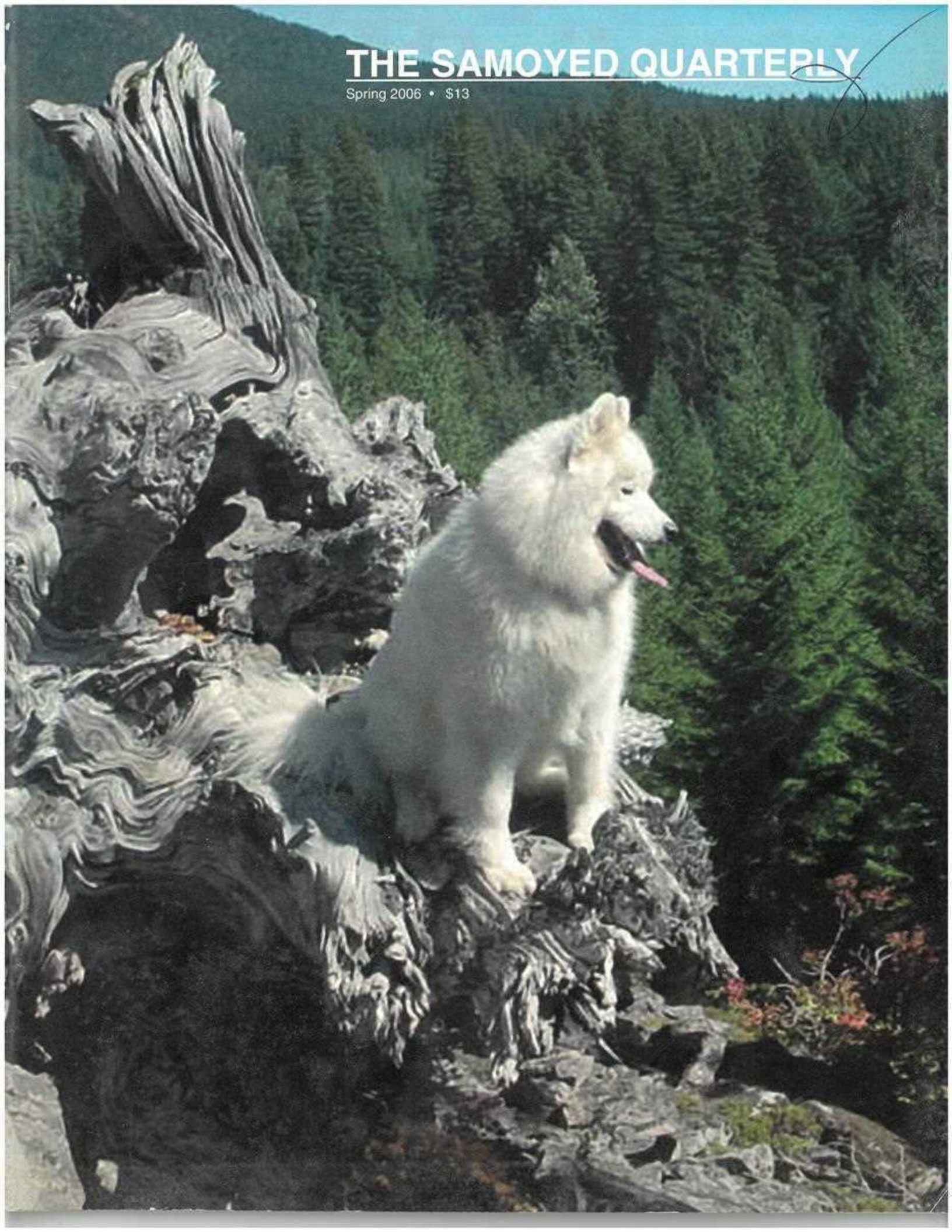


THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Carol Montgomery
ALPINE GLO
Bedminster, New Jersey

Part II

This interview was conducted at the home of Carol Montgomery in May 2004 by Lynne Robertson.

It seems like you are always on the verge of opening a can of worms; when you are selecting for one thing you have to be so careful about everything else. It seems like a lot of things to keep track of.

That is right. That's why you don't select for one thing. You are looking at improving this, but there is a lot that you want to keep. I think that you have to go to a dog that is going to help you keep some of the things that you already have.

When you are breeding you always want to make sure that you are doing all of the proper health checks and eyes. I think every breeder really needs to utilize the tools that we have as breeders to make sure that you are ruling out any major hereditary problems before you do those breedings. So checking eyes every year, doing hips at two years of age. We have actually done the hips on our dogs in their older years, like at twelve years of age. You want to know that if they are excellent when they are two, what do they look like when they are thirteen or fourteen, or even ten or twelve. It's not necessary, it's not something that you have to do, but it just gives you another tool in the toolbox that we have as breeders, just to make sure that you know about your own dogs. Did the hips change any?

Some dogs will have a little bit of arthritis in them, and other dogs you will see no arthritis in them at those later years. It is nice to know that. It's not necessary, but it is a nice extra piece of information to have.

Now we have the Optigen

and one of the things that I ask for in a stud dog that I am considering. PRA is something that we can wipe out in ONE generation. The mode of inheritance is a sex-linked trait in Sammies, so if you do the test you know you don't have to worry about it.



Ch. Major Keno Sterling O'Stardan shown winning first in Stud Dog class at the Minuteman Samoyed Club Regional Specialty, 1984, with daughters Ch. Alpine Glo's Major Attraction and Ch. Alpine Glo's Major Sensation.



Am/Can Ch. Alpine Glo's Mercedes Benz, "Sadie."

testing, and the Samoyed Club of America for three years in a row has provided Optigen clinics at the National Specialty. It is a simple blood test that will give you genetic information on whether or not your dog will develop progressive retinal atrophy (PRA). As these genetic tests become available, we will have even more information available to us.

What are some of the more common problems that you have seen, and have they changed over the years?

There are several common eye problems, like cataracts, PRA, retinal dysplasia, etc. Knock on wood, we have not had any eye problems in our dogs, but I believe it's because we test year after year. When I look for a stud dog, I want a copy of his OFA clearance and a copy of his most recent eye exam. If the exam (CERF number) is not up-to-date, then I want another eye test before I will use him.

All of my dogs have had the Optigen test for PRA. It is just another thing that I can show,

We can eradicate PRA from this breed. With cataracts, that's not so. People used to say it was a simple recessive, but I'm not sure. You have arguments about that, even some of the ophthalmologists will differ on cataracts and what causes cataracts and types of cataracts.

Hip dysplasia has been a common problem in this breed and in many other breeds. The mode of inheritance of HD is not yet fully understood. We have been very fortunate in the area of hip dysplasia and in eyes.

The breed can also have some autoimmune issues. There's a lot of controversy today about what causes it. Is it in the breeding? Is it in vaccination protocols? Should we be vaccinating these dogs as much as we do? I think every breeder and every dog owner needs to read as much as they can and make the decision for themselves. We do what we call health checks every year. I send blood samples out to Dr. Dobbs in California, and we check for

titers. If our dogs don't need an inoculation, they don't get a vaccination that year. More breeders are doing this. It just makes sense! We don't inoculate people every single year, so why should we over-vaccinate our dogs? When I think back on some of my earlier dogs and how I would vaccinate them every single year, I am grateful we didn't develop any problems. We thought we were doing the right things for them. We no longer vaccinate our puppies as early as we once did.

How much later do you start?

We generally let our puppies go to their new homes between nine and ten weeks. So I generally give the first shots at eight weeks. I try to separate the parvo from the DHP by a week or two, and we use killed virus not modified live. I have never given rabies inoculations before six months of age. I hold off on that as long as I possibly can. There are vets who will tell you to do it at three or four months, but we don't give rabies before six months. It is just overloading their systems to me. I believe in vaccinating, but I believe in doing it as far apart as possible with as much time in between as possible. Then yearly checking titers to make sure they have enough protection.

It seems like a lot of people are catching on to that.

They are. I have to say, I have lived in different parts of the country, but there are some very savvy people who keep informed about dog health issues everywhere.

Have you shown or judged in different parts of the country, and are you seeing any difference in quality anywhere?

People think there are type differences in different parts of the country, but I think we are reducing those differences now because people buy dogs and breed to dogs from all over the country. Chilled semen can be shipped easily so breedings to top-producing stud dogs can take place anywhere today which allows breeders to use those same stud dogs. Offspring of these dogs are competing everywhere. I believe there's less difference now. You still see larger dogs on the West Coast, and there are still regional differences in type, but I think we are seeing some change in that.



Ch. Nentsi's Nachala of Alpine Glo.

I have to say the dogs that have consistently impressed me are the dogs in the Midwest. I actually bought a dog from the Midwest, back in the mid-'80s. A dog that we called Major, otherwise known as Ch. Major Keno Sterling O'Stardan. Debbie Jahnke, who owns Stardan kennels, bred his litter and they all finished their championships. He was a fifteen-month-old male who probably had more tenacity than the people who owned him. They couldn't control him, so Debbie got him back. I saw the dog and was very interested in him. I was really interested in his pedigree, because he was a beautifully linebred dog, and I needed to go out at that point. He had Karen McFarlane's Hotshot behind him and a Best in Show winning dog named Jack Frost. I did buy him because I knew what was behind him. I think a lot of the Midwest dogs are quality dogs. I've judged Sweepstakes there and I have been very impressed with what I've seen. In California, when I judged the Futurity

at the SCA National, there were nice dogs from all over the country. Not every dog can be as impressive as others but the good ones are easy to find. And the great ones you can always pick out.

Do you only judge matches?

Yes. I am not an AKC judge, though that is something that I want to do eventually. I think I am going to time that with retirement from working, when I have a little more time. I think it will be interesting and fun to do. Traveling around and seeing people I have known for years appeals to me. After all this many years in dogs, there aren't many people who I don't know. I find judging is a continuing education. You learn something new every time you judge.

You were saying it is easy to pick out the good ones; what is the main thing you are looking for, like the cake and the frosting?

It is really a combination of things I look for. The cake is that balance, and then the frosting is really how the dog uses

itself. It's how the dog is presented, and the style of the dog. Sometimes you see a great dog and you want to put that dog up, but you have to try to give the novice handler an opportunity to set the dog up properly and so on. Sometimes there is a bit of instruction that goes on. I have seen many judges do that, "Set the dog this way," or "Try that again," because either the handler was causing the dog to be off or the dog was misbehaving. I think the frosting is that total package. You see that dog standing, and the dog calls attention to itself. But when it moves does it cover a lot of ground effortlessly? And, finally, the show attitude has to be there. There are some really good dogs who are structurally sound, but they just don't like showing. They don't call attention to themselves because of that. It is a dog show, after all. Even in my own kennel, I want that show attitude.

Can you name a few top dogs you have owned, or some that you have liked over the years?

There are some dogs that I have thought were better than others. Kachina, as I've said, and Tak-e-na. We have owned and produced dogs who were nationally ranked. We have mostly done all of our own handling. Just recently, with some of our dogs, I have had some handlers help out because it is just not as easy for me to get to the shows. One of our girls, "Emma," Alpine Glo's One In A Million, has a handler because she is not enamored with showing. She needs a three-point major to finish. It is not that she is afraid, she would just rather be home or doing something else. When she is with me and a judge comes up to her, she leans into me. The joke is we could rent her to *Sesame Street* and have her play the letter U. So I now have a handler with her, and he has taught her so much. She looks wonderful with him. Our only male, Ch. Alpine Glo's Gambler's Image (Monte) had a handler on him when he was first being shown because I had injured my knee. When I was able to get back in the ring I finished him with two back-to-back majors in one weekend. I have tried to handle my own dogs because I love the ring and enjoy the relationship with my dogs. It is you and that dog, and no one has better rapport with your dog than you do. But as the years pass it gets increasingly harder.

How do you feel about the standard, and is there anything you would like to see changed?

There are probably one or two things I would like to see changed, but I think that the standard of our breed has been around for a long time, so as a breeder, I have tremendous respect for our standard. It's one of the better standards out there. It allows enough room for interpretation, as we talked about earlier. It really does give a picture of what a Samoyed should look like, and it keeps in mind what these dogs were originally bred to do. I don't have any major arguments with our standard. I would like to see the Illustrated Standard updated by a first-rate artist who knows and understands dogs. I think it would be a wonderful tool for judges and exhibitors alike. However, when judges are applying to judge Samoyeds they should be educated about



Ch. Sherica's Sierra of Alpine Glo, whelped November 29, 1980.

our standard. The breed clubs have judges' education and the SCA has done a very nice job of educating judges, but there is always more that we can do. We have a good judges' education committee.

Are you on the education committee?

I chair the breeders' education committee. For the past five years, I've done breeders' education, and we have put on tremendous programs, just top-notch speakers for the membership. SCA has paid for that; we

charge a very minimum amount, like \$5, for people to come in and hear some of the top people talk about health issues, or how to grade a litter of puppies, conformation, breeding, etc. We have had really top-notch speakers, and that's something that our national club just recently decided to do for our members. SCA covers the expense and just charges back a moderate amount to cover refreshments, etc. The SCA has been great about providing educational programs for its members.

Are there any other committees or clubs you are involved with?

The Minuteman Samoyed Club, I was a founding member, and North Shore Kennel Club, which is an all breed club.

Has this breed become a lot more popular since you first began 30 years ago?

No, it has really stayed about the same, and that is just fine with me. When a breed really becomes popular - every time there is a movie, like *Beethoven*, you get a lot more breeding and a lot more calls. I



Ch. Alpine Glo's Gambler's Image, "Monte."



Am/Can Ch. Alpine Glo's Mercedes Benz, "Sadie," shown taking BOW at the 1984 Canadian National Specialty. Judge Mr. Thomas Gately.

get concerned about overbreeding to meet the demand. It becomes a money-driven proposition. We are up there, I think we are in the mid-30s or 40s as far as popularity, and as far as I'm concerned, that's great. Let's stay there! It's not quantity, it's quality that you are breeding for, and it's quality that people want to buy. It's tough enough finding really good homes for these dogs. We have been very lucky; we have had wonderful homes for our puppies. But the kind of screening that we do in order to ensure those quality homes – and then the continuing education that it takes to assist your puppy buyers can be very time-consuming.

You mentioned grading a litter; how do you grade a litter?

There are different phases of grading a litter. I look at the puppies when they are first born – when they are still wet. You can tell a lot about puppies when they are just out of their mother and before they have totally dried. You can tell about what coats are going to be like as adult dogs, you can see angulation, you can see length of body, you can see neck. Then after that, you just close your eyes for a couple of weeks, because you can't see a whole lot of anything. I mean, you do, you see glimmers of this and that, and you keep records. I keep notes about what I see in a particular

puppy. We do color-code our puppies. I happen to use different colored nail polish. Some people use different colored yarn around the neck. I use nail polish on the tails or on the rump, depending on whether they are boys or girls. And I look at head shapes as they are developing, and what appeals to my eye.

About five or six weeks, when they get up on their feet, you are starting to see some glimmers of movement that catch your eye, some things that you like and some things that you don't like. Really I start at six weeks and take copious notes, and then at eight weeks in terms of proportions. By eight weeks they are moving like they

are going to move.

Pat Hastings gives a great seminar, and her video, *Puppy Puzzle*, is wonderful to watch before grading a litter. Every time I watch her video, or go to one of her seminars, I learn something more. You sharpen your eye and your ability to look at proportions, structure, etc.

I grade at eight weeks of age. It is nice when you can keep puppies until ten weeks, because they are more sure on their feet at that age and can really move out.

In Pat's seminars, she says you watch the movement. She doesn't do any of the movement; a lot of people will say, "I

like movement," but she doesn't talk specifically about movement in her video. What she is saying is, look at proportions. Here's how you grade them, here's how you go over a dog. Then watch them, do a lot of watching in the yard and on different surfaces. Judge how they are moving, and how they are using themselves. We all decide in different ways. I use the mirror, it has helped me tremendously. The mirror allows you to stand back and see everything. If you are not using a mirror, you can't see because you are looking down at the puppy from above. When you are suspending them and you are just watching how the feet drop, and you are looking at them in the mirror, it tells you so much about the way that puppy is put together. That is something Pat Hastings does in her seminars all the time. I have learned a lot from her; I think a lot of people have learned a lot from her.

She also says that it is up to the breeder to decide, after going over the structure, after watching movement, the breeder must decide what the type is that they are looking for, what appeals to their eye. The only reason that she talks about the structure and what to pick out in puppies is how do you find some of the faults that are only going to get worse with age? If they are there at eight weeks, they are going to be there as an adult, only magnified. So why, when you have another puppy that is of better quality, go to the one that you kind of like because it appeals to you? Why not jump-start your breeding program by keeping the sounder dogs? Then working on the style and the type that you like.

Was that easy for you, when picking puppies, to separate yourself from the puppy you liked to the more sound one?

No! It's never easy. There is always a head that you like or something else you like. Of course, it's always the one that you absolutely love the look of that has one fault or another. I select for structure because you can improve heads much easier than structure. You can put the furnishings on them, but you can't change the structure. You can breed pretties into the next generation, it is a lot easier to do that.

So you sell puppies at eight weeks, and you have a list of people waiting for the puppies?

I let them go between nine and ten weeks. When you are not breeding lots of litters, it's not hard to have people in line waiting for your puppies.

Is there a problem in this breed with breeders who aren't that reputable?

Absolutely. People are all different. There are people who want to do well in all they undertake. They are going to want to do the best job they possibly can. Then you always have people who take shortcuts,

and well, they may feel that it's not so important that they do eyes every year, or every other year, or maybe not at all. "I don't have a problem," they say, "so why do all of this unnecessary testing?" That is why, when people call me for puppies, they will say, "Can you recommend any breeders?" We have a lot of good breeders. And so I feel fortunate to be able to refer puppy buyers to them.

When potential puppy buyers call me I screen them. If they answer my questions appropriately I will agree to

have them visit our home to meet our dogs. Then I tell them, "I really think you owe it to yourself to visit a lot of people, because our standard allows for lots of different styles of Sams, so go and see what appeals to you. See where the dogs live, see how the dogs are raised. See if the dogs are clean, and see if they are kennel dogs or they are housedogs. You should do whatever feels right to you. Ask a lot of questions of everyone you meet. Talk about health issues, and screening for hips and eyes and so on." It's amazing what people will come



Ch. Alpine Glo's Cherokee Kachina, "Casey."

back and say, "I did this but I just sort of feel that I want to get a puppy from you because I just like your dogs. I like the fact that they live in the house with you." I always encourage them to go and find out for themselves about different dogs and people. I won't say, "Don't go to this person," or "Don't go to that person." I think people need to scrutinize that for themselves. But yes, there are some people who if they wanted to breed to my dogs, I wouldn't want to do the breeding.

What are the benefits to getting out and going to some of the larger dog shows and specialties?

The National Specialty, I don't think I have ever gone to a National Specialty expecting to win. You go to a National to take dogs that you are proud of and have them seen. I always go to the National to see some of the best dogs in the country. When you have a bitch that you want to breed, you only get a few breedings out of her. Maybe it is two to three breedings in her lifetime, so you sure want to go to the very best male you can find each and every time. That is why I keep females. To keep a male, they have to be exceptional, to me. I can go out and breed my girls to exceptional males. When you have a bitch that is a champion and you have all your paperwork to prove that you've done the necessary genetic testing, etc., people want to breed their top males to your bitches. So you go out to see some of the top dogs in the country, and what those dogs are producing. That's the important thing. It's not enough to just breed to the top winner; you breed to the top winner if you like what he is producing, so you have to see enough of his progeny. That is why you go to Nationals, AND to have a lot of fun and reminisce with friends you have made over the years. There are people who live in other parts of the country who you don't see except at Nationals. So once a year you go and relive some good ol' times and memories with them. And create some new memories, too.

Regional specialties are important as well because you want to see what is in your area or other areas of the country. Depending on the judges, people come from pretty far away for



Ch. Alpine Glo's Major Sensation.



Sadie.

some regional specialties. It is important to get to know one another as well. Then sit down after the judging and just talk to people about dogs that they have in their area that they've

seen, or dogs that they have bred, or some breedings that have been particularly good for them in terms of combining lines. It's an education, and it is a fun way of meeting people.

It sounds like you go more with breedings in mind rather than to compete, even though you do compete.

It's all about competition, but when you think about it, it's like buying a ticket for the lottery. Your chances of winning vary, but if you don't buy the ticket, then you have no chance of winning. (laughter) Unless you go to the regional and National Specialties you are limiting yourself to shows. It is nice to get out there. I'm sure you have heard the term "kennel blindness" time and time again. You can really believe in your own dogs and love the dogs that you breed, but you don't know how to get better unless you see what else is out there. It is just a way of educating yourself. You do go out with the hope of winning something. Placing at a National is one of the greatest compliments a breeder can receive. But you don't have to win the National for other people to think that your dog is a really good dog. I said this to a very dear friend who went to her very first National Specialty. I told her, "You don't go out to win; you go out to be seen. To have your dog seen, because you are proud of your dog." In order to win, the sun, the moon and the stars all have to align. I have seen dogs compete on different weekends, etc., and all of a sudden the day of the National that dog is just showing better than he or she has ever shown before. It is not that the dog is better; the dog is "on" that day. You can't make that happen, it just happens. There have been some surprises at Nationals, but the dogs that typically win are beautiful dogs and I am happy for them. You always wish you could have won, but you are happy for the other winners, too, and it does give you an opportunity to see something that you like and then you ask for the pedigree. Then you see if it matches. Sometimes, it just doesn't work. But you look and see if it's a possible breeding for you.

What are some of your most memorable experiences competing?

Winning with Kachina was totally memorable. I can still feel it to this day; you can almost taste that kind of win. I was a pure novice, and the dog had not really been shown that much. She had been in three shows before we went out there



Ch. Alpine Glo's Ice Blue Sensation.

and had garnered nine points. We were both unknowns, and that's as honest as it gets, you know. (laughter) That was memorable.

I also remember her daughter, Tak-e-na, got an Award of Merit. It was memorable to me

because Annie Clark was judging Best of Breed. I have real respect for her because I think she's a judge who has a tremendous eye for a sound dog. It was the National Specialty in Frederick, Maryland. Tak-e-na had already finished her champi-

onship, so we were competing in the Best of Breed competition. Annie Clark turned around from the bitch that she had examined in front of us, and she looked at Tak-e-na. She was a very sound bitch but not a particularly beautiful bitch. She

looked at her, and the look in Annie's eye was almost like she had dismissed her. Almost like, "Oh, this isn't my style." She came up and started to go over her, and then she asked me to move her. She asked us to do a triangle. So I did the triangle

with Tak-e-na and brought her back, and when we were coming back to her, I looked up at her face, and she was sporting the biggest smile. She put her hand on my shoulder and said, "Would you do that again, please?" I said, "Did we do something wrong?" She said, "No, my dear, that was so lovely I want to see it again." So we went again, and she marked down our number. At Nationals, as you know, when they mark down your number you are either going or you're staying, you don't know which. I thought maybe she liked her better because she had a totally different look on her face. She got to the very end and it was between Tak-e-na and a beautiful bitch that was out of Ch. I'm A Bark Star. Her name was Spark A Bark. Annie was absolutely right to put that bitch up, because she was typey, she was beautiful, and she moved equally well, but she had that showmanship that I'll remember to this day. When Annie Clark was handing out the Awards of Merit, she said, "This is my FIRST Award of Merit. And she presented it to Tak-e-na. That was kind of fun.

We have had other memorable things, just in terms of friends' dogs who have gone up at Nationals as well. It's just really fun when you see a dog that you've known and been fond of in your own area do some winning at Nationals. Memorable moments happen even at local shows.

Another memorable moment was when Ch. Alpine Glo's Piper's Glory, "Glory," was quite a bit younger. We entered a show and it was a one-point show in bitches. We went to the show which was literally fifteen minutes from our house. Glory had just started showing, and she didn't particularly like showing. So I went hoping to get one point on her. She won the point in bitches, and then we went back to compete in Best of Breed competition, and there were lots of specials there. The judge pulled out a bitch special; I thought he had found his BOB and BOW. Then he pulled Glory right behind her. I was waiting for him to pull a male for BOS. Then he stood back and started looking at the two girls. He said he wanted us to take these two bitches around

together, and it dawned on me, we had a shot at Best of Breed here, because he was looking at these two girls together. He had the bitch special go around first, and we followed, and then he switched and we went around first the second time. He said, "Okay, just stand there." So we did, and then he pulled a male out. He said to take the dogs all the way around the ring, and it hit me then that she was going to get Best of Breed. So that one point turned into three points

just wasn't meant to be. As subjective as the conformation ring is, the judge just wasn't looking for what you brought him/her that day. That doesn't mean the judge is wrong; it means you bring him/her something else, or you don't go back to that judge with the same dog a second or third time. I generally give judges at least two tries with a particular dog. If it isn't that judge's style of dog, then it isn't that judge's style of dog. You don't write off the judge, you

Some dogs just have it naturally. I've had dogs that just showed. I had a bitch at one point who was out of an Ice Breaker daughter, bred to Ch. Iceway's Ice Crush. She was one of the cutest bitches I think I've ever owned. She was adorable. Her name was Am/Can Ch. Alpine Glo's Mercedes Benz, "Sadie," and that bitch showed from the day she could walk. She just said, "Look at me!" We won Best of Winners at the Canadian National



Ch. Alpine Glo's Gambler's Image, "Monte."

that day. Those are little things, but that is what keeps people showing for years and years.

As many memorable things as you have, there are disappointments too, where your dog just wasn't "on" that day, or it

bring a style of dog that you have seen him put up.

Do you have any rituals or anything you do to get your dog's showmanship up, or is it just something that they have to wake up with that day?

Specialty, and we finished her Canadian championship in two days. She finished her American championship when she was seven months old. Judges just couldn't keep their eyes off of her. If they were passing her by,

she would step out and say, "Wait a minute! You didn't look at me!" They would just get the biggest kick out of it. She never barked, she never called attention to herself that way. She just showed. She was just that cute little package who was very special. You know, there aren't that many puppies that are that together at six or seven months of age, so when you see one, you do give it a second look. She just had that showmanship. Kachina had that showmanship, as well as her brother Nachala.

I like to get my dogs acclimated to the show ring. I take them to as many shows as I can, just walking around. Just getting used to taking them to classes, to conformation classes, because you never know what is going to throw them or what can surprise them in a ring. They are just like us, they have their good days and they have their bad days.

Do you have any examples of something that totally surprised you or your dog?

Not one of my dogs, but a friend's dog who had just won a very, very lovely regional specialty. She was Winners Bitch and Best of Winners. She showed beautifully in the Sweepstakes, she showed beautifully in the regular competition at the specialty. Then she went on to compete in an all breed Puppy Sweepstakes, all Working breeds. A noise from a loudspeaker squealing, and a falling trash can totally spooked her - that bitch was just not going to show. The only thing my friend could do was just get her through it. Calm her, and get her through it. You can't penalize that; you can't get angry at that. It is just the timing. As she went on to win some Bests of Breed, when she would get into the Group ring odd dogs that she hadn't seen before would throw her off.

That has happened to some of my dogs, too. You live in an area where there aren't that many dogs running around, and you keep your dogs fenced in to be safe, and you have to really socialize them to get them used to other breeds. That is why acclimating them and getting them to as many shows as you can is so important. That is part of something - I wouldn't call it a ritual, but it is an intelligent



Ch. Barbicon's Sail of Alpine Glo.

thing to do so that you try to remove as many surprises as you possibly can.

Are there any judges, past or present, who you really respect?

I mentioned Annie Clark, and there are several others. It's hard to recall all of them. There was one judge in particular, C. Seaver Smith, whose memory I really respect. His breed was Great Pyrenees. He did a lot for my dogs. He was a very good judge. Remember I said that when you are judging, your eye is just attracted by something that you like? There was a style that he liked about my dogs. I'm sure a lot of people thought that it was political, but he just liked my dogs. There were times in the ring when I wasn't showing a dog that he could pick out a dog I bred who was being shown by someone else. At one such show this young

novice owner was showing her Nachala son and Seaver gave him BOS from the classes over top-ranked specials. I was showing a bitch in the classes and he gave her Best of Breed. So I ran off to the Working Group, because we were the last of the Working breeds to be judged. When I came back to do the pictures, as we were standing there, I said to him, "Do you know that this dog is one I bred?" He said, "Yes, I figured that out." I asked how he could have known, and he said, "Because I have judged that head before." I said, "No, you've never seen this dog before." He said, "That's not what I said. I didn't say I judged this dog before; I said I judged this head before. The dog that I judged ..." and he named the show where he had judged this dog's father, and he actually remembered who he

put him up over - that is an incredible memory in a judge. That is very impressive to me. We went under him with dogs that he didn't like and he didn't put them up, but whenever he was judging Sams, I always entered. I respected his opinion. The more that you heard him talking to other people in other breeds, too, you knew he had incredible memory. He died a few years ago and I was very sorry to hear about that. I have always respected judges who are consistent in their choices and selections. They know what they like and what they are looking for.

Are there any kennels, past or present, that you really respect?

Tsuilikagta's kennels, I respected. I respected Kondako very much. Whitecliff - Wilna Coulter did amazing things with her kennel and her dogs aged

with such grace. Not only longevity, but the lasting stamina that those dogs had. I remember at a National watching one of her old dogs go around in the Veteran class. I think he was twelve years of age, and there wasn't a dry eye in that entire complex. When he went around the ring, it wasn't this old, broken-down dog. This dog was amazing. That says something about the people who have bred the dog, who live with the dog - I mean, she kept that dog in great shape. So those are some of the kennels.

When you asked about special or top-winning dogs that I really liked, Ch. Karalots Hotshot of Windsong, who was owned by Karen McFarlane, was a dog I absolutely adored. He had a son, Jack Frost, who I was absolutely enamored with. Beautiful dogs! That is why we bought something from that line, because it produced that gorgeous Samoyed type. Windsong Samoyeds, Mary Kistner's kennel, was the kennel behind so many top-winning Samoyeds. As far as today's kennels there are many breeders today I truly respect.

Let's talk a bit about care. What do you feed your dogs?

You are going to hear me use the word balanced an awful lot, but it's true. It is how I live my life, it is what I do with my dogs. We have always fed really good quality food, and I have fed several foods over the years. Ten years ago, I was feeding primarily kibble, dry food. I feed raw now, but I don't do the BARF diet. I do a very high quality fresh frozen food in the mornings. They also get plenty of fresh vegetables. Once a month, I go and buy lots of vegetables, and spend an afternoon at the food chopper. The Cuisinart gets a real workout on that day! I just prepare a lot of fresh vegetables for them and then freeze them. So they get the fresh frozen meat, they get fresh vegetables, they get a good vitamin supplement, and I always give vitamin C. Then because I am not a dietician or nutritionist by training, I also give them a very good quality kibble in the evenings. So they get their fresh meat in the mornings and then in the evenings I give them kibble. Or I may do a day when they are just getting the fresh



Alpine Glo's Image Maker, "Rembrandt" (Ch. Alpine Glo's Gambler's Image x Ch. Sanorka's Tailored to Barbicon).

and then the next day they get kibble. Everything they get is holistic food - no artificial preservatives. I try to be as natural as possible with them.

What kind of meat are they getting?

Chicken and turkey, beef, lamb and venison. They may get some ostrich meat from time to time. They get green beef tripe, I mix a little of that in with whatever meat I'm feeding them. That is something that you have to experience, the smell of beef tripe. (laughter). You really have to love your dogs to feed them beef tripe! It smells like you are inside a slaughterhouse; it is just terrible. But it is so healthy for them, and they love it. They absolutely

love it! They also get fresh fruits. I give them apples and blueberries. I chop up apples and give it to them instead of bone treats. I give them fresh fruit treats. You can really see it in their coats; they are just healthy. I am grateful that we can do it. Not everyone has the time to do it. As my husband says, "You are the LAST person who has time to do it, because I do work some pretty extraordinary hours and travel quite a bit. But I do it because it's important to me. My dogs have always been healthy, but I think I have far fewer vet bills now than I have ever had. The cost sort of evens out. I can't remember the last time I had a hotspot. They get yogurt also,

mixed in with their diet. So it's a very balanced diet, and I also make sure that they get a good vitamin supplement as well.

As far as conditioning, how do you keep them in good shape?

I open up the door and they run through this yard. We are lucky enough to have a nice, big area for them to run. We go for walks, I'll take four or five of them out for walks around the neighborhood. We are in the country, so we are walking on country roads. They exercise themselves far more than I could exercise them by running. I used to jog with the dogs, and I would like to do that again. Again, it's finding the time. I think everybody out there understands how precious time

is to every one of us.

Describe your kennel set-up for us.

They are indoor dogs, they're housedogs. I do have a kennel set-up. We have a kennel set-up off the family room. When my husband and I are at work, they are in the kennel. The girls are kenneled in pairs, and our male is in the middle of the girls, kenneled by himself. Not for any reason; he could be kenneled with the girls, it's just that he has his own space and he can see everybody so he's really happy. But when we are at home they are out of the kennels. They are housedogs. I keep them in the kennels during the day for a couple of reasons. They can't get into any trouble, and also if there is ever - because we are away from the house for a good eight to ten hours a day - a problem with fire, our local fire department knows exactly where the dogs are. They know to forget about the house and belongings, go down first and get the dogs out if there is ever an incident. Knock on wood, we have never had any. You saw how the door to the kennel area opens out into the fenced-in area, and all they need to do is get them down into the big dog yard, which is a good-sized area for them to run, close the gate, and no matter what would happen to the house, the dogs would be safe. At night, they sleep in the bedroom with us. They are true coach potatoes.

How much grooming do you do, and what are some of your favorite grooming products or tools?

I try to brush through each dog once a week, even when they are not being shown. It also helps to rotate the coat, so brushing and getting the dead hairs out really does help to turn that coat over. They are bathed about once a month, whether they need it or not. I always think they need it. That's for the dogs that aren't being shown. But when you are showing a dog, and campaigning a dog, they are bathed every week that you are taking them to a show. They are combed every single week. I try not to put anything on the coat. I use a good quality dog shampoo, and I use a leave-in conditioner when they need it. They generally don't. With the diet that they get, their coats are usually

in very good shape.

The favorite tools I use are a #1 All Systems Poodle comb, which is a long comb with wide teeth. It pulls out undercoat better than anything I have ever had. I'm very happy with that. It's not the easiest on the hands, but it is great for pulling out undercoat. Every hair just stands away from the dog after you use that. I have also come to like the #1 All Systems pin brush, and the Cris Cristensen's pin brush. It has very long pins, and that really helps to get undercoat out. It makes an amazing difference on these coats. Those two brushes and a good comb. I have a couple of little combs for use around the head and the shorter hair on the

ears and such. That's really it.

Do you trim whiskers?

I don't trim whiskers at all. I do trim feet, that is really the only thing that I trim. I don't do anything else. I have never gotten into sculpting the dogs, a lot of scissoring on the coat. Some people will say to take a little off here and thin a little off there, but it is just not something that has interested me. This is a natural breed, I show them naturally. I do trim feet and hocks because you want a neat, nice-looking foot. That is really about it. It's a pretty easy breed in terms of maintaining the coats.

Is there anything we haven't talked about that you wanted to mention?

Although I love every one of my dogs, a real favorite of mine is Monte, Ch. Alpine Glo's Gambler's Image, our male. He is my soul mate. He is very loving. The males in this breed are such mushes. When they are looking to buy a puppy, so many people ask if it is better to get a male or a female? Who is more loving? In some breeds there are differences, but in Sammies the boys and girls are all loving.

Monte is very special to me because we lost his mother when he and his littermates were four days old. She died instantly when a blood clot lodged in her heart. We had never lost so much as a puppy before that - let alone a bitch.



Ch. Alpine Glo's One In A Million, "Emma."



Ch. Alpine Glo's Piper's Glory, "Glory."

So we bottle-fed his entire litter. He will always be special because of the bonding that occurred during the bottle-feeding.

Monte is a son of Ch. Sanorka's Moonlight Gambler. He finished his championship with back-to-back majors at sixteen months of age. He is very sound coming and going and covers a lot of ground from the side. He has consistently reproduced his soundness in his offspring. His puppies are light on their feet and have beautiful timing and sidegait. Because we have been selective in deciding what bitches he should breed, at only four years of age he has already produced several champions: Ch. Alpine Glo's One In A Million, Ch. Alpine Glo's Image Maker, Ch. Barbicon's Sail of Alpine Glo (all littermates), Ch. Crystal Star's Hi-Ridin Rodeo Man and Ch. Pebble's Run Fabulous Fairmont (who is nationally ranked and a consistent Group placer and multiple specialty winner). There are several more of his kids who are now competing in the show ring and are close to finishing (Crystal Star's Gambler's Legend, Crystal Star's Pot-O-Gold, etc.).

Ch. Pebble's Run Fabulous Fairmont, who we call "Frisco," is owned by a very good friend, Amy Kiell, and he is beautifully handled by Andrew Green. He is a dog who loves to show. He is only two and a half years ago, but when I watch him in the ring he seems to love being there.

Ch. Barbicon's Sail of Alpine Glo, "Sailor," is owned by Michael Fernandez in Virginia. Michael has never handled before, and he is a true example of really looking at the people who are interested in having your dogs, and trusting that they will keep their word. Michael had no interest in showing, but he said, "Tell me a little bit more about showing. Is it mean to do to the dogs? Do you have to send them off with other people?" I said no, he could do it himself. He learned about what showing in the conformation ring entailed and the people in the Potomac Valley Samoyed Club helped him so much, especially Celinda Cheskawich. She taught him what brushes and grooming tools to use, what classes to take

the dog to, and what handling classes he should go to. Other PVSC members shared their knowledge with him. Michael finished Sailor's championship on his own, with some really nice wins. He even won Winners Dog at the PVSC specialty last fall. When other Sammy people take an interest in novices coming into the breed it creates an environment where novices feel welcome. Sammy people, I have found, tend to help people out who are new to the breed. I hope that continues. There are some breeds where it isn't always that way.

Any other things you would like to mention?

Well, you asked me if I had any funny stories about showing dogs, and I do recall an incident that occurred in the early to mid-1980s at a National Specialty; some of the longtime breeders may recall this incident.

There was a wonderful woman, Debbie Orr, who showed her Sams in conformation and in obedience. She had some lovely dogs. Debbie was in the obedience ring, which was adjacent to the conformation ring, and she was working two of her dogs in obedience Brace. Debbie's dogs quite frequently won High in Trial awards.

Most exhibitors were intent on the conformation ring but then some laughter started and continued to increase in volume. We all started to look in the direction of this very loud laughter which was coming from the obedience ring. In fact, even the conformation judge stopped her judging to see what was going on. Here is what was occurring ...

Debbie and her brace of Sams were performing an off-lead heeling exercise. The dogs were performing beautifully until one of the dogs decided to "mount" the other one. So Debbie was walking along, one dog was heeling, and the other dog was walking on its back legs while "humping" the dog who continued to heel. I think you get the picture!

The entire show stopped and the auditorium burst into side-splitting laughter - including Debbie, the obedience judge AND the conformation judge. It was a memorable moment when everyone came together, relaxed and realized that even in the tense moments of competi-

tion, we can all appreciate a situation and laugh together. It also proved to us that those two Sammies were the ones in control, and their antics stole the show ... and our hearts.

What are the drawbacks and benefits of being in dogs?

All in all, there are more rewards than drawbacks. I guess the biggest drawback is the fact that dogs do not live as long as people. Saying that last good-bye to a "member" of our family is one of the most emotional, gut-wrenching experiences possible.

Another drawback is simply the time involved in showing or campaigning a dog. It can be a tremendous time commitment when you consider the driving back and forth to shows, the time spent at shows and the time spent away from your family (unless they are equally involved in the sport of dogs). And speaking about family, I have to say that without the wonderful support of my dear husband, Richard, who stays home to take care of the dogs who aren't coming to the shows with me, I wouldn't be as free to attend dog shows as regularly as I do. It is so comforting to know that the dogs at home are being so well cared for by someone I trust and who cares about them as much as I do.

There are other drawbacks that we all can point to (like expenses, etc.) but none of the drawbacks outweighs the sheer joy of sharing your life with these wonderful creatures who own us more than we own them. Their love for us is totally unconditional. I cannot imagine my life without my dogs or Richard.

Do you have a secret desire or fantasy about any wins that may have eluded you over the years, if you could win big?

Oh, I think everyone would love to win Best in Show. Everyone would love to win a National Specialty and a Best in Show. There's a certain time commitment that it requires, though. Not so much the National, but certainly campaigning the dog to the point where they are well-known enough that they can get a Best in Show. I don't delude myself, I just don't have that kind of time. If I truly wanted it, I would have to send the dogs out with someone else, and I just

haven't been willing to let my dogs go away from me. I respect people who can do that, but I like being with my dogs at the shows. Maybe when I retire?

There was one other thing we wanted to talk about, Kachina and her litterbrother?

Yes, her litterbrother - we talked about Kachina winning at the National, and when I was living in Massachusetts, I had the good fortune of living a few towns away from Rachel Page Elliott. As you know, Rachel Page Elliott has written a couple of books called *Dogsteps* and she also produced a *Dogsteps* video. She had been particularly interested in Ch. Tsiulikagta's Aput, when she saw him move at a dog show out West. She knew that Kachina was an Aput daughter and wanted to see an Aput son. So we took the two of them, and she filmed both of them. The funny thing was that although she liked Kachina, she totally bypassed her for her litterbrother, Nachala, and liked him so well that she actually used him in her video.

Another dog, when you asked me about dogs of note or dogs that I remember, was a Kachina daughter by the name of Ch. Alpine Glo's Kachina Cherokee, "Casey." This was a grandfather/granddaughter breeding of Kachina back to Ch Kiska's Karaholme Cherokee. He was one of the dogs that I was so taken by - an English import that Bob and Dolly Ward brought into the United States. Casey did a lot of nice winning for us, including some Group winning. She was truly an emissary for our breed. When she went to live with a priest in Massachusetts she would lie under the altar every day as he said Mass, and also sat in the confessional as he heard confessions. I'm sure she could write a book about that. (laughter)

Another dog of note was Ch. Alpine Glo's Major Sensation. She and her sister, Ch. Alpine Glo's Major Attraction, won awards when shown as a brace, including Group placements. Major Sensation, "Maxie," won the Group multiple times. That stemmed all the way back to Kachina.

Thank you very much.

Thank you. •