

## **Thisa and Thata**

Keeping Up With the Jonahs  
by Norma Hansburg

Everybody is familiar with the phrase KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES. This refers to people who are trying to get the latest fashions in order to do as well as their neighbors are doing. In our family we had another phrase for it: KEEPING UP WITH THE JONAHS. This was because my cousin Joanie was always in some kind of trouble.

She was a very beautiful young girl who went over the hill at an early age. She ran off and eloped with her High School boyfriend when she was 16. The police brought her home but she ran off again and married him anyway –a marriage that ended in divorce. While she was in High School she was THE DRUM MAJORETTE of THE MARCHING BAND. After her marriage, she became a Hat Check and Cigarette girl in a Nightclub.

From the age of 20, after the first of her two sons were born, she was in and out of the hospital for various medical problems. Both of her boys were juvenile delinquents. Both died by the age of 40 from drugs. Since she had done such a spectacular job of raising her own children, she adopted three others. I never met any of them. I did know her second husband who was really nice. He was a Superintendent of an Apartment House. They lived together sporadically so that she could collect Welfare benefits from the government.

By the time she was 65, she had been arrested several times - even though, by this time, she was confined to a wheelchair. She had two siblings. A brother and a sister. Both lovely, hard working, completely responsible people. It was not a family trait. But every time someone in our family did something wrong, my mother would say THEY ARE JUST KEEPING UP WITH THE JONAHS. This was a very unlucky thing to do.

Many people in this country keep up with the Jonahs. They max out their credit cards. They buy anything they want or they steal it. They get houses they can't afford. Cars that are gas burners and in the dog world they all Breed to some dog of the moment that carries horrific genetic problems. It has been going on since I have been in dogs.

I think of my cousin Joanie a lot these days. I think of her when I see someone keeping too many dogs. I think of her every time I see someone dragging some pet around the ring to get that last progeny for an ROM title. I think of her every time someone has to finish nine champions from one litter because someone else finished eight. I think of her every time someone brags about finishing the youngest champion on record. And I think of her every time some one cries to the world how they lost this wonderful dog they bred who had two parents who died of bloat.

I had one dog who was a real Jonah. He was the first dog that I bought. I gave him away at an early age to my cousin Joanie. She loved him.