

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Bernice Helinski
WYNTERKLOUD
Englewood, Colorado

This interview was conducted at the home of Bernice Helinski in March of 1991 by Cindy Adams.

How long have you been involved in dogs in general and in this breed specifically?

We started with a Springer Spaniel in 1955. We did obedience with him. John was transferred to the state of Washington, the Seattle area and we had Skipper with us. There was a man whom they finally caught who was going around poisoning dogs, and he poisoned our Skipper. We took him in to the vet but he didn't make it. I was brokenhearted and I said, "I grew up with this girlfriend who had a Samoyed when I was a young kid." We said our next dog would be a Samoyed if we could find one. He said, "I know of a litter." In fact, I helped deliver the litter." It was Bonnie and Bob Bowles of Silver Moon. I called her and we went out to see her. She interviewed us and let us see the puppies and Joh-Ni was our first Samoyed, Duchess Joh-Ni of Silver Moon. We brought her home about a week before Christmas and that was a Christmas present for us that year in 1960.

From there we went on. She caught our hearts and stole us away. Through them we got into showing the dogs and learning all about it and there were some excellent people out there. We met Nell Collins and Lila Weir - they were excellent people and we learned an awful lot from them. They taught us how to show dogs. We met Walt and Ethel Stefanik who had Samoyeds and who lived in Leavenworth, Washington and we visited with them often, especially after we were transferred to Washington. We went to dog shows many times with Walt and Ethel Stefanik, as we lived near them.

There was a small kennel club starting up in Moses Lake and Ephrata and we were one of the beginning members of the club. In Moses Lake they used to have a Western week and they had a big parade and you wore western clothes. Joh-Ni became the watchdog. The herding instinct was very natural in her. The little kids on the street would come down and see Joh-Ni in the yard. I taught her the boundaries and she would not go beyond the boundaries of that yard. She would herd all the little kids into the yard. She was the neighborhood baby-sitter, so to speak. When this parade was in town that year, we all went down - she was about fifteen months old. I took Joh-Ni, and the kids went with me. Dan Blocker, who played Hoss Cartwright in "Bonanza," was the parade marshall and he spotted Joh-Ni with the kids. As



soon as he got to the end of the parade, he came right back and played with Joh-Ni. He was very impressed with her.

We were there until September 1962. In June of 1962 the Bowles had a litter of puppies and Ch. Noatak of Silver Moon was the sire. He was a littermate to Joh-Ni. John was being transferred in July back to New Jersey so I was left behind to pick up the pieces. Bonnie said, "Bernice, how about having a puppy?" So I bought Kloudi who turned out to be Ch. Wynter Kloud of Silver Moon. He was a darling. He looked just like his father did as a puppy. Before John left, he took out the back seat of the car and it was shipped with the furniture. He made a little platform in the back of the car for Kloudi and Joh-Ni. We started off. As I was traveling across country people

were so impressed when I stopped with this little puppy and Joh-Ni. They would say, "Spitz?" and I said, "On occasion they do." I finally arrived in New Jersey.

At the motel where we were staying temporarily just outside of Patterson, New Jersey, the woman in charge of the motel was very impressed with the dogs and her very close friend was Beatrice Lillie of the Broadway stage. Beatrice Lillie came and sat on the floor of my motel room while John was at work and played with little Kloudi and Joh-Ni. Kloudi's littermate later came that the lady of the motel bought because she was so impressed with the dogs. We finally found a home and moved up into Wayne, New Jersey.

In September at Westchester, the Samoyed Club of America had a National Specialty in conjunction with Westchester K.C. In those years, the Samoyed Club of America had divisions. They had the Eastern, Midwest, Northwest and Pacific Coast, not like the SCA is now. It was the Eastern Division of the Samoyed Club of America but actually the Samoyed Club of America held the specialty. I entered Joh-Ni and took Kloudi along. At that specialty show, Joh-Ni took Reserve Winners Bitch, and she wasn't even two years old. It was her first specialty show. We met Bob and Dolly Ward there who are well-known in Samoyeds, and they are also judges. Mr. Chamberlain was the judge and he was an old-time Samoyed breeder.

After we moved to our home, I started showing Joh-Ni and she was taking Winners Bitch, Best of Winners and Best of Breed over champions. She finished in nothing flat, before she was two years old. Her registered name was Ch. Duchess Joh-Ni of Silver Moon.

Did you special her then?

Yes. It was lots of fun. The following spring, Kloudi was nine months old and his first show was in Washington, DC in conjunction with the National Capital show and was a specialty again. He took Winners Dog and Best of Winners out of the American Bred class.

How old was he then?

He was only nine months old. The next few shows, I showed him in Patterson, New Jersey, at Ramapo Kennel Club. He not only took Winners Dog and Best of Winners, he went Best of Breed. I was shocked. Eileen Whitlock, who is an old-timer in Samoyeds,

encouraged me to go to the Chicago International Show because they were having the SCA National Specialty there. We went. In those days they were bench shows. That was lots of fun. You got to meet everybody and learn a great deal about your breed from the old-timers. You had to have proof of the ownership of the dog to get into the Chicago International bench show so they wouldn't get stolen because at that time, they were stealing dogs from the shows. Kloudi did take Winners Dog again and Best of Winners at that specialty. At that show, Julia Goodrich, a respected Samoyed breeder, was the chairperson. She made arrangements to have the banquet and hired guards to watch our dogs while we went to the banquet. She was an interesting lady and very knowledgeable on the Samoyeds. The next week I showed Kloudi again and he took Winners Dog, Best of Winners and Best of Breed and finished for his championship. Five shows in one month and he was a champion. I showed him once in May as a special but he was too immature to be shown as a special, so I kept him home until the next year and brought him out the next spring when he took Best of Breed and fourth in the Working Group.

How many litters have you bred?

Joh-Ni only had one litter. Ch. Wynterkloud's Patyna Sno Mist, "Tyna," had five and Willie, Ch. Shesrnustar of Wynterkloud (She's Our New Star), had three and then her daughter Chatta, Wynterkloud's Tufnwil Kachina, had one. Joh-Ni had one, Tyna had five, Willie had four and Willie's daughter Chatta had one. So, ten litters.

Did you have specific goals when you started your breeding program?

I wanted to retain the beauty of the Samoyed breed. I wanted good quality in coats; also good pigmentation, movement and sound temperament. I didn't want any shyness or poor temperament. I wanted them as close to the standard as I could get them.

Which do you feel was your best litter and why?

There was one litter with Tyna-Kloudi and then it was with Tyna and Ch. Nachalnik of Draylene, owned by Doris and Harold McLaughlin. That was a beautiful litter - four champions out of a litter of seven - also, one dog had an obedience CD title.

Were there a number of champions out of that litter?

Yes. There was one out of Willie that was a very beautiful dog. She had very pretty puppies. The Tyna-Kloudi litter, there were four champions in that



*Left: Ethel Stefanik with male Sammy "Mishka."
Right: Bernice Helinski with bitch Ch. Duchess Joh-Ni of Silver Moon.*

one.

How many were in the litter?

There were six. Four of them became champions and the other two went into obedience. They went into obedience and had two CD's but the championship in that litter was a really nice one. I bred Tyna to the half brother of Kloudi. He was Ch. Sam O'Kahn's Chingis Kahn. That was another fine litter. There were five with three champions. Willie came out of that litter.

Do you know how many champions you have produced?

There are quite a few. I've lost track over the years. Every so often I get a letter from somebody reminding me that so and so was a champion. About two years ago I received a letter with a communication about all the dogs with OFA that went back to our breeding. I was amazed to see there were so many that I didn't know their offspring came right back to my breedings. They were beautiful, sound dogs.

Which dog do you feel was the best dog you have ever bred or owned and why?

I would say Ch. Shesrnustar of Wynterkloud was just fabulous. She was a wonderful bitch. This is the one called Willie. She was very sound. As a bitch she also placed in the Working Group which was good for a bitch to

do back then in the early 1970's. She placed in a Group here in Pueblo, Colorado, also.

Would you consider her to be your biggest winner?

Kloudi was my really big winner and although I wasn't his breeder, he was in the top ranking. Back then they had what they call the Phillips System and he was ranking right up there as one of the top dogs, right along with his father, Ch. Noatak of Silver Moon. His half brother was Willie's sire and that was Ch. Sam O'Khan's Chingis Kahn. They were all ranking up there as top winning dogs. It was a lot of fun.

What is your opinion of inbreeding, linebreeding and outcrossing?

You have to do some inbreeding and you have to do outcross. I feel if you keep real close linebreeding or inbreeding you're going to get some weaknesses and you have to outcross to bring in the qualities that you might be losing. I like to linebreed but I do feel that you have to go out occasionally or you will lose some of your strengths and bring in faults you don't want and create faults.

Who or what was most influential in your breeding program? Is there a person or a particular animal?

I was impressed over the years with Billy Tucker. She was a very well-

known breeder. I was very impressed with her breeding program. Nell Collins out in the northwest was where we got our start. Doris McLaughlin was very influential. I bred to her Ch. Nachalnik of Draylene twice. I was very pleased with what I came out with. Those people were very conscientious. They promoted x-raying for hip dysplasia when it was first starting. They were very influential in that. They were right there at the beginning as far as x-raying for hip dysplasia and then involved with the eye problems later, testing for PRA. I think Bob and Dolly were early leaders in giving information on the breed. They were from the early times of the Samoyeds, and from them you learned a great deal.

How did you come up with your kennel name?

I liked Kloudi's name, Ch. Wynter Kloud of Silver Moon, and I thought I would combine it. Kloudi made a name for himself as a show dog and I thought, "Why not just make it into one word and have Wynterkloud." When we first named Kloudi, I didn't want to spell it just plain "winter" and "cloudy." I wanted to make it different and then we decided to make it Wynterkloud, one word.

Over the years, have you developed any scheme or method in naming your litters?

Not really too much. When people buy the dogs, just so they use the kennel name they name their dogs whatever they want. I never had any specific way of naming them. When Willie was born, I was whelping that litter, and we lived in New Jersey. Our neighbor who was a police officer walked in and asked how many puppies we had then. I had two who were born by then and there was a litter of six. He said, "The next one that is born, you have to name after me," and his name was William. So that's how she got the call name of Willie. Their call names are something that suits them. Like this one we have now called Sugar. That's not the real name. It's from the kids in the neighborhood who said, "Oh, she's so sweet. She's just like sugar." So, on occasion, that is how our Sammies receive a "call name"!

Do you feel that over the years you developed a distinguishable line where people would say, "That's a Wynterkloud dog"?

Yes, I think so. In pigmentation, coat and face, they can tell, and overall soundness and good temperament. Our Wynterkloud Joh-Ni of Karana had an ideal temperament.

How would you rate type, temperament and soundness in order of importance?

I want soundness and I do like

type and I want sound temperament, too. It means a great deal to me to have them sound in temperament. I want an overall dog and I want good movement. That tells you an awful lot about the dog. A dog that is put together correctly will move correctly. I look for that. I don't want to lose that and I don't want to lose temperament. They are supposed to be a Christmas dog with a spirit of Christmas in their heart and in their smile and that's what I want.

What is the ideal conformation in this breed?

A Samoyed should be well-balanced, not too heavy in overall boning to appear clumsy. They should give an impression of being capable of endurance and able to perform the work they were intended to do. Males should be masculine in appearance – not aggressive. Females should look feminine but not with loss of structure or temperament. Both males and females should be just off-square. The coat should be of good quality, double coated and biscuit coloring should *not* be penalizing. The Samoyed expression should be important, too – the "Samoyed smile" is the typical Samoyed expression, with good movement and soundness of temperament. I do want a good coat. I do not want to see a dog in the show ring that's been altered by clipping and trimming and all that. This dog is supposed to be natural. I can see them trimming up the feet a little but I don't want to see them sculpturing the dogs.

What do you like or dislike in head type?

I don't like too much of a foxy look. I don't want to see a little foxy type face. I want a nice balanced head. I don't want to see a real harsh look to them. I want a nice soft look to the head so that you know that they're gentle and you know that they can hold their own. I like to see a nice stop. I don't like the loss of stop. It takes away from the correct head of a Sammy. I don't want a coarse looking dog either.

What do you feel is the ideal ear size and set of ear?

I have had large ears. They should be fit so they have an equilateral triangle from the eye to the ear to in between across the top of the skull. That, to me, is the ideal ear set. And the size of the ears can vary. I've had some from correct to the large ear but as long as it fits in with the dog, it shouldn't make any difference. As long as it balances out. It can vary but as long as they are correctly set on the head, that is what counts.

Are missing teeth a problem?

They should not have missing

teeth. That is a very grave fault. It is in the breeding program and they should not have missing teeth.

How important is eye color?

Eye color can vary from the black, dark, dark eyes to a more amber color. I don't hold that against them. Of course, a blue eye is disqualifying. The lighter colored eye along with the liver nose and all, that dog can produce black points. I don't hold that against any dog.

How important is head type, when you are rating a dog?

I like to see the dog's head in balance with the overall structure of the dog. I don't want a large, coarse head on a finer body. It's out of balance then. I want the head to balance with the rest of the dog. To me, in a Samoyed, they should have the Samoyed smile because that's part of the breed.

How important is pigment and would you breed to a dog that was missing pigment?

If he had the overall structure. You would have to know what was behind that dog. If there was a solid black lip line, then, yes, I would breed to him because it will come through again. The breaks in the lip line I don't think are that serious because that can be bred out if you are careful in your breeding program and know that you must breed into one with a good lip line pigment, or eye rim. But lip line breaks, I do not count the dog down as far as quality because of that because it's in the breed, but you do try to breed it out in a good breeding program.

Will you comment on the white, white coats and the biscuit coat and maybe on the black?

I have found through experience that if you take a dog that is a white, white dog with a solid black pigment and it has the longer white coat – say it's been several generations – then I think at that time you want a dog that is carrying a little bit of a liver nose and maybe has a tendency toward a little biscuit in his coat here and there. If you breed to that dog, the litter could come up with excellent pigmentation and beautiful, beautiful coats and very, very good overall structure.

Will they come out with the white coat then?

Yes. There will be a combination, too, in the litter, you'll find, because I have done that. You will have a great overall structure and their pigment coming in really great. Some will have the shorter dense coats and some will have the long coat but then you are carrying the genes back that will come again the next time one of those are

bred then it will come back and you will have equal quality there. You will have good coat. You will bring out some biscuit but biscuit helps. And you need the liver. It's part of the breed. You read in the old books back in the history of the Samoyeds, they bred to liver nose for a purpose. It will increase the black points in future generations. It's excellent structure. If you keep breeding black, black points with the white longer coats, they seem to lose some of their boning. They are a little lighter in boning but by doing the combination you are getting a dog that is what they were. I find it very important.

You have an early picture of a black Samoyed. Do you think there were more black Samoyeds then?

No. According to this English book here, they were very, very rare. I would love to have had a set of blacks and whites just to prove that it was not the dominant gene in the Samoyeds. The dominant gene is for the white coat or the biscuit. Black is very rare.

But it does happen?

Yes, rarely. There was a litter here in Colorado where they had one black puppy. Unfortunately, the owner of the stud took the black puppy as stud fee. He had distemper in his kennel and the puppy died. Everybody was heartsick because everybody wanted that black Samoyed. It would have been just great.

What do you think is the cause of snow nose?

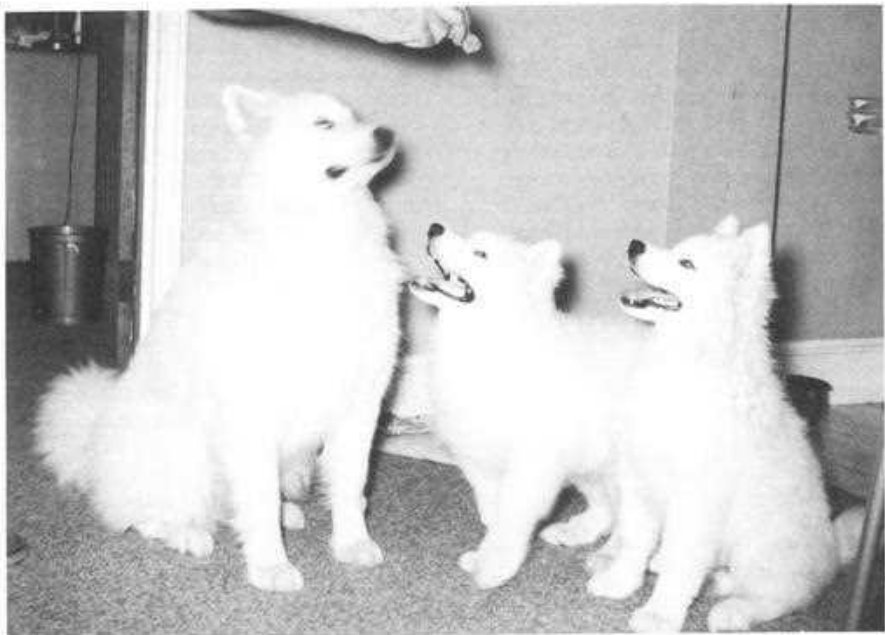
I think it is part of the breed. In the wintertime they're going to go into snow noses. Particularly in the bitches, as they get older, the nose stays that way most of the time. You can see the one out here. Her nose is a liver nose now. When she was young, it was black, black. But as the bitches get older, they seem to retain the liver nose then and that's not a fault of any kind. It's part of the breed.

How deep do you feel the chest should be?

It should come right to the elbow. It has to be according to the breed standard. You don't want a real shallow chest or too low. And the layback of the shoulder makes it all equal then. It has to be in proportion.

In your experience, how important is coat to winning in the ring?

Well, the overall quality has a lot to do with it. I've won with dogs out of coat. But it's the quality, not the quantity that counts. You have to know that, yes, your dogs are going to shed. Especially the bitches have a tendency to shed twice a year according to their heat cycle. I've noticed that. But it is



Ch. Joh-Ni of Silver Moon at 22 months with pups Kloudi and Mich at 11 1/2 weeks.

quality, not quantity that counts because you may have a short, dense coat and they're very good. That's a good coat to have and it's easier to take care of, too.

What do you consider to be ideal in shoulder layback?

It should be according to the breed standard, a 45 degree layback of shoulder. I don't like to see a short neck because that throws the whole dog off.

Do you see more short necks now than you used to?

Yes. It throws the whole front off. Then the dog is not balanced in front and you will see poor movement in the front as a result.

What do you think the ideal height is for dogs and bitches?

I think they should stay within the standard. I like to see a dog, just as they are, 23-1/2 inches. I will accept a 24 inch male. At one time I can remember that we tried to get it but it wouldn't pass, to change the bitches to be instead of 21-1/2 inches to 22 inches and then have a disqualification just like they do in Siberian Huskies. We wanted to see that play two inch because if they're on a sled team, they would be in better balance. If you have a couple of bitches there that maybe they're overlapping the bottom part of the male, then they're going to be more in balance and they'll work better. I would like to see it that way. Judging bitches, I will not put them down as far as placing them or giving them a win if they are a little bit oversized. The bitch

should be, I think, around 22 inches. The males I would like to see just where they are or I'd let them go to 24 inches, but not above it. I want to keep them balanced right where they are. Unfortunately, it's 21-1/2 inches for bitches. I would like to see it go 22 inches for bitches and then disqualify. I don't want to see them getting too big.

Will you comment on the Samoyeds as a herding breed?

The Samoyeds are a herding breed. I remember there was a man up in the northwest and all he would have were Samoyeds to herd his sheep. They make excellent herding dogs. In size, you don't want them to be oversized. You want that dog to be agile. If you start getting a big oversized, over-boned dog, they're not going to be able to do their quality of work as far as a herding dog. I learned this when we went to our first SCA Specialty in Westchester, New York. One of the speakers at the banquet said, "They (the Samoyeds) are known as the three H dog: hunting, herding and hauling." If you have a big, klutzy, oversized Samoyed, they're not going to be able to do their herding.

What do you feel the topline should be like and how do you feel it relates to the function of the dog?

It has to be a level topline because the overall function of the dog depends on it.

Do you see that Samoyeds are starting to get more rear angulation than they should have?

Yes. Too straight, too much angulation – they're both wrong. You do not want this over-angulation. It's going to throw their whole rear end off and you will find weaknesses in the rear then. If you start overangulating, you are going to run into too many problems. It's the same if it's too straight. Either way, you are going to have problems. The dog is not going to be able to function the way it's supposed to.

What do you feel is the ideal foot shape and how is it related to function?

I don't want to see a cat's paw on Samoyeds. When they are in the snow they need the hare foot. You want a good, solid hare foot. You don't want a splayed or little, tiny cat foot. The hare foot balances with the boning so they can function in the snow like they are supposed to. It also helps them herding. They need that grip. When they're herding, they have to make fast turns and if they don't have the right foot, they're not going to do it.

How would you describe the ideal temperament in a Samoyed?

I don't want to see them overly aggressive, ready to bite at the drop of a hat. I think a Sammy should be very cordial. They should be able to get along with everybody. They like to please people. They are supposed to be happy dogs. They are supposed to have, like I say, the Christmas spirit carried over in their smile. They are not going to attack anybody. They shouldn't shy away if someone comes up to them. I want them to be very steady that way. I don't like to see them where they back off and shy away or they growl at a person the minute they come up to a person. They will be protective but you won't find them growling, snarling and ready to bite. They are not that type. I want to see them very even tempered, not shy and not overly aggressive.

What do you feel are some of the most serious faults in the breed today?

There are some eye problems and some oversized dogs. I've come across some temperaments that I don't like either.

What type of eye problems do you see?

Juvenile cataract and progressive retinal atrophy, PRA. This is where you need to watch your breeding program. Juvenile cataracts are easy to eliminate if you watch your breeding. You are going to have to test. I'm sorry to see this coming out in our dogs.

Is the eye testing something that is done by most breeders?

They should have dogs' eyes tested before breeding. We have some of the best right here in Colorado. We

have a veterinary college in Ft. Collins, and we have Dr. Hammond, an ophthalmologist, in Denver, so it's not any problem to have access to a good canine ophthalmologist. It's a shame because it can be eliminated.

Do you feel that the Samoyed standard is overall a good standard?

Yes, I like the standard. The only change I would make is I would like to see the bitch be 22 inches. Otherwise, I like the standard as it is. It isn't overly aggressive. It's easy to follow. It's easy for the breeders to say, "Let's adhere to this." There is nothing too much to be deviated at all in it. I like the standard.

Are there any disqualifications and should there be any?

I would like to see a disqualification as far as the size, yes, like the standard with the Siberian Husky on height. The other thing I might also go for would be disqualifying an overly aggressive dog in the ring that would attempt to bite. If a dog is going to try to bite somebody in the ring, the judge or anyone else, they should be disqualified because the breed was not to be an aggressive, nasty dog.

Do you feel that champions should be specialized?

Yes, I think so. I like to see them specialized. This is what our breed is, this dog is deserving of his title. If you have a real good dog that is a champion, let the world see what they are.

Do you feel that making the top ten or top twenty is a real achievement?

It's a good achievement but I don't think it's necessary. If the dog is a good dog and he's made a championship and he has done some nice winning, I think all these rankings go a little overboard. Then the people are caring about winning and they are not caring about the breed itself. There are some dogs that should not even be champions but they are being specialized all over and they have serious faults, not producing well. But everybody is going to jump on the bandwagon and breed to that top dog up there and it might not be the best for the breed.

Do you feel overall that judging in your breed is fair? Do you think there is anything that can be done to improve it?

I want to see a dog judged for who the dog is itself and not for who is on the other end of the lead. I'm sorry, but that's the way it goes. It's not always the best dog that wins, it's who was showing it. They must take into consideration that no dog is perfect. It can even be in temperament, too, and that's why I think temperament should be very important.

If you have a preference, would you rather show under an all breed judge or a

breeder-judge?

I like breeder-judges. I'm one. It just depends. Some of the all breed judges that we have were originally Samoyed breeders. They know the breed well. It just depends on the judge, I guess, but I do like breeder-judges.

Do you think that poor judging is more a result of politics than of actually not knowing the breed?

A little of both.

Do you think advertising influences a judge?

I think some of it does, yes.

Have you always handled your own dogs?

Yes, they were all owner handled, always.

Have you ever handled for other people as a favor or professionally?

Not professionally, but occasionally maybe one that was of our breeding and the people cannot take it in, I will say, "Yes, I'll do it for you." I wouldn't just handle anyone's dog just for the fun of it, but if it was one of our breeding, if they didn't know how to do it and were just new to the breed, then I'd go into the ring. I've done it several times but not for just everybody. Just to help out once in a while, that's all.

Did your husband handle?

Yes, he did. He didn't do it very often but he did. He handled one of our breedings up in Cheyenne when the woman couldn't handle it at all. She was older. John took the dog in, Kama Kloud, and he got Best of Winners. In fact, he helped finish the dog to his championship.

You always took your own dogs into Group?

Yes. It was fun. I enjoyed the competition. Willie, Ch. Shesrustar of Wynterkloud, placed in Groups. I remember one show here in Pueblo she was given third in the Group. That's when the herding breeds were in. The man on the herding breed, German Shepherd, was also a judge. He tried to nudge me out of my third place and he got fourth. The judge said to him, "You know better. You're in fourth place and you know it." It was funny. Especially since Sammy bitches are not as popular as far as being Group placers. At least back then, that's the way it was. Now it's different but back then, bitches hardly placed at all in Groups.

How do you train puppies and at what age do you usually like to start?

I like to start when they are tiny. Even eight to ten weeks of age, I start them. I like to get them used to being groomed and used to the collar and lead. I always start them on a little collar and let them drag it around and

then follow them. It's just great if you can start them early getting used to the collar and used to the grooming. And used to having their mouths looked at, open their mouths. This is a big thing. In fact, what I usually do with litters of puppies, when they start getting their teeth, I take a little human baby toothbrush and brush their teeth. They get used to that and they don't mind it then. By the time they are three months old, they could care less about anybody handling their mouth because they are used to it. They like it because I usually put a little wafer in it and they think that's pretty good. If you start them off early, they're used to it. Most of my puppies I let go about ten to twelve weeks of age and they are used to having the collar and lead on by the time they leave. I think it's the best thing you can do for them and for the owners, too. Give them instructions about it, even the pet owners, so they know they can be on a collar and lead. That's important.

Do you like to encourage attendance at fun matches and training classes?

Oh, yes. That's the best for the dogs and the people. You're going to training classes, going to your fun matches and with newcomers, this is how you get them started. It's the best thing in the world. It's good for the dog, too. It's where you practice with them and if you are making mistakes, you know how to correct them. For obedience and conformation both, that's the place to do it, at these fun matches and in classes. It gets the dog socialized. The earlier the better.

You have done a lot of obedience training with your own dogs?

Oh, yes. I enjoy doing obedience training. I think it's good for the dogs and it helps you overall as far as being in conformation. You really have control of your dogs. It's better for around the house, too. For people that have families, too, if you have a dog that is going to obey, it will be much easier to live with. I am pleased with obedience.

Do you think that if you teach them obedience before conformation you will have a problem in the show ring?

No, I don't. I have not found that. I've done both at the same time and I haven't had any problems. If you are taking obedience with conformation, when you get them in the show ring then they know the commands and they know when to stay and will stay there. You have good control and they know the difference between when you are going to go fast or slow. You can adjust your speed as far as gaing the dog, too. It's much easier. It is better for the examination of the dog, too.



Ch. Shesrnustar of Wynterkloud, "Willie."

You put them on the stand and tell them to stay and when the judge goes over them, they won't object.

Have most of your conformation champions also had obedience titles?

Not all of them had obedience titles but they had basic obedience. I thought that was lots of fun. Tyna was one who said, "I will do it once but don't ask me to repeat it." She was real sharp in obedience but you did the run-through once and that's it. When we lived in New Jersey, I made the mistake of thinking, "Well, I'll run it through" - this is tonight's graduation for basic obedience for your beginners. I said, "O.K., Tyna, let's see how good you do." I worked her out in the yard. We went to class that night and they brought in a regular obedience judge to judge the class for graduation. Tyna was first to run through and I said, "Tyna, heel," and I'm heeling. The judge said, "Forward," and I went forward. He said, "Halt. Would you like to look around and see where your dog is?" There she was back there with this Sammy smile on her face: "I did this earlier and I'm not doing it again." She was already a champion, too. She knew stand and stay, but forget it. I

put her on the stand for the examination and she sat right back down again. The only thing she did right that night was her sits and downs. I took her to the fun matches and never ran through it. I would just take her in and she'd be perfect and get real high scores. I enjoy doing obedience with them and I think it helps.

Have you ever done any tracking?

No, I would like to have tried. I never got into that. This breed of dog would be good at that. I know some that are and they are very, very good at tracking and they are excellent in herding.

Is there any kind of competition at fun get-togethers where they do herding or anything with Sammies?

They do have some herding but they are in with other breeds. There are some, even in our local club, that are quite active in herding and even in weight-pulling. They are very good at weight-pulling.

Do you feel the Samoyed is more intelligent than other herding dogs or other Arctic dogs?

I think they are very, very intelligent. I put them on a level with all the rest of them. They're very intelligent, I



John Helinski photographing pups at Wynterkloud Kennels.

find, in knowing people. They can sense things about people that we don't know. A man wanted a puppy from Ch. Shesrnustar of Wynterkloud's litter and she wouldn't let him anywhere near to look at any of her puppies. She stood between him and those babies of hers and said, "No." So I said, "I'm sorry, but you can't have one of my puppies." He looked at me and said, "I want one." Well, I didn't sell him a puppy. She knew something I didn't know. It turned out he got one from somebody else and within six months that puppy was back and it had been abused. Willie knew about it and said, "There's no way you are going to get one of my puppies."

There was a litter of Tyna's and I made a mistake. She didn't like this person - this was before the doctor - and I said, "Oh, Tyna, you don't know what you are talking about." I let the puppy go and two months later I got a call and it was a neighbor to this woman, she was a German Shepherd breeder, and told me what was going on. She said the puppy didn't get fed unless she fed it. She would go across when the owner went off to work to feed the puppy. The puppy did not get the rest of her shots and she said the

poor dog half the time didn't even have any water. I went and got that puppy back. I said, "You are not getting your money back for what you've done." She was in vitamin deficiency and everything else. It took a while to get her back on her feet. I remembered Tyna when she said, "No, I don't want that puppy to go to her." After I finally got her back to good health, the woman that bought her then took her and that dog lived to be two weeks shy of seventeen years of age because she then had proper care. She showed her later, too. But it took a while. It took a good year for her to get back into good health. So, yes, watch your dogs and watch the people that you sell them to. The dogs are smarter than we are when it comes to knowing people. They really do know. If they don't like the people, then they don't get them. They are very intelligent, too smart.

Do you feel that a dog should be taken everywhere off lead if they are obedience trained?

No, I still think they need a lead. You just never know. A situation could arise and you would regret not having them on a lead. Something could happen.

Can shy puppies and shy dogs be correct-

ed with training?

I don't know. I've never had one that was really shy that could be trained not to be shy.

Is there any specific advice that you could give to owners who would like to handle their own dogs?

I think you need classes. You are training to know how and what to do. Go to fun matches. That's where you are going to learn to handle your own dog. I think there is a camaraderie between you and your dog, a certain rapport between the two of you, so that you can get more out of him than the handler would. I firmly believe that, but get the practice, work with them. You can go all the way if you want to and it's fun. You have the fun of saying, "This is my dog. I've got the best dog in the ring," and you are going to show it. You know how to bring out the best in your puppy and you learn this from going to classes. Learn your puppy's faults as well as his good points. Know what to bring out. If the dog has beautiful movement, that's the thing you are going to bring out. Maybe the color is a little off or maybe it's a liver nose - that's part of your breed but some of the judges don't always take that into consideration - but there's a rapport between the owner and that dog that you can't get with a handler. You can do your own winning. The dog can do it. If you have a good dog, you can get out there and show it. Learn, practice and that's what counts.

Choose what applies to your particular breed, such as weight-pulling, herding, sled-dog, and explain how your breed fits into those things.

I think they like to get involved with things they were originally bred to do. They are very good at hunting, too. I had one who would catch birds. She wouldn't kill them but she would bring them to me. The Sammy enjoys a challenge. They are capable of doing the hunting. They are capable of herding. They can haul. It's part of the breed and they're forgetting this. They are not just little wimpy things sitting around to look pretty. They like to work. I think they are a very versatile dog, myself.

To be continued ...