

OF SLED DOGS AND STAMPS

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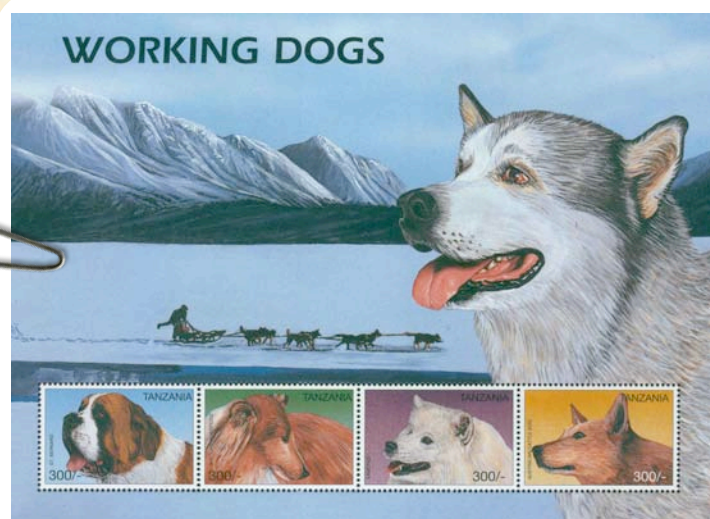
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The Illustrated Breed Standard: A Philatelic Appendix

Malamute enthusiast and show judge Arie Schwarz entertains us with a whimsical look at the breed standard, as seen through the world of stamps.

We all know that the written breed standard is not comprehensive enough: we need to see the “perfect dog” with our own eyes in order to fully understand it. While there is more than one opinion on the illustrated standard, none of them will be the subject of this article. Instead, allow me to use my stamp collection to demonstrate some less known characteristics of the breed.

The “Temperament” part of the standard asks for “a loyal, devoted companion.” A loyalist? Maybe it should have said “loyal to the crown, likes to be part of the royal court.” Monaco principedom holds an annual FCI (Fédération Cynologique Internationale) all breed dog show, for which a special stamp or stamp series is issued every year. The winner of the 1973 show was Am/Can/Intl/ Mex Ch Glaciers Storm Kloud, CD, ROM. Princess Antoinette de Monaco fell in love with him, and some ten years later, under the direct order of Prince Renier III, a stamp depicting his descendant, BIS Am/World/Intl Ch Storm Kloud FFollow My Dream, WPD, owned by Gloria Urbani of Italy, was issued. At least in His Majesty’s opinion, the picture on the stamp can easily qualify for the “this is what they should look like” part of the breed standard.



The Tanzania stamp sheet features a malamute with a soft expression.

High Standards

Stamps from around the world illustrate and celebrate the beauty and history of the Alaskan malamute.



Monaco royalty are malamute fans - and ordered this stamp to be issued!

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Rare mis-perforated stamps feature a malamute and collie.



This happy malamute lives in Israel!

Term of the Day

Maxi Card - a post card with a stamp and a cancel, where all three of these components feature the same topic.

"The expression is soft and indicates an affectionate disposition," claims the standard. Well, we all know what that means: "yes, dear, I can be soft and affectionate, as long as you understand I am the better of us all." Tanzania, a country that never had much snow, sledding or malamutes, issued a souvenir sheet depicting some working dogs: Australian Cattle dog, Samoyed, Shetland Sheepdog and St. Bernard. It was smart of them to let the malamute look down on the other dogs from above, thus allowing it to have a soft and affectionate expression!

"Generally impressive by his dignity after maturity" can be interpreted in many ways. I have found this one to be better than others: "If you ain't my friend, and want to stay in one piece, get out of my way." Having said that, it is understandable why the United States Postal Service printers had their hands shaking when they printed the lovely malamute and collie stamp of 1984. With modern technology, mis-perforation in stamps is very rare, not to mention that one sheet was not destroyed and found its way to the stamp collector markets! These unique stamps are among my favorite items. I believe that the only reason the collie looks happy in

the stamp is that collies cannot read breed standards.

The breed standard phrase, "Malamutes usually have a shorter and less dense coat during the summer months," is an understatement. Malamutes who live in warm climates usually have even less than that. Silver Mist Noga Shel Nili (bred by Jan and Dave Richards) was not fortunate enough to have a winter coat, but was very fortunate to live in Israel and to have his happy face put on a postage stamp before his second birthday. This is a real, legitimate stamp for regular local post, and the dog's face is printed on a tab by the Israeli Postal Service on request. I guess this stamp is good enough to illustrate the "malamute's summer no-coat."

The head part of the breed standard says nothing about the dog's tongue, as if it has no functional use. Well, every stamp collector knows that the gum on the other side of the stamps tastes bad, which you can disregard if you have someone else lick your stamps for you. Yes, my friends, I know you never thought about your dogs as stamp lickers, but there is always a first time! In 1989, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers went on a long strike, leaving



Above: Mis-perforated stamps.
Below: Stamp-licker malamute!

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Up to no good - just look at his naughty eyes!

the British Columbia residents with only private couriers to carry mail. One of these couriers had already made his own label depicting a "stamp licker Alaskan malamute," and using it during the strike made it a legitimate philatelic item.

"Eyes are brown, almond shaped and of medium size" is easy, but we all know what that means. In humans we call it "smiling eyes." Our dogs can smile, laugh, grin, gloat and express their mischievous natures with only their eyes. The Somali Republic, another country with no snow and no dogs, issued a lovely malamute stamp with a great design: a self-contented, naughty smiling dog. You have to admit he is all of that and more, showing it all with only his eyes.

We all know that the Alaskan malamute is an affectionate, friendly dog. I think the standard should have said "...and you should keep more than one." Years ago Storm Kloud Kennel ordered a private stamp with the kennel's emblem – a wonderful picture of Am/Can/Mex/ Intl Ch Glaciers Storm Kloud, CD, ROM and Am/Can Ch Timberlands Storm Kloud. Private stamps can be issued by anyone, including you. All you need is a good picture and access to the zazzle.com website. As you can see, Storm Kloud got

there first; their stamps are from five cents ago (not centuries, cents). You, on the other hand, will now need to pay 44 cents if you want to create your own stamp.

Speaking of having more than one, we come to yet another interesting philatelic item – the Maxi Card. A Maxi Card is a post card with a stamp and a cancel, all having the same topic on them. The 1994 Storm Kloud Iditarod Race Team (SKIRT) gave me the once-in-a-lifetime chance to make my own special Maxi Card. Postcards made in advance by Nancy Russell, stamps from Bob Russell's bottomless drawer, and a group of silly looking people sitting on the floor of the Anchorage post office combined to manufacture the best looking Maxi Card ever. After sending hundreds of SKIRT magazines all over the world, I made ten of these postcards. Signed on the back by Nancy Russell and Jamie Nelson, one of them was donated and sold in



Double Standard? This custom stamp was created at zazzle.com.

the National Specialty auction a couple of years ago, for the sum of \$200. Thank you, Nancy, for providing me with all these wonderful philatelic items.

Before we end, may I ask one thing of you: if any of you ever decide to create your own malamute stamps, please, order a couple of extra sheets and send them to me. They will be more than welcome in my collection!

The next time we meet, you will hear a story of war, economy, politics, espionage and forgery, all told through the history of sled dog stamps.

