly effortless. He is quick and light on his feet, and when in the show ring should be gaited on a loose lead at a moderately fast trot, exhibiting good reach in the forequarters and good drive in the hindquarters. When viewed from the front to rear while moving at a walk the Siberian Husky does not single-track, but as the speed increases the legs gradually angle inward until the pads are falling on a line directly under the longitudinal center of the body. As the pad marks converge, the forelegs and hind legs are carried straight forward, with neither elbows nor stifles turned in or out. Each hind leg moves in the path of the foreleg on the same side. While the dog is gaiting, the topline remains firm and level.

Faults: Short, prancing, or chopping gait, lumbering or rolling gait; crossing or crabbing.
Faults

Too Narrow

Too Wide

Cowhocks
Pad Marks Converge

Moves in the path of the foreleg

Smooth and flowing, good reach in the front and follow-through in the rear...
TEMPERAMENT
The characteristic temperament of the Siberian Husky is friendly and gentle, but also alert and outgoing. He does not display the possessive qualities of the guard dog, nor is he overly suspicious of strangers or aggressive with other dogs. Some measure of reserve and dignity may be expected in the mature dog. His intelligence, tractability, and eager disposition make him an agreeable companion and willing worker.

SUMMARY
The most important breed characteristics of the Siberian Husky are medium size, moderate bone, well-balanced proportions, ease and freedom of movement, proper coat, pleasing head and ears, correct tail, and good disposition. Any appearance of excessive bone or weight, constricted or clumsy gait, or long, rough coat should be penalized. The Siberian Husky never appears so heavy or coarse as to suggest a freighting animal; nor is he so light and fragile as to suggest a sprint-racing animal. In both sexes the Siberian Husky gives the appearance of being capable of great endurance. In addition to the faults already noted, the obvious structural faults common to all breeds are as undesirable in the Siberian Husky as in any other breed, even though they are not specifically mentioned herein.

DISQUALIFICATION
Dogs over 23 1/2 inches and Bitches over 22 inches.

Breed Standard approved by American Kennel Club October 9, 1990
Illustrations 1981 © by Richard K. La Branche
Published by the Siberian Husky Club of America, Inc.