

# THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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## Samoyed People



The Samoyed Quarterly Talks With  
John and Carol Chittum  
BELAYA  
Sierra Madre, California

*This interview was conducted in September, 1985, at the home of John and Carol Chittum by Brenda E. Abbott.*

### How did you get started in Samoyeds?

John: I married one! That's always been our joke.

Carol: It really has. I wanted a dog when I finished college and I very carefully researched the breeds. Having grown up with a Dachshund, I decided I wanted something bigger and fuzzier. I narrowed my choices down to the Collie and the Samoyed. I subsequently read about some of the eye problems that plague the Collie breed and so I just decided I really liked the looks of the Samoyed. I started looking for a dog and I found a dog that was probably like many Sammies that people start with, not a very good repre-

sentative of the breed, but it was a very good learning experience. I later married John, who with his wonderful objectivity, began to notice that the dog that I had didn't look like the dogs that were winning! (Laughter) He was nice enough to say something about it, and at that point he thought we needed to look for a dog that looked more like the ones that were winning if we were going to really do this properly. That point is what I really consider our beginning, and it was a joint beginning. We then found Ivan and started with him. He was our first really good dog and we were quite lucky to start with him.

John: We were at the Santa Ana Valley Kennel Club and Diane Miller Dalton showed him. I had shown him the day before at the specialty, but with Diane showing him it was easier to really look at him and see him as others did. This first dog we had was just not a show dog. He was just a Samoyed.

Carol: And yet, I think I did what a lot of novice people do - I read the standard

and looked at my dog and thought "Oh, yes! That's right!" (Laughter) But once we got Ivan, it opened the door for us in terms of people. We got very familiar with his pedigree and made a commitment at that point to try to breed a Sammie that would be as close as possible to a working type of dog that would be along the lines and ideas that Agnes Mason started; this would be a dog that could work as well as be beautiful.

### What year did you get Ivan?

Carol: 1967. He was born in December of 1966 on the day after Christmas, which is where his brother got his name: Almost Christmas - "Chatter." He was Mardee Ward's dog.

John: We went to SCLA's first "A" match back when they were breaking up the divisions according to the dictates of the American Kennel Club. We were one of the first groups to set up a local club and then went through the steps to become sanctioned. Ivan was sitting there in a pen, and was this HUGE puppy in comparison to what we had been looking at. He had supposedly been pick of the litter out of Ward's male, Clancy, and when they came to get him - because he had been pick at birth, he hadn't been shown to all the puppy people who came around to look at the litter - he hadn't been socialized and wasn't as outgoing as the others. He didn't seem as responsive as the other puppy, and at the point Mardee was more interested in obedience. She was living up in Central Valley and had horses and wasn't doing a lot of dog showing at the time. She picked another dog and all of a sudden, here was this other dog who was SOMEBODY'S pick. I guess at the moment they were feeling kind of stuck with him, so we were fortunate enough to get him although he was then almost six months. He was a big, floppy puppy! His father was considered a very large dog for the time, although by today's standards, he probably wouldn't be that big. Ch. Kazan of Kentwood (Clancy) was his sire and he went back to some of the Wards' original dogs that they got from Agnes Mason, and the mother was Ch. Trina of Taymylyr who came from Elliott Colburn. She was a double granddaughter.

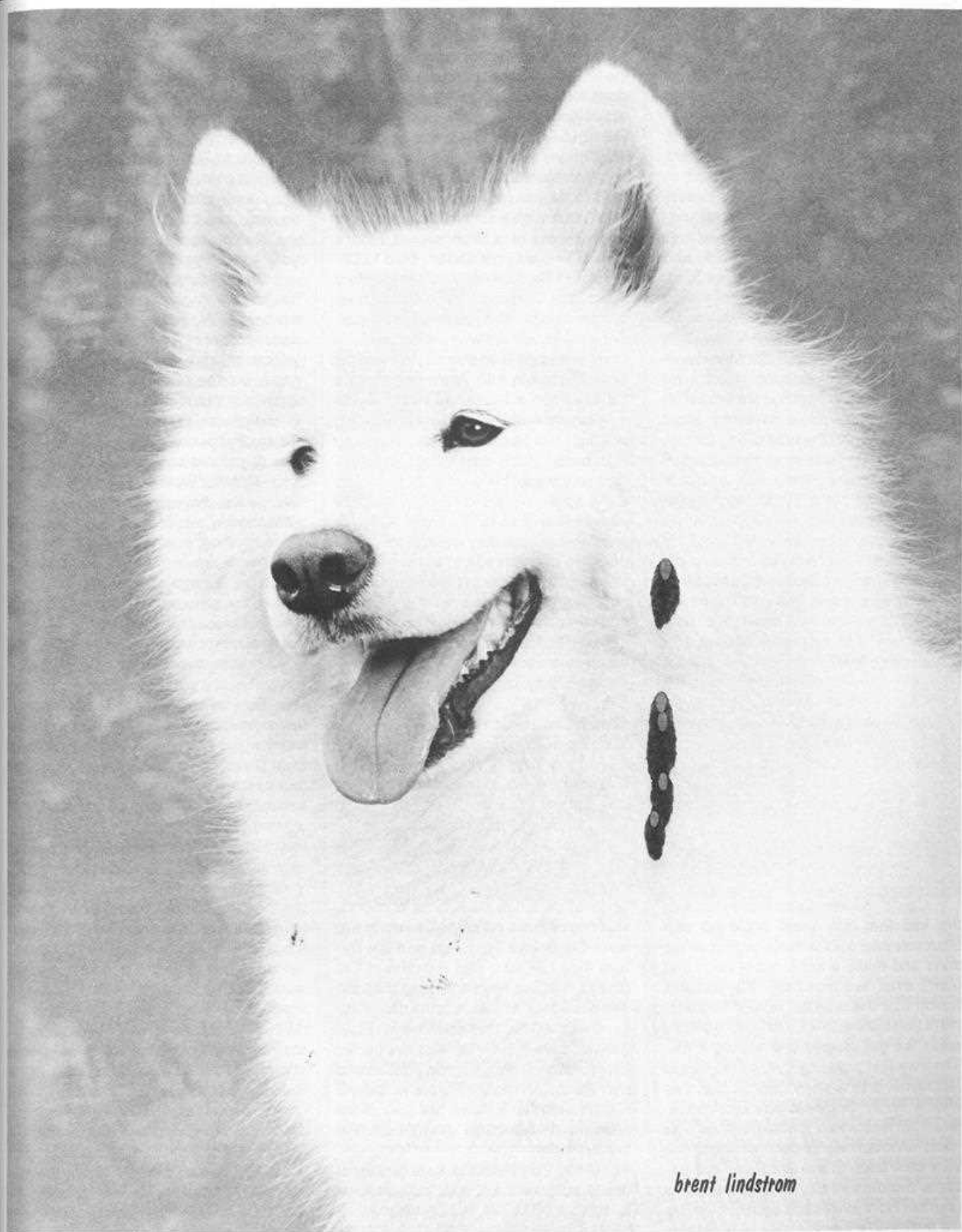
Carol: She was inbred on Shondi. She was Shondi bred to his own granddaughter, but the daughter that intervened there was all White Way, so it was definitely a combination of Rokandi and

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Ch. Belaya Anja Padrushka.

Juliet (who was Rex of White Way's daughter). It's the same family that you have basically, right?

**Right, that's what I'm sitting here thinking. (Laughter)**

John: Of course, Helene Spathold and the Drayalene dogs is where Chief, Ch. Nachalnik of Drayalene, came from. He was out of Rokandi and Clarisse.

Carol: And Clarisse is also heavily White Way. Back to this start, John and I took a trip after we had both Ivan and Anja and we went to see Lenora Sprock, who had White Crystal's Balilaika, who, although he didn't have the White Way name, was 100% White Way. We went to see Madeline Druse and all of her dogs who were heavily White Way via Snow Ridge, and I think it was on that trip that we really decided the direction we wanted to take. We made some decisions about temperament and the type of dog that we liked, although it was more temperament than anything else. We were very conditioned away from a hyper, aggressive, noisy dog by some of the people that we had talked to who had done sledding. Plus the fact that these dogs live with us in our house, they are not kennel dogs but sleep in the bedroom and live with us, so we wanted dogs that we could live with. Neither one of us had much tolerance for a high noise level!

John: Several people like the Wards, and some others who are no longer around, used to talk about the fact that all of the dogs used to be able to be benched together. They would be at Santa Barbara or Golden Gate and it would be an open bench with no dividers and no crates. They would just be sitting there on the bench, all together. They were supervised, but certainly within reach of each other.

Carol: We were also impressed with the fact that Bob Ward could go with Starchak and collect three or four of his sons and make a team out of dogs that didn't even live together. We had this notion that this was the sort of temperament that we would want to try to breed for when we got around to breeding litters. The very first breeding that we did was to Nachalnik with a bitch that we had that was a White Crystal's Balilaika daughter. That was a litter that we learned a lot from, although we ended up selling the very best bitch in the litter, and she became the dam of Ch. Westernesse Remember Ron. We didn't keep the best one (by accident) ourselves, as often happens with novice breeders. We let her get

away, I suppose you could say, although she certainly has made a nice contribution. The next litter that we did, which is the litter that is probably pivotal for us and maybe even for the breed, was the breeding of Anja to Ruble, Ch. Snow Ridge's Rubal of Tamarac, who was all White Way.

**You haven't told us where you got Anja.**

Carol: Anja was bred by the Walkers and was out of a bitch named Elbur's Bonnie who was not shown, bred to Ch. Karshan, so she was three-quarters White Way, Drayalene, etc. She was one-quarter Northwest dogs through Noatak. We were impressed with the uniformity in the litter and we liked Bonnie. We weren't expecting to buy her. At the time that we did it, we sort of happened into it. It was not planned well ahead of time or anything like that. We heard of the litter at a party and pretty much committed ourselves right on the spot because at that point we knew what we wanted to do in terms of pedigrees and so forth. The timing was just right because they were going to take the litter to a "breeders' showcase" the following day ... it wasn't like a pet shop or anything; the breeders were right there and contacted the people directly. It was through Bullock's as a matter of fact, which is a very nice department store, although they have since stopped this program. The woman that had the litter, Irene Walker, had thought to take the litter there the next day because it seemed like a good way to make the right contacts. At that point, we made the commitment right on the spot to take her home.

**Tell us about this pivotal litter.**

Carol: That was the breeding that produced three champions out of five puppies. Ch. Los Laika's Belaya Tracier, who was owned by the Adams, of course, was one of these puppies. The other two were Ch. Belaya Tony Tiga and Ch. Belaya Tiga Lily, who was the dam of Ch. Belaya Sargent Pepper. Tony was the sire of a litter that the Osborns did, which Lynthea's J.C. comes down from. Right behind several of the very influential breedings that are going on right now is this particular litter. Tracier is behind Razzmatazz, as is Tony, because of the Middletons' breedings down from the Osborn dogs.

John: To go back to the beginning of that, that litter was because we bred Anya to Madeline Druse's Ruble, who was a heavily White Way dog. Carol had been planning to do that at the same time that

we bred the litter from Chief, but they were in an accident on the way back from Colorado (the bitches were in season at the same time, roughly) and although they went ahead with Anya's breeding, it didn't take because of stress and trauma due to the accident. So on her next season, we bred her to Ruble and had a really outstanding litter.

Carol: Well, so it seemed at the time anyway, and it has proven down nicely.

**Do you consider that to have been your best litter?**

Carol: I think so, in the respect that it has had the longest and best influence on the breed. We bred another litter, a subsequent litter of Anya's which in terms of uniformity and quality was equally as good, but the puppies didn't end up in show homes and didn't end up being bred in the right way. This was the litter that Ch. Belaya Peppermint Pattie came from and was Anya bred back to her own grandfather, Ruble's brother. There were five bitches and that was quite an outstanding litter, too. Again, three of those girls could have finished, one did, but the other two didn't end up with the right homes at the time. So, in terms of the influence on the breed, this other was the sort of litter that everybody would like to breed - one where several members of the same litter have influence in several directions. That's the most that one can hope for.

**Do you have a dog that you consider to have been your biggest winner?**

Carol: Of our own breeding, Peppers would be it. Of dogs that we owned it would have been Ivan, because he was shown more heavily. There is a funny story I think I'd like to tell you. At about the age of seven or so, Ivan had a health problem and we had to stop showing him for the time. He had already sired several champions and we were pleased with the puppies he was producing, but we weren't showing him anymore because we had younger dogs to go on with. Word got back to me through several friends in the Midwest that he was "dead," "sterile," and had all manner of health problems! Name it and he "had" it! He did, in fact, have a kidney infection and that had been dealt with. It was largely our fault, anyway, because we had given him enormous amounts of calcium as a puppy, which had been the advice of the time, and the kidney problem that he had was predictable because of the hyper calcification as a puppy. He never had any other problems, nor have any of his children. The end line

was that this dog who was living healthily in our midst was "dead," so at about the age of eight, I started roadworking him a bit and got him in good weight and so forth, and started showing him a bit. I showed him fifteen more times and he won eleven Bests of Breed and a specialty, the Washington State Specialty, between the ages of eight and nine. Not bad for a dog who was supposed to be dead! That was great fun, because I didn't do it from the Veterans class; I put him in Best of Breed and competed with the younger dogs. That was probably one of the most fun things I've ever done.

**Was he then bred from again after this age?**

Carol: Oh yes, I believe he is the sire, to date, of 28 champions and he was only bred to 18 bitches. He had a total of 20 litters because two were repeat breedings. I just heard from Celine Kohlman over the summer that another Ivan granddaughter finished, so he is still making his presence felt.

**Describe your ideal Samoyed for me.**

Carol: Neither too large, nor too small. Probably toward the top of the actual standard, but not over, for both dogs and bitches. Good substance, adequate boning. I don't like an overly refined looking Sammy. I like enough length and angulation to have a good ground-covering trot. I like a pretty head with an almond shaped eye; I'm distressed lately at what I would call "plain" heads. A Sammy has to be structurally sound, but it also has to look like a Sammy, and what makes it look like a Sammy is a proper head and proper expression. Another thing is a really stable temperament, which is something I think the breed is lacking right now in a lot of cases that I see around the show ring.

John: To me, the ideal Samoyed temperament is extremely important. It is one of the things that makes this dog a "Samoyed."

Carol: This breed shouldn't have a Terrier temperament, and we're seeing a lot of that, at least in this area. I haven't been to the National Specialty for a couple of years, but these noisy, wired dogs are not typical of what the breed is supposed to be. That shouldn't be tolerated. Everybody has certain things they can or can't tolerate when they consider a breeding; we all have to weigh faults, and I think that this temperament is hereditary. Not enough importance is given to really deciding what a proper temperament should be. I'm not saying I want a dog that's a

"rug"! All of my dogs show well, are alert, come up for the applause and so on, but that doesn't mean that they are that way around the house.

Another thing that doesn't really show in terms of the dog that we see on the surface when we look at a dog in the show ring, but which is very important, is the fact that an idea Samoyed should have good health. A Sammy should be a vigorous dog that doesn't need a lot of

been placed on antibiotics and drugs, and she had been on hormones to even come in season. The antibiotics lasted until the puppies were weaned, and this was his "natural" litter!

What do you do with the puppies produced from something like this? Are the people who have these puppies going to go through the same thing in order to get more puppies? It is just ridiculous.

Carol: We've felt that this natural



Ch. Belaya Taiga Lily.

veterinary attention or special care in terms of diet or anything else. He should only need his ordinary shots.

John: Along with this goes the dog's reproductive health. A dog should be able to reproduce without a lot of monkeying around. I can remember being shocked during our early years in dogs by a man who related his experiences with a particular bitch. He had been trying to breed her for a long time, two or three years, and "Gosh, wasn't this wonderful! (He) had gotten a 'natural' breeding!" From the moment the bitch came in season she had

vigor is something else that is largely being ignored by people, partly from ignorance and partly from the desire to reproduce what they have, whether or not it ought to be.

There are some problems that have cropped up in recent years that are familial that need to be paid careful attention to. They are a whole series of problems that one could lump under "immune" problems. They can be as simple as a chronic low-grade infection or as complex as any of the ones with the nonpronounceable names and they have been diagnosed in

Sammies in the last ten years. We had an experience with a bitch that had an immune problem and I know that they are familial, if not necessarily hereditary. I'm not sure that they aren't triggered by messing with antibiotics and puppies, which destroys things in their immune systems. Or if that happens in a family that already has the tendency to the immune problems; I'm not sure which comes first, the chicken or the egg. I'm not sure if it is strictly genetic or if there are some other outside influences, but the point is that Lupus exists in families.

I think people need to pay real close attention to a chronic infection, or a tendency toward a chronic infection, because that can be a sign of an auto-immune disease or an immune problem; they are two different things at work. The bitch that we had we ended up putting down at the age of 22 months with seven points; she was allergic to one of her own body proteins. The onset is usually with either the estrus or puberty with a young dog, and it attacks both sexes equally. Since this is something that strikes a dog after the age of six months or so, you are kind of stuck in terms of figuring it out. There are any number of problems that manifest themselves. A degeneration of the pigment can be the first sign. We had a very wise veterinarian talk to us years ago because we had bred a litter and out of one of the bitches from that litter came two dogs that had immune problems later on. This was our first real exposure. We weren't the breeder of those dogs, in other words, but we were the breeder of the dam, so it was something that concerned us. He basically said to us that if people don't pay attention to some of these chronic things, we would end up with a breed that is riddled with problems like this. It goes along with what I feel, these dogs should be healthy, they shouldn't have to have special diets and should be able to maintain their good health on a good diet with exercise. I would estimate that 90% of the Sammies I see are too fat and it's a real tragedy, because it breaks the dog down. It is a breed problem because they are such good processors of food that they don't need as much as the dog food bag says, but nobody believes that.

#### **How did you feed your dogs?**

Carol: We have basically fed a wheat-based kibble with meat and cheese and whatever fresh vegetables that are left by the family. I've always fed the dogs fresh vegetables like choppings from salads, as well as a multiple vitamin for the

bitches in whelp and some calcium. We need oil in our climate during the hot weather because it is so dry. The coated dogs can profit from a little extra fat under those circumstances. We haven't particularly stuck with one brand so I'm not a good advertisement for any particular brand; we did feed Ken-L Biskit for a long time and we are using Solid Gold right now. We've stayed away from soy and corn and some of the "hotter" grains simply because I don't think dogs are good at digesting those.

When I wean my puppies, I never use cereal. I just soak the kibble really well in goat's milk and start them right on it. I've never bought a box of pablum in my life. I don't even use the puppy food; I just soak the plain adult kibble in goat milk or raw cow's milk, which is much higher in enzyme and vitamin content than the pasturized, so we have used that, too. I only used puppy food with one litter and I didn't see that they did any better than putting them right on regular food. That was something from Agnes Mason that Madeline Druse told us. She always started the puppies at nineteen days with scraped meat and milk. So we've never done anything really exotic with puppies and they seem to grow well and have good coats and bone. Bone doesn't come from inside a bottle, anyway, it comes from the genes.

#### **Do you help your bitches whelp?**

Carol: No. We sit there with them, but we don't do anything for them. If two puppies come quickly, I might dry off one or help out in that respect, but not in any other way except just making sure they are warm.

John: Now, if the bitch were in distress, obviously, you would help her.

Carol: But she's asking us about our bitches, and we have not had that situation. We've had bitches that have been free-whelpers, they've bred normally, carried their puppies normally, and whelped freely, and that was one of the things that we were at least smart enough to ask Irene Walker about when we bought Anya. What sort of a mother was her mother? That is hereditary and that's something that is largely ignored by many people in this breed. Maybe not just this breed, but I know this breed intimately and I see it all too often. People do not understand what "vigor" is, and that "vigor" itself is an hereditary factor. A bitch who has consistently small litters or trouble whelping can pass those characteristics on to her daughters, so it is really

a deadend street.

John: We are looking at a domesticated dog as opposed to a "wild" dog or wolf, however, and these animals do not come into season as often as a domesticated dog and don't have as many pups. Looking at smaller numbers in a litter may not be such an unnatural thing; it may be more natural for that matter. Look at the dogs who have extremely large litters and they are breeds like the Irish Setters and Saint Bernards; that in itself is not an extremely natural phenomenon. The Sam is a neat dog in a lot of ways because of its naturalness - it doesn't need the amount of food to survive that some of these other dogs need, for example. The breed really maintains very easily.

#### **Did you supplement any of your puppies?**

John: No, never. One time we had trouble - but as I'm thinking, it was probably one of the Whippets! Carol did most of the work with whelping and puppies. I helped with training and such after they were older. We did once have problems because of a dog that had been given a PIT shot, and another time we had a bitch with a fever but were advised to continue to let the puppies nurse and never had a bit of problem. Anya once had six puppies in three and a half hours, and all of our bitches have been good whelpers.

Carol: No, we never had to supplement puppies and I really firmly believe that there are very few bitches that need supplementing, and few puppies also. People do it for their own needs and they don't understand the physiology of lactation. There are really very few circumstances where the bitch NEEDS help; the more the puppies nurse, the more milk she'll produce. If you give the puppies something else, they don't nurse as much and then the bitch doesn't produce as much, so it is a real Catch-22. Lactation is a strict situation of supply and demand; I have never supplemented a puppy, nor would I. If it couldn't make it on its own, I wouldn't keep it going, but then, I'm pretty hardnosed about that.

#### **Do you know how many champions you've produced in your litters?**

Carol: I think the last time I counted there were fourteen, and we've bred twelve Samoyed litters.

#### **What is the most Samoyeds you have kept at one time?**

Carol: Seven Sammies was the most we ever kept at one time. Those were adults and young adults, not little puppies. We were always really happiest with

around four or five; that was a more manageable number for us. That higher number was at a point where we got one back from a divorce (as does happen), and it was not a number we would choose to have all the time.

**Who or what do you think most influenced the direction your breeding program took?**

**John:** Good common sense, and being independent about it and not believing everything you hear. We got a lot of advice from a lot of different people, as everybody does, and it's a matter of intelligently sifting through that and distilling it into something that seems to make sense for your own situation, and what you want to do with the dogs that you have. I was working for a veterinarian for a while when I was going to school, and I think that, along with other things that we learned on our own, helped us get through some of the misinformation and stereotypes that people laid on what you do in certain breeding situations. Just because somebody had done it this way for twenty years didn't necessarily mean that it still had to be done that way.

**Carol:** Speaking for myself, one of the greatest influences in my life as a dog person was my aunt, who was an extremely successful breeder of English Bulldogs. She bred 44 champions, always showed her own dogs and was a real, tough, smart dog person and I learned a lot from her. I never really spent that much time with her, but my few contacts with her were very influential. She was a person who, by virtue of her own success, of course, believed she was very right about a lot of things. In her 44 champions she bred 4 all breed Best in Show winners, and I couldn't tell you how many specialty winners. She believed in absolutely, rigorously culling each litter. I don't necessarily mean putting down, but eliminating from the breeding population the animals that weren't exactly what they should be to represent the parents and the pedigree. She preferred to put a good dog in a pet home even though it might not be bred from or shown, rather than to have a poor specimen represent her as a pet. She did some culling and that influenced us, because we have, too. We have culled puppies and it is not an agreeable task, but in order to be perfectly realistic about how many homes there are and how many dogs one can represent as show quality, I think it must be done. Her influence was very strong along those lines, and her own results proved that what she felt was right.



Belaya's I'm A Pepper Too at 6 weeks.

She also was a very passionate owner/handler. She really believed in showing her own dogs, and we have too.

**Have you always shown your own dogs, then?**

**Carol:** Yes, with the exception of two of our Whippets. We've always shown our own Sammies, and I've gone so far in encouraging people to show their own dogs that I started a series of handling classes and I still teach them. I feel the greatest joy is for an owner to do it himself if he has the physical ability to do so. For me, the greatest joy is to take something that I've bred to its championship. The rest really isn't too important; I'm not really that interested in Group winning. I like finishing champions best, and I think that is the best measure of a breeder's art.

**Does John also help handle?**

**Carol:** Yes, although he hasn't so much recently, but he's put points on all of our dogs. Since he's had a dog-related business, he hasn't really found as much enjoyment in going to the shows as he did before he was involved daily with dogs.

**What does he do?**

**Carol:** He has a grooming business, so he is with dogs six days a week, and another dog show on the weekend is not such a thrill for him. But he does go from time to time and still enjoys it, and is still a very good handler.

**What made him decide to become a groomer?**

**Carol:** When he was in college he worked for a veterinarian that had an active grooming shop on the premises. He is a very creative person, and to be a good groomer one must be creative. He is also a very patient person, and to be a good groomer one must be patient, so it was kind of a natural transition for him. He thought at one point about being a veterinarian, but he didn't have the grades to get into vet school and so he started his own business after he did what I suppose you would call an "apprenticeship" with this fellow that had the grooming shop at the veterinary hospital. He's had this business for going on twelve years now. He started it in 1974 because it was the same year we got "involved" in this house! (Laughter) That's a whole other story!

**Okay! Well, along the lines of helping bitches and supplementing puppies, have you ever had to help a mat-ing along?**

Carol: No, and we have had three active male stud dogs at one time. The most we've ever done in the way of helping, I would say, was in the case of extremely hairy bitches, ones with very full skirts. We have done a little bit of trimming of that hair. In all of the bitches that have come to us to be bred, we only missed with one and she later conceived. We do hold the bitches on leash, hold them still, and we don't allow them to pull away or anything. With Tony, there was no touching the bitch, period. He would not have it; he hadn't had any bad experiences or anything, it was just that he would stand and look as if to say, "Well, if you're going to do it, do it." (Laughter) He was competent and he did it, and that was that.

**Have you ever refused to service a bitch?**

Carol: Yes, several times.

**What would be the primary reasons for which you would refuse to service a bitch?**

Carol: I can think of a couple of circumstances. One was that we didn't feel the people had the proper motives for doing the breeding to begin with. That has been the reason several times, in fact. These have been mainly local people who simply wanted a litter of puppies and who had no business having a litter of puppies. They had no real notion about why you should breed a litter or what you should do with the puppies afterwards. Another case was with an out-of-state bitch and I felt, based on some earlier breedings, that she wouldn't be complementary, so we turned her down.

**What should a Samoyed puppy sell for today?**

Carol: I'd say probably somewhere in the range of \$300 to \$500, depending on the quality and the pedigree of the parents. Obviously, since I don't have any Sammy bitches right now, I'm out of touch. That range would be my feeling for what's going on in the area and what seems to be fair. The last show quality puppy I sold was Poppy, and that was \$350 two years ago.

**What is a fair price for a stud service?**

Carol: Well, we've always felt that the AKC guideline is correct in that it says your stud service should reflect the price of a good quality puppy, so our stud services have always been that. I think Ivan's later

stud services were \$300, which at that point was the price for a good quality puppy. That would maybe be on the low side now, but at that time, when he was still active, it was fair. I feel that sometimes people get a little unrealistic with how much good a dog can do, and I think the bottom line is still that what it's worth is what it's worth! No dog in existence can do everything for a bitch, and the stud fee should stay in line with what people can realistically sell puppies for.

**Did you ever sell puppies on terms, for instance a puppy back when you sold a bitch, or was it cash only?**

Carol: We've done a little of everything. We've sold for cash, outright, co-ownerships, with the OPTION to have puppies back. By this I mean that we've sold dogs with the right of first refusal on their puppies, but never with a puppy back as part of the price. In other words, this was the option to have the choice to BUY the best puppy from a litter, but we haven't taken a puppy back as part of the sale price. For the same reason, we have not taken very many stud puppies back because we have felt that when people breed a litter, if they are breeding for the right reasons they are breeding for themselves. They should be the ones to have the option to have the best from that litter. To amend something I said before, the other reason I would always turn down a person for a stud service is if they were breeding and not intending to keep a puppy. To me, if you are breeding for the right reasons, you are breeding for yourself and that goes whether you are the breeder of record or you are the stud owner.

**At what age should puppies be placed in their new homes?**

Carol: Never before nine weeks, and I say that even more emphatically than I used to because of the situation with parvovirus and needing to be absolutely positive that puppies are adequately vaccinated. We always felt nine weeks was good because, while a Sammy puppy adjusts really well (I don't have a hangup with that) at any point, I've always felt that they need the contact with the litter until the end of the eighth week to learn how to be proper dogs. I don't think they learn proper dog behavior unless they are with the litter long enough. I think this has been borne out amply with other research and is nothing original on my part. A lot of what we have done in terms of raising puppies and how we sell them and so on, was influenced by Scott and Fuller's research,

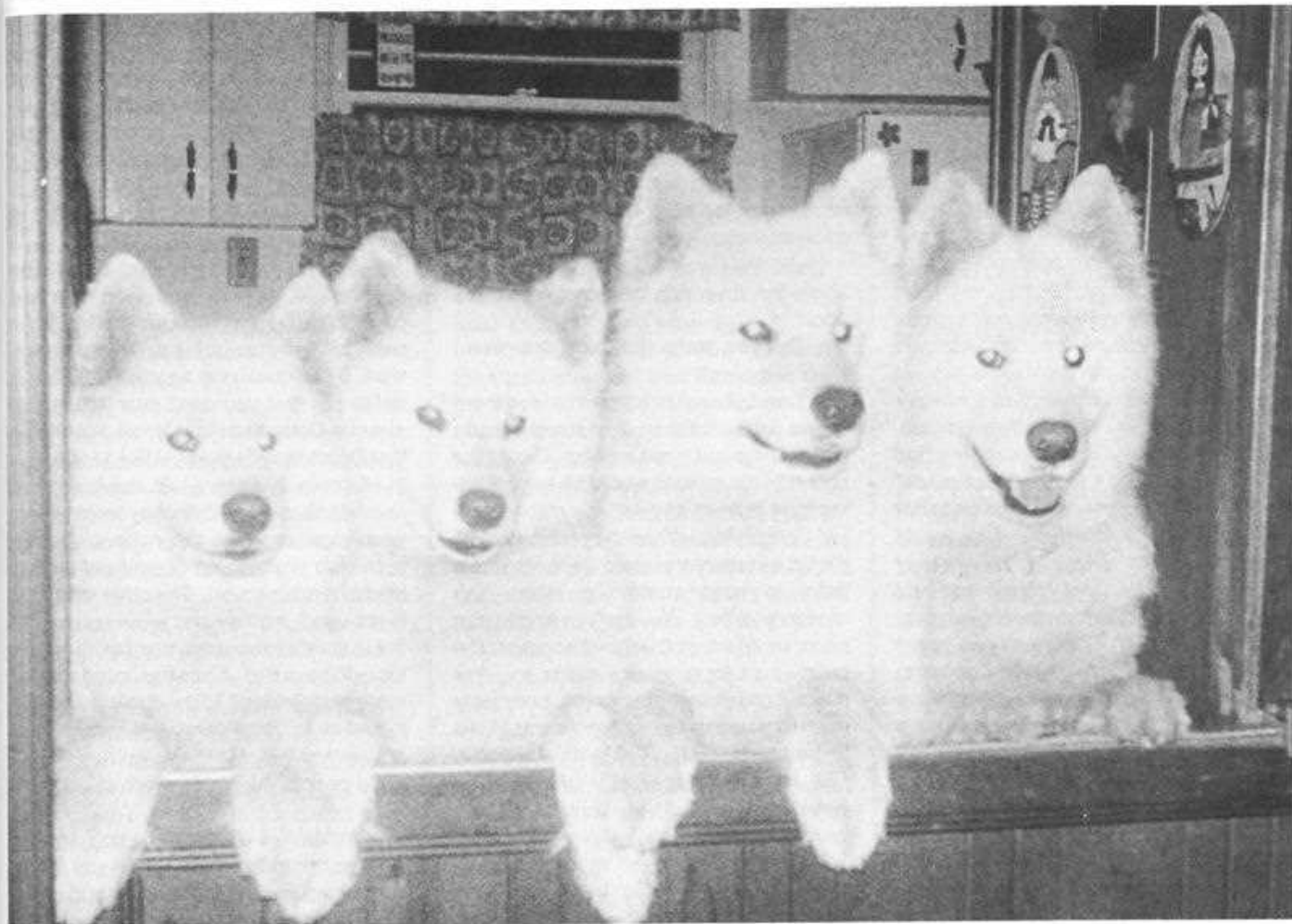
"Genetics and the Social Behavior of the Dog," which I think is a real bible and a lot of people don't even know about it. Millions of dollars and over fourteen years of research were spent on how to raise dogs to be social and to be, also, proper dogs. I'm talking about social with regard to people and social with regard to their own behavior. Years ago I went to a breeder seminar where Dr. Michael Fox was one of the speakers, and he cited very heavily from Scott and Fuller's research. I went right home and bought the book and have been doing things that way ever since. The two critical periods that everybody knows about are the third week of life and the eighth week. There is quite a body of research that supports the idea that puppies shouldn't experience trauma during the eighth week, so the message, I suppose, would be to either sell them by the eighth week or wait until the end of that week, which is what I've always chosen to do. I also feel I have a better idea of what I have after eight weeks.

**How do you feel about inbreeding, linebreeding and outcrossing?**

Carol: We have basically worked within what one would have to call linebreeding. We've stayed within two fairly related lines. I think you have to determine your goal. If your goal is to just produce more dogs, then it doesn't matter and you can breed anybody to anybody. If your goal is to produce consistency in your litters (consistency of type, temperament, and in terms of what those dogs are capable of producing) then you have to do some sort of linebreeding. Without that, you will not get consistency; again, this is nothing original, this is simple Mendelian genetics. There have been a number of people in the breed who have felt that it is more important to breed dog to dog, than to breed pedigrees. I think you have to do both if you're smart. If you pay attention to genetics, you must pay attention to both the phenotype and the genotype; in other words, both the dogs that you see in front of you and what their pedigrees represent.

John: Now, you can take the best pedigree in the world, and if the individuals don't measure up, you are still breeding only what you have in front of you, even though you have that gene pool behind them. The possibilities are simply not as promising as if you breed the best individuals from that gene pool.

Carol: Again, this gets back to proper selection. I think that too many people settle for breeding possibly not the best dogs in a litter, and selecting in scientific



Left to right: Ch. Belaya Anja Padrushka, Ch. Belaya Taiga Lily, Ch. Belaya Tony Taiga CD and Ch. Los Laika's Belaya Traicer.

terms means just picking the characteristics you want to go on with. If you compromise that, you won't be happy with the results.

**Does outcrossing have value?**

Carol: It absolutely has value, and I think outcrossing followed by breeding back into the family is required from time to time. If not necessarily a complete outcross, perhaps a breeding to an individual that is 50% unrelated. The resulting puppies would turn out to be 75% of one family and 25% of another. This would add a mixture of fresh genes that you might be lacking for some particular characteristic. This type of cross has a place in any breeding program.

**How close do you consider the relationship where linebreeding becomes inbreeding?**

Carol: Father/daughter and mother/son. We've done granddaughter to grandfather and that is the closest we've done. Mainly because I've never felt we've had the right individuals to do father/daughter

or mother/son; to do that kind of inbreeding (which is just tight linebreeding), you have to have absolutely outstanding individuals to deal with. We've had a number of individuals along the line that have probably been (each in their own right) outstanding, but they have not occurred at chronologically the right time to do this type of breeding! (Laughter) I can think of a few of Ivan's daughters that I would love to have bred back to him, but he was already dead. There have been other cases where we could have done that, but the timing was never right. That kind of breeding really takes outstanding individuals and ones who don't duplicate each other's faults.

John: As anyone knows, who knows anything about inbreeding, you are simply strengthening the characteristics that are already there. If you have undesirable characteristics, it will certainly strengthen them. If you have the good ones, it will strengthen those. Then, it takes being able to make proper selection of the re-

sulting individuals, too. Sometimes, as we all know, you can't even tell how good your selection is until much later. It's always a guessing game.

**At what age did you like to evaluate your puppies?**

Carol: Eight weeks. Birth and eight weeks. I've done a number of series of pictures following puppies at eight weeks and then later on, and what I see at eight weeks I have been able to find again in my adult dogs. The proportions stay exactly the same; they may go through a number of changes in between, but what you've seen in terms of proportions and angles at eight weeks is pretty much going to be what you see later on at adulthood. We've done heads, sides and rears, and followed that through and it has really proven out.

**How do you go about training your puppies?**

Carol: Oh, I have a way of training - I start them quite literally on my lap at about five weeks. I just hold them in place

and make them stand there for a second; usually this is after I've brushed them. This is their little personal attention time. I tell them to stay and give them a little piece of kibble for staying just less than a minute; the whole lesson lasts less than a minute. Then I say, "Oh, good boy (girl)" and put them down and start them feeling being placed, standing in one spot and being rewarded for this behavior at quite an early age. They are then trained to the point that I can really photograph them at eight weeks because they will stand. I usually start leash training them at around eight weeks; I don't really start the leash too soon and when I do, it is usually, again, with food rewards. We were really gifted with Anya because she had a "presence" about her that she really passed on to her children and grandchildren. She would walk in and place all four feet where they should be and look up at you with her ears up and tail up; that has come through over and over again. Four generations later I still see that in some of the descendants. That willingness to please and show themselves off a bit seems to be a pretty strong characteristic. I really believe that a lot of that can be trained if you know how to go about it; on the other hand, I believe that there are a number of people who really push the dogs too hard too soon, and that leads to a lot of other problems. I believe in starting puppies early, but I don't show them at a competitive level that hard. This is all positive training with goodies and praise and stress-free. People ought to use Puppy class, Bred-by or American Bred and not all this heavy emphasis on Open and the points early. I don't believe in pushing the dogs to be very competitive and highly structured at too early an age; Sammies can suffer from that. Some breeds thrive on that structure and Sammies don't; I know it can ruin a dog, because I've seen it happen and I can think of a couple of contemporary cases of dogs that have been pushed too hard too soon and don't enjoy it anymore. It ought to be fun and it will be fun for everybody if you do it right. If you don't do it right, the dog ends up hating it and it isn't fun for anybody.

John: We start handling and holding the puppies as early as three weeks, and that's training. The amount of attention you give these puppies is invaluable and you can accomplish so much toward their responsiveness to you. Contrast this to the dog that hasn't had the attention and the socialization and is therefore difficult to work with.

Carol: John's right; everything you do with a puppy from the age of three weeks on is training. Even when I call them, that's training because they are learning to "come." They are rewarded instantly with food, which is the very best reward at that point, of course. People have often commented that our dogs seems to show really well and seem to enjoy it, and I feel this is why. I'm thinking about the show ring later on even at this age.

#### **Do you help the mothers wean their puppies?**

Carol: Absolutely not. We feed them at the point that they start having teeth, which is around three weeks. This is the time that the mother would be regurgitating food to them anyway in a more "natural" kind of dog. When they have teeth is the time that nature would have meant for them to have something other than mother's milk. We don't withhold the bitch; we let the mother have access to the puppies as long as she wants to. We make it possible for her to get away from them if she wants to, but if she wants in, we let her in with them. The mother will do it.

John: Remember Posey? She would have nursed her puppies until they were six months old!

Carol: She loved motherhood so much. And we still didn't do anything to stop her. I'm sure there was nothing there; long after there was not a drop left, she would stand there and nurse some more! She was one of those consummate mothers who had to have her puppies as much as possible. Again, she is descended from Anya and that good "mothering" stock.

Obviously, when we offer the puppies solid food, we do have to remove the mother for a few minutes because Sammies are such gluttons. When you asked about weaning, I was thinking of people who actually take the mother away and simply ONLY feed the puppies, and I have never done that. I feel that dogs know all of this information and we can really foul them up by interfering too much.

#### **Do you think the Samoyed Standard is a good one?**

Carol: Yes, I think it's great; I just don't think enough people read it! (Laughter) It is probably one of the better ones that I've read, and I've read a number because I've done some match judging. I don't think it is as ambiguous as some are; there are a few places that could be a little more carefully detailed. I would like to see a little more attention paid to what exactly is correct temperament, because I think to

simply say, "... unprovoked aggression should be severely penalized" is not sufficient. What does that mean and how much else do you put up with? Is that aggression toward other dogs, the judge, or what? I'd like to see that a little more clearly stated.

John: Severely penalized? It shouldn't be tolerated!

Carol: I think the dog should be disqualified, period, and then it would really disappear. The Dobermans have really cleaned up their act, temperament-wise, by disqualifying aggression. This is not to say that you don't ever see on the street a Doberman that is not everything that Dobie breeders would like it to be. But the Dobies that represent the breed are much farther along than they were twenty years ago because the national Doberman club really came down hard on that kind of temperament. The other thing that is not used properly and widely enough is the illustrated standard, and I think we are lucky to have this. It has frustrated me that more people don't know about it and use it, and even perceive what it means to be able to apply that to their own dog. I wish more people would pay more attention to it.

John: We all have our dog and we want to breed "our" dog, but if you follow something like the illustrated standard as a guideline toward what these dogs should ultimately be, then it might help you decide who to breed to. It might also help you decide what to pick from your litter.

Carol: I suppose this would be a good place to say this because I'm not sure that a lot of the new people in the breed even know, but the illustrated standard was not developed as one artist's concept of the breed. It was developed based on the actual measurements of over 100 Samoyed champions. It is a compilation of what was excellent in the breed at that time. Possibly, allowing for some natural evolution, there could be some minor changes today, but I think the overall shape and proportions are just as correct in that illustrated standard as they were twenty years ago. The only part of the standard that has bothered me, and will bother me until it is changed (if it ever is), is the fact that there is no allowance for an overlap between the bigger bitches and smaller dogs. It is the only one of all the Working Group standards that does not allow that natural overlap. That was an artificial measurement that the English had a notion was correct, and we adopted. It actually did happen in the Samoyed Club of America,

and it's an historical fact, that the raising of the bitch standard to allow for the overlap PASSED at one time and there was some "monkeying" around with the vote counting and it was published that it HADN'T passed! In actual fact, it had passed and should have gone as a recommendation to AKC as an amendment to the standard. I have the records on this. This should have happened, and would be much more correct.

John: In a normal population, you expect to find the largest bitch bigger than the smallest male.

Carol: Either that, or drop the whole thing and say 19 to 23 1/2 for everybody. That would also fix the problem. It is unfair to penalize the smaller dogs as much as it's unfair to penalize the bigger bitches. As long as bitches look feminine, and as long as dogs look masculine, it ought not to matter. The bigger bitches should still be in proportion, slightly off-square and they should have a pretty, feminine head. The smaller dogs shouldn't be short-legged, should still look masculine, with good substance and so forth. Neither one should be penalized, because they are both equally correct, historically so. It has always bothered me that that hasn't been the case. It seems as if most people just ignore the standard, anyway, but wouldn't it just be nice to have a standard that everybody could live with and allow for the natural variations that occur?

**Along with the standard, I think you have a strong stand on the issue of whiskers, don't you?**

Carol: Oh, you bet! (Laughter) Every single champion I have ever finished had its whiskers. Now we even know they aren't "whiskers" anyway! They are a really important sensory organ and we should not be cutting them; not for anybody! Not for any handler, not under any circumstances. It has now happened that several other breed clubs have taken a stand on the cutting of whiskers because of the fact that they are a sensory organ. The Vizsla Club of America has now taken a stand against cutting whiskers, and I believe the Pyrenees club has, too. Golden Retrievers have taken a stand. The wonderful article that appeared in many magazines has helped to convince people along these lines; that's where I felt so justified, so vindicated, whatever. We stopped cutting whiskers after one time when we were in a hurry to get ready for a show and I nearly cut the end of Ivan's tongue off just before he was supposed to go into the ring, and it was just a mess. I

decided it wasn't worth it and you don't see white whiskers on a white dog, anyway. I cannot really believe that they influence the decision of the judge at all in the Samoyed breed. I can see where, in some of the smooth-faced breeds, it would be harder for people to get used to them not cut, but when you see and read about the research difference they've found in the leaving and cutting of whiskers, you can't deny the fact that it really does impair the dog's function.

Did you read about May Carpenter, the Vizsla breeder? She was the one who got this started. She's been one person I've admired for years with her dogs. She had a dog that she was specializing and hunting and she would always notice that right after a show he would hurt himself. He would run into something or he wouldn't make a turn or whatever; she stopped cutting his whiskers and he stopped hurting himself. She was the one who really started the ball rolling in the Vizsla club; one person can make a difference.

John: There is no need to do it.

Carol: If it served a purpose, that would be different. I can see trimming feet and cleaning up hocks a bit so they don't look shaggy or bunchy, or make a dog have a "funny" rear line appearance. Other than that, I don't think a Sammy should be trimmed at all. As long as I'm on my little soapbox, I've noticed a lot of people grooming the Sammy "mantle" up, or forward, which makes a very funny ridge across the back, instead of letting the mantle lie in its natural pattern. I wondered about that because it is something I've never done. I always noticed in the pictures of the old Sammies that their mantle just lies there. I've noticed people even backcombing it, which really seems funny to me because it spoils the topline.

John: Well, I think it's a matter of framing the face.

Carol: But that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the hair behind the withers.

**These people are taking it from the middle of the back to frame the face!**

Carol: That's exactly right! (Laughter)

**Have you ever specialized a dog?**

Carol: Not in the truest sense of the word. Ivan is the closest we've ever come to it and we've never done it with all of the advertising and extensive traveling. I traveled a lot with Ivan, but I couldn't really call that specializing. I showed him as much as I could, given our means at the time,

and got him to as many specialties as I could, again, given our limitations. But beyond that, no.

**Does being in the Top Ten or Top Twenty mean anything?**

Carol: Not a thing. Being in the Top Ten or Twenty as far as doing something for the breed, yes. In terms of breeding good dogs, yes. But beyond that it doesn't mean anything to me. I wouldn't be unhappy if they dropped the Group judging from the shows because I think it is just a lot of window dressing. As I said before, the real joy for me is in producing dogs that have the ability to reproduce themselves and make an impact on the breed.

**Do you think judging is fair?**

Carol: Yes, largely. I think it is for the most part in the Breed ring. There are times when questionable things happen, but I don't complain about judging as long as I feel the judge has followed his own heart and his own head. I don't mind as long as he has put up what he really feels is a correct Samoyed and what he knows is correct for the standard. I think beyond that, if there are other influences, it's too bad, it's human, but I think at the breed level it is still fairly honest. I guess what I'm saying is that if a person has a dog that is better than average and presents it properly, in proper condition, then he's going to win with it a fair amount of the time regardless of whoever else is in the ring at the other end of the lead.

**Do you feel that our judges are competent?**

John: I don't know that I should say, because I haven't been to that many shows lately, but I think that is more of a problem than dishonesty. I don't think dishonesty occurs as often as lack of knowledge. It is very difficult for a judge to know these dogs as well as those of us who live with them and study them and breed them. These judges read one or two books, listen to a couple of people who tell them things, and this influences how they judge. There is no way they are going to have the knowledge about the breed that someone has who lives with them.

Carol: I would like to see the requirements for judging be stiffer, and I would like to see that judges would have to renew their licenses periodically. That would probably be a healthy thing. We were briefly involved with dairy goats and we went to quite a few shows and watched the judging. It really gave us an appreciation of how another kind of judging takes place; those judges (we found out) have to

renew their judging "ticket" every three years, and each time they judge they have to rank every animal in each class. If there are 25, they have to put them in order. At major shows they are called upon, with a microphone and a PA, to justify every placement from 1 to 25. "This animal is placed over this one for this reason," right down the line. It made us really think about the fact that maybe there are some flaws in our system of judging. All a dog show judge here has to do is find four good ones in a class of 25 at a specialty. Maybe there are 10 good ones and maybe those 10 ought to have recognition, and not just 4. I also like the European system of having to do justifications and evaluations of every dog they judge; that is really a healthy thing.

To get back to my earlier point, I think the biggest mistakes that judges make are

more from a question of competency, or lack of it, than dishonesty. I agree with John on that. And yet, I think you have to figure out how to help that not happen. One of the things that I think is the obligation of the breed club is to educate the judges. The illustrated standard ought to go to every judge, and it was supposed to at one time. I don't think it is being done anymore, although it has now been reprinted. That would be at least one form of educating the judges, although I'm not saying that is the only thing that could be done. It at least puts "flesh" to the words; it puts a picture to the words, and one would hope that they have also done a lot of looking at the breed, sitting at ringside and so on.

*To be continued ...*

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- p - puppies available occasionally
- d - grown dogs occasionally for sale
- s - stud service to approved bitches
- b - dog boarding available
- h - Samoyed handling

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