

# THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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# Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly  
Talks with  
Danny and Chris Middleton  
**QUICKSILVER**  
Houston, Texas

*This interview was conducted at the home of Danny and Chris Middleton in August 2002 by Sandra Miller.*

*How long have you been in this breed?*

Chris: It will be 30 years in October. We will be married 30 years in October. We got our first Samoyed two days after we got married.

*How did you get started in dogs?*

Danny: I always had dogs as a kid.

Chris: I did, too. Not show dogs, just pets. Right before we got married, he brought home a book about Samoyeds and said, "This is the kind of dog we are going to get." It was not what I had in mind, but we went to a pet shop and played with one. I loved their personality and dis-



position. We got back from our wedding in New Orleans, looked in the paper and bought a Samoyed at 11:00 at night.

Danny: We honeymooned in New Orleans. When we came back here, we didn't even spend the night before we had a dog. It was like our wedding

present.

*What made you decide to show and breed?*

Danny: We got into obedience first.

Chris: We met conformation people. Then we got interested in showing in conformation.

Danny: The Winslows helped us along quite a bit, too. They don't live very far from here. We brought our Samoyed over to their house for them to see.

Chris: They told us that if we seriously wanted to show, we should consider her as a pet and show her in obedience. But get another one to start with in conformation. So we did.

*How did you decide on this breed?*

Chris: Because they were pretty, and had great temperaments. They are very people-oriented.

Danny: Yes. Especially after we went and saw the one at the pet shop.

Chris: We could not afford the one at the pet shop.

Danny: They were stunning, just to look at them.

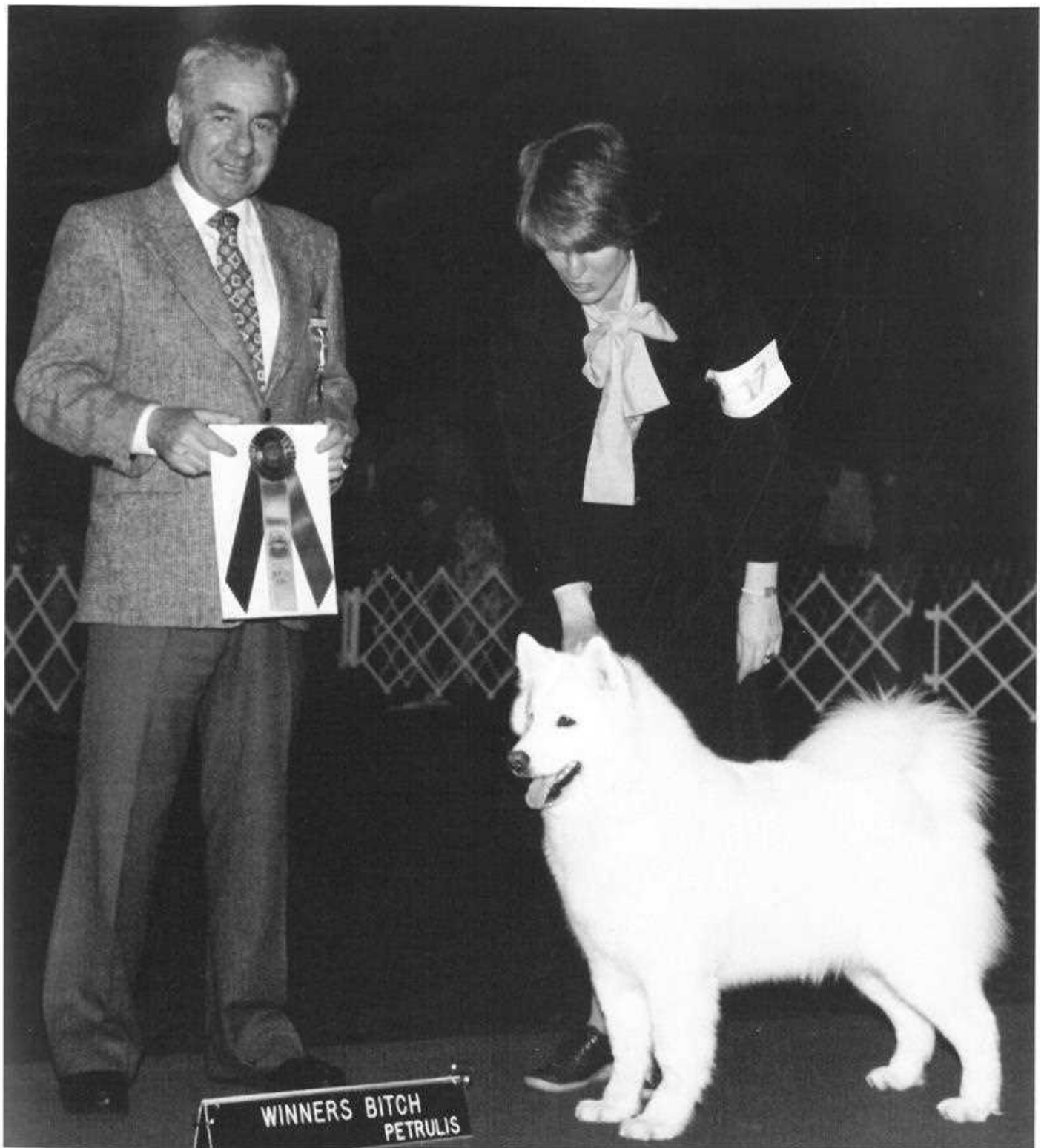
*How did you find your first show dog?*

Danny: Through the Winslows.

Chris: But he did not work



*Our first two champions: Ch. Lynthea's Yellow Rose of Texas (Lynthea's J.C. x Ch. Mischievous of Lynthea), bred by Jim and Marion Osborn, whelped February 1976, and Ch. St. Croix's Miss HAP on right (Ch. St. Croix's Batu Khan O'Sam O'Khan x Tsartar's Silver Kim Tuppence), bred by Florence and Vivian Watson, whelped January 1976. Missy was our foundation bitch.*



*Ch. Quicksilver's Lucky Starr, dam of Taz.*

out.

Danny: Then we got our second dog from Connie and Dave Richardson, but she did not work out, either.

Chris: Connie sent us to Jim Osborn and we got Rosie,

Lynthea's Yellow Rose of Texas.

Danny: We decided to buy two bitches, hoping one of them would work out. They both worked out.

Chris: They were our first

two champions. Ch. Lynthea's Yellow Rose of Texas, we got from Jim and Marion Osborn and Ch. St. Croix's Miss HAP from Florence and Vivian Watson. We never got anything from Rosie to go on with.

Missy ended up being our foundation bitch and our line goes back to her. We ended up breeding Missy to Rosie's sire, Ch. Lynthea's J.C., owned by the Osborns.

*How many litters have you bred?*

Danny: Not very many. All of our litters were two or three puppies. Our biggest litter was six puppies.

Chris: No, we do not breed a lot. In 30 years, we've had ten or eleven litters. We are defi-

nately not supplying the world with puppies!

*Do you have one that stands out as your best litter?*

Chris: We bred the top-winning Samoyed of all time, Ch. Quicksilver's Razz Ma Tazz. I

guess we would have to consider that as our best litter. He was one of just two puppies; he had a sister. He had a son that was really good, too. He was a Best in Show winner and a multiple Group winner. He was Ch.

Kolinka Quicksilver Jazzman. He was bred by Eugene and Joyce Curtis. We did not campaign him. I showed him myself. By that time, we got busy with our kids and they took over the scene. After you



*Ch. Quicksilver's Red Baron, grandsire of Ch. Quicksilver's Razz Ma Tazz.*



*Ch. Quicksilver's Razz Ma Tazz (Ch. Kolinka's Quilted Bear x Ch. Quicksilver's Lucky Starr), co-owned with Eugene and Joyce Curtis.*

campaign a dog, you are undecided whether you really want to do it again. It was fun and we learned a lot about dogs, but it was a lot of money and traveling. It was a lot of work.

We had a handler, but I went to all the shows. I groomed him for every show. It was about 100 shows a year for

two years. Now they are doing more than that. People hire handlers and they fly around with one dog. We basically went on the circuit that our handler, Roy Murray, went on with all of his class dogs.

Danny: The one thing that people did not understand about Tazz is that we went to the

shows and we never picked the judges. We just went where our handler went, because we could not afford to do anything different. If the judge was good or bad, we just had to take them. Now they fly around everywhere and pick the judges who are good for their dog.

Hazel Arnold, a friend of

ours, introduced us to Roy Murray. In my first conversation with him, I said, "I want to make him the number one Working dog." He said, "Oh, sure." A year and a half later, he was the number one Working dog, and number two all breeds. It was fun. It was something that we can remember and

treasure the rest of our lives. I would probably never do it again!

Chris: Tazz was campaigned in 1983 and 1984. He had 54 all breed Bests in Show; 202 Group placements, of which 141 were first place; 232 Bests of Breed; Bests of Breed at the Samoyed Club of America in 1983 and 1984; number one Working dog, all systems, 1983 and 1984; number one Samoyed, 1983 and 1984; number two dog, all breeds for 1983, and number three dog of all breeds for 1984. He was also a Quaker Oats award winner, Working Group, 1983 and 1984. A pretty good record! We did not have a handler who was flying around looking for certain judges.

*Does one of your dogs stand out as your biggest character?*

Chris: Right now, it is our youngest one, Ruby. She has the most interesting temperament. She's very busy and mischievous. She is the most persistent dog I've ever had when it comes to getting what she wants.

Yet she is also one of the easiest dogs to train that I've ever had. She'll do anything for a cookie and some praise. She's a really fun dog to live with. She reminds me a lot of our Tazz; he was a fun dog, too. Everything he did, he did with great gusto. He acted like a puppy until the day he died.

Danny: Rosie was pretty neat, personality-wise. She was a real talker, and had something to say about everything. Tazz was one of the most fun dogs, as far as playing ball. After the shows, I would throw the ball in the fields. He would play ball until he dropped.

We would take our first dog, Cher, to the beach. She would get out into the water eight or ten feet deep chasing fish and stay out there for hours.

*How have you used inbreeding, linebreeding, and outcrossing?*

Chris: I do linebreeding and outcrossing. I do not do any father-daughter, mother-son or brother-sister breedings. The closest I have ever done is half-brother/half-sister. My favorite

has been aunt/nephew, or uncle-niece, those are the ones that have worked out the best. When I outcross, I like to go out for what I need to somebody who has linebred for it, but that does not always exist. You just have to do the best you can do. But I feel it is very important to linebreed in order to get consistent dogs.

*Do you think that you have established a distinguishable line? What do you feel others are looking for when they think of your line?*

Chris: I do not feel like I am there yet. But that is what I am working towards. It is hard. Tazz was our fourth generation. He was a dog that had it all together. Then you have to go from there. It is really hard to get it all back together again. I think that our dogs have a certain look. I am striving for it all. I want a sound dog. I want a dog that is also pretty.

Danny: And one that will show well.

*If you had to rate type, temperament and soundness, what order would you put them in?*

Chris: Soundness first.

Danny: I disagree with that. If the dog does not have a good temperament, if it bites people, it is out.

Chris: I agree with that, but thank goodness, that is rare in Samoyeds. I am talking about a dog like our Harley, that is soft and not a good show dog. I had to keep him, I needed him structurally. So in this case I had to rate structure over a showy temperament.

Danny: You have to be able to live with the dog first.

Chris: I have a tough time with the old type versus soundness argument. Type includes not just head and coat, but also soundness and good structure. I can live with different types of heads and coats. I cannot live with straight shoulders, short legs, long backs and weak movement.

Danny: It has to look like a Samoyed. I couldn't handle a dog that moves beautifully and looks more like a white German Shepherd than a Samoyed. You have to try to keep it all in bal-



Three generations of BIS Winners: Ch. Kolinka's Quilted Bear, bred and owned by Eugene and Joyce Curtis; Ch. Quicksilver's Razz Ma Tazz, and Ch. Kolinka Quicksilver Jazzman, co-owned with and bred by Eugene and Joyce Curtis, at the 1984 National Specialty.



*BIS and multiple-Group winner Ch. Kolinka Quicksilver Jazzman, son of Taz.*



Ch. Quicksilver's Pretty In Pink (Ch. Kolinka Quicksilver Jazzman x Polar Mist Quicksilver Lil).

ance.

*How many dogs do you keep now?*

Chris: We have four. Our goal is to get to two.

Danny: We have one that is fourteen and a half. She might live to be twenty. She's doing so well and is so spry for her age.

Chris: I would really like to be down to two, but realistically that is probably impossible. Three maybe. The most we ever had was seven. That was way over my sanity limit, since

all of our dogs live in the house with us.

*How did you come up with your kennel name?*

Danny: It was a musical group called Quicksilver's Messenger Service. We just used Quicksilver.

Chris: He came up with that, but it goes well with the breed.

*Do you have any theme for naming your litters?*

Chris: Not usually. I might do a certain litter. Like Harley

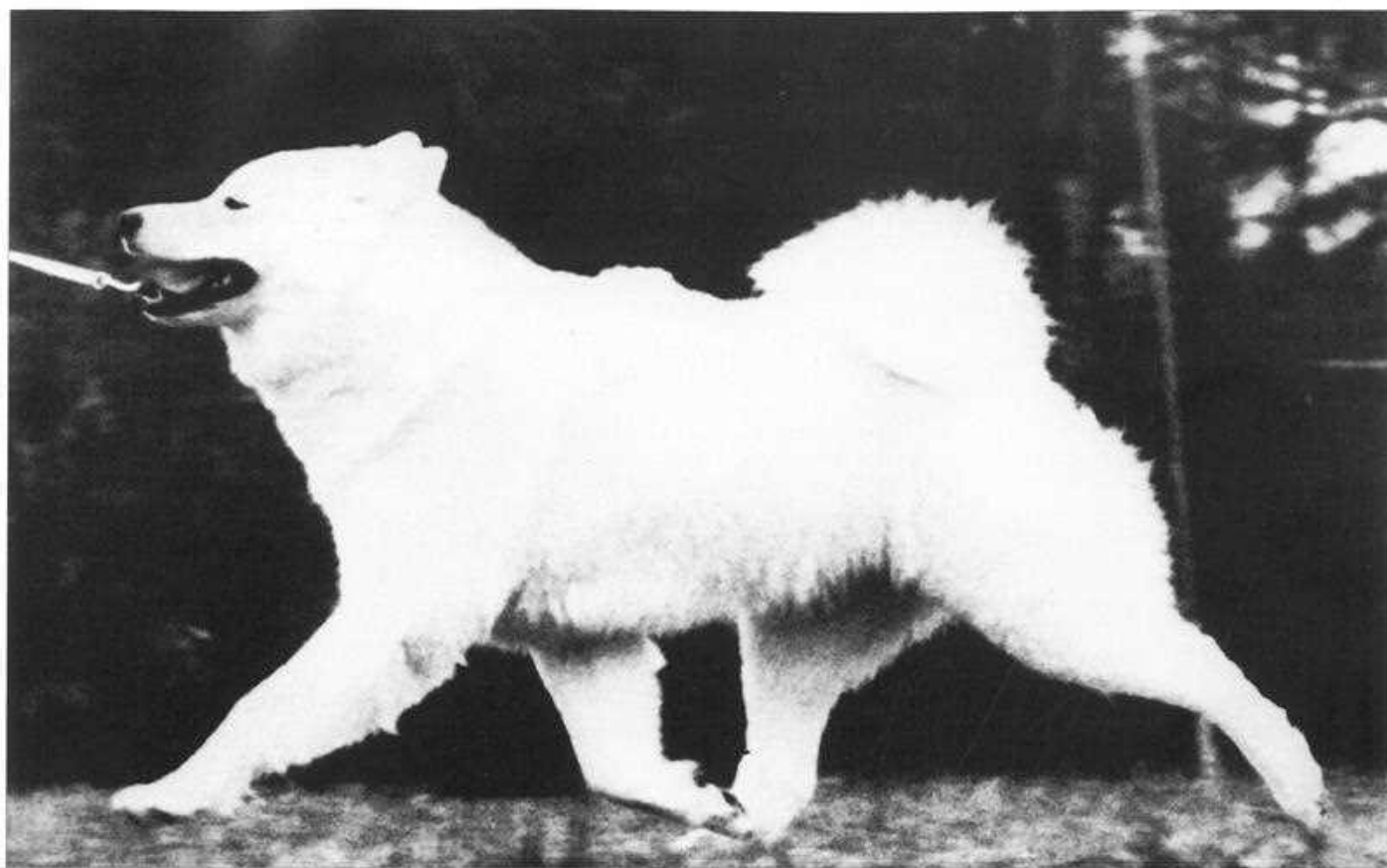
is for the Harley Davidson motorcycles and his brother is Easy Rider, which is another Harley Davidson motorcycle. His son is Quicksilver's Night Train, which is also a Harley Davidson motorcycle. Usually, I just let the person I place a dog with name the dog.

*Describe your interpretation of the ideal Samoyed.*

Chris: You want the proper eye shape and the smile. I do not have that in every one of my dogs, but I love that. I think

that is classic. The standoffish coat. Tazz had that kind of coat. A lot of our dogs did in the past. But since then, we have gotten some longer coats and I do not like the longer hair. Of course, one that moves like a Samoyed should move, clean coming and going and a good sidegait. One that shows good. That is my ideal Samoyed. Ears not too big ... we have some problems with that.

Danny: But not those little bitty ears; I do not like that. We



Ch. Silvercreek's Puddin' O'Sitkin (Ch. Lynthea's J.C. x Great Sitkin's Midnight Magic), bred by Chris Higley.

do not like that droopy coat.

Chris: I like to be able to see their body some. Some dogs

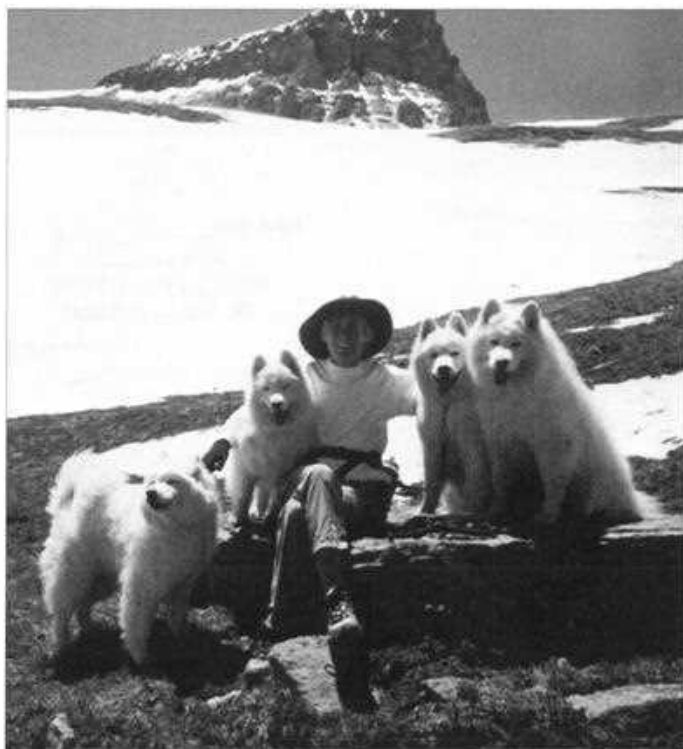
have so much hair that it hides their leg length and their neck.

On a point scale of 100, how

many points would you assign to the head?

Chris: I'm not sure how

many points I would assign to the head. When you look at the breed as a whole, you see quite



a few different types of heads. One of the most important things to me is the almond eye shape and the turn-up of the corners of the mouth to form the "Sammy smile." I can handle a little longer muzzle and ears if those two traits are present. If a dog shows really well and is very alert, it can make the most

of its head. A good example for us was our Jazz. He was not as pretty in the head as his father Tazz, but he was so showy and alert that he made the most of his head. The judges would always comment on Tazz being pretty, but quite a few judges said that Jazz was handsome. He had a wonderful body, too.

A short back, good neck, just strong and sturdy-looking. I cannot judge a dog on head alone. When you are building your line you have to keep dogs for structure and movement traits and be willing to give a little on the head. A good example for us was our "Puddin," Ch. Silvercreek's Puddin

O'Sitkin, who we bought from Chris Higley. She was Tazz's grandmother. She was not a pretty girl in the head, but she had beautiful movement, great arch of neck, which I still have in most of my dogs today. She also had a great temperament and showed really well. She contributed a great deal to my



*Polar Mist Quicksilver Lil, bred by Lynette Hansen.*



Ch. Quicksilver's Harley Davidson (Ch. Promise's Silver Vaquero x Ch. Quicksilver's Pretty In Pink).

line.

*Has it been your experience that coat has been very important to winning in the ring?*

Danny: You have to have it. It does not have to be anything spectacular, but you cannot win big with a naked dog. It depends on how far you want to win. If you are just talking about putting a championship

on a dog, you can do that without a great coat. But past that, your dog has to have a decent amount of good, standoffish coat. That is why it is so hard to special a bitch, because they lose their coat so often.

Chris: It is hard to campaign them, because they do not stay in full coat very long.

Danny: That was one thing

about our dogs, they were the kind of males that you could show all year long, because even if they lost coat, they had enough to get by with.

Chris: When they would have outer coat, but not a lot of undercoat, you could fluff it up and it would look all right. With the bitches, it is harder.

*What about pigment?*

Chris: We have had some problems with weak pigment, mostly lip breaks. That is another reason that I kept this younger bitch, Ruby, because her pigment was so good.

Danny: Her skin is black.

Chris: Both of her puppies had very good pigment. Black all over very early. I was thrilled. I would not place a dog

as a pet for a lip break alone if the dog was good quality in most areas. It is not that important to me. In the standard it says 'preferred.' It is not a dreadful thing.

*What are some of the most serious problems in the breed today?*

Danny: The hips have gotten better since we have gotten into dogs. When we first got into Samoyeds, many of the dysplasia cases were so severe that many dogs could not live comfortable lives as pets. Now when you get dysplasia it is usually mild, and they can still make good pets.

Chris: It is the same old problems as far as structural problems go. Straight shoulders, fronts that are not clean. My

problem with my line has been close rears. When I look for a dog to breed to, I have a hard time finding one to get more width in the rear. It is probably not that bad of a fault after all these years of hating it. Many dogs that move close still move strong. Rears that are too wide can be weak.

Danny: As far as I know, I don't think there are many serious health problems that are very prevalent in our breed.

*Do you think that the standard is a good one? If not, what would you like to see changed?*

Chris: Our standard is very good. You can read our standard and picture exactly what a Samoyed should look like. It covers movement and type very

well. The only thing I would change is I would love to see bitches raised in height. I would like 20-22 inches and instead of 19-21 inches. I think that is what Siberians are.

Danny: That is one thing that has helped us; most of our bitches are toward the top of the standard. We have never had to worry about size.

Chris: I believe that if you have your females too small, you cannot get your males at the top of the standard. To me, the ideal Samoyed is at the top of the standard. If you want to go out and compete in the Working group, you cannot have this little dog out there. It has to look like it belongs in the Working group. The same with a bitch.

But the whole battle with the bitch is the bigger they get, the doggie they get. It is tough to keep them feminine and at the top of the standard.

*Overall, do you think that judging is fair?*

Chris: No, too often it is far more political than it should be.

Danny: I think a lot of people expect too much from judges. We know our breed. I cannot go out there and know 100 other breeds in the same detail that I know mine. That would be absolutely impossible. They just wing it. Every now and then, you will find a judge who has a feel for a good quality dog of any breed. They still do not know all the ins and outs of the breed, because they are



*Time in the high country.*



*Ch. Holiday's Quicksilver Jewel, "Ruby," co-owned and co-bred with Garey and Cookie Hayden (Ch. Winter Frost Gyrfalcon x Ch. Quicksilver's Holiday Glitz, co-owned with Garey and Cookie Hayden).*

wrapped up in the few breeds that they have been with. They are trying to learn about all these others and they cannot do

that in the same detail that they know their own breeds.

Chris: There is no denying, it is a very political game.

*Does advertising influence judges?*

Danny: Yes, we advertised with Tazz.

Chris: We played the game with him. If we would have owner-handled him, we would have done well because he was a



good dog. But we would have never done what we did with him, without the handler and the advertising. There is no way. That is just the way the game is played. Sometimes you are going to have the better dog and you are going to lose to someone who has a handler. It doesn't bother me anymore. I accept it; I know the game. I know what I have on the end of my lead, and know when I deserve to win and when I deserve not to win.

Danny: If you really have an outstanding dog, I do not care who you are competing against, you will do your share of winning. We did. I did not even know how to show a dog and I was showing Tazz. I took Best in Show on him, Group 1s and the whole thing. He was just a good dog.

Chris: There are so many judges who are not good and should not be out there. When I see one of those, I mark it down and keep a list. I just will

not give some judges an entry. They are so out there playing games, putting up people instead of dogs. In a lot of cases, some of them know a good dog and they are still playing games, putting up people instead.

Danny: Let's just assume that half the judges are pretty honest, but they do not know the in-depths of the breed, so they put up the people who have been winning and advertising, so they cannot make a mistake. They won't go out on a limb and pick a dog they like, just because they like it. They are afraid to be wrong because they do not know enough about the breed.

Chris: As far as educating the judges, they are doing so much better.

Danny: Yes, they are doing a great job.

Chris: They are having to go through a lot more to get breeds than they ever have before. I feel like a lot of judges know more than back when we

first got started. It was probably a little more political back then than it is now. Although, some of them are still out there.

Danny: Some of the old judges cannot see the dogs. They get mixed up in the ring. Some of the judges need to understand that it is time to retire.

Chris: The AKC is doing a lot to improve it. There are some really good judges out there and I appreciate them.

*Would you rather show under an all breed judge or a breeder-judge?*

Chris: Definitely an all breed.

Danny: Some breeder-judges have too many hang-ups.

Chris: Plus, so many of them are my friends, I do not want that to come between us. It was a thrill when we were showing Tazz and we were worried whether the Wards were going to like him. When they did, we were very proud because they were so knowledgeable and so important in

our breed. It is a nice compliment when a breeder-judge does like your dog.

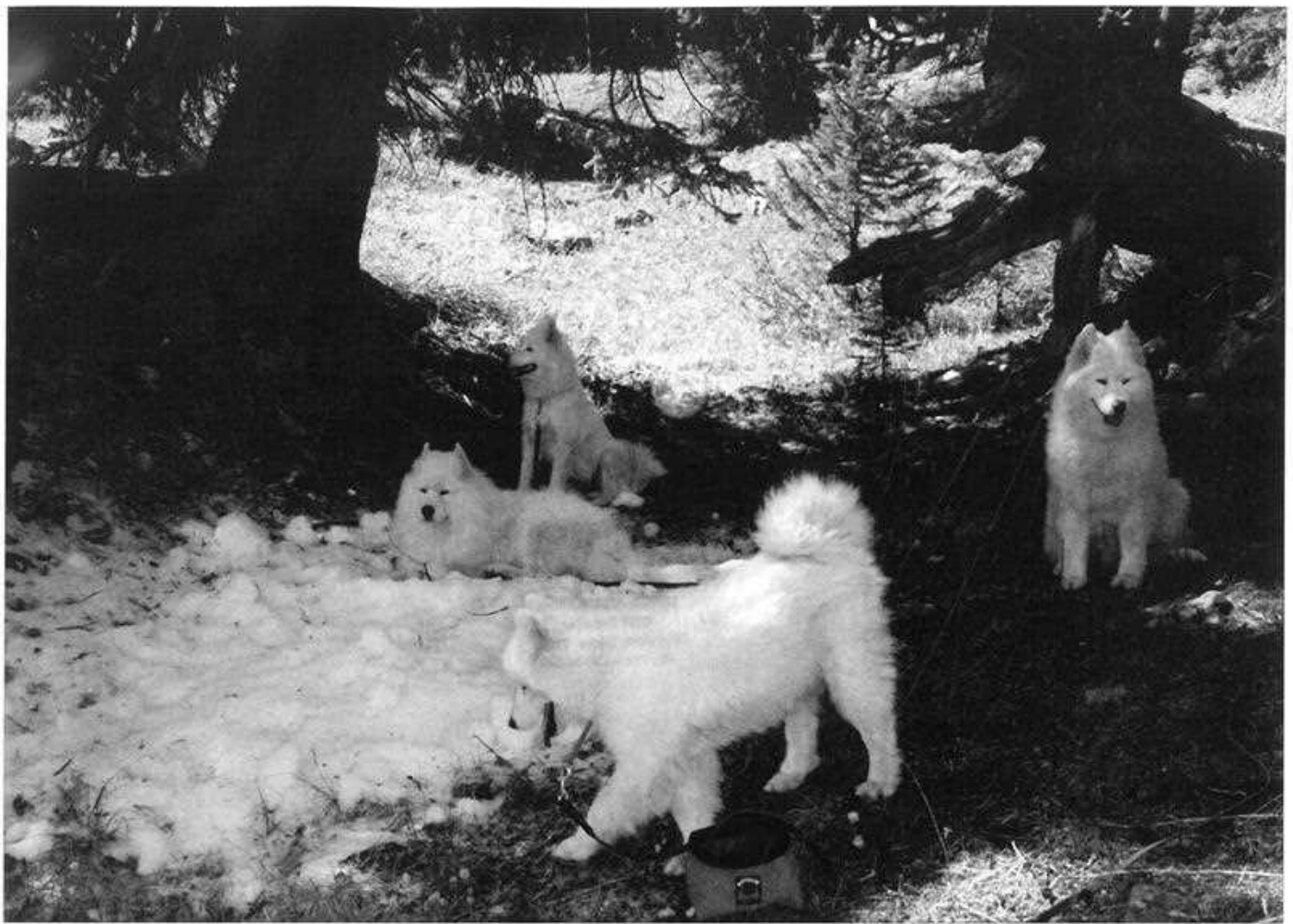
I have only judged a few times; I have done a National Sweepstakes. I do not care who is on the end of the lead. I do not care if I ever get another judging assignment, either. I go out there and I know my breed and I am going to put up what I think is right.

*Have you ever handled for other people?*

Chris: I have taken a friend's dog in, but not for money.

*How do you train puppies and at what age?*

Chris: I start training them the minute I possibly can. The two little puppies that I just had, at five or six weeks they knew what "cookie" and "stand pretty" meant. I probably start too early. At about four or five weeks, I put a lead on them and try to get them to follow me around. I have a great dog show ring in the tennis court!



At about four or five months, I'll start taking them to training classes so they can get used to other dogs.

*Do you believe in obedience training?*

Chris: I think it is fun. If a dog has any kind of temperament problem, it is the best thing you can do for a dog. However, if you have a dog that you think is going to be a really great special, I do not think that you should obedience train them. You should not take one thing out of that dog. I know the obedience training has changed a lot since we've been in it. Food and praise are used a lot more. Back when we were active in obedience, you had to give very harsh corrections. That always took a little something out of the dog. I would not take a chance if I thought I had a good special.

*You do not think that training is necessary to winning in conformation?*

Chris: Not obedience training. It could probably hurt you.

You want that dog moving out in front of you.

Danny: Obedience training will take a little bit of the spark out of a really good dog.

Chris: I think that it is a wonderful thing to do with a dog that is not going to be campaigned or shown as a special. It is a lot of fun. I would love to do the agility.

Danny: On a dog you are going to campaign, you cannot really correct him too harshly.

Chris: We try to get everything out of the dog with praise and food. They have to think that life is a bowl of cherries out there. We want a Samoyed with its ears and tail up. It is not one of those breeds that you can hand stack and put it together. They have to be happy. We want the Samoyed smile.

Danny: One of the worst things in the world is to go to a dog show and the dog will not look at you. His tail is down, his ears are down. What do you do? You try to hand stack

and they won't. We have tried. I would never do it again.

Chris: We have not had many of those.

Danny: But we have had our moments where a bitch was in season and it was disastrous if you're showing a male.

*How intelligent would you say this breed is compared to others?*

Danny: There is a wide spectrum. We have had some dumb dogs. We have also had some really smart ones. We have never had another breed, so I do not know how smart other breeds are.

Chris: From things that I have read, they fall somewhere in the middle.

Danny: They are smart enough for us. The smarter they are, the harder it is to live with them. We have had some pretty low IQ dogs that basically would do anything in the world that you tell them to do. The smarter ones do what they want to do.

Chris: The smarter ones are

more independent. The smartest dog is not always the best dog in obedience.

Danny: It is not the best show dog either. They just do their own thing.

*Do you believe that a breed should do what it was bred for?*

Chris: I think it is important to maintain that. At one time there was talk that the Samoyed should go in the Non-Sporting group. That would crush my heart. A Samoyed should be a sound, athletic dog that is a multi-purpose Working dog.

Danny: It was a people dog first.

Chris: They can do just about anything.

Danny: You can use them for hunting and sledding. Just about anything.

*Have you done any activities with your dogs?*

Chris: In the beginning, we did some tracking. That was a lot of fun. And we did obedience. I have not done agility or

herding. Lily herds us on our hikes.

Danny: She is fourteen and a half, and she leads the pack on the hike.

Chris: She goes up and back and she tries to keep us all together. The instincts are there.

*How trainable do you think this breed is compared to others?*

Chris: I would say medium. In obedience, you are not going to see that many Samoyeds taking High in Trial. They learn the exercise very quickly, but when it comes down to doing it very precision-like, they get bored with it. They are not going to do 100 sits, so they sit just right. They learn really quickly; they are pretty smart. Maybe a little better than middle. You can do well with them. But you are not going to beat the Poodles, the Shelties and the Border Collies that often.

*Have your breedings been natural or controlled?*

Chris: In the beginning, almost always natural. This last one, I did a surgical AI and a c-section. We had not had a litter in eight years and I wanted all the chances I could to have her conceive and have all the pups survive.

Danny: We have lost so many puppies from the bitch having three puppies and the last one is dead. From now on, the bitch will have a c-section.

*Can you remember any whelping that you sat in on that was interesting, strange or sad?*

Chris: Our very best one was Lily. She was a joy. She popped those puppies out every fifteen minutes. She took care of them and was the best mom.

Danny: Ruby was good, too. Ruby got her puppies so fat, they could not walk. She fed them 24 hours a day. She had so much milk before she had the puppies, she was walking around leaking milk.

Chris: I have never had a bitch do that before. She had so much milk.

Danny: We finally had to tape up a couple of her nipples.

Chris: I had to. They were gaining weight so fast. They were gaining four ounces a day.

*Do you wean the puppies yourself or do you let the bitch do it?*

Chris: I facilitate it gradually by decreasing the dam's food and increasing the solid food for the puppies over a three-week

period, usually from five to eight weeks.

*Have you ever had to supplement feed?*

Chris: Yes, little ones. One of our litters, we had a little bit of one ... we lost him. We have probably had every problem imaginable.

*Do you have any set rules as to how young a bitch should be bred or how old, and how many litters she should have?*

Chris: I would not want to breed them before two and a half to three years, and I rarely breed a bitch more than once.

Danny: We sometimes wait longer.

Chris: We probably wait too long. Sometimes four years.

*At what age do you evaluate puppies for pet/show quality and what do you look for?*

Danny: Trust me, she is evaluating them from the day they are born. She spends hours with the puppies. By the time they start walking, she knows

everything about them.

Chris: I will place a pet at nine weeks. The ones that you think are good, I think you need to sit on them until eleven or twelve weeks.

*Do you sell pet pups with spay/neuter agreements?*

Chris: Yes, I do. That is a great thing that the AKC added, allowing the breeder to put restrictions on the papers. They can show in obedience. But if they bred the dog on their own, they could not get AKC papers.

Some good friends of ours sold a puppy to a guy who acted like he wanted it for a pet. It turned out he had a pet farm. It just broke their hearts. You have to be careful. Some people could really fool you. That is one reason that I do not like to breed too much. I really worry about where they go and I want someone who is going to love them for the rest of their lives. I love the person who calls and says, "I had a Samoyed for thir-

teen years and it died. I want another one." I just want to give them one. That is great. They know what they are getting into.

Danny: Some other breeders get caught up on how many champions they can produce. We probably could have finished more dogs than we have. We like to keep the best one and just concentrate on finding good, loving homes for the others.

Chris: The most important thing to me is finding them a good home where someone is going to love them for the rest of their lives.

Danny: Finishing a dog, finishing twenty dogs. Big deal!

Chris: We don't care. I just want a great one. You need to keep the one you need to go on with to keep working on your line to try to improve things. The rest, just find them good homes.

*What do you feed your dogs?*

Chris: I have changed a lot on that over the years. I like to



Tax going BIS.



Tazz.

stick with a dog food from a big company. I use Iams, because I feel that it will be more consistent. I have tried some that have all these wonderful ingredients in it, made by smaller companies. I have had problems like diarrhea. One time, this puppy did not grow on one for a whole month. It scared me. I do believe in giving a good multi-vitamin with minerals because it says on the bag to feed your dog so many cups per day. If you did that, your dog would be so overweight it would be ridiculous. So you have to

question whether they are getting the amount of vitamins and minerals they need if you have to decrease the amount of food so much to keep them in a proper weight.

*How do you condition your dogs?*

Chris: By walking and running with them for a couple of miles a day.

*Do you have any favorite grooming products?*

Chris: Back when we were showing Tazz, Sandy Tremont was a professional handler who showed Toy breeds and she used dishwashing liquid for

shampoo. Safeway's White Magic dishwashing liquid ... they do not make it anymore. So I use Dove or whatever I can find that is white. I dilute it half-and-half. I swear by it. It is better than any dog shampoo that you could ever buy. It cleans the coat really well and gets it whiter than any purple or blue shampoo could. It makes it shine, you can see the silver tips. Plus, it does not make it too soft.

*Do you have any special kennel set-up?*

Chris: We have a dog room attached to the house, and we

have two runs off it. We hardly ever use the runs unless we have puppies. The four dogs I have now have the run of the house. They can go out in the runs to relieve themselves if we're not here. I have an elevated tub in the room where I can bathe them. I always leave the grooming table up.

*What advice would you give to breeders who are just starting out?*

Chris: Talk to experienced breeders. Sit with them at dog shows and learn everything you can. Talk and ask questions of as many different breeders as

you can so that you get different opinions. Study *The Complete Samoyed* written by the Wards. It is by far the best book to learn about the Samoyed.

Danny: We were very eager when we first started; we picked the brains of every breeder we could.

Chris: We really tried to learn everything we could about the breed.

Danny: Our phone bill was like \$200 a month with all the dog talk.

Chris: I would go to National after National. Sometimes go and do not show so you can just look at dogs and study their pedigrees.

*Do you think it is a good idea to join a local breed club?*

Chris: Absolutely.

Danny: We started ours.

Chris: That was a big instrument in us learning a lot. We got all the existing people together and started the Samoyed Club of Houston. All the original members are older now, so when the novices come in, they stir us around and get us going again. It is really good.

*Do you use a computer for any of your doggy activities?*

Chris: I don't, but I should learn. I rely on Danny too much. If I need something, I just ask him to look it up for me. I have learned to get the entry for a show the day after it closes. I don't use email; I still rely on phone calls.

*Are there any other stories you would like to share?*

Danny: The best thing that somebody can do who is starting to breed dogs is to talk to the breeders. Drive them nuts; call and make a pest out of yourself. That is what we did!

Chris: We learned so much from so many people. Jim and Marion Osborn in California were our main mentors.

Danny: But there are so many others who helped us along and shared their knowledge, the Winslows, the Peils, the Richardsons, Betty Chamberlin, Chris Higley, the Krausses, the Hodges, the Dendingers, and Phoebe Helms and Tommy Mayfield, who we dearly miss.

*How long have you lived in this location?*

Danny: 24 years.

Chris: We moved here when I was pregnant with my first daughter, so I can always remember that because of her



*Quicksilver Silvertip Pin-up (Ch. Quicksilver's Harley Davidson x Ch. Holiday's Quicksilver Jewel), owned by Nelda and T.J. Dendinger.*

age.

*Where did you move from?*

Chris: We lived in another house in Houston. Before that, we lived in an apartment when we first got married, with two Samoyeds.

Danny: We lived about three blocks from Archie and Ann Peil. We did not even know them until we moved into their neighborhood and found out that they had the same kind of dogs we did. We got to know them real well. We moved into this neighborhood on the same day and with the same mover; they bought a house out here, too.

Chris: We both bought houses out here at the same time, because we both wanted bigger yards for our dogs.

Danny: They still live here, too.

*Where are you from originally?*

Chris: New Orleans. I went to school here in Texas and ended up staying here.

Danny: I was born here.

*How did you meet?*

Chris: We lived in the same apartment complex.

Danny: In a singles complex.

*Besides the dogs, what other things have you done for a living?*

Chris: We don't do the dogs for a living, we would be starving! It is strictly a hobby.

Danny: Anyone who tried to make money from dogs would have to be insane.

Chris: I am a physical therapist. Danny has had several businesses over the years, but is now in real estate. Hobby-wise, tennis has been our big thing other than the dogs.

Danny: That is really what slowed down our dog showing. Our daughters got involved in tennis. One of our daughters, Laurie, went to Colorado State on a tennis scholarship. Our youngest daughter, Melissa, turned professional when she was fifteen. She just recently gave it up and started school at the University of Texas. She is twenty now. We got involved with the kids and their activities, and that took the place of the dogs. Now that the kids are gone, I don't know if we will get back into dogs big time or not.

Chris: I will never be out of dogs. I will go to my grave with a couple of Samoyeds. I just love living with them.

*How would you say the dogs have affected your lifestyle?*

Chris: They dominate it!

Danny: Everything you do.

All the clothes you buy, the furniture you buy, the carpet you buy, the house you buy. Also the motor home you buy. We even bought a second home in Colorado for the summers which had to have a big yard for the dogs and be at a high altitude so the dogs can be cool.

Chris: They dominate our lives; they're a big part of our lives.

*Has it been worth it?*

Chris: Oh, yes. I would be miserable without dogs.

Danny: I would never go hiking by myself. But bringing four dogs with me is absolute joy.

Chris: They are so happy, there is no way you could not be happy.

Danny: They are interesting to watch up there; chasing the squirrels, mice and bugs. They don't miss a thing.

Chris: They like to hunt. They hunt all day long.

Danny: Next time we go up there, I want to try sledding. I think that would be a lot of fun; maybe a lot of work.

*Have there been any drawbacks to having dogs?*

Chris: When you want to go somewhere without the dogs, it is really hard to find a dog-sitter. We have had different people over the years.

Danny: We have never kennelled them. We pay someone to come to the house and watch the dogs.

Chris: Then it is the sheer numbers. Like traveling in the motor home or going on a hike, it would be better if we had two or three. The more you have the more complicated it is.

Danny: This summer in Colorado, we had eight. Archie and Ann brought their four dogs and we had our four dogs.

Chris: It was really amazing because they all got along. We were hiking and we have a private trail that we go on; we don't like to go on the popular ones because we like to let them off lead. We told Ann and Archie, "This is our private trail, we never see anybody." After the first two minutes we are out there, here comes a biker. He says, "Do you think you have enough dogs there?"

Danny: I am looking forward to doing that again next summer.

*Thank you so much.*

Thank you. •