

GYR

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks With
Don and Barbara Winslow
KARATYLL
Houston, Texas

Part II

This interview was conducted in Houston, Texas in November of 1991 by Judy Mears.

Does making the Top Ten or Twenty mean anything?

Barbara: If you had a dog that you were out there campaigning, it would probably start meaning something. Obviously it would, but it's mostly the fun of showing your dog. If you were out there to really campaign a dog, I think you'd get a different perspective.

Don: We were never in a position to campaign a dog and got chastised a couple times by some people for it, but we are not in that position. I'm afraid it doesn't hold the meaning for us that it does for some. I've got my own Top Ten. (laughter)

Is judging fair?

Don: It's like they say about our government, "Democracy isn't the greatest, it's just the best that we've got." I just got through musing about the British Kennel Club's system of awarding certificates and so forth. I haven't done it, haven't been there and haven't shown, but from a distance, it seems to me to be a fairer method. I think there is far too much ego content, but I think judging is basically fair. It may not be fair this weekend in relation to last weekend or last year, but the world turns.

Barbara: I think most judges are basically honest. They want to do a good job of evaluating the dogs and sometimes they just really can't.

Don: Sometimes they get tired and sometimes they get in a rush.

Barbara: I think they even lose concentration sometimes.

Don: Judging 175 dogs is a long day.

Barbara: You have to really discipline yourself to concentrate for the full length of the day, and they may tune in

and out once in a while. (laughter)

Don: Talking about matches, the most I ever did in one day is probably about 60, and right now 175 is an astronomical number. (laughter) That's a lot of work, and if you feel like you got shortchanged or somebody wasn't paying attention, what do you mean? It's a hard job up there.

Barbara: If you take all the breeders, we all have different ideas and different emphasis, and you are going to find that with the judges, too.

How long have you been members of Houston Kennel Club?

Don: Almost twenty years, because we just had our fourteenth or fifteenth Astro Hall show and we were members several years before that started. It's close to twenty years.

You were part of the original Astro World Series of Dog Shows committee that put together the shows at the Astro Hall?

Barbara: Right. It's been an undertaking, and every year is a new ball game.

Don: To the people who come in, the people we want at the Astro Hall more than anybody else, and that's the general public, the dog show is an amazingly organized thing. It's on time, it comes off and the people are where they are supposed to be. For the most part, it's a very orderly thing, and there's a book, and they go by the book. It's published in the paper, and what you read in the paper, is what's going to happen on Saturday, there's no question about it. Occasionally there is a substitute judge if a judge gets sick, but actually that's pretty rare. Inside is chaos, and we've gone through our fourteen years of internal chaos. It's tough putting on a show of that magnitude, but thank goodness it's not that tough for a whole lot of people. Believe me, for about four or five people out of each of the kennel clubs who are in it year after year, it's a mind-bender.

Barbara: The Astro Hall shows actually came about because of the gas crunch. That was what got us thinking about the clusters, and it went on from there.

Don: The cluster shows, and the bicentennial cluster they had in Denver in 1976 was really a fine event, a great event. As soon as I got home after that, I said, "There have to be more like that," and that was sort of the guiding light in how we did this. Of course, the principal people involved were Hazel and David Arnold.

Barbara: Hazel was my college roommate and they've been lifelong friends. It was really Hazel's baby, because she conceived it.

Don: She put it together, she did

the promotion. Dog shows in Houston, Texas up until that time were held in a public parking garage down on the Bayou. We had a lot of fun, but as far as the general public was concerned, it was a greasy parking lot, it was noisy, and not only were there barking dogs, there wasn't enough room to walk in that place. We had a lot of fun as exhibitors, and we put up with a lot of stuff, but Hazel had the concept of truly doing what AKC had for so many years promoted, and that was the club's need to bring the general public into our dog world. There needs to be a nice place to have it, and there needs to be plenty of room. There needs to be some continuity to it. A one-day show is great for us, we move on, but to get the media involved and the general public involved, and to put on some of these other events, such as agility, we need more than one day.

The greatest thing for the public, in my estimation, is obedience. Please come to the AKC obedience trials and now the USA Agility Association - people call them circus dogs: "Have you seen the circus dogs?" Fine, call them what you want to, but it is fantastic to see dogs work together with people like that and the public gets a kick. They go home and say, "Maybe I'll take my dog to a training class." If they just get a little spark of interest, that's why we have the Astro Hall shows. It's certainly not for us as exhibitors, because it's difficult. It's big, spread out, and in fact, the exhibitors often complain about the circumstances there. "I can't get to the ring because there are 20,000 people in here." Right. That's what AKC chartered us to do and that's what we need to do.

We are under a great deal of pressure from animal rightists, or leftists - I don't know what you'd call them. (laughter) The problems that are cited with respect to dogs and humans have primarily to do with the lack of good citizenship on the part of dog owners who are not involved in our AKC sanctioned activities. Not that all of us on the inside are lily white, by any means. We have our problems, but we have to get the general public interested in enjoying their dog and letting their dog enjoy them. I've had 25 years of one heck of a tremendous experience, and I believe our kids have. It brought our children up. They were successful with dogs and they've been successful in life. I think it's in no small part because they enjoyed success, working at it, a vision and a goal, and were able to achieve some of those. They learned a sense of achievement and they took it with them into other aspects of their lives. We

need to open that door to the other 99 percent of the people in our community. We are hogging it all. It's our oath that the Astro Hall shows are to bring the joys and the rewards of having and doing with dogs to the general public. Otherwise, why kill ourselves? Oh, yes, guaranteed four days, five-point majors, fine. But it's a hell of a price for some of us. (laughter)

Barbara: We didn't start with such noble ideas! It was purely the gas situation.

Don: Yes, we had a slow start, and really, this thing has culminated only in the last couple of years, but it was always our goal.

Barbara: With each show, we think we've made further progress.

Don: With the cluster shows, they were extraordinary-circumstanced licensed. See what we have today. There are a lot of clusters. When you have cluster shows, large numbers of people come from great distances, and handlers – and there's nothing wrong with handlers, they bring a lot of dogs – and you have a lot of points and you have a lot of champions. I don't know how many dogs finish here, but I'd like to see the statistics of dogs that finish at cluster shows. There are a lot of them. Of course, there are probably just as many dogs who get their final one or two points somewhere else, but where do you go for majors?

Barbara: Our shows were farther apart than other parts of the country and we had to drive a lot farther. We had the Texas circuit, but even that was quite lengthy. We had to go 200 or 250 miles ...

Don: It's 600 miles to Amarillo.

Barbara: And there weren't as many kennel clubs as there are now, so there are a lot more shows now, but the cluster worked out very well at that time.

What year was it that you put all the motor homes inside because of the hurricane?

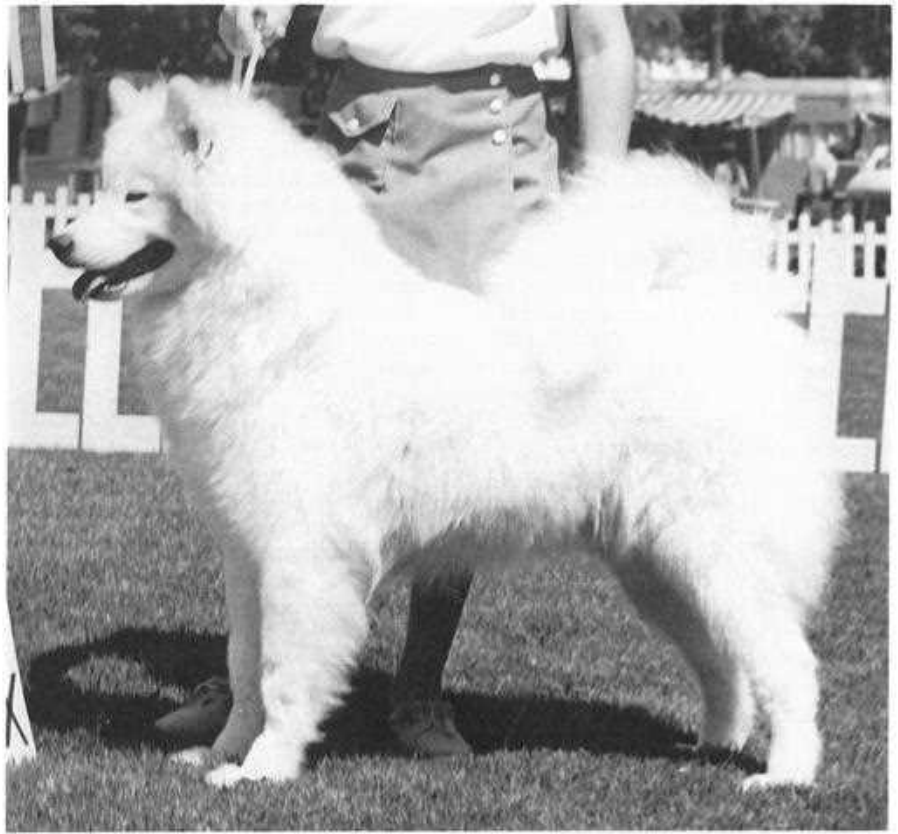
Don: It was the very first year, 1978.

Barbara: Was it the first year? Anyway, we were close to the beginning. The fire marshals were screaming because the motor homes were all inside.

Don: I think we had 2,300 dogs that first year, and this past year we had a little over 4,000.

Barbara: We never thought we were going to run out of room! (laughter) But every year it gets a little harder.

Don: You walk in when there is nobody there and say, "There's lots of room." I don't, because I've seen the flood of people and dogs come.



Karatyll's Tashkova.

Barbara: We had to change the layout of the rings this year and it was unbelievable.

Don: People become associated with it and think there is all this room, thirteen acres, and now we've got another six acres. We have between nineteen and twenty acres under roof of strictly dog events, and people say, "Boy! That's a lot of room!" But it sure fills up.

Barbara: We were cutting and pasting, trying to get the rings arranged differently this time and get all the booths around them and keep the people happy as far as setups, and it was really hard. Of course, there are a lot of booths, and the public loves that.

Don: For the general public, we believe the booths are important. And, of course, it's important to the people who travel the dog show circuit with merchandise, whether it's dog food or jewelry or whatever. They are very important to exhibitors. They don't necessarily need to be catered to, but they need to be given consideration, and that's one of the things we feel is important when we have the Astro Hall shows.

I don't think it's any secret, but just the rent on that complex, not the whole

cost, this past year was officially \$46,000. Before it's all over, they start adding this, that and the other and you can't get out for less than about \$54,000, and that's a lot of money.

How many judges do you usually have?

Don: On the average, they go about 150 dogs per judge, and we had 27 conformation rings. In addition, we have obedience and Sweepstakes judges.

There is additional expense when you talk about clusters. You can arrive at a one-day show, the superintendent can arrive late the evening before, start laying things out and put out a few trash cans and get a few nice people to go around with pooper scoopers during the day. At night you break it down, push the trash cans aside and you leave. But you don't do that when there is a show the next day, and the day after that, and the day after that.

Barbara: Cleanup is a very big part of it. When you invite the public in, they create their own mess.

Don: But it ought to be whether you walk in at 8:00 in the morning or 3:00 in the afternoon on the first, second, third, fourth or final day – and they have five at San Antonio – it's the same, and that's tough.

Barbara: And in the cluster, a lot of people leave their dogs there, so you have more cleanup because of that.

Do you always show your own dogs?

Barbara: We have never had a handler. The dogs were shown by either us or the children. My very first show I had a handler, but he wasn't a handler then.

Don: Barbara adopted Clay Coady - and Clay will just love to hear this - when he was a teenager and Barbara was a young mother of 26 or 27. He took a bitch out of our first litter by Mary Lake's George Dupree and Tyly. George Dupree's granddaddy was Americ. He was a very nice dog owned by the Moronys, who were very instrumental in our early years. Super nice people. That litter came down with distemper, a measles vaccine break - and there is a lot of technical talk behind this thing we call the measles vaccine break, but let's just leave it at that.

Barbara: They were using the measles vaccine before the permanent distemper shots. That was rough, because that was another great litter and our very first one.

Don: "Nick" had hard pad distemper and he came through it. Fortunately, we had sent "Sophy," Am/Can Ch. Karatyll's Sofya, off to Clay and he showed her for a while. It was his dog

and we co-owned her. So, yes, one of our dogs was handled by a professional handler, a co-owner, when he was about sixteen years old. I think all our kids had a turn with Sophy when Clay started working. We have pictures of all of them with her. Sophy died of cancer at an advanced age.

Barbara: But the distemper was heartbreaking. Our veterinarian at the time said we would never experience distemper again and we haven't. But it wasn't through any negligence on our part. At the time, they thought the measles vaccine was sufficient, and it wasn't. We just did what we were supposed to do.

How do you train your puppies and at what age do you start?

Barbara: About five weeks we start lead training them.

Don: At six weeks they are pretty well lead trained. Barbara and the children do it. It only takes five minutes to lead break a dog, no matter how old they are, but as far as training them for show, we stack them, and bait them, but we don't go to big ends with it.

Barbara: Because there is time enough for that, there really is. Mostly you have to hand-feed them some so they get used to baiting, eating out of your hand, and that's the most important thing.

Don: Some dogs' minds will clue in to you quite early in this exercise of let's-be-a-show-dog-and-do-this-exercise-bit. Others don't, and without subduing the dog, you have to say, "Let's get together. I'm talking to you." That's probably the hardest thing there is. A lot of the better professional handlers are good at their jobs because the dog is with them. It's why a lot of novices, and even some people who have been showing dogs for a long time, don't really pull it off too swiftly in the ring. They have hold of the lead and the lead is around the dog's neck, but they are not together - there's no unison of discipline and purpose there, and it's obvious. But it's tough when you have one that you haven't linked up with yet.

Barbara: The most important thing, I think, is to socialize the pups, more important than training. If they are outgoing and happy, training can come later.

Don: It's never too late to train a dog unless the show was yesterday. The best thing is, does he/she like you and do you like him/her? Does the dog like people? Is he comfortable around other dogs? If he is comfortable with you, he will be comfortable around other dogs real quick. Are they at ease with their environment or aren't they?

Do you go to fun matches or training classes?

Barbara: Very rarely to training classes, sometimes just to socialize the pups, and matches when we can. They are such a long, drawn out ordeal that we don't go to many of them, but if we have puppies, we sometimes go with a whole litter to socialize them.

Don: Both of us have volunteered to hold handling classes for the different clubs over the years, and that's a lot of fun, passing along a few tips that you might eventually wish you hadn't. (laughter) There have been a few times when that's occurred, but it's still fun.

Have you ever done any obedience training?

Barbara: Yes, we both have, and the children have, too.

Don: To do both conformation and obedience on the same day is fun. That's a real eye-opener for novices, because after the first show season, which was the fall after we got back from Canada, the following spring we started in both, and wow! That's something else. We met some of the greatest people in the early days. We haven't been in it enough lately. We've all put obedience titles on dogs, except our youngest daughter, Melissa.

Barbara: But she's been reading books lately about obedience training. She just needs the time. She wants to



Ch. Karatyll's Shonizar.

do it.

Have you ever done tracking?

Barbara: No, but we'd love to.

And agility, too?

Barbara: Yes, we'd love to do that, too.

Don: I think the Sammy and agility is something we all need to be thinking about.

Barbara: I had a phone call from a schoolteacher who wanted to put a Sammy in agility, but I only had an older dog at the time - not that old, just an older pup. This person wanted a puppy and I couldn't talk her into that older pup.

Don: I wish people would take advantage of buying an older dog. It's a very worthwhile experience. I've been proud of the dogs that we've bred, but I've been equally, if not more proud of the dogs that we haven't bred.

How important is training to winning in conformation?

Don: I think that other than the relatively few occasions when it doesn't make a whole lot of difference, it is very important. In speaking of training, I put both human and canine into the training picture. Some of the best times I've ever had were in getting first place with a winners ribbon, when if I'd let my dog just stand there, we'd have gotten beat. That's fun.

Barbara: And part of the challenge.

Don: If the dog is working with you and you are working at it and not fumbling around and you know what you are doing, they exude the confidence of the team and they are going to look better and do better and they are going to know they are doing better. Once you get a good team going, there are not very many dogs who don't clue in, who are nice dogs, and when the judge passes that ribbon, the people clap, they know it. And it's more fun!

Barbara: We're going to have to get YOU back into the show ring. (laughter)

Can you give any specific advice to owners who would like to handle their own dogs?

Don: We were quite fortunate, and this is the advice I would give. Barbara met Clay and Clay subsequently took a job as a helper with Larry Downey. When they would come to the Texas circuit, we would visit with them, and we learned a lot of the lingo. Larry would be shorthanded, and I showed Boxers, Great Danes, Irish Setters and several others when he wasn't able to make it to the ring and Clay was busy elsewhere. I learned a lot about having a lead thrust into my hand, and he would say, "Would you please? I'll come and rescue you as soon as I'm



Am/Can Ch. Hercules.

done." I'd turn around and there would be Larry standing there beside the ring, smiling and giggling. (laughter) I don't think Larry ever gave me a handling lesson, but he did the kids. He enjoyed the children but didn't have any of his own. I don't think that's why he did it, but the kids were very interested. Larry took the few moments he had on occasion and very nicely critiqued them and showed them this, that and the other. It certainly held our kids in good stead and we learned from them. (laughter)

Barbara: So did Clay. There was a reason Clay was working for Larry. He is an excellent dog handler, and I think that he said, or Larry said, "If you control the head of the dog, you control the dog."

Don: If you had just one rule and didn't know anything else.

Barbara: Right. If you've got that dog's head and are controlling it, you can pretty well set that dog up where you want him to be.

Don: That's where it starts. You don't start with the left hind leg or something else.

Barbara: It's a good, strong, upward pressure on that lead and up with the head and go from there.

Do you feel that a breed should be able to

do what it was bred for?

Barbara: Herding reindeer? I think herding would be the most fun, but I haven't gotten a chance to take part in that. I think it's fun that everyone is doing that now.

Don: Most of our dogs have had a very good herding instinct. It would be great fun to live in the West or live on some acreage and have some sheep, goats or cattle and have the dogs work them and guard them. But they'll do it with kids and they'll do it with people; they'll guard your property. I think their basic instincts for herding can be satisfied. There are many situations in their daily lives where dogs can use and employ the herding instinct. We as people simply need to learn what those are. They don't have to go to the country, the farm or the tundra, in my estimation. It does our hearts good if we can see it, but I don't think it's injurious to them that they don't.

Barbara: Of course, if we lived in a colder climate, we would have a sled team. We've talked about that. I think it would be so much fun!

Don: Walking into the show ring with a dog that you lead around in a circle is child's play compared to having a sled team, but wouldn't it be fun! I'm trying to talk them into getting Susan



Am/Can Ch. Karatyll's Katyna.

Butcher down here to the Astro Hall to talk to people and tell us about what a great time she has up there. Either that or I've got to go up to the Iditarod one of these years and camp beside the trail and watch it all.

Barbara: Of course, we go skiing every year in Colorado, and there's a sled team where you can rent the ride. I'm going to do that this year. Last year I wanted to, but this year I'm going to. I think they're Siberians, but who cares?

When you are breeding, are your breedings natural or controlled?

Barbara: Most of the time natural, with our supervision.

Don: We've never helped or artificially bred one of our own bitches. When one comes in for service, I'd say 30 percent of the time we assist, 5 percent of the time it's inevitable. We've been pretty fortunate. Our dogs have performed well on their own.

Barbara: We've helped a few other Sammy breeders get breedings. We do help the dogs. You get outside bitches in and some of them are inexperienced and there has to be some assistance, and always supervision. It would make me nervous not to supervise.

What's a fair stud fee?

Barbara: The price of a puppy.

Don: The price of a puppy, but not a puppy. What's a fair stud fee? What's the price of a decent animal out of the breed? You can expect three or four. If there's only one or none, repeat service.

Are your males available at public stud?

Don: Yes, if the bitches qualify.

Barbara: A lot of people are very protective of their males. I'm of the opinion that we can only help those people out there who have decent animals, but who don't really know how to breed them, by letting them use one of our studs. Some people are so protective that they will not use them. I think you can go overboard and be too protective. We will allow our male to be used at stud as long as the bitch is x-rayed and its eyes are good and it's a SOUND animal. Some people I know require that the bitch be a champion, but I don't think that's necessary.

Don: We live in a large metropolitan area, and I don't believe in an open door, all-comers policy by any means; however, if the door is closed in a community this size, there are those people who will find some way to do it. We don't have what I consider to be any present-day, existing Sammy puppy mills. Part of that is because we try to

treat people fairly. You can't expect everybody who calls or gets your name from a vet - and our names are out there - to walk in with a Group winning bitch. You dare not draw the line too closely, either, but you have to give them their due, and that doesn't mean you have to berate them, but you have to counsel them. To the casual person, and there are fifteen or twenty very casual requests per year, and some very legitimate questions asked at the beginning will discourage the not well intentioned. You don't have to be nasty about it at all. You have to express the desire that you would like to give them the benefit of your experience and what needs to be done and what doesn't, and the people who are not well intentioned will simply go away. Those that are well intentioned you try to direct their intentions to a higher plane than they perhaps had originally considered, and you lose some of those who won't come up to what we'll call reasonable standards. In what's left over, you find very few really unworthy bitches. Part of a bitch's worthiness is the intention of its owner, and if they are well intentioned and they ascribe to the basic principles of good breeding practice and the health of their dog and of the puppies, I don't think that's being loose. I don't consider us to be loose, but we always give people the benefit of conversation. I think that's a must.

Have you ever refused service to an outside bitch?

Barbara: Yes.

What do you think are good reasons for refusing stud service?

Barbara: Unsound hips and eyes. She does not have to be a show animal, but her faults have definitely got to be something that can be bred out.

How many breedings have you done?

Barbara: We don't count. (laughter) We did quite a bit of breeding in the first ten years. We've actually had quite a few litters, but for a long period of time we didn't do any.

Is it a good idea to breed to the top winning dog regardless of pedigree?

Barbara: Obviously not.

How many litters should a bitch have?

Barbara: I don't think we have any set, concrete answer to that. It would depend on her health, circumstances and the males that are available to breed her to at the time. I don't think there is anything written in stone about that.

Do you help your bitches whelp?

Barbara: We are there if we can be.

Don: We had a leased bitch have a C-section, and that's the only one we ever had. I'd say we keep our eyes and

ears open, we make sure they're comfortable, and we are there if the new ones panic, and the ones who imply, "I can do this myself," we watch from a distance. (laughter)

Barbara: I dry the puppy off and check the cord and all those things. I can wake up in the middle of the night. You hear those pups being born and you just can't miss it. Don can sleep right through it, but we women are right there. (laughter)

Don: Most Sammies are good mothers, and if it's the first time around, they just need to be reassured. If the puppies are coming fast and furious, and occasionally they do, then the mamas will panic and you need to calm them down, but generally they are very good whelpers. We haven't had any problems there. We are pretty proud of our gang. (laughter)

Barbara: For the breed in general I don't think it's a problem. Now Pomeranians, that's something else! (laughter)

Do you supplement feed very young puppies?

Barbara: No.

Don: Not unless there is some sort of distress in evidence.

Have you ever tube-fed puppies?

Barbara: Yes, if there is a problem for one reason or another. But it's usually a puppy who is not doing well, and there are not very many of those.

Don: Although we haven't had a whole lot of litters in the last fifteen years, during the first ten or twelve, we have a record of everything on each litter.

Barbara: Talking about supplementing puppies, there has been some discussion about Esbilac causing cataracts. That's kind of scary. We've used it, but only on occasion and never for any length of time. I know there are some people where it's just a matter of course to supplement and use Esbilac, and I know some people who ran into some problems, but whether or not it's related, I don't know.

Don: We've never had a bitch dry up. We never had one who was unable to care for her pups. I guess we've been really fortunate.

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

Barbara: Half and half. We start feeding them and it's sort of a natural thing. We don't do an abrupt weaning. We essentially let her do it.

Don: Some of them you have to help with it because they don't know how to say no. (laughter)

Barbara: You just have to make a judgement call, I think.

Don: Others say no a little too



Am/Can Ch. Karatyll's Leonid CD.

early and you have to say, "No, now calm down here."

At what ages do you evaluate your puppies for show and pet quality and what do you look for specifically?

Don: Would two years be too early? (laughter)

Barbara: We like to let our puppies run on until four to six months. Many say eight weeks, but I'm not that confident at eight weeks myself, though I have a good idea. We can all do that, but not the final evaluation by any means.

Don: We're probably more likely to place a puppy at twelve weeks with a person who has similar values to our own in terms of showing and caring for dogs; and it would be one of the best, if not the best, pups at that time, and we are more likely to keep one for six months that we are not sure about yet.

Do you ever cull puppies?

Barbara: No, just a cleft palate or deformed puppy.

Don: If you had an unwanted breeding, between brother or sister, or you had a stray dog get into the kennel and mix breed or something, I'd cull it down, but I wouldn't take all of them.

Barbara: Basically, we have not

ever done it.

Don: It's not easy work mentally when it comes to doing something like that, and I think more people need to be assured of an appropriate mechanism for doing it, that they can use themselves in the privacy of their own home, that is not cruel by any means. If we really wanted to be good breeders, we'd have 25 dogs of breeding quality and age and we'd probably have 10 to 15 litters a year and it would be a full-time job. At that point, you would be reaching beyond the one breeding per year philosophy, and in that situation you might want to cull.

Barbara: Most of the pups are healthy, and I don't feel assured enough to evaluate a puppy when it's born, unless there is obviously something wrong with it.

What should a show puppy sell for?

Don: How many definitions can we get of that one? To the right person, nothing. (laughter) Is that acceptable? I think a lot depends on who it's going to and what their intentions are, but I'd say, the market being what it is and the demand being what it is, the number of people out there who are similarly intentioned in our neck of the

woods, \$500.

Barbara: There are breeders who ask more, but some of those breeders maybe deserve to get more for their puppies. It depends upon what part of the country you are in, too.

Don: Two brood mares a few days ago sold for \$1.4 million apiece. Wow!

Do you sell on terms or cash only?

Barbara: It depends on the circumstances, but I don't guess we've ever really sold on terms - maybe once. Most people don't ask for terms. Most people are anxious to give you cash.

Don: They give \$350 cash and a \$150 check postdated a week. (laughter)

Barbara: It's not a big thing.

Do you sell puppies with a spay/neuter contract?

Don: No. We either take care of that ourselves or the people we sell them to do. That is part of their basic intention anyway. We've never trusted a contractual arrangement. We've never withheld registration. I might say, "This is a very nice dog, but it is not of breeding quality. We don't intend to register the dog and we would hope that you would feel the same way." But we don't withhold the registration for payment, a puppy, or until

they show it twelve times - that's what I meant by withholding registration.

What about puppies back when you sell a bitch?

Barbara: Maybe once or twice, but not as a general rule.

Don: We sell them a puppy with the understanding that if they would like to consult with us on the breeding, we would be glad to do so. We don't string people up. Nobody is going to do that to me and I'm not going to do it to the next person. However, if the bitch is nice and they breed to one of our males, we may breed for a puppy.

What do you feed your dogs?

Barbara: Right now we are feeding Nutrimax and Nature's Recipe.

Don: And Pedigree. The Pedigree people are obviously in business and they intend to make a profit, but they are wonderful people to work with.

They service the licensed shows, particularly the Astro World Series of Dog Shows, in a very wonderful manner, and we are most appreciative of them. They have good pet food products.

How important is diet in raising a Sammy?

Don: We have a handout that goes all the way from what to do with eggs and cottage cheese, how to mix it, how

many times a day, what dry dog food to use and how much to use, and we adhere to our own handouts.

Barbara: With some dogs, it matters more than with others. With some dogs, it doesn't really matter what you feed them, and others are more sensitive. Some are more prone to skin problems than others and that sort of thing.

Have you run into food allergies?

Barbara: We could have, but nothing that has been identified as such. That's the type of thing you do a little study on.

Don: We hear some things that are going around about certain dog foods that have certain ingredients that are not good. Unless we have real sound reason for using it, we don't use it. We don't go looking for trouble.

Do you feed any supplements?

Barbara: Off and on, but not on a regular basis. Sometimes I think that can get you into more trouble than help.

How do you condition your dogs?

Don: Chase them. (laughter)

Barbara: I try to walk those that we are showing, some on a regular basis, some not. We do have an acre and they condition themselves.

Don: By the time they get through chasing squirrels, birds and each other, and they come in the back door panting, they've had their exercise.

Barbara: I've had my hands on a few superbly conditioned dogs, and I admire those people who take the time. There are some dogs out there that are just hard as rocks, they are superbly conditioned, and that takes a certain dedication of time and effort. You must do this if you are campaigning a special.

When showing a Sammy, how much grooming should be done?

Don: Until your fingers ache and your wrist is broken.

Barbara: You groom them until you walk into the ring. They need it up until the last minute.

Don: You can do too much of the wrong thing, but you can't do too much of the right thing. Initially, when you go out with a new dog, a new team member with the grooming routine, they don't like it for the most part. After about the fifth time of "We look good together, don't we?" they love it, they really do. They may not ever get over their ticklishness in certain places, but they will stand there and lie there and soak it up. It's attention they like.

What grooming products do you like to use?

Don: It used to be that we would pick up a new tip every show back in the old days; and, of course, there were some things the pros didn't let us in on. To this day, there are a couple that they



Kombo's Golshan Czar.

never did let us in on. I don't wash them in Ivory soap or lye soap. Over the years, we have used just about anything that anybody recommended or that we saw results of that we liked.

Barbara: I like the new Australian one in the black bottle. Mr. Crystal is good, too. The Australian one, Mela Miracle, is very expensive but very good.

Don: It uses a eucalyptus oil derivative and it's good for their skin and keeps the parasites off them.

Barbara: We have a big problem with fleas in the area.

Don: Our freezes aren't long enough, and you are going to have fleas. We used to not have a flea on a dog. When we moved here, it was ten years before we had a flea. Of course, there were no birds, squirrels or grubs. I said, "Hold it, there's got to be a better way." Precor works good. It keeps the fleas from maturing. You will have a few, and if you have a dog who is driven crazy by one flea, you are still going to have a little problem, but for the most part, there will be a few fleas, but you are going to have to really hunt for them if you use Precor.

Do you trim whiskers?

Barbara: We always did until recently, but not lately, because it's easier not to, I guess. I like the look of a trimmed whisker myself.

Don: I suppose there are two reasons behind the new order. One is natural and the other is it is painful to the dog. If you trim whiskers, they get stubby, and if a judge reaches for the muzzle and comes in hard on the sides, I've seen dogs flinch because they've just been stabbed 40 times. I don't think that it's all that painful, because we'd been grooming dogs for the show ring for 25 years before no whisker trimming came in. It's something you can get used to - like when you are a child and you say, "The water is cold," and when you are an adult you stick your hands in the cold water. They become accustomed to it. I'm very comfortable not doing it. I don't think it detracts from the dog with or without them, and I didn't object to the new order at all. It's fine.

How do you kennel your dogs?

Barbara: We have a kennel facility with one sandy run and the rest are cement.

Don: But more dogs are in the house than are at the kennel.

Barbara: We use the kennel if we go out of town.

Don: If we go out of town for a day or two and can't take them with us, we'll put them in the kennel along with the one or two that we always leave in



Samko Karatyll Neilson.

the house anyway. Anymore, the kennel is just a holding or staging area under extraordinary circumstances. Most of the time they are with us.

Can adult males and females be exercised and run together?

Barbara: Yes, most of the time.

Don: Except for those several days ... (laughter)

Barbara: I don't think you can ever completely trust two males together. They will go a long time and they are fine and then something will trigger it and they won't be fine.

Don: You can have them together if you are around, but it's just asking for trouble to leave them. There may be a couple old males who are over the hill and they don't give a darn, but if you have a couple guys you are showing and they've had their square dance with the girls, I don't think they are going to kill one another, but you might not be showing one of them next week - you'll be doctoring some elbows or feet or sewing an ear back on or something. I don't think it's good. Females are not much of a problem, but you have to look out for those occasions when you have a dominant bitch and one who figures she's not second class, either, and

you'd better watch them. When you are around, though, anything goes. In fact, when I'm around, even the two guys who don't get along better get along when I'm around. I turn my back, if they have at one another, that's natural, but if they are sitting around in front of me, they'd better mind their p's and q's. They generally will.

Barbara: The male we have right now doesn't show any inclination to fight, but his day may come. At the Denver National, it was cute when all the males were growling and carrying on in the holding area and he was just jumping up and wanting to play. (laughter)

What advice would you give to a breeder who is just starting out?

Don: Anymore, there are probably not very many people who are going to be breeders in their own right for some time, if ever. The alliances they might form with people in order to follow and/or mutually serve the common interest is about the only way you can do things. I don't think the person should be the lucky, and there are some circumstances out there like that, but to be a breeder, you need to become acquainted and probably work with



Ch. Karabyll's Tigger, BOW, Austin KC, March 1988, handled by Melissa Winslow.

somebody else, at least counsel one another a lot and share. We've all done that. I sat down and talked with Billie, Lila, the Beals, and Donna - we almost made special trips out to visit with Donna Yocum and just chew the fat. There is so much you cannot learn on your own through so many years and so many hundreds of dogs. There are very few people who are ever going to do that again.

Barbara: One thing you can do is to counsel them about the dogs they are dealing with and the pedigrees they are dealing with, because so many times they are just names to people starting out.

To get started with breeding and showing, should you go to the kennels with the big winners to purchase a pup?

Don: No matter where you go, there is an element of luck and patience.

Barbara: I think that's the inclination of the people who are starting out. They look at the people who have been successful; that's the only gauge they have and they really can't evaluate things on their own at that point.

What kennels do you consider the best today and why?

Don: No comment on that. One of the most worthwhile experiences in the beginning is having some reasonable measure of success. That starts with

showing a dog. The best advice I can give to a person who really intends to go someplace with this activity is to have other people help them examine dogs from ringside, talk to these people, and buy a good dog. Not every good dog is for sale, but don't just go out and get a puppy from anybody. A puppy can cost you thousands of dollars or you can pay \$1,000 to \$2,000 for a very substantial, well bred, well mannered, winning, breedable dog. Do yourself a service. If you can cuddle up and get on the inside with a person who is willing to work with you like that and pay the freight, turn off on the high road. Who is that? It changes year to year, month to month, state to state and nation to nation.

Would you recommend joining a local breed club, a national breed club or an all breed club?

Don: I think an all breed club is a very necessary experience. If we are talking about Sammies, the average person who is interested in Sammies probably can't attend the local breed club meeting because it's too far away. Sammy people are as dispersed as darts on a map. They are not all concentrated in a big city where they have one or two reasonably good breed clubs - that's not where they are. Get involved in an all breed activity. There's bound

to be one of those close to you.

Barbara: All three have their place, and I would recommend they join all three if it's available and accessible to them.

Do you feel the parent club is doing enough to educate judges and new members?

Barbara: I think we are beginning to do that. There seems to be more emphasis on that now. We need to do more of it. But then, look at the lack of response at the Denver National. We can but try.

Is there an AKC video on Samoyeds and is it a good one?

Barbara: There is one, and it's adequate, but it's not wonderful.

Don: It's reasonably good.

Barbara: I've seen better and I've seen a lot worse.

Don: There are probably 40 of them that are better, and that is discouraging. I'm not saying the Sammy video is bad - it's adequate - but there are 40 of them that are outstanding.

Barbara: I think we could work on that.

Do you feel there is adequate literature available on the breed?

Barbara: There didn't used to be, but there is now.

How long have you lived in your present location?

Don: For 25 years.

Barbara: We went to school here, though, and as far as living in Houston, we've lived here for 35 years.

How long have you been married?

Barbara: We've been married for 34 years. We got married in 1958.

What have you done for a living?

Don: Whatever we've done for a living, we've put it all in dogs. (laughter) We've lived high! (laughter)

Barbara: I'm an accountant and Don is an electrical engineer.

And you both have graduate degrees?

Barbara: Yes, we both went to Rice Institute. We went to high school together and we went to college together. We were high school sweethearts.

How have dogs affected your life-style?

Barbara: Except for our children, they have been our whole life. They've governed who our friends are.

Don: Kids, dogs, one another, dog people.

Barbara: I'm sure they've changed our whole life. There is just no telling what we would do now if it wasn't for dogs.

Don: Even those people who I'm friends with in the place of my employment, it eventually gets around that I'm the guy with the dogs. They say, "I've got a dog problem," and we go on from there.

Barbara: Even after they leave

employment they call - "Solve this, will you please?" (laughter)

Don: Given that our kids were raised showing dogs and they all get a lot of enjoyment out of dogs and are still showing and judging, everything, where we live, how we live, what kind of cars we buy, the clothes we buy, the vacations we take, the people we know, the things we appreciate doing and the things we can do without, all begin and end with "d-o-g."

Barbara: When you buy dresses, they have to have dog pockets. (laughter)

Has it been worth it?

Barbara: I think so. I can't imagine living without them.

Don: I can't think of any bad experiences or "I'd rather haves" or anything. I'll say there are certain things that we don't do, like we don't go off for a three-week vacation without making sure the dogs are taken care of or taking a majority of them with us. In a few instances it's burdensome, but it's a burden we accept and we go on.

Barbara: We get pleasure out of it.

Don: There has never been a day when I've said, "Let's sell all these dogs and get out of it."

Barbara: Maybe a day - maybe an hour?

Don: Well, there's been a dog or two ... (laughter) I wouldn't have changed a thing.

Barbara: We did a lot of traveling with the children when they were younger. We'd go to Canada ...

Don: We've had some sad experiences, we've had tragedy with the dogs, and you certainly wouldn't want to repeat that, but there is nothing we would want to change.

Is there anything we haven't covered, any personal soapboxes you want to get up on or anything you think needs to be talked about?

Don: I don't know if this is an appropriate forum for this or not, but there's been an awful lot of redirection on the part of the qualifications and the testing of judges in general and there seems to be a policy - and I understand it's an unwritten policy, but it is a policy - that judges are not to consort with exhibitors in any fashion whatsoever. "Hi. How are you doing? Goodbye," and that's the extent of it. Other than the official AKC judges' enlightenment forums meetings, where they invite people to a hands-on or a tell-me-about-your-breed (a very formal thing), I can't tell you how long it's been since the judges have come around and said, "Tell me about Sammies," and sat at ringside and critiqued with one another. We are getting away from that and no wonder they want standards that are



Am/Can Ch. Chan Star's Silver Chief.

standard. It's getting sterile. You can sit down with the old hands and shoot the breeze and have a lot of fun. But the judges are sterilizing themselves with the exhibitors. We used to go to kennel club dinners after the show, and we were nobodies, but we would somehow manage to get our elbow into the conversation and peel an ear and listen. Maybe there are some people who do that now, but I think there is not enough of it and it seems to be on the wane. There is a knack to raising, training, showing and breeding a dog, but you need some help and the benefit of some experience. Some of it's just a bunch of wild talk, but there are some clues in wild talk and braggadociosness. We used to sit around until 4:00 in the morning at these shows. Maybe I'm too old and am out of it, I don't know. We'd never go to bed. We were lucky if we got one hour's sleep a night. (laughter)

Barbara: I think what it is that we are not all in the parking lot together anymore. There are other people in the parking lot, but we're not in the parking lot.

Don: I hope so, because that's where you learn it. Shoot! We'd go off

camping to Big Bend together, and what would we do? We'd talk until 5:00 in the morning about dogs. (laughter) But I think that's what there needs to be more of, and the judges need to be in on it; the judges need to help us and they can pick up some things. There needs to be more parking lot tailgate parties and ringside critiquing.

Barbara: Even with your fellow exhibitors. That's some of the most fun. I remember T.J. Denninger.

Don: We used to have fun with T.J. We'd sit around. T.J. is one fun guy and he is out of it now. He's off busy doing other things.

Barbara: He was fun to compete with, and when he was gone, it was one less fun person to compete with.

Don: He'd share a six-pack with you at 5:00 in the morning and at 7:00 you were beating one another's brains out with the brushes and blood in your eye! (laughter) It was fun!

Barbara: But you have to have a little bit of that blood in your eye when it comes time to get into the ring.

I have thoroughly enjoyed doing this. It has been so much fun and I really appreciate your time.

Barbara: It has been fun! •