

# THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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# Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly  
Talks with  
**Pat Hill Goodrich**  
**STARSHINE**  
Baytown, Texas

## Part II

*This interview was conducted in Houston, Texas in January 2006 by Lynne Robertson.*

*People have told me that you have a very interesting personal history.*

My brother and I had wonderful parents who encouraged us in whatever we wanted to do. We had a happy childhood and learned to see the funny side of things. Bellaire was just bald prairie then where we lived with all kinds of pets – cats, dogs, horses, bantam chickens, canaries. You name 'em, we had 'em!

Our folks read to us, took us to the library, taught us safe marksmanship and gardening. My brother had violin lessons, I was started on piano at age five, and in the evenings after supper we played classical music together. Our parents played the violin and piano. These times are among some of my favorite memories.

At Christmas we listened on the radio to Madam Schumann-Heinke, the famous European opera star, as she sang "Silent Night," an annual tradition. Boy, does that date me!

My brother, now a Western artist, was drawing horses; I was painting and scribbling stories in a little notebook. We've both kept it up. I always love tinkering with words.

Music was important, so naturally my husband and I started our daughters the same way. They had piano early, then at seven and nine began harp lessons, which they begged for. So did I at that time. Bill played the clarinet, so we four made music in the evenings also. Even our Sams gather around to enjoy it, sometimes. Now Bonnie and Barbara have fine careers with their harps. And I stay in practice. Remington "sings" when I play. I plan to record our hilarious duets!



*Pat with Fanya, Rocky and Whizzer. Photo by Les McKinney.*

Bill and I met in college, became engaged, and married at the end of his first year in the University of Texas Medical School in Galveston. He said what attracted him to me in college was that I brought my horse, dappled gray Lady, there with me; I played the piano; and never wore socks in cold weather! We met in the school print shop where we each worked part-time, and never dated anyone else. He was in the U.S. Air Force awhile also.

I taught junior high grades in Galveston so we could eat! You might say this was baptism of fire but that age group turned out to be my favorite. They were all arms and legs, falling over themselves, wondering who they were, and eager to learn. They appreciated a teacher who was interested in them. High schoolers already know all the answers!

After medical school, we moved to Temple, Texas, where Bill was an intern a year and a resident in radiology for three years. I taught there in high school and junior college. It was all great fun.

In Galveston we lived frugal-

ly in a tiny servant's quarters. The living room was 7 x 10, to illustrate the size. I said we had to go outside to turn around. We rode bicycles two years, saving for a car. I took clothes on my bike to the washateria, but we couldn't afford to use the dryer, so I brought them home to the clothesline. Wet and heavy, they always fell off on the way back.

We did have wonderful adventures and felt like we could lick the world as long as we had each other. I have completed a book ready for a publisher titled *Stalking the Wild Caduceus*, with apologies to Euell Gibbons who wrote *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, about eating wild plants.

*What is a caduceus?*

It is a medical symbol, an icon sort of thing, perhaps. It is a snake twined around a staff. Sometimes you see a small round metal one attached to the bumper of a doctor's automobile.

We ate supper at Bill's fraternity house with his classmates, an unusual bunch because almost all were World War II veterans. They were

serious but clever and funny. We had a good time! When liver was served, they examined it closely and argued over what must have caused the animal to die. One fellow sat at the end of each long table with slices of bread. To get one, you hollered, "Deal one!" and you had to spear it out of the air with your fork when he sailed it to you. I was expected to spear my own bread, too.

The professors gave the medical students killer tests each Monday morning which kept them studying all weekend instead of carousing. To let off steam afterwards, on those nights they would have costume balls, which were great fun. Most did not have money to buy expensive outfits to wear, hence a lot of clever creativity added to the excitement.

A tragedy occurred that we struggled through. Bill and a fellow classmate contracted polio when an epidemic hit just before the Salk vaccine appeared. The other man died overnight. Saying it was a harrowing experience is putting it mildly.

This was just before Bill's senior year would begin. We

had just bought our car, a good thing because he would never be able to ride his bicycle again. There was a nurse shortage so I was allowed to help. They really could do nothing for him but try to keep him as comfortable as possible. He was in terrible pain which we tried to alleviate by wringing towels out of the hottest water and placing them on him.

One of the youngest in his class, Bill was in the hospital six weeks recovering. An honor student, he was allowed to enter his senior year six weeks late. He still graduated as a top student in a class of over 100. The doctors caring for him had a hip-length brace constructed to wear on his right leg that had lost all its muscle. They showed it to him, saying after they went to lunch, they would return to show him how to put it on and use it along with crutches or a cane. When they came back, they found he had put the brace on and was walking with it. When I appeared later, he said, "I want to show you how I can walk!" He put it on, walked and twirled his cane like a drum major, to the applause of all the other patients in the ward.

*Did he ever get over it or is it something that stays with you forever?*

It stays with you. Polio kills the nerves. His classmate who died had it go to his brain, called bulbar polio. It affected Bill's right leg and left arm. The nerves twitch as they are dying, while the disease seems to be moving up, and within hours muscles are visibly beginning to atrophy rapidly, never to return. I watched and prayed as the twitching climbed higher and higher, across his chest and reaching to his shoulder to finally stop there. Scary? Yes, hair-raising.

He never complained, never let it slow him down. He had his medical practice in Baytown and people just knew him as the doctor who walked with a limp. By then he discarded the brace, walking only by keeping his balance which meant he needed a smooth surface or he would fall.

Bill and I both love animals. In Galveston we weren't married very long when a rough, tough, big orange tomcat walked in one day and let us know right then he intended to live with us. He was a real sweetie that someone must have abandoned. At

night when Bill studied with his legs propped up on a table, Tom would stretch out on Bill's leg with his own legs hanging down and sleep. I stayed up to ply Bill with coffee to keep him awake, at his request. When a catfight started down the alley, which happened often, Tom would hop down, rush out the door and the squabble broke up. He seemed to love to fight, but had ears and paws ripped open sometimes and caused us to have vet bills we could hardly afford. He followed us as we walked to a neighborhood grocery store, was allowed to enter,

riding on my shoulder, to the meat counter to see the meat. I usually bought him fifteen cents' worth of ground meat which made his trip worthwhile. He dearly loved riding in the car, so I would drive him to the seawall to feed the seagulls. He never tired of watching them. He was an important family member. We took him to Temple with us when Bill started his internship at the famous Scott and White Hospital.

Interns were paid \$25 a month. We were given an apartment that had one closet, more than we had in Galveston.

We thought we were kings! The next three years when he was a resident in radiology, he was paid \$75 a month, almost more than we could count!

He had to work in all specialties, such as obstetrics, which they called "catching babies." Many times he would have to work 24 hours at a stretch. He would come home white with fatigue from standing so much, since polio had weakened him. When I suggested he get a stool to sit on, he replied no one else sat down during the rounds and such, so he would not either. (It takes a polio patient twice as





Pixie.

long to rest up.) I was warned he would have an early heart attack from pushing so hard to do things. He did.

*He had an early heart attack?*

Yes, but he recovered miraculously. He was a fighter. Later when our girls were born and old enough to climb, he climbed trees with them and also took them up on the roof at night to study the stars with his telescope! With all the muscle on his left leg gone, he had no control over it. He amazed me. He would climb on top of the house with a chainsaw, too, to saw off tree limbs scraping on the roof. That scared me! I knew he was proving to himself he could do these things, so I tried hard to "play it cool."

*It sounds like you had a long and happy marriage.*

We did. We had a fabulous time. Never argued. I didn't marry him to fight with him!

*Were you still teaching junior high?*

No. In Temple I taught English and art in high school and junior college, and loved it all. Great students. Much fun. I could see things going downhill in public school when we came to Baytown. When our Bonnie and Barbie became school age, I had worked for two years getting ready to open a small private school. No one at that time was really interested

in such. One woman asked if we would have a football team and another said her daughter wanted to take twirling. You can guess what I said about that!

I moved the school to Houston and had immediate interest. For PE we rented a YMCA for tennis and basketball, then on Fridays took the students to the ice rink at the Galleria. Better than a football team!

We never had more than 100 students at a time, with grades through twelfth. I accepted students with good minds and good manners, and with small classes and excellent teachers, it was enjoyable for all and good grades resulted.

Our students excelled on the PSAT and SAT so we received blank scholarships from colleges throughout the state. Our curriculum requirements were higher than those of public schools and I refused to be accredited. We would have had to lower our standards. We had twelve to fourteen part-time and full-time teachers, all with degrees in subject matter, none with only degrees in education. The chemistry teacher had a master's in chemistry, as did upper math and English teachers.

Some students left after the eleventh grade to enter college. Many placed out of freshman courses. They had many extra opportunities. We started Span-

ish and French in the first grade, taught reading with the phonics method, required two years of Latin in junior high grades, used the reissued McGuffey Readers, avoided modern math like the plague, stressed multiplication tables and mental arithmetic, had instrumental music with practice time at school, took the students on field trips they loved - and oh, how wonderful to be independent! There is nothing like it! I still hear from students now grown-up, and our daughters frequently thanked us for setting up the school and still do.

After about twelve to thirteen years another private school, with only lower grades, asked if we would merge with them. They wanted my upper grades, teachers, and library. I said, "Here, have it!" I had a grand, unforgettable time. They took it.

By the way, while I had the school I had my own radio talk show for four years. Several times I took upper grade or lower grade students on programs. Parents would sit in the lobby with tape recorders and shudder some for fear of what their youngsters might say. Everyone had a great time and LOTS of laughs. It was a two-hour show. They turned the whole thing over to me. I made my own promos, invited guests I wanted, just planned it all

myself.

*Why did they give you your own radio show?*

I haven't the foggiest notion. They must have been desperate. But they liked what I did, even tested how my voice sounded from different areas, and liked that too.

*Was your show in Baytown?*

It originated there but went to Louisiana and Houston as well. They wanted me to have one Saturday morning too, saying they would set it all up in my kitchen, but I told them that would interfere with my family. I did have fun, though.

I got to interview Ginger Rogers among others. What a lovely lady. I had heard she was tired of talking about Fred Astaire, so asked her about her painting, which really pleased her. My interviews played over other Houston stations. Everybody in the county was there and wanted to talk to her, but she spotted me and asked me to come sit on the arm of her chair. What good luck!

One day I had an invitation to go fly with the Blue Angels but something was going on at home so I couldn't go. Also I missed the chance to broadcast from the Goodyear Blimp, but I had other good times.

I took our pet bantam rooster at times. When I set him by the mike he would crow almost a dozen times nonstop. Listeners would call in about how they loved to hear a little rooster crow! Zackie slept at night in a box in the closet in the back hall. Sometimes he would stroll through the kitchen, dining room, and into the living room. He would stand in front of the television set and crow until one of us would turn it on for him. Then he would fly up on the sofa to watch it. You think I'm kidding?

*From there what did you do professionally?*

I tried to catch up on my writing and painting.

The radio show ended after four years because the owner of the station passed away; a bank bought it and changed the format.

*Were the Sams around when you had Zackie?*

Yes. I took a Sam, sometimes a cat, to visit with the students. Some lived where they couldn't have a pet, so this gave them a chance to be acquainted

with one. Those white Cochin bantams are something special, too. My brother and I had some when we were little, so I could hardly wait to get some for our girls.

I garden with ladybugs and also order praying mantis egg cases which are about the size of a walnut with rows of tiny slots in them for the babies to come out. They hatch coming out hanging on each other, looking like long chains. They are about one-fourth of an inch long, and are exact miniatures of the grown ones. I took an egg case to the school for show-and-tell and the little rascals hatched out sooner than I thought they would. The school office was crawling with them to the students' delight. It took us adults quite awhile to catch them all. They do stay around your garden all year so you get to watch them grow up. However, the ladybugs, which are carnivorous and eat only other bugs and bugs' eggs, clean up your garden overnight and then head out for someone else's garden. Tell your neighbors to expect them and not to spray them as they are helpful. Apparently the ladybugs taste bitter because birds do not eat them.

Speaking of gardens, I let the city children measure their own little plots in the flower beds. I gave the grammar school set seeds, like radish, that came up quickly, so they had fun at recess checking on their latest crop of veggies.

We had a large lot with a big home that included an apartment, extra bathrooms and kitchens, one of the latter which we used for a science lab. We hung black curtains on a small room for a planetarium we had especially made for our eighth grade which had astronomy one term and marine biology the other. We had an interesting annual field trip to a company that trapped wild exotic (and snapping!) fish off the Great Barrier Reef of Australia.

Back to what else I did: I have worked on writing and painting for some time, had good luck winning with paintings entered in juried shows and have one in the permanent collection of a museum in Mobile, Alabama. It won a purchase prize in a five-state show. And I have scribbled notes all over the house! My book, *The Savvy*



Mother "Sunnie" (Donneraign's Yee-Ha O'Starshine) with seven-week-old pup.

*Samoyed*, was nominated best dog book of 2002. I now have another about pups and what they have taught me. (I don't claim to be an expert!) It is done and about ready to go to a publisher who is waiting for it.

Another I researched for about twelve years, about a Texas Ranger who had never been written about before, one who lived life in the fast lane, the grandfather I never knew. He was assassinated before my mother married. He was a hero

in the Spanish-American War, a Captain in the Rangers three times, and Chief of Police in Houston, during some of its most wicked days. Yes, Houston! He was in a shoot-out in the street and in a famous murder trial, but acquitted. He was a crack shot, could shoot with both hands, and kept in practice spinning the barbs on "bob" wire fences. He would shoot an obstreperous criminal through the ear and say, "Next time it will be your heart." There

never was a "next time!" The book should be out soon.

I wrote a movie script based on it which won first place in the biographical category of an International FilmFest. Almost 6,000 entries of films and scripts came in from 34 different countries. I am still on a cloud about that! An award-winning independent producer is waiting for the book to come out so he can make the movie. He says one will help publicize the other.

Another finished and ready





through icicles, and adds greatly to their beauty. The guard hairs catch ice and snow and the undercoat is insulated. This is how they can sleep in freezing weather. Mother dogs also put their tails over the pups to warm them.

We save clean fur to be spun. A dear friend, Sally Paulesen, spins for me and another knits. Sally kindly gave me an article about spinning for *The Savvy Samoyed*.

I wore my snap-brim hat of knit fur to the Westminster and those who saw me with Remington recognized what it was. In an important show like that I have used a professional (they all know a lot more than I do) handler, so I climb to the nose-bleed area and hide behind the seats. Sams can smell and hear so well. They are easily distracted if they look for "mama" who is hiding. He won two Awards of Merit while I was up there about to tear up the upholstery in excitement. The handler always asked, "Where WERE you?"

*What have been some of the more exciting wins you've had?*

Those times were two of them! A recent one was when Ricochet got his first major dancing all over the ring on his hind legs! Another was when Fanya won the Sam Specialty years ago in Houston while I hid behind a post. Then Pixie later won the Puppy Sweeps and I was behind the same post. Can't win 'em all, though. Always there is another judge with a different opinion and another show. I just roll with the punch. I love what I have and simply enjoy the fun. Puppies are a special riot. One never knows what they will do next; it's always SOMETHING! And most judges seem to be pretty forgiving when puppies are concerned.

Fanya was at Westminster with Lucky Duck one time. "She just didn't want to show that day," a bystander said, "If she had she could have beaten him!" She just wasn't interested, instead paying attention to activities outside the ring. Lucky Duck pulled the same stunt some days, nerve-racking to the handler. He would send his assistants racing out to collect various treats to tempt the scamp, who seemed to enjoy the commotion and worry he

to go to a publisher was mentioned earlier, *Stalking the Wild Caduceus*.

I'm working on another about Texas history that needs to be told. Two years ago I papered the state with petitions to the legislature to make March the official Texas History Month. In a few months I had enough so the Senate and House of Representatives in Austin passed a bill unanimously to do so. So I have done a little bit of good with that!

*Let's get back to the dogs. Are you a licensed judge?*

No! You couldn't hire me to be a judge! You make one person happy and everyone else hates you. I'd have to leave town! (laughter)

*What has made you stick with Sams for so long?*

They are wonderful members of the family. I've heard of others who tried another breed but always went back to the Samoyeds. They have us well-trained and I don't want to get something else that will have to

train me all over again. I love 'em.

*What other dog publications have you had something published in? And what do you plan to write about in the future?*

The beautiful *ShowSight Magazine* (not an error - they spell it that way) has used a number of my articles and photographs about special dogs, such as seven-pound Boogie who went on 50 bombing missions in World War II. He wore his own little flak jacket like the men wore. The owner, now in his '80s, sent me a photo of his plane and crew with that precious little dog sitting out front and center, looking terribly important! I had a small bit in the *Gazette*, and other articles in various newspapers.

What will I write about next? Whatever shows up! Another book almost finished is about the baby blue jay we rescued and raised and turned out here in our woods. He stayed here with us, did some astonishing things worth writing about,

and lived to be thirteen-plus years. He sat at the window to sing with my harp music. I miss hearing that little voice.

My puppy book stresses EARLY training, such as potty training. Most important is working with them while young. If people won't find the time, they should not have a pup. Not teaching one good manners is a terrible disservice, really criminal, in my thinking. The puppy can suffer all its life for this neglect.

I suggested a Rent-A-Sam shop in an article once for those who want to have fun with one but don't want to take care of it. Brushing isn't hard if one keeps up with it. Actually once a week will work sometimes. Males usually shed once a year and females a couple of months after being in season, if you don't switch temperature on them suddenly. A wonderful tool to clear out undercoat is the rake. Sams do have glittering "silver tips" if the fur is healthy and clean. The ends of it resemble sunlight

caused. He would be offered a choice of chicken bits, sausage, hot dog, cheese, etc., and sometimes he would accept something. Or he would simply look away. Others observing might have been collapsing in laughter, but I'm sure the handler was not. However, Lucky Duck – such a precious, gorgeous boy – was definitely in charge!

*I have the same problem when I try to give my dogs vitamins.*

Really? My dogs love pills.

*By themselves?*

Yes. They think it is candy. Although they never get that!

*Why is that?*

I don't know. I don't know anyone else with my luck, either. Usually people hide the pills in marshmallows or some such. Mine bark if I forget to give them their pills at breakfast time. I give Remington omega-3 also. He has a tremendous coat. I hear handlers use that for beautiful coats, too.

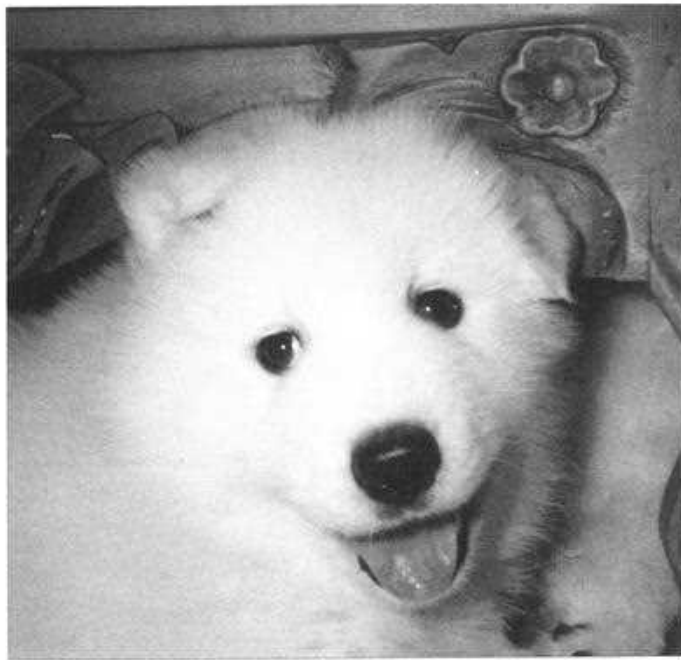
*What do you normally feed your dogs?*

They get hard food with a bit of water on it and also a round of the beef and rice roll, same Natural Balance brand, broken up. I'm careful to measure their food, especially when puppies, as you don't want obese dogs. "Keep 'em lean and mean." They will have health problems just like overweight humans, and broken-down pasterns also. It is hard to reduce them too; they get mad at you for shortchanging them. So keep 'em lean. You should be able to feel the ribs on the side and the spine.

Read labels. You would not believe some of the junk used as filler in dog food. Avoid "chicken by-products" and "essence" and "digest." Look out for artificial coloring and other additives.

I do give them each a hard-cooked egg two or three times a week sometimes. They love a heaping teaspoon of lowfat cottage cheese. Pups always get this, so they expect it as adults! They like bits of banana, tomato, anything they see you eat. A good nonfattening treat is a slice of the raw baby carrots. I think there is less chance of choking on carrots if you slice them lengthwise in three or four pieces.

We are fortunate that so far we have had no bloat (this can be fatal for horses, too), but I try



to avoid it. Make your Sams wait an hour after racing about and playing before eating a meal and also keep them quiet about



Ch. Starshine's Remington O'Pixie.

an hour afterwards. They have deep chests to accommodate the lungs they need for their work, which may ... well, heck, I don't know enough about this to expound on it. Just keep them quiet about an hour before and after eating. I keep them in crates to eat to discourage arguments about who has the most food, or best.

Crate training is important, but should not be used as punishment. It is the dog's home away from home. He can keep his toys in it, can go in and out as he pleases. Take it on trips, unfold it in the hotel room, and your Sam will feel at ease.

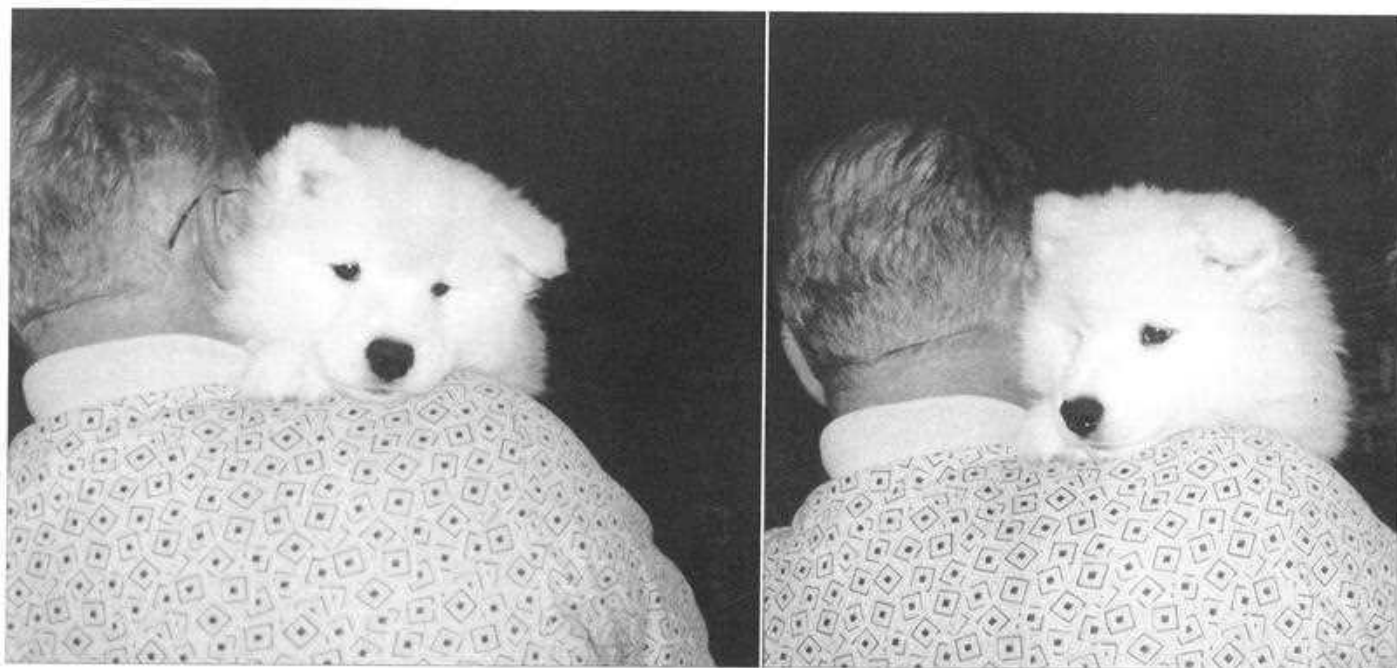
Keep it pleasant. If he is naughty, he may be just trying to tell you something, or just be the mischievous Sam he was born to be. Correcting him with your voice will impress him probably – the tone, loudness, and your level of distress. Sometimes I just say, "What the heck! This rascal is just being a Sam, a clever one at that!" and laugh at the antics. Don't take yourself too seriously or your pooch either. Just toddler-proof your house, keep bathroom paper up HIGH, bottles of medication high and out of sight, and count your underwear when you take it out of the dryer. Keep doors latched good and electric cords put away.

*How healthy is the breed as a whole?*

I have read that they are considered to have few problems. I know some breeds have innate problems and anomalies, but Sams in general appear to be without so many. Use common sense in taking care of them, get their shots with regular check-ups, and keep a close eye on how they act and look. It is good to be familiar with how they look when in good health. I mean, know what their eyes look like when they are well and if you see a change, be suspicious and get a vet to check. Don't waste time if you see something not quite normal. You can head off a lot by quickly seeking help.

*How genetically diverse are they?*

Sometimes now in the shows one does not see much uniformity. Ethical breeders try to stick to the standard set for them. However, some breeders do disagree on various points in the standard. Our goal, I think, is to keep them the way the earlier



*Leica peeking over Ed Brown's shoulder, ready to go home with him, and she did.*

tribe did so they could do the work needed of them. That means keeping their build correct to cope with the fierce weather of their environment: smaller ears, correct shape of eyes, the right size and furred tail. Also important: the black eye and lip liner. The breed is a natural one, not a man-made one. As I said, we are indebted to the natives who fine-tuned them. It should behoove us to maintain this excellent breed, not play God with them as some have with other breeds.

Remember the natives even used them to hunt polar bears. An episode was related by Nansen, the Norwegian explorer who was the first from the outside world to see the Samoyeds. He deliberately let a ship of his become frozen in the northern ice, figuring when it thawed, the water would carry it where he wanted it to go. He had several Sams aboard. While frozen in one spot for nearly a year, his men would leave the ship at times to hunt. One day when two Sams left on board noticed a man trapped against a wall of ice, threatened by a polar bear, they raced down the gangplank and rescued him.

*Where did the first ones come from?*

I've read that all the Samoyeds in this country are descended from some that were used on the great polar expedi-

tions. A famous one named Buck was found later in a zoo in Australia by an English couple. He was in poor condition, covered with fleas and flies. When they tried to buy him, the zoo people refused at first, but later relented.

I understand these people worked with AKC to set a standard for the breed. They decided to specify white as their color, since at that time they knew of no other large breed that was white. By this time it was known there were some Sams in Siberia that were all or partly black. It is said that these days most, maybe all, of them have one black hair or two on them. I actually found a small cluster of several tiny short ones on one of Remington's heels. It would be interesting to hear from others if they have located a black hair or two in the midst of all that thick coat. This would make an exciting article.

I did read that some people wondered about the reason a spot of biscuit somewhere seemed to insure good black pigment. In their breeding program they managed to eliminate the biscuit (probably hard to do) and started getting pups with pink where the black should be. So they trashed that experiment.

I was lucky to find an old scrapbook with clippings from early English publications about our breed that included pictures

of some of the early ones in our pedigrees.

*Has the standard changed much over the years?*

Not that I am aware of, but if so, probably not much, if at all. It seems a bit flexible pertaining to the height of both female and male. It would be a big mistake to change anything.

The natives retained the important characteristics that enable these dogs to do the work required for survival in the harsh and brutal living conditions. Smaller ears did not freeze easily, almond-shaped eyes were more practical in the fierce storms, black eye and lip liner, plus black noses, were protection from the glare of the sun on the snow. Sams have what they have for a reason.

Our daughters had a white horse with blue eyes and long white eyelashes. He was a charmer, got anything he wanted, but would blister around his eyes and nose where he was pink, with short hair, if any at all. He had no black eyeliner, of course. I kept him supplied with a tube of Coverstick obtained at a department store's beauty counter. That solved the problem. I also bought him big black jelly beans which he loved!

*What is your interpretation of the perfect Samoyed?*

They are not supposed to be too heavily boned, yet not too thin either. Bigger-boned Mala-

mutes are bred to haul, and the smallest of the three northern breeds of work dogs are built to race or carry smaller loads. Sams, the middle sized, are versatile enough to just do it all.

You want a dog that is the proper width in front and rear, that has correct length of leg, and a great tail that is set right. (Mama spreads it over to warm babies.) If the tail is not right that can be an index telling skeletal system is off base somehow, I think. They should not over-step on moving. You don't want hind feet making tracks in front of front feet. If a team member does not move correctly, the others will suffer for it. You want effortless, smooth moving, without extra motion, not needed, that will slow down and/or tire the dog. A double coat with guard hairs with silver tips is desirable. When the sunlight glitters through the last half of each hair, it looks like icicles, a beautiful sight.

*That is the correct coat?*

Well, a clean, well-brushed one! There are different types of coats, some longer, some with shorter, thicker fur. Not all pups in the same litter will have the same type. Think of it this way: you do not need any feature, including fur, exaggerated in a manner so it would slow him down.

*I have heard that some people tend to groom fluffy.*

I haven't heard anything about that, perhaps they are trying to hide something before going into the show ring. If a dog is too narrow, front or rear, it will be left more hairy or fuzzy. If too wide, the fur can be clipped carefully. One is not really supposed to trim Sams. Some other breeds have specific cuts, but ours can have feet "neatened" up a bit, if this can be done without it looking trimmed. Sometimes a few stray hairs show up that have to be snipped off to avoid a frowzy look.

Feet are important. Sams' feet should be well-furred on the bottom for traveling on ice. Notice the ones in the Iditarod wear neat little booties.

*Because they are an Arctic breed, have you had to make special accommodations for them?*

Just keep the air-conditioners going! In our house the ducts are in the floor in strategic spots, which even the small puppies recognize and claim at an early age. They love to lie on the vents with cool air blowing through their fur. The rest of us have to stay rather chilly to keep it cool enough to please them!

*How many dogs do you usually keep at your home?*

Two or three. However, I have two senior citizens, the older of which is Remington, who will be thirteen. I pray he'll last lots longer, but I kept my Ricochet so at least I'll have a junior. Dazzle is the other who won't live forever, especially if she doesn't quit eating my personal flimsies, such as pantyhose! She is a slick operator and hard to catch.

*Did you see her eating them?*

No. She quit eating, was throwing up, looked bloated, the usual scary symptoms. What she would do is when I took clothes out of the dryer, she would slide silently in to grab underpants or pantyhose and race off to swallow her prize. I have talked to others whose Sams do the same thing. They know the static electricity holds garments together only a few minutes, so when something falls, the dog is there, waiting. Believe me, I watch the scamp like a hawk and she hasn't managed this mischief lately.

The last time Dazzle consumed a pair of my underpants, the veterinarian told me to give her a can of a certain kind of



*Dazzle as a teenager.*

food with a tablespoon of mineral oil on it four times a day. He hoped to avoid another surgery if she could pass these herself. After some days, almost a week, I had one of the biggest thrills of my life! I saw Dazzle outside in the dog patch doing just that! I felt like I should be on my knees all day thanking God for that miracle.

Flo Waldman had a similar experience. However, she didn't know beforehand that something had been swallowed, so she was not under stress, merely shocked at the time. She looked out a window just in time to see her "Stormy" (from us and not kin to Dazzle) pass a four-foot, one-inch wide red leash. She worried when no

metal snap on the end appeared, but later Saul told her that he had removed it earlier.

Sunnie is an important family member too. John Donner wanted to keep her himself but was kind to let us have her. She is the kind I was looking for to breed to Remington. They produced two great litters. And I kept Chrissie (Crystal Pistol) who, of course, is adorable like all the rest of the Sams. They all have that great ability to con you out of anything! I really think no one should keep many. Each needs to go to a separate home where he can be the king or high mogul and can run the family himself. Each needs so much attention, one can hardly do justice to a flock.

*What are some of the other stories you have?*

I was told about the toddler who went across the street to a forbidden yard. Her watchful Sam immediately went over, grabbed her by the seat of her little pants and dragged her back home.

Remington has a special way of cornering me to get attention. When I answer the phone, he comes near, flops over on his back with hind feet up in the air, paws folded on his chest, and hollers, his voice so loud I cannot hear the caller. He wants a tummy scratch. The person on the line usually asks, "What's THAT?" I checked this out with two of his brothers, Wesson and Mr. Thompson. Each



"Oh, the goodies in this place!" Dazzle at nine weeks old.

owner told me they did the same. Must be in the genes.

*How do you choose your prospective puppy buyers?*

Carefully. It's hard to let the little fellows go. The only way I can do it is to find absolutely the best homes, as far as I can tell, for them. And it is still tough.

I pepper interested folks with questions. Who is their vet? Do they have a fenced yard? Do they have children? What ages? (Any tail pullers is what I want to know!) Have they had a Samoyed before? Any breed? What and when? How long did it live? What happened to it? Is your spouse agreeable to having a puppy? House or apartment? If apartment, what about the dog's exercise? I think of other questions as we converse. Just listening will give one clues. Give the other person a chance to cut his

own throat and have himself turned down. I do not want to be mean, but think of the puppy first.

I have been fortunate to find great homes, and now many repeat wonderful homes. Kay Tilley wanted another, drove down to take two girls. Flo and Saul were ready for another and got Sasha who traveled on the lap of a flight attendant friend who flew to Houston to get her. Carol and Ed Brown came from Indiana for Leica, who met her uncle Wesson already at their house. Remington Steel went to Diane Sorrentino and Joanne Rean, with son, Bill. More went home with other good friends who keep in touch with calls, notes, and photos. I owe a lot to my Sams for the wonderful friends they have made for me!

*Have you ever had any come back?*

I always have an agreement

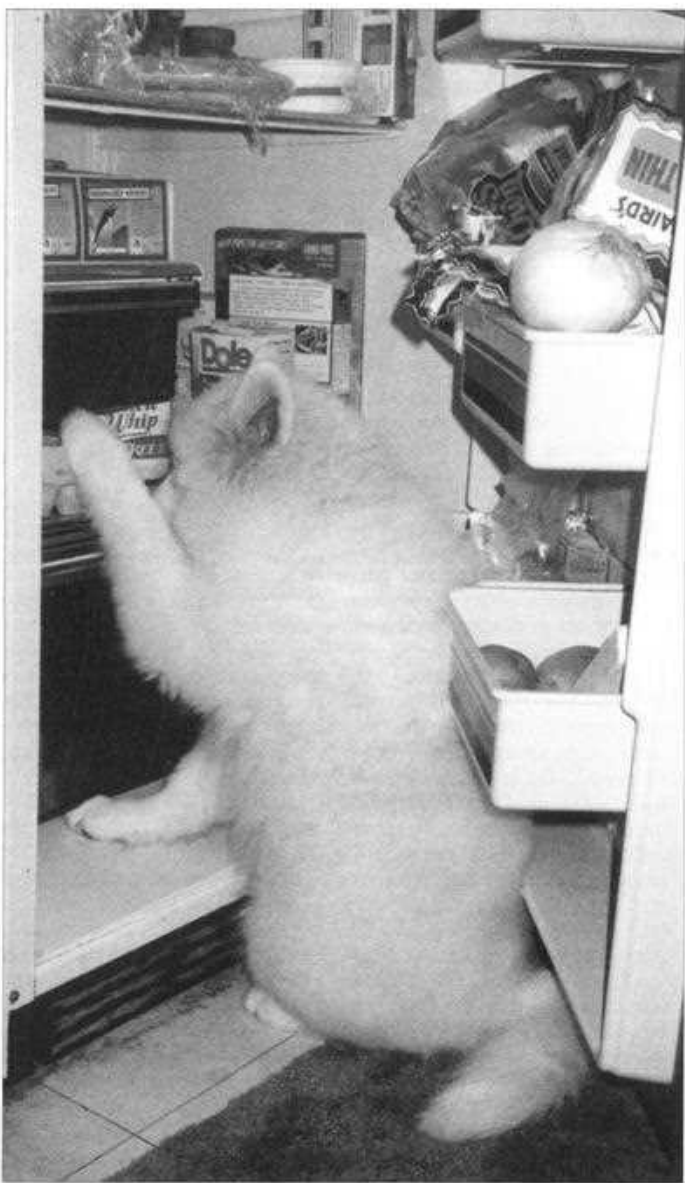
that if things don't work out, the pup comes back to me. But one did, in spite of that promise. It really didn't come back. I got a call from an animal shelter. Debbie Baird, another good friend, heard there was a Sam there, so went to see him. She told the people to look for a chip which they had not done, then called me. Then I heard from Carol who had heard about him. Debbie and Carol knew I could not leave my husband who was so ill. They kindly rescued him, brought him to Rose's kennel nearer to me. Carol found him a fine home, with his own toddler - they are inseparable, I hear - and took him with her when she and Ed came to pick up Leica. What fabulous

friends I have! This was my beloved Mr. Peach (his code color) who waltzed with me in the kitchen when the music was right! The woman and daughters seemed enchanted, sounded good, even came twice to play with him, but did not keep their promise.

*Did you ever find out why he was given up?*

I never did. The shelter people said an Oriental man brought him in, so the poor dog had been handed to someone else before going to the shelter.

I am so thankful for the wonderful people who give their time, energy, and money to rescue the homeless Samoyeds. Baytown now has a much-needed animal shelter, founded by



Dazzle continues to raid the refrigerator.



*Dazzle soon decided she loved all things kitchen.*

Marilyn Kinney, who works out of her home until she can build something. She has folks who foster needy animals until enough money is collected to construct a building.

*Did Marilyn get a lot of Katrina dogs?*

She did. Thousands of people came this way, too. I think it was cruel for those trying to escape the storm to have to leave their dogs behind. Many courageous people were rescuing animals, such as dogs sitting on roofs, waiting for help. It was a terrible situation for the animals as well as the people.

*A lot of the people refused to leave their dogs to be rescued so the shelters took the dogs in to hold for them.*

I couldn't leave my dogs either. I didn't want to sweat out those hurricanes and worry about the power being off for weeks, the horrible heat and no air-conditioning. Sams can have heatstrokes quickly. I always said I would never run from a hurricane. We had hurricanes in Bellaire when I was a child and in Galveston, and Baytown, too. But this time I did run from one.

*Which one did you run from?*

The one that looked like it was coming here! They do crazy things. I've seen them come in, slam everyone good, go back out in the Gulf, build up

more force and return to smack us again.

I left the day before there were problems on the road, packed the dogs up, their food, vitamin pills, water and went a

long way northwest of Houston. When I heard later about the horrible trouble on the highways that people had I was so glad I left early.

*What are your plans for your*

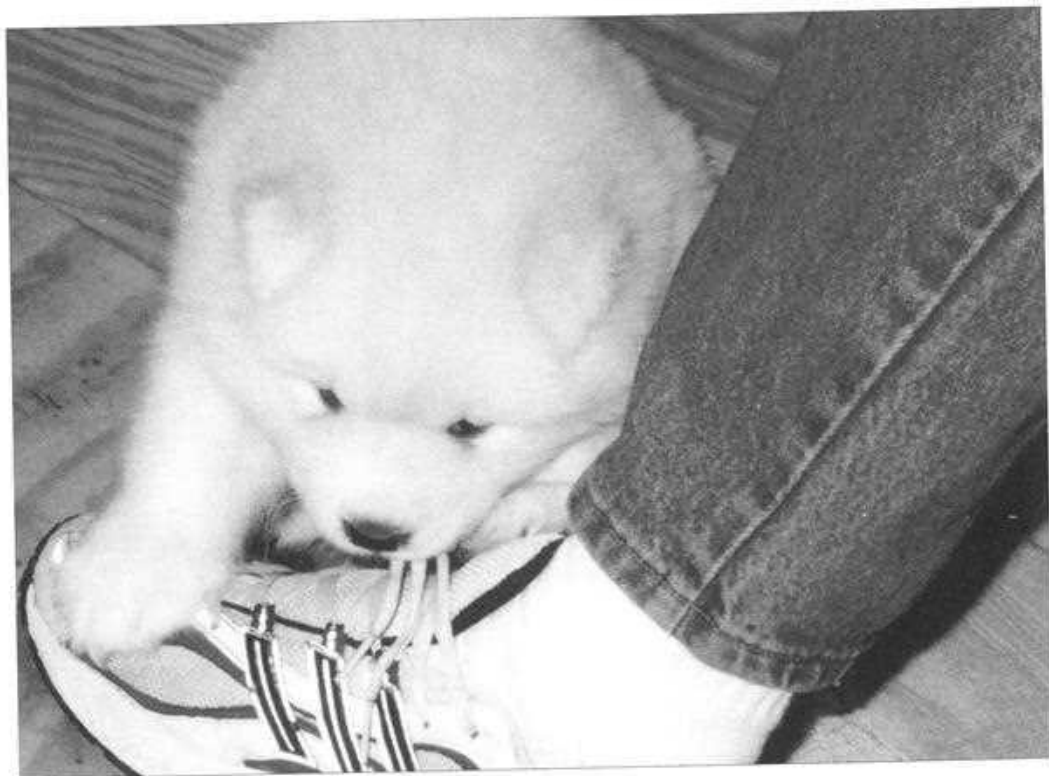
*Sams?*

I'll keep 'em going. They are great companions. I cannot manage without them! I may special the two pups, Chrissie and Ricochet, that are from this last litter. Who knows? Friends urge me to have another set of pups, but I am not sure I am up for that. I usually say, "Well, come help me!" and get a laugh. My 40 acres of woods and wildlife are for sale and when the dust settles, I hope to catch up with my painting and get my manuscripts off to publishers. Two are actually waiting on them, a nice feeling, but I have to get even busier. What I need are a couple of secretaries! Also, I am eager for that movie to come out.

*Is there anything else you'd like to say?*

All Sams are distinct characters who earnestly cultivate their own unique idiosyncrasies. Mine love music, and hear it a lot. They howl and "sing" with it as well as with the police sirens they hear going down the freeway sometimes. Remington sings with me a lot when I play my harp, seeming to prefer the deep velvety bass tones. He moves closer when I play what





must be his favorite, "The Window Smasher Jig," a lively Irish tune. He will carry on until his voice gets tired. I am trying now to record it if I can stop laughing long enough!

He gave me a real scare one day, however. I found him sitting in Bill's blue chair again,

and still unwashable - we finally had to get rid of the thing - with a large bottle of aspirin that had been in the middle of a table, out of reach, we had hoped. He had removed the childproof lid without making a scratch on it and consumed quite a few. When I showed it to Bill, he said

a lot were missing.

After a short wrestling match, I poured a fourth of a cup of hydrogen peroxide down his gullet and waited for results. That took only a few minutes. Have you ever see a white dog try to turn green around the gills? It made me sick to watch.

He was at one end of our long kitchen and tossed his cookies - aspirin, that is - a dozen times rapidly. I was on my knees, unrolling paper towels and hollering at him to slow down. The floor looked like it was knee-deep in white cake icing. He was exhausted, and I, who will have the dry heaves myself if I am within earshot of someone else throwing up, was simply limp as a wet dishrag.

The veterinarian congratulated me later on my success, saying Remington would have had serious stomach problems if I had not made him get rid of that many aspirin.

I'm thankful for my many blessings, my parents, my brother, my Bill and two daughters, my Samoyeds, the great friends they have made for me, and my life in general. It has been, and still is, an active life, so I plan to keep running as long as the motor works. I played tennis, my favorite game, all through school and college, learned to ice skate (feels like flying!), had ten years of ballet with a great teacher, as an adult, and have been working out at a gym for years now. Keeps the blood running!

*Thank you.*

Thank you so much for your interest in our Samoyeds, and some of the things I have done - am doing. •

## Finding the right food & supplements

By Ronald E Rompala, Ph.D.

*"... you're working building a mystery and choosing so carefully." - Sarah McLachlan from "Building a Mystery."*

The outcome of making a food change or giving supplements to your dog does not necessarily need to be so mysterious. People change foods or provide supplements because they want to keep their dogs healthy and happy. Many owners believe that nutrition plays a vital role in the well-being of the dog. It is true that inadequate nutrition can cause problems leading to early aging, immune disorders, behavioral disorders and other maladies. Dog owners must also realize that nutrition is not the only factor that affects health. Owners

often overlook or underestimate the large role genetics, social issues, pathogens and environment play in the well-being of the dog. Consequently, all dogs cannot be fed the same way. A given food or supplement may work wonders for one dog but be catastrophic for another one. Accept it as fact that no one food is perfect for every dog under all types of conditions.

Any animal owner will attempt to find the best food and combination of supplements for their individual pet. Most people who change foods or add supplements are expecting an improvement in the well-being of their dog. However, three things can happen as a result of changing the food. Either something good happens, something bad happens or nothing happens. Note that if the change

costs more money and nothing happens, then only one out of the three outcomes can be considered good. Consequently, most supplemental additions or food changes fall short of the expectations of the owner.

Dog owners change foods or add supplements because they expect something good will happen. Will the dog look better, perform better or feel better? Is the food change expected to correct a disorder like arthritis, allergies or be an adjustment to benefit a diabetic dog? No doubt the owner has goals. How will the change work? Only the owner can answer those questions. In order to avoid disappointment, the owner must first set some realistic goals that can truly be measured to determine if the nutritional change is beneficial and

cost-effective. Otherwise, the outcome may just always be a mystery.

The last thing a dog owner wants to do is put time, effort and money into changing the food or adding supplements and come up with nothing to show for it. How can a person possibly know for sure that a food change or supplement actually produced a positive effect rather than something mysterious? There are six things that must be considered in order to truly know that a nutritional change has worked.

- Keep accurate records. Record keeping is vital for any type of experimentation. More information collected will provide more accurate assessments. Observations concerning hair coat quality should include information on factors that affect