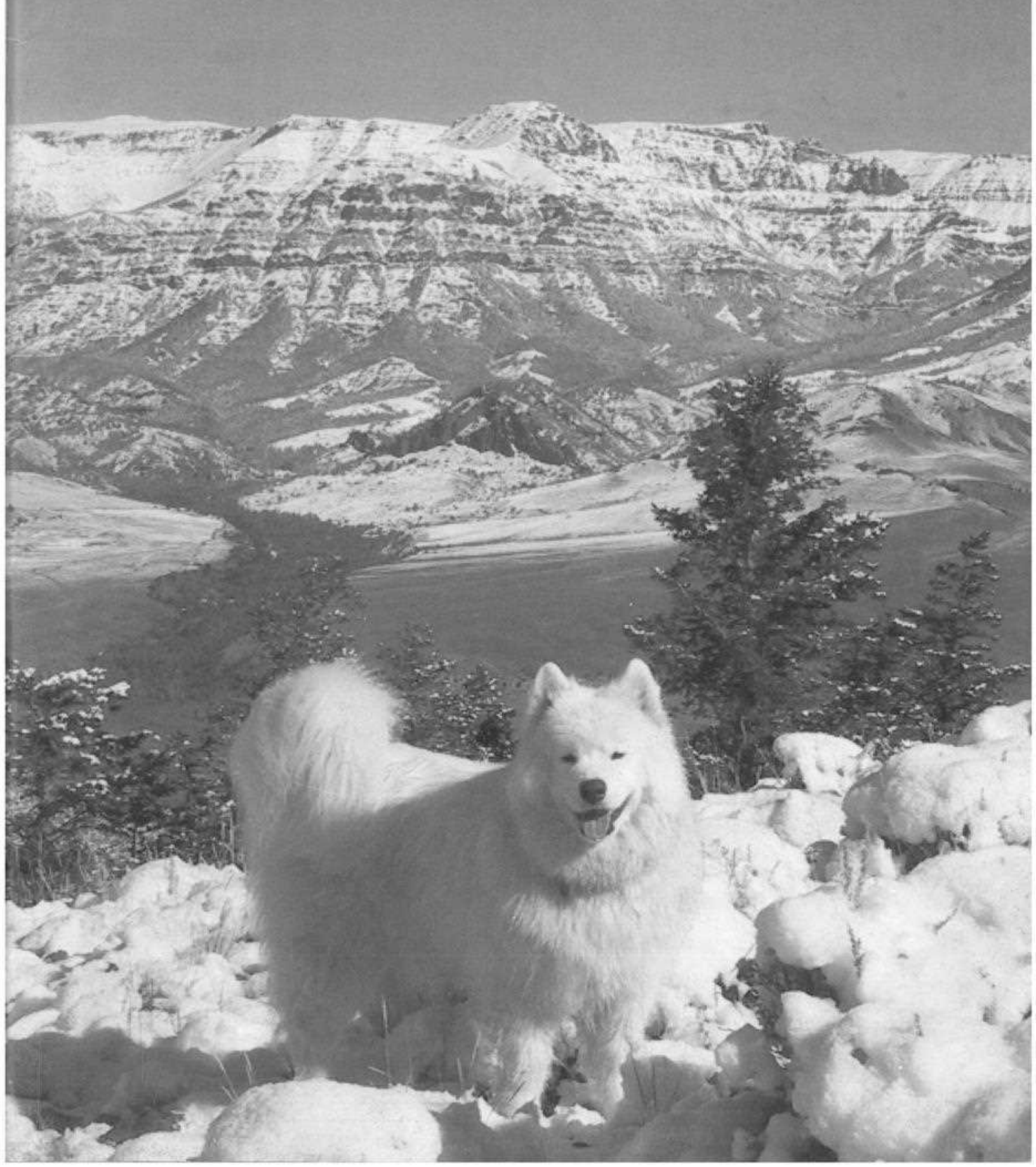


J 12/16/13

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

Winter 2003-04 • \$13



Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Susan Hampton
RISUKO
Pagosa Springs, Colorado

Part II

This interview was conducted at the home of Susan Hampton in August 2002 by Lynne Robertson.

How did you come up with your kennel name?

We didn't really have a kennel name until we bred our first champion. Our first kennel name was Ri-Su's, for Rich and Susan. We had three champions. We wanted to start over with the best. Two of the champions that we had were actually

from the dog that I had who was a pet quality, the one that finished really quick, Sam. His daughter finished very quickly, also, but we wanted to go to a different level. We were SCA members at that time, and we had been getting bulletins. There was this particular dog in them that kept catching my eye. Every time the bulletin would come out, there would be a couple of his kids in the bulletin. I just loved everything that came out of him. His name was Ch. Showoff Czar Of Whitecliff. That dog was probably my mentor dog. We decided, at that time we had "Honey Bear," and we wanted to get permission from the owner of that dog to breed our Ch. Honey to Czar.

We finally got up enough nerve to call Wilma Coulter, and she got really choked up when I called her. She said she had just lost him! She and I were crying over the phone; I could have just kicked myself, because I had been watching that dog for years. I loved that dog, but by the time I had decided to go for it, he was gone. She was doing a half-brother to half-sister breeding out of Czar. I immediately said I wanted one! She said I could have pick of the litter, though she didn't know me from Adam. I felt so privileged that she was offering me pick of the litter. That was how we got the bitch that actually started the breeding that we still have today, and that is still

going on in the show rings today. That was Risuko's Ms. Molly O' Whitecliff. She was the most beautiful bitch you ever saw! Her two litter-sisters went to two other breeders, and ended up being foundation bitches as well. So three of the bitches out of that litter were foundation bitches for three kennels. It was a lovely breeding.

When it came time to breed Ms. Molly, we did something that many breeders thought was crazy; we did an outcross. To me, it wasn't a total outcross, because it went back to Ch. Yurok of Whitecliff. That went back three or four generations. We bred to a Kondako male at that time, who was a top stud dog, Ch. Kondako's Dancing Bear. Connie and I had talked about it before; Connie owned "Dancing Bear." I always said that if you get too involved with a stud dog and you start picking him to death, chances are you are going to change your mind and not want to use that dog. This was the case with Dancing Bear. He had produced many champions, and was top stud dog in the country for a couple of years, as was his father. But he had his faults. I am not sure I would have bred Molly to Dancing Bear had I known his faults, because she had front faults, and Dancing Bear had front faults, even though they were different faults. They weren't the same, but I needed a strong front. Seeing a lot of Dancing Bear's kids, they had nice fronts. But I have to say, had I seen him in person I probably wouldn't have used him, which would have been a major mistake. That taught me a lesson, because I didn't see Dancing Bear until after we did two breedings.

We repeated the breeding because we got such nice dogs out of the first breeding. We got champions out of both, which ended up being very critical as far as our breeding program. They were very strong in our breeding program. One of them was Ch. Risuko's Dancing Demon, and the other was Ch. Risuko's Shady Lady, who was eventually the dam of our Best



Current best friends, left, Risuko's Cream O Wheat, "Buckwheat" (Risuko's Roxanne O'Trilogy x Ch. Risuko's Joi of Snowonder) and Risuko's Roxanne O'Trilogy, "Roxy" (Ch. Sanorka's Moonlight Gambler x Ch. Risuko's Debutante O'Trilogy CD).



Ch. Risuko's Mister Moonlight BIS, BISS.

in Show winner. Then we had "Fancy," Ch. Risuko's Fancy Free. So that was one thing that really taught me a lesson to not be too critical about stud dogs. There is no perfect dog, so you have to keep focused on what it is that you are trying to get out of a breeding. What does your bitch need? If you are going to

improve your bitch, you have to decide what it is you would improve on her, and go for a stud dog that ideally would look similar to her, but had something that would compensate for what she doesn't have. That is why we have always done extremely well in our breedings.

Again, that combination

with Whitecliff and Kondako was a beautiful combination. Not too many people did that, and a lot of people would either go one direction or the other and would never combine the two. In actuality, they both came out of the same place, Ch. Yurok of Whitecliff. It was a good lesson to get together with

Dancing Bear several years later, and have a conversation with Connie and Dave. They said the same thing; had they seen some of the stud dogs that they used, and gone over them and critiqued them to death, they probably wouldn't have used them. Then they wouldn't have been where they were at the



Left to right: "Nicki," Ch. Risuko's Mister Moonlight; "Taboo," Risuko's Sweetest Taboo; "Ruby," Ch. Risuko's Devil Woman; "Lady," Risuko's Singing the Blues.

time, had they not used those dogs.

It is a lesson in life. There is no perfect thing; there is no perfect animal, there is no perfect person or dog. You do the best you can and be honest with yourself. You always try to improve what you are lacking, and be truthful in what you are lacking. Anyway, how we came up with our kennel name was that at that time, our kennel name was Ri-Su, which was for Richard and Susan. We decided that it was too short, because it was only four letters. We added the "ko" on the end of it for "company." So it is Richard, Susan and Company, "Risuko." Actually, I have to say we kind of stole it from Connie and Dave Richardson, who have Kondako for Connie, Dave and Company. It just had a better ring to it. After Molly, all of her kids and grandkids on down have "Risuko" in their name.

Do you feel you have established a distinguishable line, and what are others looking for when they think of your line?

We definitely established a

very strong line. We became very predominant in breed type. We never bred just for beauty; it was never the only consideration. We always went for the overall dog. We wanted balance, type, and a pretty head to go with it. That is the breed type; they are known as the most beautiful breed in existence. Without that beauty, they don't have the type; they are not the Sammy. That is exactly what people came to us for. We were very predominant in establishing and correcting type. We always had nice bone, dark pigment, the nice slanted eye which is what the breed is supposed to have. What I would like to say we were known for is that we never went to extremes on everything. Not on movement, on type, on coat, but on the overall, balanced, beautiful dog. Good temperament was always very important, too.

Describe your interpretation of the perfect Sammy.

My favorite Sammy includes males who are toward the top of the standard. I would like them

to not be over, though. The same thing for the females. Middle of the standard or top of the standard. If I ended up getting a dog that was a little taller than the standard, but everything else was really good about it, such as Taboo who was 22 1/2 inches tall. She was excellent in so many ways, she ended up being the perfect brood bitch. She was a very primitive bitch; she really loved to do everything herself. She liked for me to just sit on the sidelines, and she liked to take over everything else. All my other bitches wanted me to pretty much take over for them.

But the perfect Sammy is easy to live with, happy all the time, always a clown, that is the typical Sammy nature. From puppies to older adults, they are always dragging out their favorite toys. Buckwheat has a ball that he has had since he was eight weeks old, and that is his favorite toy. They are always characters; they have their individual little quirks about them, which gives them their own little special personalities. As far as looks, I like a Sammy to look

intelligent. I like the dark eyes and the white coats, but that is not what I would particularly breed for. If we got biscuit or off-white, that is fine. I would much rather have the soundness. I love to have a dog that, when we go hiking, you can stand back and watch them go and go. It is like they could just go forever. You know that is the way they are supposed to be. Nothing is extreme on them, no fronts that are flinging around or hocks that are rubbing together. They have a nice, balanced movement about them, and they are pretty to look at. If you don't have a Sammy that you enjoy looking at, then you really don't have a Sammy.

How should they move in the front, from the side and rear, and going away at a slow trot?

The standard says they should single-track, so that is the way they should move. As far as sidegait, for the last twelve years or so, the trend seems to be this flying sidegait. I have noticed, and a lot of people would notice it, too, if you have this flying sidegait front and

rear, it is like the joints are moving on a pendulum. They are really not going anywhere. The showy, flying feet go up in the air, but it really doesn't accomplish a whole lot. The proper gait should be balanced. They are known for their stamina, so they should be able to go and go for miles. They shouldn't be the fastest or the showiest; they are all about stamina. That is what the sidegait should be. Anything extremely reaching is as faulty as stilted. It is not proper; it is not what they are supposed to be doing.

When I was actively breeding, I was always trying to go for that balanced movement. That smooth topline, nothing choppy or that looked like they were going downhill because they were flying downhill and out the front. Those look like they are going downhill all the time. The back should be level. The front foot should not extend past their noses in reach. The back legs should not extend to the back any more than the front legs do in the front. They should be balanced. That is what Sammy movement is all about; balance.

What do you look for in the head, and do you prefer a parallel-plane head or down face?

They should always have a clean-looking face. Never droopy flews. Their eyes should always be angled toward their ears. I really detest these large, round eyes. Knowing these are Arctic dogs, you could see why large, round eyes would be very improper. It would cause a lot of problems with the retinas in the snow and the sun. Everything should be balanced. The ears should be not too low, not too high, centered. Not too long or too short; nothing extreme. They always should have some stop. There are so many dogs today that have no stop. Their muzzles are too long and too narrow, and they look almost more like a Collie head. The ears, as they go around the ring, are flopping. The ears should be short enough and thick enough that they stand erect, and should not be flopping around as they move around the ring. When they are panting, they should have a smile; that is what they are known for. The Christmas smile all year long. That is what the breed is. Just an overall



Ch. Sanorka's Silver Sabre O'Risuko, "Sabre," at two years old.

beauty to their faces.

What should be the relationship of chest depth to the rest of the dog? Should the chest come to or below the elbow, and how many dogs have you seen that honestly did?

That was something I loved about Nicky, he had a beautiful, deep chest. A heart-shaped chest, which is what they are supposed to have. That is what the standard says. The chest should come down to the elbow. You should actually feel it come to the point right at the elbow. Taboo also had a beautiful deep chest with lots of depth, and lots of width in the front. To be honest with you, that has always been a weakness in the breed. You see a lot of dogs in their natural stance who stand really close in elbows. Or when they are moving away from you, their hocks are almost rubbing, which is very incorrect. They just don't have enough width of body, enough depth of chest.

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

Right: Nicki.



Today, it is almost the opposite. The Samoyeds are supposed to have an Arctic coat. They are supposed to have a long, stand-off coat, and they are supposed to have a ruff around their necks. They are supposed to have feathering, but today the dogs are being reshaped with scissors. Some of them are being clipped. After seeing these dogs with improper cuts, with

more Siberian-type coats which are too short, judges are now thinking that dogs with "proper coats" are "improper." Somehow, we have to get back on track, because that is so wrong. We have to get back to reading the standard. That is not what they are about! They should not be dripping in coat; the coat should not be hanging off their bodies. But the males should

have a ruff around their heads and feathering on their stomachs, and on the backs of their front legs. Feathering on the pants and long feathering on their tails. To not have that is improper. To be breeding dogs for short coats is not breeding Sammy type.

What are the most serious faults in the breed today, and the most common?

Faults that I see today are no bone, very unattractive heads, ears too long, muzzles too long, round eyes, lack of pigment, dogs that are too close front and rear, and very shallow chests. It seems that everybody is going for sidegait, without any consideration of what they look like coming and going. That is extremely improper.

Is there anything about the stan-



Ch. Risuko's Joi Of Snowonder, "Zoom."



Risuko's Cover Girl.

dard that you would like to see changed?

Not really. If we start changing the standard, we will

be doing what other breeds have done. Almost all the standards today are a result of what man thinks they should look like. As

a result, you can see some of these breeds have a lot of health problems because of what man has done to try to make them

more perfect. The Sammy standard should remain just as it is; I don't think it should change in any way. We are setting trends

when we do that, setting what is popular today. Who is not to say that is not going to change

ten years from now, or fifteen years from now? That means that the Sammy today is not

going to look anything like it will 100 years from now if we keep changing the standard.

The Sammy is a natural breed, and it should remain so. If we start changing the standard, they



Ch. Risuko's Silver N' Lace, specialty winner.



Ch. Risuko's Big Guy O'Whitediff, sire of Ch. Risuko's Mister Moonlight BIS, BISS.

are going to gradually start looking different than what they did ten years ago or fifty years ago. If you read old books on the breed, and you see the pictures, they very much resemble what we have today.

Have the shows changed today, and how have they changed?

They have changed tremendously. From my perspective, when I started doing this, I did it for pleasure and for fun, and with the idea that if I were going to do breedings, I was going to take it seriously. My intention was to try to better the breed in some way. By bettering it, I mean as far as the dogs I had;

with every breeding I did, I tried to correct some of the things that were weak. It is a tremendous responsibility for breeders to take that upon themselves, to go on their own and try to correct things that they think the breed needs. And again going back to the standard and sticking with it. That is the Bible for the dog world, the standard.

Initially, when I was going to shows, it was for fun as a hobby, and for pleasure. It was for getting together with friends, to have that camaraderie. We had something in common; we all had Sammys, and we were there because we loved the

breed. There were always politics involved in dog shows. I think there is corruption involved in all politics, even not talking about dogs. In all governments there is corruption, and in businesses. It seems like the dog competition is going right along with that. Today, the trend is that if you have been breeding dogs for six or seven years, you are qualified to become a judge. But a lot of the judges today are continuing to breed, so what is going on that I see is that judges are putting up other judges and we are getting all these favors going on. It is actually changing the breed,

because we have breeder-judges now who are directing new people coming in the breed. Instead of actually helping them, they are manipulating them on who to go to for stud dogs, and who not to go to. Not necessarily because it is not a good dog, but because for some reason there are other motives there.

It seems like there is always a motive for a major win, especially at specialties where we have breeder-judges. It has totally gotten off-course. We are not judging dogs anymore, we are judging people. Who owes who a favor. It is not about the best dog. I go to a



show every once in a while and just kind of observe, and to me, it doesn't look like people are having fun anymore. It is too serious. All the fun has gone out of it; it has totally changed. I think it is really sad, especially for the new people who are coming in. It is way too serious. People are taking what dog went up that day as their success in life, when really, it is a dog show. It is about the best dog. It has nothing to do with you personally.

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

Today, I would definitely rather show under an all breed judge. However, the all breed judges have been misled with our breeder-judges, and they are going toward the same trends our breeder-judges are, which is incorrect.

Do you have any ideas on what could be done to improve judging, or to make it more fair?

I'm not sure that it is right that a judge who is still currently, actively breeding and showing dogs themselves should be judging dogs. I think something should be done about that; either you are a judge or you are a breeder. You shouldn't do both. It is very good that you were a breeder, but when you are judging your own breed, you ought to be considered retired in the breeding process. You should just judge dogs, and forget about the person at the other end of the lead. You should truly try to judge what is Best in the ring that day.

Does advertising influence judges?

It influences some judges, but not all judges. A lot of these judges get so many photos of wins, they are probably tossed in a pile somewhere. Maybe the newer judges are more influenced by that. Maybe they are more flattered by people sending them pictures and writing letters, etc. What is probably most influential is what is talked about among judges. Breeder-judges, all breed judges - who's who is probably more influential than anything. It is a real disservice to the whole outcome of all breeds of dogs. When you are not judging dogs, and you start judging people, and you are

Left: Litter out of Ch. Risuko's Devil Woman x Ch. Kipperic Jackson. Future champions at six weeks.

putting up dogs for the wrong reasons, what is that telling new people coming into the breed? It is all off-track.

We are not doing what we are supposed to be doing. This is a DOG show, it is all about judging the best dog in the ring that day. Not what won last week or last month, or who went Best in Show at Westminster or who was Best in Specialty. It is about, who is the best dog today? It may be a matter of who is performing the best. Maybe the dog that won Best in Show last week is not on his best behavior today. Maybe another dog is doing a little bit better. Shouldn't that dog win today, rather than the dog who is going up only because he won Best in Show last week? It is not fair anymore; we have lost the fairness.

Are your breedings natural or controlled? Are there any stories that are memorable regarding matings or whelpings?

One of the things that people may have thought I was too harsh at, considering breeding in particular, concerned the actual breeding process. If the bitch did not want to be bred, and had to be artificially inseminated to have puppies, when it came time to be bred again, if she didn't want to be bred I would consider that as not being natural. I would no longer use that bitch. As a matter of fact, we have only had one breeding that we did an artificial insemination on.

That goes with the whelping process, too. If I had a bitch that totally relied on me, and didn't want anything to do with those puppies, and I had to force her to feed the puppies or had to help feed those puppies, I would not use that bitch again for breeding. The more you do that, the more you are controlling that process. In future generations, you will have bitches that have to be artificially inseminated, have babies that have to be artificially fed, and the human is going to have to take over the whelping process and the total raising. Then you lose some of that naturalness, and that is what the Sammy is all about.

There are a lot of breeds today that cannot breed naturally, and have to be induced to have puppies. A lot of puppies are lost as a result of that. The

generations on down just get more and more toward that. Pretty soon there will be no natural anything. So that was part of my culling process, I don't mean culling as far as putting them down, but I mean as far as taking them out of the breeding program. If they did not want to breed naturally, if they did not want to whelp naturally or if they were not good mothers, they would be removed from the breeding program, even if they were champions. Even if they had excellent hips or whatever. That was all a part of the process.

A lot of times, that is how I kept the numbers down, by placing those as pets. I would just keep the ones who liked to be mothers and who bred naturally. Who were good mentors for the puppies, too. That is the other thing; a good mother will produce good puppies that will grow up to be good mothers. If you continue to force breedings that, as I say, were not meant to be, you have mothers who are bad mothers who have puppies. Those puppies will grow up to be bad mothers!

Do you have any funny, sad, or strange whelping stories?

Taboo was probably the most consistently funny story, because she was a very primitive bitch. She liked to do everything by herself. She loved to have me there, but she really preferred not to have my hands where she was working. She wanted to whelp the puppies, sever the cords, clean up the puppies - she wanted to do it all. One time she was in the middle of whelping a litter, and the phone rang. It seemed like I had enough time to answer the phone, so I went to answer the phone. I was gone for maybe three minutes.

When I came back, she had taken all the puppies - she had three at the time - we had a ramp that went up through the basement window and out to an outdoor kennel. You went through a dog house to get outside. Well, she had taken all the puppies up the ramp and in the doghouse. She had three puppies at the time, and she whelped four more in that doghouse. It was like she was saying, "See, I can do this by myself." (laughter) Once she had them whelped, she was okay about bringing them back

down to the whelping box. She just wanted to do everything by herself.

I thought it was great; she was like that with every litter. Every one of her puppies survived, they were all healthy. You saw those puppies 24 hours later, and they were like fat ticks, laying on their backs with these engorged bellies. Milk would be coming out of their mouths and noses. You just knew she was the perfect whelping bitch, because she always had enough milk, she loved her babies, and she would teach them things. As soon as they were old enough to go outside, she would teach them how to hunt, how to catch baby rabbits and birds. She was just a wonderful, primitive bitch. She was probably my favorite bitch as far as whelping, even though she never finished her championship. She was the one I was talking about earlier that we couldn't take in the show ring. She had beautiful babies and lots of champions. She was a great whelping bitch, and that was always very important in our breeding program.

At what age do you evaluate your puppies for pet and show qualities, and what are you looking for?

We start evaluating at two weeks, but of course, you can't really evaluate a lot. There were things you could see in the heads and the ears, the stops, etc. We would seriously start really monitoring their structure and movement between six and eight weeks. A lot of times we kept the puppies until twelve weeks. We found that as we went into different lines with different stud dogs, some puppies you could evaluate at eight weeks but some puppies - what you saw at eight weeks was not what you saw at twelve weeks. We just kind of made it a rule to keep those puppies around until twelve weeks. At that point, we could pretty much be sure of what they were going to turn out like. We were almost always correct in that.

What do you feed your dogs, and how important is diet for the Sammys?

We have gone through every dog food, and every natural dog food, on the market. What I believe right now is that anything that has any preservatives in it, you should avoid. Try to get as natural a food as possible. An interesting thing

that we are doing right now is that we are giving our dogs vegetables every day. We are trying to eat more raw things, and the dogs started really begging for broccoli and carrots. As we are eating raw foods, I would take a bite and give them a bite.

I think there is something to this. Every day they get a handful of raw carrots, broccoli, beets, celery, cabbage, and they love it. Their stools are so much more consistent. Roxy would sometimes get a little constipated, but she is now very regular because she is eating those vegetables. Buckwheat, who was a little loose, is now very firm. They look forward to the vegetables. I would love to be able to feed more natural meats and fish, like elk and deer as well as fish, but that is not always available. So we still go with a natural food that doesn't have any preservatives in it. There is so much cancer today, it is becoming so prevalent in all dogs, not just in the Sammy breed. With people, as well. I feel that the more you can avoid preservatives, pesticides, fertilizers and things, the better off you are. So they are eating organic vegetables.

Do you feed any supplements?

No. The interesting thing about Sammys and probably about a lot of dogs is that they are very perceptive about healthy foods. In other words, if someone would offer them white bread, or part of a bun off of a hamburger, they would spit it out. But if it is whole grain or homemade, they love it. They thrive on it. They would never eat a cooked potato, but they would eat a raw potato. They don't like cooked carrots, but they like the raw carrots. I think it is very interesting, because it is telling us something. Especially with grains; they will not eat white bread. They don't like it, but if it is multi-grain or whole grain, they like it. They like more organic things. I find that with a lot of my dogs. But to be honest with you, I haven't really offered them vegetables like I am doing today. They will go in the garden with me, I have a raised bed, and they will sit there like they are begging for cookies. I will pick vegetables and put some in the bowl, and then pick a handful to give them some, the greens, and they eat it like it is a



Nicki at age seven months, winning his first major.

dog cookie.

When showing this breed, how much grooming should be done?

A lot! But again, I am a firm believer of natural grooming. I don't like the sprays and goop

they put in coats. I will use cornstarch to clean up feet and hocks. In this climate we have a lot of dust, and that is a quick cleanup, but I brush it out. I never leave it in when we go in

the ring. The most important thing about grooming is preventative grooming. It is an ongoing thing.

Do you have any favorite grooming products or tools?

I don't use a lot of products. I use a comb and a slicker brush, and a pin brush. The favorite thing for my male right now is the pin brush. It is like a massage to him, and he loves it. I

have a table set up all the time on the deck, twelve months every year. If they have been in the dirt or whatever, they just automatically jump up on that table. I will brush them for three minutes or so, and that is probably the best thing that you can do with a Sammy. It is contact, you have your hands on them, and they love that. It is like petting them or praising them. They both argue about who is going to get on the table first! (laughter) It is something that they really look forward to.

I don't spend a lot of time grooming. Of course, when they are blowing coat, you have to comb all that stuff out. But in between times, people think I must spend all my time bathing and brushing the dogs. They probably don't get a bath once a year! It is just keeping that dead stuff out and the dirt out of their coat. I am not obsessive about it, but we just go through a little bit of brushing several times a week. Before they go in the house, they have to get the dirt clods off, you know. So we brush real quick. If you have a good coat, their coats are naturally resistant to stuff, so that dirt just comes out with a brush really easily. That is the best thing for them mentally and physically. They love it because you have your hands on them, and physically you are keeping them clean. They love to be clean, and they know when they are pretty. They like to look good.

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

You need to be very open-minded. It is nice to have a mentor, but be careful who your mentors are. It would probably be better to talk to a variety of people and get a lot of different views so you can form your own opinion. If you stick to one person, for instance, who you bought a puppy from, a lot of times you are misdirected in a very opinionated way. You don't get an overall perspective. It is better to be very open, and talk to many people. Then try to form your own opinions. Read books, read the standard, go back to the older books and what people were doing twenty or even 30, 40 or 50 years ago with the breed. The more information you have, the more able you are to form your own opinions. Don't form an opinion on

what to do or not to do by one person, or one kennel, or one judge.

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

I have been kind of removed from that for quite a while, so I really can't honestly say. To an extent I think they are, but more can be done. As far as getting back to basics and not being directed to certain bloodlines or kennels, they should be more in tune with giving basic, correct information rather than opinions.

How old are you?

I am 52. Next week, I will be 53.

And you have been married to Rich for how long?

For 33 years. We have had Sammys since we were first married.

What have you done for a living?

We moved here from Wichita, Kansas. There I worked for the same dentist for 26 years as a hygienist and educator. It was quite a different lifestyle. My husband has been in the building business for over twenty years, and we came out here as a team. Now we are building custom homes. Most of the homes in this area have been built by us. It has been a total change in lifestyle, and we love it. We love living here.

Do you have any other stories about some of your favorite dogs?

One of the most amazing things to us was with the very first Sam we had. His name was Sam, and he had never been around small children. We were in a park one time, and my husband was playing horseshoes with this other man. The wife had a toddler about two years old, and we were watching the guys play horseshoes. All of the sudden, this two-year-old starting wandering off toward the street. Sam, who was only seven months old at the time, ran toward this child and herded this child back to its mother. It wasn't until that child was almost walking off the curb that I turned my head and saw what the dog was doing. It was so amazing, what a natural protector this animal was.

We saw that again with the bitch that we have today, Roxy. She had never been around a little child, either. We had some customers coming over to look at some house plans, and they

brought over their grandchild who was not quite two at the time. The child had never been around stairs. We had a real hard time having a conversation, because the grandmother kept getting up to keep the child from going down the stairs. Just for the heck of it, I told Roxy, who was not even a year old at the time, to watch this little boy to keep him from going down the stairs. She just acted like she totally understood what I said, and would not let that child go within five feet of those stairs. When people come to me and ask if these dogs are good with children, I tell them they just won't believe it. They are the best babysitters in the world! They are wonderful dogs to be around. You just can't appreci-

ate how truly good they are with small children until you see it. Even if they haven't grown up with them.

At Christmastime we had my one-year-old nephew come to visit us, and he, too was not used to being around stairs. Both of my dogs kept him away from those stairs. We did not have to barricade the stairs at all as long as those dogs were in there. It is amazing how perceptive they are at truly protecting small children. They treat them like their puppies.

Is there anything we haven't covered?

I don't think so, we have done a good job.

Thank you very much.

You're welcome. •

Ring stewarding

So You Think You Want to Steward?

By Melanie Harwood

The Steward There are a great many people who steward in the UK. Some steward because they now have to steward at a minimum of twelve shows before they can be passed to award CCs. Some steward because they do not like showing but enjoy the social side of dog shows and the people they meet. Some steward for the pure enjoyment of the job and it enables them to watch a variety of breeds they would not normally see when attending shows as an exhibitor. Whatever the reason for them stewarding they are a vital part of the running of the show.

What Do Stewards Do?

Stewards must be fully conversant with the rules and regulations as to the duties of a steward and must abide by them at all times.

When stewarding you must arrive in plenty of time before the commencement of judging. Always wear comfortable clothes and shoes and make sure you have a good supply of pens; if the show is outdoors then pencils should also be taken, if the weather is wet then your pen will not work! The

first thing you do is to report to the steward's office to let them know you have arrived, collect your steward's box and check your ring number. Then get yourself a drink in the steward's reception area and check through your box to make sure that everything you need is in there, e.g., catalogues, prize cards, any rosettes that may be on offer, award boards for your slips from the judging book, chalk and cloth for your ring board so you can write the class winners on the board for the audience round the ring to mark up their catalogues, steward's cards where the winners ring numbers are written for the secretary's office to use as a check list and drawing pins to secure the award boards firmly, or you could end up chasing them across the field on a windy day! You usually have two stewards in a ring so it is a good idea to decide who will do what before the judge arrives, that way you present a united and responsible team.

Make sure you arrive at the correct ring in plenty of time. Make sure you have a table for stewards and a table for the judge to examine the dogs if your breed is a table dog; measures or weigh scales if needed; and a mat for the judging table if the surface is slippery.

The Steward's Responsibilities