NEWS IS SCARCE: Pity the poor editor who tries to get out even this capsule publication without any news. Dog shows are in the doldrums, most members are sitting under the shade of the old apple tree and, in general, Briard activity is at low ebb. The Rudolph Vogels are in Europe and their last card was just before they headed for France to visit some of the Briard kennels there. Katherine Stryker, chairman of our Board, recently had the misfortune to get mixed up with a car that was rolling backwards and got pinned against a wall. Her injuries were painful but not critical. This report came from her partner, Sue Fonn, who also states that Ch. Westlawn Gossamer has not been too well this summer. Gossie is getting close to her eleventh birthday which, translated into human ages, means the equal to about 77 years.

It was sort of Old Home Week at the recent Lake Mohawk show. Mrs. Holloway of our Board was, as usual, on hand as well as Maxine McKean who was one of the busiest of the officials. The writer’s Chef went best of breed but the honor was rather hollow for the rest of the membership stayed away in droves. This is unfortunate as the Lake Mohawk show has always been well patronized by Briardites.

Another letter from Rudolph Vogel stating that he misses his Briard during his trip abroad but stating that, previous to the trip, he had been having success in obedience work. Her training is going on while the Vogels are away so she should be ready for the big time trials upon their return to America.

Letter by Cyrus Crubaugh about his Marc, An accompanying photo shows that the dog is a tawny
with an exceptionally heavy coat that requires more than the usual amount of care.

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MONGREL VS PURE BRED: Every breeder of pure bred dogs has heard the ancient argument that a mongrel is smarter than a pure bred. Could it be that the owner of a mongrel, suffering from an inferiority complex, goes along with that yarn to salve his own feelings? Every expert who has ever studied the subject objectively agrees that proper breeding improves, rather than reduces, the brain functioning of a dog -- or any other animal. This is especially true in any breed where -- as is true for Briards -- the standard of the breed is not constantly being monkeyed up to keep in line with some style which, like that in women's clothes, is never intended to do more than improve the bankroll of those who are able to benefit from the so-called improvement. Since the first Briard standard was drawn up it has never been changed and, we hope, it never will be unless the alterations are to clarify certain passages which are now as vague as anything governmental directives have produced as examples of how not to write English.

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SHOWS TO BECOME MORE COSTLY. There is a rumor that the entry fee for shows will rise to $6.00 per dog for indoor events. When the writer started showing Briards, the fee was $3.00. Show officials argue that they simply cannot stage indoor, benched events and still hold the fee to the $5.00 that has been standard for some years. Perhaps this is not the place to discuss show finances but the fact remains that many dog owners are already complaining that the $5.00 fee prevents them from showing as frequently as they would like. On the
one side we have the argument that the show giving club does not have finances sufficient to lose money on each show. On the other we have dog exhibitors who say that showing is too costly. To attempt to rationalize the argument it is necessary to consider that dog exhibitors range from the very wealthy down to the owner who has to shake the piggy bank before deciding upon entering a dog show. The wealthy contingent -- they usually employ professional handlers and often or not see their show dogs so seldom that their "pets" do not even recognize them -- will show no matter what the fee. Often their dogs are constantly on tour under the care of the paid hands. But these people do not represent the bulk of dog owners who would show if the events were run for the benefit of the majority of dog lovers.

One lesson has been learned in the past few years. There are more and more shows that save money and make it more attractive for the exhibitors by having unbenced shows. Professional handlers don't like that sort of show. They bring dogs by the car load and put them on the bench until they are needed at the ringside. An unbenced show is inconvenient for them in spite of the fact that the amateur dog lover would far prefer to walk around with his dog like the true pals they are. Another lesson is that the "come and go when you like" show attracts dog lovers. Again the professionals -- both handlers and exhibitors -- don't like the idea. Making money out of exhibiting dogs, they are willing to put in all day and evening on their jobs. The amateur loves his dog more than he loves showing. He is willing to pay a reasonable entry fee providing he is not required to remain on exhibit like a two-headed calf or the snake charmer.

Show officials are prone to play follow the leader. If the Mud Creek Kennel Club does certain
things all the other clubs fall in line. One startling exception is the Morris & Essex show. There are others, but M&E is the top example of a successful show that asks only that an exhibitor arrives by ring time and, once he has enjoyed the thrill of showing, has the right to go home and spend the rest of the day rocking on his porch or watching TV. If we are to fork out six bucks for each entry and are still to be faced with the stern visaged guard at the gate who snarls, "No-body ain't allowed to leave the building," the day is going to come when the curve of diminishing entries passes the curve of increased entry fees until we arrive at the point where the average dog owner -- the man who can take shows or leave them along -- will drop out entirely and the only entries will be those of the "gentleman farmer" kennels handled by a crew of paid hands. Now and then the great man himself will show up to be photographed receiving the best in show plaque. As the great man often maintains his kennels as a tax-saving activity he will not only fail to object, but will welcome higher and higher entry fees. All of which is one man's opinion -- or do we have a "second the motion"?

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A WEST COAST CHAMPION: Providing we have not previously mentioned it, one of the latest Briards to reach the championship goal is Jonal Kennels' Lorfi's Lesser Yellow Legs. Messrs. Barrasso and Mayall of Jonal are doing a wonderful job for the breed in the Oregon-Washington area and we hope that, eventually, they will get a great deal of competition to make their efforts more fun.