

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks With
Bob and Wanda Krauss
K-WAY
Poynette, Wisconsin

This interview was conducted at the home of Bob and Wanda Krauss in June of 1992 by Judy Mears.

How long have you been in Samoyeds?

Wanda: About 25 years. We got the first one in 1968, a week before we moved out of our second-floor apartment. We were enthusiastic.

Bob: We got married in June of 1967 and moved into an apartment in Madison. I was still a student at the time. The first thing we did was get a cat, the only animal we were allowed in the apartment with us. We had always wanted a dog, and as soon we had the opportunity of moving from the apartment into a house, we started looking around for one. We had decided we were either going to get a Saint Bernard or a Sammy. Thank heavens, we got Samoyeds! (laughter)

Wanda: We were skiers, outdoor people, and we wanted an outdoor dog.

Bob: We camped, we owned a couple horses and we wanted a dog that was large enough to be able to go out on the trails and run around and do things with us. In the end, the Sam seemed the better choice and I'm really glad that we chose it.

How did you find your first Samoyed?

Wanda: The first dog we got came from an ad in the paper by an owner who had problems and had the dog in a boarding kennel. She had to get the dog out of the house and was boarding it.

Bob: The owner of the house was complaining because the dog was digging up his flower beds. This dog was four months old at the time. The lady had only had it a couple of months and already it was causing problems for her and she decided it was best to make the break before she became too attached to the dog.

Wanda: I was reading James Michener's book *Hawaii* at the time, and his name became "Kapu," which is "forbidden."

Bob: Because he was always doing forbidden things. (laughter)

Wanda: I had had animals all my life. I owned my first horse when I was about five, and we lived on the first road out of town so we had dogs dropped off that wandered in regularly. I did everything from dress them up like dolls to teaching them to do circus acts. The first purebred dog I had

when I was a 4-H kid was an Airedale, which I obedience trained. We went into obedience with Kapu, and met Mel and Miriam Lasky of Suruka Orr, and Don and Dorothy Hodges of Kipperic at obedience, and started going out on sledding exercise evenings with them. We took the dogs camping, worked them, got into them as a working animal.

So, showing dogs was really secondary to having them as pets?

Wanda: Right.

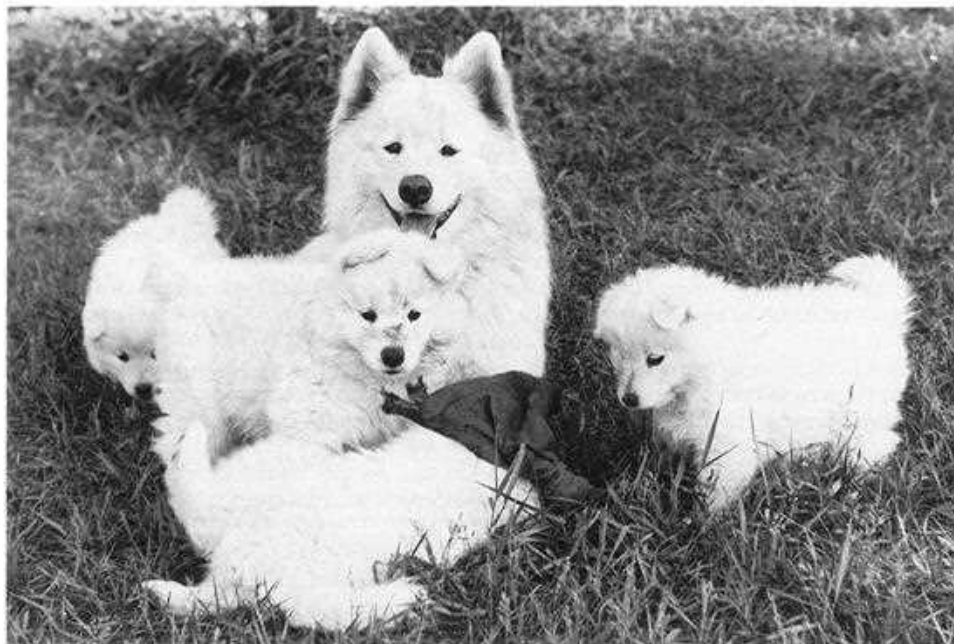
Bob: Initially, that was true. We got our first dog strictly as a pet and started working him in obedience. As I recall, the spring of 1969, after we got Kapu, we went to an obedience match in Green Bay. Since conformation was also offered at that time, we took Kapu into the conformation class. We didn't know too much about it, but we ended up winning Breed and a Group III. (laughter)

Wanda: The only other time the dog was shown in a match, he got a Group placement, also. Within a few weeks after that, we put in an entry for a show, but he went out and ran into the side of my nephew's school bus and broke his neck. We were left without a dog at that point. We had just gotten into the idea of showing, and we wanted to be in better quality animals. I had that idea from the horses. When I was showing horses, I was showing

grade horses and losing to the children of people who had money, and who had registered, professionally trained horses. One of our original premises was we would love the good ones, rather than keeping just the dogs we had because we loved them. If they weren't good enough to make the grade, somebody else could love them.

Bob: Long before we got dogs, when we were dating several years earlier, we were already going out on camping trips with horses, going to the Madison Saddle Club and Arabian shows here in town. We were very familiar with conformation in horses, and kind of followed that route for a long time. In fact, before we got married we were deciding whether we ought to get into purebred horses or purebred dogs. We decided that we might be able to afford showing one purebred horse, and that dogs seemed like a better bet, especially since I was still in school at the time. The dogs were sort of a natural thing to get involved in. When we decided to get a second Sam we decided to look for an established breeder in order to get a better quality animal. We also decided we would try getting a female instead of a male this time.

Wanda: We went to Phyllis Watson of Prairiewind Kennels in Kansas. One of the things we had been doing in horses was driving around, visiting the farms, and seeing the quality of animals - surveying the



Ch. K-Way's Gay Gazelle CD, her puppies and friends.

scene – so we took that same tack in the dogs and became associated with a very good breeder to get our foundation stock. We also wanted to start out with a year-old bitch who was x-rayed. At that time, OFA was one year rather than two years. She was a granddaughter of Ch. Nachalnik of Drayalene, who was the top producing dog in Samoyeds at that time. We started at the top with good stock.

Bob: Phyllis Watson had offered us two bitches that she had for sale. One was a daughter of Nachalnik and the other was a granddaughter of Nachalnik. The daughter was only about eight months old at the time, and hadn't had a hip X-ray yet.

Wanda: She was also adolescent, to say the least. (laughter)

Bob: High in the rump, a little saggy in the back, and just generally was gangly. It didn't really appeal to us at all, whereas the other one was two years old and more mature and, we felt, a little more typey, and thought she would probably be a little better brood bitch for us, so that was the one we took.

Wanda: Subsequently, we did one breeding with that bitch, which produced one puppy that had most of the faults of both the sire and the dam (laughter). We did point her and actually came very close to getting a major on her, which scared us because we knew she wasn't that good. We ended up also buying the previously adolescent, but now very nice young bitch, who became our foundation bitch, Ch. Prairiewind's Shanna CD.

How many litters have you bred?

Wanda: Somewhere around 50 or thereabouts.

Bob: I would say, in total, slightly over 200 puppies in 20 years.

Did you have a particular plan in your breeding, anything you were working towards as far as pedigree or structure?

Wanda: We looked both at pedigrees and the individual dogs. We'd heard a story about an Arabian ranch that was run by two brothers. One looked at the pedigrees and the other looked at the animals, and only when they could agree could they make a breeding. Since we started with the dogs from a working standpoint, we did a lot of traveling and speaking with people who were well-known in the breed at the time and learned a lot about the dogs. It was basically four years until we had our first litter. We talked to people from the *Bulletin*, and to people who wrote articles and who were recognized, and, to some extent, I suppose we searched for the person who knew it all. Of all the candidates, none of them knew all of it, but together we learned an awful lot, and only then were we ready to go do something.

Bob: I'm a physicist by trade. One of the things I was particularly interested in was learning a lot about structure. The



Ch. Prairiewind's Shanna CD.

book that we cut our teeth on in this respect was McDowell Lyon's, *The Dog in Action*, which I still think is one of the best books that's ever been written on the subject. We don't hear about it very much anymore, but he also came out of horses and studied dog breeding for a number of years. From a purely physical, engineering point of view, I think he has one of the best views of the way a dog should be built.

Wanda: The first time we learned about doubled-jointed hocks in Samoyeds, I said, "But they would fall down." Some of them do, nearly, but based on the horses, I just couldn't conceive how something like that could function.

Bob: You have to understand, too, that we were getting into dogs in the late '60's and early '70's when there were some really poor quality champions being shown in the ring on a regular basis – dogs that were slab-sided, shallow chested, cow hocked.

Wanda: Three-fourths of a good sized class of specials – ten or so – would be, frankly, cow hocked, not even just narrow, but really cow hocked.

Bob: Cow hocks seemed to disappear in the '70's. Enough people were beginning to notice them, and enough people were doing good quality breeding, that the emphasis was very strongly on rears. At the time, we were interested in placing the emphasis on fronts. We always seemed to be out of phase with what was in fashion in dogs. When everybody else was working on improving the rears, we were working on improving the fronts. Then we had to put some work into improving our rears in the '80's, and everybody else was noticing fronts in the '80's. The quality of dogs right now is considerably higher than it was twenty years ago. I really think breeders have done a tremendous job of improving the quality of Sams throughout the country. In large part, I think it's due to the fact that

we've increased in numbers and there is a lot more competition around.

Wanda: To some extent, I think it's more a matter of the dogs they select to show are a medium range. The very bad dogs we never see, but we don't see as many dogs with the really important structural assets that are needed for a dog to be efficient for hours on the trail. Because we have indoor shows, we are not looking at the efficiency, the length of stride. The fewer number of steps per mile means you have to carry that much less food on an extended sledding trip. The dog that burns his food efficiently is going to get less tired than the dog next to him who is straighter of stifle and straighter of shoulder and takes more steps to go the same distance.

Bob: There seems to be a tendency lately to choose dogs for the showing more on the basis of type and showmanship, and general overall appearance while standing still, with less emphasis being given to the working qualities of the breed.

Wanda: Not the obvious flaws of structure, but more hidden ones.

Such as?

Bob: Nowadays, a good share of the judges place a great deal of emphasis on coming and going. You've got to single-track and look efficient and smooth while moving toward and away from the judge. At the same time, if you look at the side gait of the dogs, they tend to be a little bit restricted. You might find the croup angle is not correct. You will generally find there isn't a great deal of emphasis on good shoulder layback. Also, a large part of the breed, in a moving dog, has to do with overall balance, in which case you need a longer neck to go with the more sloping shoulder. You need a little more angle to the pastern and you need good feet, so that a dog who is out on the trail will be able to cover the ground without feet which tend to get sore and hurt the dog and make him restrict his action. Also, pads that don't have well arched toes and a lot of fur between the toes means that ice and snow will get up between them and cause the dog some skin damage and potential injury. You don't see very many judges paying attention to good feet or length of neck or arch of neck, and, yet, these are very important to a well engineered dog.

Wanda: You see a lot of dogs that roll or bounce. The body wastes a lot of energy that should be used in moving the unit forward instead of coming in at strange angles and getting dissipated. In a short ring, in the indoor shows or the smaller ringed outdoor shows, you don't see a lot of what's going on. If you take three or four steps and then have to slow down to turn, the judge just doesn't see what the dog has as we would see it out on a trail where we go two or three miles before we stop or make a change.

Bob: It's important to note that doesn't mean you should always judge dogs on grass. While it's nice to have a large outdoor ring where the dogs are free to move, you can hide a lot of faults in the grass. You don't see bad pasterns, you don't see the shock transmitted through the dog's shoulders and to the upper back. Dogs will generally look smoother on grass than they will on a hard, concrete surface. The concrete also emphasizes structural faults in the dog, such as bones that aren't exactly parallel. Joints that don't have the bones meeting in exactly the right way are not going to be stressed quite as much on grass. As a result, when you move the same dog on grass, it looks great, nice and smooth and covers ground well. But when you move the dog on concrete, coming and going, you discover the joints are moving sideways in and out, and that the dog might be a little out at the elbows. You are stressing the pasterns more and discover there is a funny little flip-flopping going on when the dog is coming towards you down in the pastern area.

Going away from you, concrete really emphasizes any weakness in the hocks. You can see those hocks moving from side to side when the dog is moving away from you. Often, you will see the handler trying to cover it up by moving away from the judge a little faster than they come back toward the judge, but you can't really hide it completely from a trained eye. I'm strongly in favor of showing dogs both on grass and concrete. You need to see a dog in both environments to truly evaluate it properly. This might not have answered your question, but it just seemed to be the place to say it! (laughter)

What is the best litter you've bred?

Wanda: That's a hard one. We had an absolutely gorgeous litter of seven puppies, six of which died of parvovirus at seven and a half weeks. Who knows if that might not have been our best litter? It certainly looked gorgeous at that age. We were also recipients of very strange, good fortune. We had sold a bitch to a young couple, who we also helped to pick out a male that we thought was appropriate to breed to her. The bitch was Julie and the dog was Merlyn. They couldn't seem to keep them apart. As we found out later, she'd had mismatched shots and had been bred basically every season, but had not had a litter until twenty months of age. Finally, their answer to this was that they would leave the dog at home and take the bitch to work with them, and they left her in their sports car with leather upholstery. After she'd done about \$500 in damage, they called up and said they didn't want that bitch. So, we got her back and a friend took her for a couple of weeks, thinking about whether she wanted to buy her or not. She decided she didn't need another

bitch at that point, so she brought Julie back to us.

We had her on the end of a long line, running around the parking lot, and the friend said, "She moves a little funny. She's kind of thick in the middle." The friend said, "I've been feeding her all I can feed her. She acts like she has worms or something." Well, she did look a little pudgy. (laughter) We called the original owners and they said, "Absolutely not. We put her in the crate on the seventh day." Sixty-three days from that seventh day, Julie had seven puppies. At that time, we were doing very limited breeding, did not live in a place where it was conducive to have more than one male, so we sort of pawed them off on all our friends, sold some as pets, and had said, "Any of them that aren't sold by fourteen weeks, we're going to put down." The last one I sold at thirteen and a half weeks. Four of those seven are champions and one of them is Omen.

The strangest thing about that was the original owners were not willing to take any of the puppies back or help us sell them or do anything with the litter.

Bob: They basically just signed the bitch over to us, and signed papers to say we had leased her retroactively. We were willing to sign the papers saying they had the stud. We took total responsibility for the breeding, but it was not originally of our making. We figured they would make the breeding sometime in the future.

Wanda: That's part of why we feel that he was given to us as an artwork; a gift for us to be conservator of, rather than anything we take credit for.

When he was four months old we decided to sell him, put an ad in the *Bulletin* (the picture was taken at training class when he wasn't groomed up or anything), and we've had two or three people tell us they looked at that picture and wanted to consult us on him but they didn't. That was on the occasion of his father being Winner's Dog at the National. We had somebody try him out for a couple of weeks, and I don't know what they did to him, but he came back very scared, so it was a labor to get him back to being showable. He never liked the shows. He liked being around the shows and was wonderful at being a smarty-pants outside the ring (laughter), but if you took him in the ring, he simply wilted. I worked quite hard to get him finished. Part of that was because of my nervousness, and he just wasn't a show dog.

The other interesting part of that story is it was at a time when more coat and prettier heads were becoming very prevalent around this area, and we had originally picked a male to keep that had the big head, long coat and all this glamour, and the morning the people were to come and pick up their "show puppy," who never



Ch. K-Way's Touch of Class.



Ch. K-Way's Wind Chaser CD.

saw the ring, we decided that we would keep Omen, the Green Boy, and they would take the Red Boy, because I couldn't accept Red Boy's rear. We were still fighting those weak hocks, so we kept Omen and sold this dog to some people who never even went to a match, despite the fact they had said they wanted a show puppy.

Bob: Omen came to us by accident. He was almost sold at nine or ten weeks of age, but the day before he was to go, we decided to keep him and send out the other puppy. At four months of age, when his daddy won the National, we figured we would make another try at selling him, and when that wasn't successful, we decided maybe we'd better keep him.

Wanda: He was almost a year old when I decided, "Folks, you are missing something here. This is an awfully good dog, and I'm going to rub your nose in it." (laughter)

Bob: As he grew up, he kept looking better and better and better, compared with anything else we were seeing in the showring.

Wanda: Again, it was the balance. The better a dog is, the better balance he has, the less he grows in fits and starts and has pieces not fitting. He was, almost to perfection, the proportions of the standard. He was exactly 55 percent high to the elbow, exactly 5 percent longer than he was high, he had a good neck, although not as much as I would have liked, he moved ... How do I want to say it?

Bob: ... in perfect parallel front to rear. His front leg and his rear leg moved parallel to each other; they were both exactly at the same angle forward and backward as the dog moved. They both hit the ground

at exactly the same time. His timing was perfection. The front pad lifted off the ground exactly a fraction of a second before the rear pad hit in exactly the same spot. You'd run him in the snow and you would only see two footprints for every stride.

Wanda: It was a perfectly straight dotted line.

Was he the second or third generation you were breeding?

Bob: He was third generation. I guess we ought to go back to Shanna since we haven't mentioned her.

Wanda: We bought Prairiewind's Shanna, we bred her to Kondako's Sun Dancer, which produced K-Way's Gay Gazelle CDX. Gazelle produced K-Way's Mint Julip (Julie), who we sold and then got back - so Omen was the third generation of our breeding.

Did you ever show Mint Julip?

Bob: She was shown up to about two and half years of age. She had a four-point major that she got at one of the shows in Chicago, and another point or two. Then we decided that we were going to breed her and shipped her out back East. Good old Mint Julip, who had torn up the leather upholstery of her former owner's car, managed to escape from her crate and run around in Kennedy Airport - and came back with a permanent limp. She never finished her championship.

Wanda: But in about six shows, she had five or six points. She was a real personality conflict with me. Her mother, Gazelle, was a pixie, an imp who would tease you, but it was all in fun. This one did the same thing, but there wasn't quite the same gleam in her eye. (laughter) When we brought her home from her air-

plane flight, when we got her back originally, we stopped at some Samoyed friends' house, she went in the house, up on the chair, then up on the kitchen table and said, "Hello!" (laughter) One of the first days we had her back, she proceeded to eat our supper out of the frying pan as it was frying.

Bob: It didn't seem to bother her.

Wanda: We could control her, but it wasn't fun! So, we tried to sell her a number of times. But she kept coming back. Somebody leased her for a litter and sent her back, and I was hoping they'd keep her.

Bob: Wanda has had this problem with females before. There was a female horse I owned that Wanda didn't like. Her name was Duchess. Duchess and I got along just famously and really enjoyed each other. We had great times riding in the country and on camping trips. But every time Wanda got on Duchess, Duchess would try to wipe her off against a tree, she would bounce up and down, wouldn't work up on the bit, wouldn't turn right or left, wouldn't neck rein at all, kept backing up when Wanda wanted her to stand still, would try to move ahead when Wanda was mounting her - everything you could possibly think of, she did. She would toss her head when Wanda would be trying to calm her down - nothing would work right between those two. They were constantly fighting each other. (laughter) Julie was exactly the same way with Wanda. Wanda could not handle her in the showring. I was the one who took Julie into the showring and she and I got along just great. Julie was always the one to come up on the couch to get her head scratched by me; Wanda would push her away. (laughter)

Wanda: She was a parody of her mother, Gazelle, Ch. K-Way's Gay Gazelle CDX, the first dog we had born in our house that finished a championship, finished a CD, did extremely well at everything, was sweet and loving, but jumped out of everybody's kennel. We always kidded that she should write a book entitled, *Famous Kennels I Have Jumped Out Of* (laughter) We had her back in the era when we were traveling around trying to find the guru who knew everything. She jumped out of the Woods' kennel, she jumped out of the McLaughlins' kennel - people were all very nice: "Why don't you put the dog in the kennel? It's been in the car all day." The next thing we would know, she was at the front door. She would do things like that, but she was always sweet about it. She was like a little lady who would never get her ruffles dirty, but Julie got her ruffles dirty!

Bob: When Gazelle went to John and Carol Chittum to be bred to Ivan, Ch. Ivan Belaya of Taymylyr CD, Carol used to exercise her in the backyard, which had a five-and-a-half or six-foot fence. Gazelle used to come up to the back door and scratch and bark. When they wouldn't let her in the house, she would jump over the fence, go around to the front door and scratch and bark at the front door. She always got action then because there were lots of other dogs in the neighborhood.

Wanda: The trouble was they lived on Sierra Madre Boulevard, one of the busiest avenues in town, and it was open to any passing dog or anybody who wanted to steal her or anything else - so she got real quick action when she barked at the front door! (laughter)

Why did you pick Ivan to breed to Gazelle?

Wanda: We had done the breeding with Sun Dancer ...

Bob: The breeding to Sun Dancer was Shanna to Sun Dancer.

Wanda: That's where Gazelle came from. Her brother was Ch. K-Way's Garmouche, who was one of OWS's first Working Certificate dogs. She had what we considered just minimal angulation to meet our needs. We went to a dog that had more. We'd seen Ivan at the National in 1972 in Wisconsin, and the National in 1973 in California. While we were in California at that specialty, we went out and saw as many of his kids as we could, which was seven, out of four different bitches, where we saw both the bitch and the get. Every puppy - and, granted, they were the best puppies in the litter, the ones the breeders had kept - had a better layback than mom, and some of them had even better than both mom and dad. Aha! This is a characteristic that we wish to have. So, we bred both Shanna and Gazelle to him, and that's been the foundation of everything we've done since.



Ch. K-Way's Omen of Destiny CD.

Bob: We were very pleased with the first Shanna litter. We got a dog and a bitch out of that litter that we kept.

Wanda: We did the second breeding because there was only one bitch in the first litter. That one puppy bitch, Touch of Class, was what we wanted, but with all the things that can go wrong between a promising puppy and a brood bitch, we just didn't want to trust it all to just one candidate. We don't normally do repeat breedings. We've done two or three, and it was always because of the sex distribution or similar reasons. We figure if you get a really good litter the first time, you probably won't get as good a litter the second time. If you didn't get a very good litter the first time, why would you do a second one? Whatever you do, if it works out well, see what you can get if you breed to the brother, the dad or son, something close by, rather than repeat the same breeding.

How many champions have you bred?

Wanda: I was supposed to figure out all these things ahead of time, wasn't I? (laughter)

Bob: Somewhere in the neighborhood of 40, maybe slightly under 40.

Wanda: I think that's both champion and obedience titles.

Bob: It's well over 30 champions, but we really haven't kept track.

Which dog that you've owned or bred do you consider to be your best dog? I want three answers to that question. I know your best producing dog was Omen. What was your best show dog and your best pet?

Wanda: Actually, I have a third answer to that. The best producing has to

be Omen, because he produced well in the breedings we did with him, he did extremely well with breedings of related stock that other people owned, and he did good on outcrossing. Being able to do all three of those well is unusual. The best show dog we had has to be Connie, Ch. K-Way's Rainbow Connection, although I compare her to Gazelle. She and Gazelle were a lot alike. She and Ch. Char-Soo's Bonanza of K-Way, "Bonnie," are show dogs that know the routine, and, in Bonnie's case, taught Kathy Kersten how to show dogs.

With Connie, she gets me over being nervous, carries me if I'm not doing a good job; she just knows what to do and is a consummate showman. She knows how things are supposed to work and she does what's to be done at the time. That works real good for me, because I get very nervous in the ring. Most people don't realize that. I didn't even like showing for years and years. I did the obedience and Bob did the conformation, until, I think, Omen was the first one I finished - Omen and Wind Chaser.

Bob: It used to be that Wanda would take the puppies into the showing. She is very good with young dogs, and, because of her obedience background, she seems to provide the right give and take with a dog to keep them up and happy, knows when to apply the pressure and when to release it. As a result, for about the first year and a half, she would work with the dogs. Then, when they were ready to go out and compete in earnest, she would hand them off to me, because I seem to be able to work with the adult dogs without transferring as much

of the nervousness down the leash.

Wanda: Besides, he could run faster. (laughter)

Bob: Yeah, in the larger rings I could keep up with the dogs, and since we placed a great deal of emphasis on structure and movement, especially side gait, some of these dogs moved quite fast. Our first Ivan litter, for instance, K-Way's Jeremiah Johnson CDX, the male we kept out of that litter, was able to trot steadily at fourteen miles an hour.

Wanda: Yes, it was certainly more than I could do. (laughter)

Bob: We've had quite a few other bitches - Classy, Ch. K-Way's Touch of Class, and Ch. K-Way's Wind Chaser CD, were both able to trot at well over ten miles an hour.

Wanda: Touch of Class had the best shoulder layback of anything we've ever had, but Wind Chaser had the absolute balance, like Omen had. She's the one that Peggy Borcharding, the long-time editor of the Samoyed Club of America *Bulletin*, co-owned with us after she couldn't have a dog at her own house anymore. She needed to co-own a Sam to be a member of SCA, and we were very impressed that she asked if she could co-own Chaser. She said that she saw her out running across a field and a lump came into her throat. She was our best example of how a dog should move - not just lack of faults, but the personality, the mental set, the muscle tone, everything that goes into a dog going across a distance. When we try to explain things to people about structure and movement, she was a very trustworthy dog to use as an example. We'd be sitting in a park somewhere, or at a show site, or whatever, and we would take her off leash and let her go out 100 feet and run a circle around us. She would just flow.

Bob: One interesting comment Peggy made when she asked us if she could co-own Chaser was that she had seen her at one show where she was stuck in a chair behind the judge's table. All she could see of the dog's gaiting in the ring was the tops of their backs, their heads and their tails. She said it was absolutely amazing what you could learn watching a dog move by just looking at those portions of the dog and not seeing the body and feet at all. She said Chaser was the only one she saw that day who moved with her head well up above, over the table, a nice arch of neck, absolutely smooth, steady topline, and her tail arching up over her back. She felt that it gave a true picture of the way a well built Sam ought to be able to move.

I hadn't really thought of it at that point, that you really ought to concentrate on looking at just one part of a dog when you are trying to learn things about movement, and try to figure out why a certain part of the dog moves the way it does

because of the other parts it's connected to. Again, I'm getting more into the physics and engineering of dogs, but I feel it's important to understand that a dog is really a dynamic creature, and all of the parts have to work together in order for a dog to be considered structurally sound, and, as Bob Ward would put it, typey, because the function is also type in this regard. It's something that most people don't pay much attention to when they get into the dog game, because they are sometimes overwhelmed by the beauty of the breed. All the pictures we see are of dogs standing still. Very rarely do people get into the breed by watching them actually move.

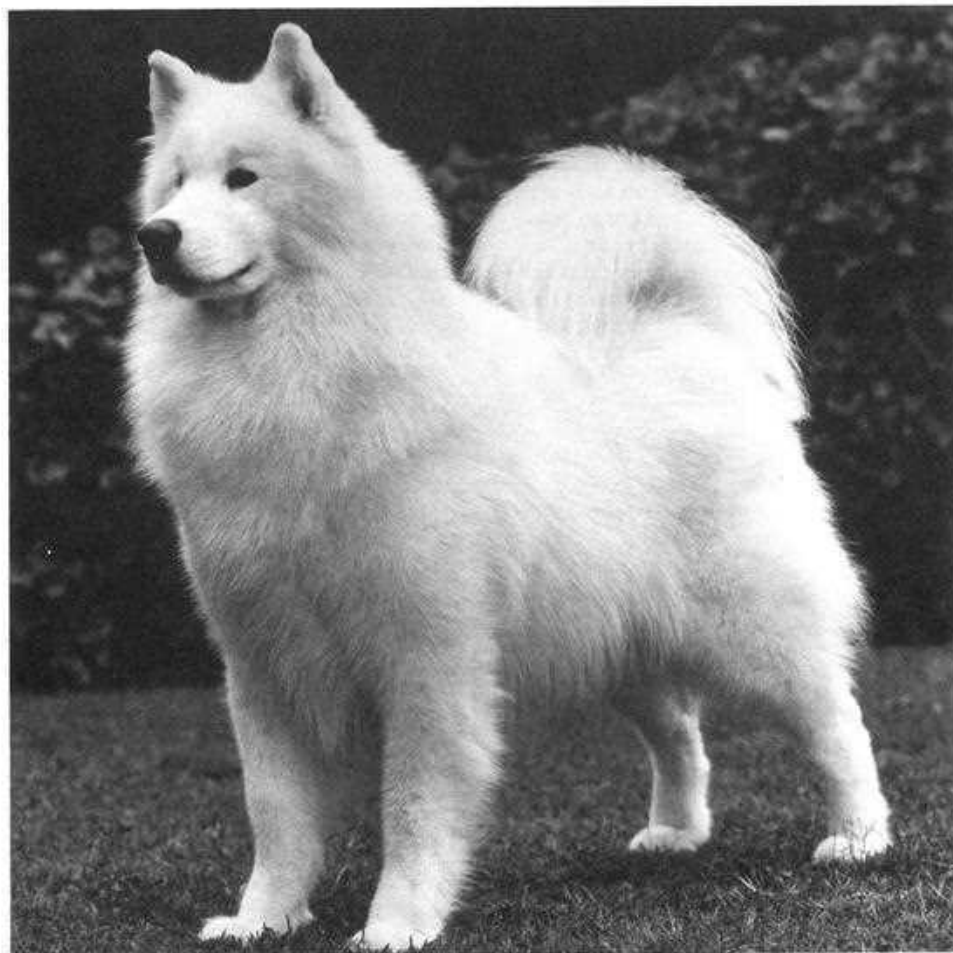
Are topline something that most Sammy people don't even see?

Bob: Very few talk about them. Some people who are established in the breed pay some attention to it, but often people without very much experience are overwhelmed by the coat. Really, what you need to do in order to understand the value of topline and structure is put your hands on several hundred dogs, which is what we did when we first got into dogs and traveled all around the country. We felt every dog in

every famous kennel that we could get our hands on. We also took photographs of them. We took an eight-millimeter camera and photographed every dog moving. We have rolls and rolls of eight-millimeter film of some of those early dogs. We looked at those in slow motion and tried to figure out why some dogs appeared to move better than others. It was a very valuable learning experience.

Everybody now has access to video cameras and it's much easier and cheaper to do these things, but very few people are willing to take the time to feel several hundred dogs and photograph several hundred dogs. But that's what you really need to do if you want to become familiar with the variations in the breed, how the different structural parts relate to each other, what they look like, both in slow motion and when the dog is moving fast. You really need to do some thinking about how all these different parts and pieces fit and work together if you are going to understand structure and movement.

Wanda: We had a discussion recently with someone who put all their emphasis, when talking about side gait, on the rear



Ch. Ivan Belaya of Taymylyr CD.

movement; whereas we put the majority of our emphasis on the shoulder layback, the upper arm, the pastern, the front assembly. It took us quite a while of talking to figure out that the part of what we were saying affected what they were looking at, and part of what they were saying affected what we looked at.

Bob: We placed emphasis on fronts because fronts have more structural parts; therefore, it's harder to breed a good front than it is to breed a good rear. There are more things that have to be taken into consideration.

Wanda: It's also harder because there's no bony connection; it's all slung together with muscles and tendons.

Bob: Yes, you need to have the bones and angles right, but unless you are also breeding for the proper muscle shape, length and structure, you are not going to be able to put together a good front. People who just feel for the bones and don't look at how the dog moves and how the muscles are allowing these bones to interact with each other are missing half of the picture.

Which dog has been your biggest winner?

Wanda: Connie, no question about that. I go to a ranch, which I will be going to next week, where a guy teaches self-confidence, positive outlook, teaches that anything you set your mind to, you can do. We had never speialed dogs; that just wasn't the game we wanted to play. Connie was so good that she just demanded to be shown as a special. We went through a period of talking with people about whether we should hire a handler, sell her to somebody who would hire a handler, or find a sponsor. I think she is probably capable of being one of the top-winning Sams in the country. After a couple tries at different things I said, "This is not fun. You say you can do anything you want to do? Go do it." So, I did. What we decided our aim was, was to make her a dog people knew on a first name basis. Just like people used to know Chief, Scarlet, and different dogs by a single name, I wanted them to know who Connie was, and a number of them do now.

She is a couch potato, very much so. She is probably the least obedient dog I have. She simply does not play when I tell her she must do something. The only way to relate to her is to ask her kindly to "Do this, please." That's a real different attitude for somebody who has been doing obedience for 35 years. I don't know whether I'll ever get a CD on her or not. I haven't figured out how to even approach the subject! (laughter)

Bob: And she is a real couch potato, too. When we're campaigning her, she has to get at least fifteen miles of roadwork every week, and we have to keep her weight within about one pound of opti-

mum. If she gets a little too fat, she starts rolling; if she gets a little too thin, she doesn't feel substantial enough when the judges put their hands on her. She's got to be exactly in the proper condition in order to do well.

Wanda: I think the conditioning makes the difference in the dogs where people say, "The handler won." The handler probably conditioned that dog, and three-quarters of the rest of them in the ring weren't in as good condition.

Bob: That dog was probably on the treadmill at the handler's four and five days a week. That doesn't come by accident. There are very few bloodlines that will produce Sams that feel as solid as a sporting dog that's worked in the field. Most Sams feel like family pets when you put your hands on them in the ring - sloppy is the only way to describe it. When they feel that way, they move that way, and, if you don't believe me, look at them in slow motion sometime.

Wanda: You had asked what was the best pet we ever had. That has to be Jeremiah. Jeremiah was 25 1/2 inches, 58 pounds, when he was in his proper weight, and that's a tall, lean dog. He was my CDX dog that I could have gone on and gotten a UD on, but he got heartworm. I've had three CDX's and never gotten a UD. He would do anything that I wanted him to do.

He was born in the six months we were out in California. Our routine was to take young puppies out and have them swim when they were eight or ten weeks old, and he missed that. We were at a friend's house who has Goldens, and they had a pond and stream. One of the things the Goldens did was run down to the other side of the stream to take a shortcut, then jump in the water and come to you. He got down to the water and said, "What's this stuff?" and he splashed right in with the Goldens. He'd never seen a stream before, but I called him so he came. We have a movie of him running loose up there, by the way. It's just gorgeous.

The other thing he did up there one time was, there was a roll of wire fencing up there and he hit it with his back pastern and it went right through. Luckily, it went out around the tendons and bones and just stretched the skin and came out the other side. I took him to the veterinarian - had a substitute vet that day, of course - and he was sure I was the typical, hysterical mother. He saw the entrance wound, couldn't see the exit wound, and he wouldn't believe me that the wire had been all the way through until I finally insisted that he shave the whole leg. We normally don't let anybody near our dogs with a clipper. But he finally saw that it had gone all the way through, he filled the tunnel with antibiotics and Jeremy healed just fine. The minute he

hit that wire, I was probably 75 feet away and I yelled, "Jeremiah, stay!" and he froze, never moved another half step.

Bob: And Wanda was able to go up to him and remove the wire from his leg.

Wanda: Otherwise, it would have probably torn through. He was my gee/haw command leader. He could take a team of six or eight dogs past anything I told him to take them past. We had a neighboring Malamute who thought it was great sport to come out and jump into the middle of the team. There was a pig farm and everybody wanted to see the pigs and I'd say, "Jeremiah, take them on by," and he took them. There was no question, he was going. The only time he was in a weight pull, he pulled 1,050 pounds and won his class, won the 1,050 of dog food.

Bob: Wanda was the one who trained Jeremiah to be a leader. She decided we needed a lead dog and she went out and trained one, the same way she would train an obedience dog.

Wanda: I used the Lee Fishback *Training My Way*, which is still the nearest book I know of on how to train a sled dog. We ran our dogs as recreational dogs for years, did some racing when Jeremiah was the leader, but we never came in last. There was always, at every race, an award called the "red lantern," and we never got it. We had control. He never took a wrong turn or went off the trail. But we were competing with kids who weighed 50 pounds out there, with three or five of their parents' twenty-mile per hour crossbred Huskies, and we felt we were doing fine for what we wanted to do.

Bob: Wanda did the training of the lead dog, and I was generally the one who took them out during the week. When we were competing regularly, of course, we needed to build up the speed and endurance of the dogs, so I was the one elected to do the wind sprints up the hills and that sort of thing. (laughter)

Wanda: I think our best year we had something like 400 miles of training on them before the season started - and that's why we don't do it anymore. (laughter)

Bob: It takes a lot of time and effort to compete if you are going to do it properly, and I would have been embarrassed to come in last. As it was, we generally came in in the middle or the last third of the dogs, competing mainly against Alaskan Huskies. I don't think we did too badly. On the other hand, we obviously didn't burn up the trail.

Wanda: This other thing we did was teach all those funny black and gray dogs what white dogs were. When we started running with that group, a lot of the teams wanted to stop to see what those funny looking white dogs were. (laughter) Over the three years that we ran in the races, we got them all accustomed to white dogs.

Can pedigrees in Samoyeds be trusted as to accuracy?

Wanda: For the most part.

Bob: I don't think people deliberately try to falsify pedigrees. You find a lot of misspelled names in them. If you are dealing with reputable breeders, generally there is no problem. It's to their advantage to maintain honesty in the pedigrees for their own sake as well as for the people they sell puppies to. We've never encountered any falsification in pedigrees in our twenty years.

Wanda: We look at the ethics this way: If they are falsifying the pedigrees, if they are taking a different dog to get hip X-rays or eye checks, if they're breeding a lesser dog when you ship your bitch that is supposedly to be bred to the good dog, it's not going to help. Since you HAVE to trust people on some of these things, you might as well trust them on all of them.

I know of two cases back in history where people were pretty open about the fact that there were some mismatings or something wasn't the way it appeared on paper, but those are the only two I know about. Being as the dogs look so much alike, it's basically up to us to be honest. The vets aren't going to know if we bring a different dog. Many times, we'll have people come up to us and say, "Now, which one is this?" indicating that we probably could take in a bitch that shows well, for her sister that doesn't. But what would that gain us?

How do you use inbreeding, linebreeding and outcrossing?

Wanda: We do most of our breedings somewhere in the region of inbreedings to linebreedings. Not very many half brother/half sister or father/daughter, although we have done father/daughters. There was an old horse breeder, whose name I can't recall, who did a treatise back in the 1890's, before they knew much about genetics, most of which was bunk. But one of the things he did was put out a plan of what made the best breedings. He said that the sire of the dam should be the grandsire of the sire on the dam's side. The funny thing is, as we look back, a lot of our breedings have been that or similar. I've read books on plant genetics, cattle breeding, rabbit breeding ...

Bob: What seems to work best for us is uncle/niece and aunt/nephew. That generally produces very good dogs; whereas, half brother/half sister, who you would think ought to be similar, don't turn out as well. Grandfather/granddaughter is usually a pretty good breeding, too. Full brother/full sister, father/daughter or mother/son generally tend to produce more faults for us rather than the virtues for some reason.

Wanda: The thing most people don't realize about inbreeding is that it is a plain

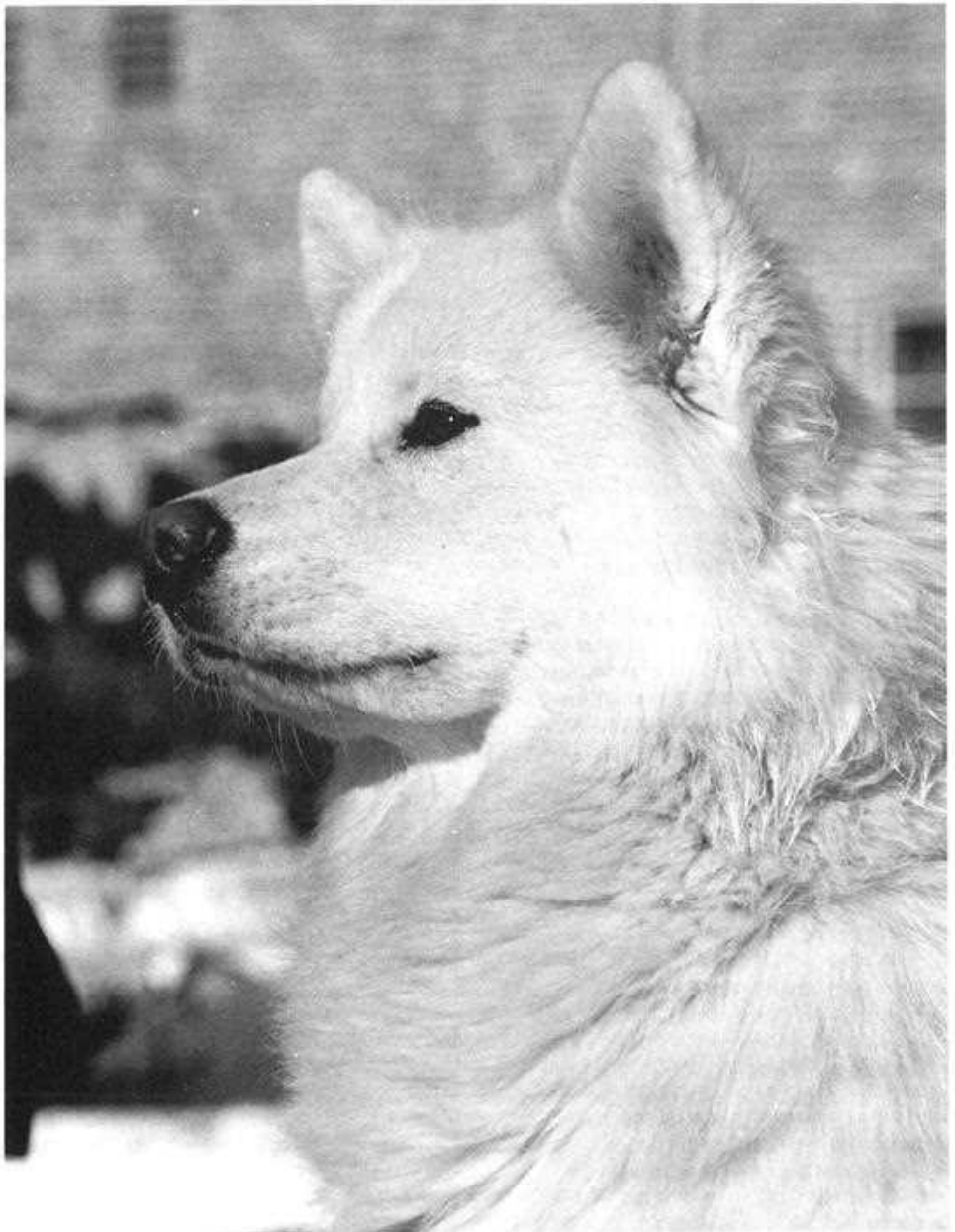
and simple method of intensifying what you have. It intensifies the good that you have, but it also intensifies the problems you may have. If you are going to do it you have to be willing to make the tough selections. You have to be willing to put down the dogs that are not whole, you have to be very careful about where those dogs are bred, and it's not something for everybody to do. We think of breeding within a gene pool. We started with Ch. Nachalnik of Drayalene. Everything down from him for three or four generations we figure are all dogs we are interested in. We bred to Sun Dancer and looked at dogs that are down from him a couple of generations; we think of all the dogs that came down

from Ivan, because there weren't very many of them as part of our pool ...

Bob: And Ivan goes back to Drayalene, too.

Wanda: And then we've brought in two outcrosses. We bred to Ch. Scandia's Kejsare, who is down from some of the Kondako dogs, so he isn't fully an outcross. We feel our type of dog was primarily a good length of leg, good angulation, shorter coats - working coats, the narrower heads, more the 50-50 type heads that Bob Ward was talking about our losing, but we still have several of them.

Then there is another type that is less angulated, wider of body, usually heavy coated. A good share of them have lots of



K-Way's Mint Julip of Vicrian.

pigment. They are a different kind of dog than what we are looking for. Twice, we've gone out to that kind of dog, and within that class we tried to pick the best moving ones we could find. We did that with Ch. Scandia's Kejsare and Am/Can Ch. Snow Fantasy's Main Man. Main Man was the top-winning Sam in Canada for a couple of years, finished real easily, both in the States and in Canada. He was an absolute, total outcross with not a common dog in six generations. Almost everything we have now has some Main Man in it. We don't have much left that had the Kejsare in it. One of those breedings had all bitches. It was real hard to breed to a male out of that litter. One of the litters, the bitch had an infection while she was in whelp, and out of seven puppies, there were only two healthy puppies.

We picked up better pigment and got that more profuse coat, which is not really a correct coat. If you feel those profuse coats, the great majority of them are too soft. Again, you go back to the working basis where the working body has to dissipate its heat, and literally one of the reasons Sams don't work as well in harness is they get too hot. If it's a real long, droopy coat, it will get icicles and look like a Kuvasz. (laughter)

One of the hardest things we ever did was, in one of the Main Man litters, we literally co-bred that litter with the owner of the sire. We whelped the litter, kept it the first four weeks, and she kept it the second four weeks. Then we went to her house and picked out puppies. There was one female that was absolutely the thing that we had bred to him for, but didn't have all the things we look for in our dogs. There was another bitch that was just exactly what we like, but didn't have the characteristics that we made the breeding for. We kept gravitating to her and they kept gravitating to the first one. At the end of the day, we took home the one we had made the breeding for. That was exactly what we had to do, but it was terribly hard. That's Am/Can Ch. K-Way's Classic Snow Fantasy, who had a Group placement as a puppy, has produced extremely well for us, and has been kind of an intermediary foundation for us.

How many dogs do you have now?

Wanda: About fifteen. We'd like to be down to twelve or so.

What's the most you've ever kept?

Wanda: I think we had 23 one time.

Bob: That gets to be an overwhelming number of dogs to feed, groom, exercise and clean up after. I would feel more comfortable with around twelve to fifteen. That would be a comfortable amount to handle without extra kennel help and still maintain a normal lifestyle. Otherwise, you are spending every night at home grooming dogs, cleaning teeth, cutting toenails.

Wanda: I spend about one week a month going through the whole kennel grooming everybody.

Who or what has influenced your breeding the most?

Wanda: How big a list? (laughter)

Bob: Right. We just seem to pick up little bits and pieces all over the place and develop our own style. I don't think you could say there was any one really strong influence. It's more a combination of little things here and there, but what we've tried to do is keep an open mind. If we don't understand something, we try to evaluate it and see if it fits into our overall conceptual picture of what the breed ought to be like. We consider the source. If someone who has been established in the breed a long time makes an observation and we don't agree with it, we try to figure out why. If somebody says something that we agree with, an interesting thing happens; we just accept it and go on from there.

However, I've discovered something very unusual and that is you have to reevaluate all your concepts about every five years. No matter how strongly you may believe something, and believe that it is

always true, somewhere along the way you are going to find an exception, and then the question arises, why is it an exception?

Why doesn't this one fit the pattern that you are used to? If you think about it long and hard enough, you'll find there are some added facts that you weren't taking into consideration, and you'll become more knowledgeable if you can understand why the exceptions exist.

Wanda: We ran into that three or four years ago. We go over dogs and usually pretty well agree what we are feeling. Somebody brought a bitch to us and asked us to go over her, and I wasn't impressed with her shoulder layback at all. Bob went over her and said, "She has a pretty good shoulder." I said, "What?!" It turned out, we didn't realize it, that one of us measures the points on the outer edge of the bone, the highest point of the shoulder and the furthest front point, and the other one feels the actual ridge of bone. In this bitch, the ridge of bone was not placed on the flat shoulder the same as anybody else we've ever felt. Actually, we've felt a couple since then.

Bob: The muscles were attached in a



Ch. K-Way's Rainbow Chaser.

slightly different place. What that indicates is simply that those dogs are going to move differently from others. If you aren't aware of the fact that the muscles might attach in a different place, you might assume that you can feel for the points of bone or the ridge of bone and you will thoroughly understand what's going on when you see the front action on the dog. Lo and behold, that's true most of the time, but not always.

Wanda: But that's turned into something we have to check for if things don't feel like they ought to look - or don't look like what they ought to from what they feel. (laughter)

Bob: So you go back and make a more detailed study the next time. You feel the dog, you watch it move, and, "No, it shouldn't move that way from what I felt." You go back and feel again. There's generally always a reason why a dog will move a certain way, a physical reason that you can find if you take time enough to examine the dog.

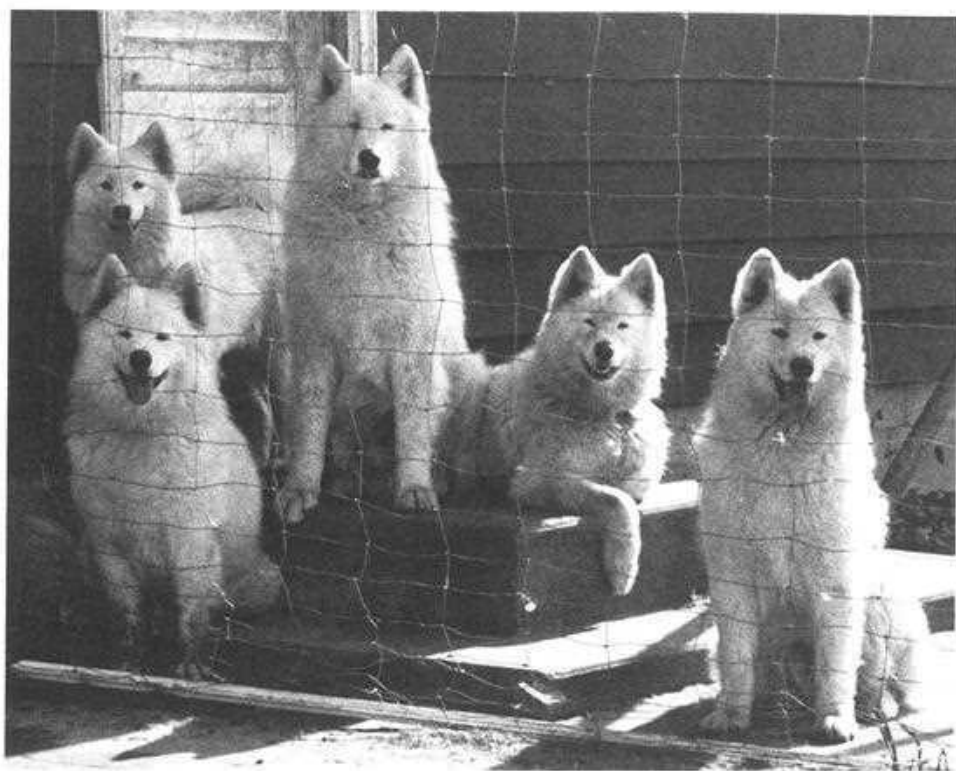
Wanda: Or a mental reason. Those are harder.

Bob: For a long time we had thought that it was really weird that there are some dogs that move really wide in the rear, like they are getting ready to dump a load on the ground. It really bothered us, because sometimes they would look good, and other times they would move with their rear real wide, and you feel the dog and there is nothing in the croup, nothing in the hips, nothing in the stifle, the hocks look good - why should the dogs move that way? Wanda discovered this. I don't know whether it was by accident or what.

Wanda: I went over a litter of three-week-old puppies from a line that frequently did this. I said, "My gosh, how long those ribs are!" We had always thought the longer the rib carriage carried through, the better - more room for lungs. But it can be too long. Then, if the stifle comes up and hits the rib cage, the dog starts moving wide so he can get around his rib cage.

By the way, when I was telling about Jeremiah being run through with the wire, I didn't really finish a point I wanted to make. When we went to the veterinarian, as long as I had my hand on the dog, he would not flinch no matter what the vet did to him. I was implying that whatever he did was acceptable. I had to consciously take my hand off the dog before he would show that he was hurting. In the puppy temperament test, where you pinch the toes, with some dogs there is quite a difference from if they are sitting facing you, and what they do if they are snuggled back in your lap touching you.

Bob: If they are sitting in your lap, sometimes they will tolerate a much higher threshold of pain. If you are aware of this when you take your dog to the vet, you will stand back and let the vet examine your



Touch of Class, Jeremiah Johnson, Gay Gazelle, Shanna and Wind Chaser.

dog without your hands being on it. On the other hand, if the vet is going to do a procedure that might be a little bit painful, you are better off holding onto the dog. Now that we've added that little aside, where were we? (laughter)

Wanda: Since we are adding little bits to things, in talking about Connie being the best show dog, people are absolutely dumbfounded when I say, "Yes, she's by far the best show dog we've ever bred, but we've had a lot of better Samoyeds." They just don't compute. "If this one wins, how can another one be better?" That is, I think, what is going wrong. The way we started was, you worked the dog, you knew how the dog was built, you knew what it gave you on the trail and so on - you knew it was a good dog. If you took it into the ring and the judge didn't like it, that's his problem, not mine. (laughter)

I think many people have gotten away from that attitude, that we should know what our dog is going to be over a lifetime. We know this year-and-a-half-old dog that is still in the adolescent stages; when it's four years old, it's going to be a magnificent dog, but you have to look at a lot of dogs over a life span. You have to know that this dog is out and winning as a six-month-old puppy, but his career is going to be done early. Don't bother to take him out anymore after he is five. I think the first dog is the better dog.

Bob: The dogs that tend to mature more slowly and be in good shape and

more sound for a longer period of time as adults.

Wanda: This is important both in working dogs and pets. Once you spend the time and energy to train a dog, whether for herding, hunting, sledding, you want that dog to live and do his job for as long as possible; if you are talking about being a pet, you want that dog to live until he is fifteen years old and drop over dead with no pain. As we breed more towards early maturing dogs, we are going to get away from that.

Bob: You see a lot of that today. People place too much emphasis on winning in selecting their breeding stock. As a result, the dog that is doing a lot of winning is THE fashionable dog to breed to these days. Unfortunately, people miss the point. They don't trust their own judgment. Maybe they aren't well enough educated, but they should be able to look at a dog and decide whether it's good without necessarily accepting the opinions of judges. People are looking for show stock that matures sooner, is flashy, is perhaps a little too much overdone in terms of the features in the head, the amount of coat, the general showmanship of the dog. A large part of that may just be training and presentation, and may be related to the dog's actual personality. As a result, the big winners are the ones that a lot of people breed to for the wrong reasons.

What people fail to look at is the fact that, often times, these big winners are out-

crosses. They aren't prepotent for the characteristics they have and people are disappointed when they get the puppies and discover they aren't quite the same as the parent, or, what may be worse, they get one that looks just like this big, top-winning star, and they go into the ring with something that might not be as physically sound or as temperamentally sound, but will do a fair amount of winning. They are not really improving the breed. All they are doing is breeding better show dogs. You lose some of the type that's associated with the working characteristics of the breed by doing this. You lose some of the temperament that goes along with making good pets. A lot of dogs that are really showy in the ring have big egos. They are not as good a pet as some other dog that may not be as flashy or as pushy, but might relate better to a family and be less of a discipline problem at home.

Wanda: There's a book by Carmen Battaglia called *How to Breed Better Dogs*, or something along that line, where the author talks about seeing as many get as you can. He's basically talking about how to pick a stud dog. He talks about evaluating the dogs, giving them letter grades, and seeing out of this bitch he produced puppies that were like this, and out of this bitch puppies that were like that, and it gets you more into the idea of evaluating the whole dog. We keep talking about parts, but the basic unit is one dog.

Bob: We were talking earlier about whether the genotype or phenotype is the most important, and we overlooked the one most important characteristic of picking a stud, and that is, looking at his get. The real measure of a stud is not what he looks like, or who his parents or grandparents were, but what he produces. This you can only determine by looking at a number of his early litters, looking at their dams, and seeing if he made an improvement, and, if so, where. Then you can be a far better judge of what this stud is likely to produce with your bitch. This is the way people ought to be picking their breeding stock rather than just picking this year's biggest winners.

Wanda: That gets a little hard, because people tend to keep what they feel is the best from the litter, and you don't necessarily get to see the ones they place as pets. One article I read recommended placing your poorest dog from every litter close by and going to see them periodically, just to keep yourself on an even scale to see how well you've done. (laughter)

Bob: The true measure of breeding is not to produce one good dog out of a litter of ten bad or mediocre dogs. You are trying to improve the quality of the whole litter and hoping you will have one or two standouts. I really think people ought to place more emphasis on looking at the

worst dog they produce in each litter.

Wanda: I've heard a lot of emphasis that every litter should be better than the previous one. I think that's pretty unrealistic. It's hard enough to keep your assets and gradually add a few things in. The people who think they are going to improve every time are not realistic.

Bob: For one or two generations it might be possible to improve, especially if you start out with mediocre breeding stock. The better your stock is, the harder it is to improve with each successive generation, and the harder it is to hold onto those qualities you value while trying to add other ones.

Wanda: One of the really early pieces of advice that we profited well from was from Joyce Cain, who was the dean of Samoyeds in Wisconsin. For some reason, we agreed to take her home from a show in



Gazelle, May 1975.

Wisconsin. Since her home was about two hours from ours, I don't know how it was that we did that, but we stopped in a little restaurant. That was the time when we had our original bitch and were thinking of buying a puppy from a real nice breeding or getting the second bitch from Phyllis Watson. We had a repeat stud service coming on the first bitch.

Bob: We had three options. We could repeat the stud service on the first bitch, where we had the one puppy litter that had the faults of both the sire and the dam; we could buy a well-bred puppy; or we could buy a well-bred adult. Which option should we choose? Joyce's comment was, "You know that the first bitch did not produce well." We had shown her enough times to realize that she was sort of mediocre, too, and Joyce said, "If you work hard for two or three generations, you could really produce some pretty nice stuff. You will have invested lots of money, time, effort and five years of your life. Or you

could let somebody else invest five years of their life and lots of money and time and buy a puppy from them and start from where they are."

Wanda: We talked about how to be the kind of person to whom someone would sell a really good bitch, which is another subject entirely. After talking to her, we bought the adult bitch who was Shanna, our foundation, and also put in the reservation with the Hodges for the real nice puppy, but the breeding never took place. When their bitch got to the stud he said, "No, thank you." They ended up breeding to a son of his, which didn't turn out nearly as well as we had hoped.

Bob: Getting an adult or a very young bitch, say a two-year-old that is already matured that you have hip X-rays on, that you have eye checks on, that you know is sound, a good looking animal, and has already gone through most of the uglies in the puppy stages and all the things that can go wrong with dogs, you have something you will be able to breed in the next year and show right away, that really is a tremendous advantage - a real leg up on getting started in dogs.

Wanda: It's almost the only way to start if you want to be serious about it. If you want to go through all the cute puppy stuff, you may have to do that two or three times.

Bob: Our experience has been that generally you are lucky if one out of three great looking puppies turns out to be the adult people expect. A lot of promising pups are going to fall by the wayside. You keep those in your kennel as pets. Even though they might finish their championship, they aren't worth terribly much as breeding stock. Or, you place them in pet homes somewhere along the way.

It is amazing how people will buy a puppy, and when it's eighteen months old, they get another puppy to breed to the first one without having any idea of how the animals are going to mature or what the qualities are or the faults are.

Bob: Yes, and what's worse is when you ask them what some of the other family members are like, some of the ancestors, and they don't know. They just say, "The breeder told me this would be a good dog when it grows up." Well, sure, that's what everybody hopes! (laughter) The real world isn't quite that nice. If it were, we'd all have Group winners and Best in Show, right? (laughter)

Why K-Way for a kennel name?

Bob: That came from our first dog who was named Kapu. We had Kapu, who was owned by the Krausses, and the K seemed an appropriate letter to put in there.

Wanda: I think it was around the time of the song, "My Way." (laughter)

Bob: We also wanted something short because we were well aware of AKC's restriction on the number of boxes in the

registration applications.

Wanda: What we weren't aware of is that they don't allow any hyphenated words, so it's not registerable.

Bob: However, there haven't been too many people who have used K-Way in our own breed or others. We found a roofing contractor in our town who is named K-Way, but, other than that, it seems to be fairly unique.

Wanda: There's a company that makes soda dispensers for the bars that says "K-Way" on the top of the dispenser. (laughter)

Do you name your litters with any sort of scheme?

Wanda: To some extent, yes. We like to reflect something in who the parents are. For example, we bred Ch. K-Way's High Flying Destiny to Ch. Northwind's Rising Star, and named puppies things like High Flying Star, Fly Me To The Stars, High Flying Rock Star, and another one which escapes me at the moment. We've had series of names. We had Wind Chaser, whose daughter was Rainbow Chaser, whose daughter was Rainbow Connection. We had Touch of Class, whose daughter was Head of the Class, whose daughter was Quilting Class, whose daughter was Classical K-Way. Everybody says, "Which class is this?" (laughter) Most of them were all named Class. Out of Hoss (Quilted Bear), we had Quilting Class, and we had his daughter Ch. Char-Soo's Bonanza of K-Way, and we have a champion son of hers named Cartwright.

I can't tell you why sometimes we go with names that have to do with the names of the parents, and sometimes we go off completely on their own. High Flying Destiny should have been a Class, too, but wasn't. Omen of Destiny came because he was a dog that had a lot of characteristics that we wanted in our ultimate dog. He came to us by accident, as I told you. The dog we have as our logo I had drawn about three months before he was born. We feel that Omen is very much the dog in that logo. He was made to order. I would like to have had more of his kids named "of Destiny." We have the frozen semen and we can have some more Destinys.

Bob: I'm afraid that once you get hooked in this sort of thing, it's hard to stop. You always feel that the next litter is really going to be the great one. It's one of the things that keeps us going.

Do you think you have established a distinguishable line?

Wanda: People have told us we have. For example, I can remember Paula Phillips going to a show where there was a puppy that we had sold to somebody in a different area, and that we didn't have any particular contact with - it wasn't really our dog anymore. Paula said, "I walked up to the ring and saw that and said, 'That one must be a



Ch. Char-Soo's Bonanza of K-Way.

K-Way dog."

Bob: People have said they can tell it's a K-Way dog from how it moves. We seem to have a certain look to our dogs, too, in the heads and faces. If you want to be really practical about it, you have to admit that dog breeding is sort of like building sand castles at the beach: You can work real hard building a line, and if you stop producing, it will disappear within a couple of generations. You dissipate the dogs to other breeders, they do their own thing, and, as a result, whatever distinction you might have had will disappear very fast.

Wanda: We kind of established the structure and movement that we wanted, and made some efforts towards making a prettier face since our basic model lacked that essential. There are a number of dogs that are much prettier than our basic stock was, and people don't tend to recognize those as K-Way. We probably have a different definition of type when it comes to what heads should be like, because a couple of things that we really feel the breed is in danger of losing, very much define our type - eyes that slant and lip lines that turn up into a smile. You look at a large entry of dogs and you very seldom see those anymore. As a breed, we've gone through big eyes, triangular eyes, and all kinds of eyes, and we've gotten back to a pretty good shape, but they are almost always set straight across the head, but they need to slant up to have that expression that is a Samoyed. It's the same with the lip line.

The end of the lip line has to turn up when the mouth is closed to be the dog that smiles. We are getting a lot of loose lip lines and even wet flews.

Bob: It started about ten years ago when everybody wanted to get a bear head and small ears. As a result, they bred for more head so you could hide the ears, and they started making the muzzles shorter, so you now have a lot of Sams that look like Chows, and, of course, they bred for the human-like, round eye. In the process they've lost the relationship of the features, and they've got these coarse, heavy flews that go with the bigger, broader heads.

Wanda: Actually, I think part of that comes from the shortened nose, too. There's that skin there, and the skin is the last thing to change shape.

Bob: Yes, and that's probably why the eyes are beginning to flatten out and become more horizontal, too. With the shorter muzzle, the head compresses and you don't have everything set on the side of the head. The muzzle tends to be pushed into the head, so the center of the head and the inner part of the eye tends to move more towards the ear, and the slant of the eye is lost. People ought to take a very good look at the old SCA emblem with Peter of Kobe in there to recall what an old Sam ought to look like. The lighter head is still what the standard calls for.

Wanda: People talk about those big, overgrown dogs as being typey dogs, but if you ask them specifically what's typey about them, they don't know. They don't

even know what they should be, so how can they select for that? The same way with the coats. The two acceptable coats were the real short working coat and the longer shawl type coat, but we've gotten a long all over coat at least as long, if not longer, than the shawl. People have gotten away from knowing what a working coat is. I tried to give an example to somebody of a rather famous dog of the past, and they didn't know what I was talking about! I said, "Uh-oh. I gotta readjust my time scale!" (laughter)

One of the strangest things, to me, is being considered an expert, somebody who knows things, because I always think of myself as the student going out and learning these things. Shortly after we wrote the Juliet Goodrich pedigree book, we had somebody tell us that they had been at the National Specialty and would have liked to have talked to us, but they didn't think they could bother us. For crying out loud! Come to talk to us! That's what we go to specialties for. (laughter)

Bob: I work at a university. I've been a student for 50 years. When I get a new job, I figure out what the problem is, and then go to the library and bone up on what I need to know to solve it. Being a student of dogs is the same way. You are never going to learn everything no matter how long you work at it, and you need to reevaluate your positions on everything, because, since you are never going to know it all, you are going to make some mistakes along the way. You are going to neglect to take account of the exceptions to the rules, you're going to get into mental dead ends, you are actually going to evolve into some wrong concepts, and, occasionally, have to receive a kick in the pants from somebody.

It's not at all unusual to start thinking in certain ways, and sort of get into a loop, where you are feeding on your own ideas rather than evaluating them against other people's. You become insensitive to anything that is different from the way you think or the way you are currently thinking; consequently, you end up with this inbred thought, which may be, indeed, wrong. It may not have started out wrong, but over a few years you may have built it up and embellished it to where it absolutely doesn't make sense anymore. That's where it's very helpful to be continually talking with other people who are established and knowledgeable and whose opinion you can trust, and keep bouncing ideas off of each other. You are always going to learn something. If nothing else, it will open your ideas to something you have neglected.

Wanda: To some extent, they don't even need to be Samoyed people. We've picked up various relationships of parts that you don't immediately see by talking to a terrier person. One of the measurements we make came out of a veterinarian who

had examined a litter of wolves.

Bob: You are really doing yourself a disservice, if you want to be a Sammy breeder, if you don't talk to people in other breeds.

Wanda: That's one of the things I'm hoping for with Working titles that will get us out amongst people doing whatever activity of work that they choose to do, people who are doing agility, because that's one of the things we need to keep in our Sams. We don't want fence post legs and dogs that plod. We want dogs that can go over jumps, spring around things, and turn quickly. Part of that goes back to the herding part of Samoyeds. Yes, there are parts that say they have to draw heavy loads, but there are also parts that say they have to have all-day endurance, and be able to turn quick to avoid the kicking caribou.

Bob: Yes, they can't all be junior Malamutes with cow heads. Sorry, that just won't fly. Or should I say, won't run all day long? (laughter)

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

Wanda: Temperament first. We are going to have to live with the dogs, first. There are a few people who have dogs and keep them in kennels with none in their house, but most of us live with our dogs. To the extent that we are doing well for the breed, we are producing good pets for people who want dogs. I read an article in a horse magazine that the overall aim is to produce good geldings for people to take out and use. That, in essence, is what we are doing with our pets. We need a dog that is long lived, healthy, easy to keep up and has good temperament. There are dogs that we have liked and not bred to because of their temperament. There is a lot that goes into evaluating temperament. You can't just make a snap judgment that one dog's temperament is terrible because of one instance you see in the ring or something. That is, perhaps, one of the things that goes by the wayside if we get to the point of being able to do shipping of semen, and so on. Presumably, you could breed to a dog you've never been in a room with, but we have to see the dogs. We have to get to know the dogs. We want to observe the dog over some length of life to see if it's getting better as it gets older or if it's a flash in the pan.

Bob: We very rarely will breed to a dog unless it has been around for several years and has several litters on the ground. Of course, as far as soundness goes, most family pets do not have to be terribly sound in order to survive around a house, live in the backyard and play with the kids. Most dogs are able to do that quite well. On the other hand, a lot of the dogs we saw in the early '70's, when we were fresh out of horses and just getting started, because of their cow hocks, floppy pasterns, poor shoulder

layback and bouncy gaits would have terrible trouble herding reindeer for as much as an hour. For those who are really interested in breeding top quality Sams that are truly typey, you have to consider function and soundness as part of what type is all about.

Wanda: Type and soundness, or structure and movement, or however you want to put it, is all one thing. If all the pieces are in the right place and work together, then that's typey. The head type things I mentioned are important. We won't accept a dog that is too far out in any direction on anything. I've done enough ringside judging that I guess I would probably judge on structure and movement first rather than type, but I'm not sure that that's the way we breed. (laughter) I read an article - I've done a lot of reading in 25 years - in an old illustrated standard that was put out by *Dog World*, who used to, every few years, put out a picture of every breed and print the words of the standard right on it, and there was an article in there about what makes a show dog. It talked about breed type, conditioning, showmanship, and soundness in terms of hips and eyes and things like that. The conditioning, the grooming, the exercising, and all that kind of stuff, each of us can do the best we can do, and we probably owe it to our dogs to do that, and not present them in less than well groomed condition, and less than well conditioned.

The sparkiness, the showmanship, is both inbred and trained. You can frequently see it in puppies, but you can depress it, get rid of it, short-circuit it. The structure and movement you have to breed, and the soundness. We simply will not breed a dog that does not have good hips. Again, it doesn't get you anywhere. We knew of some people who bought a bitch, were told that she was x-rayed, and bred it to their dog and got a litter of eight puppies. They all x-rayed clear and everything was fine and wonderful. They bred her to an outside dog and the people demanded an OFA number, or a university hip report, or something of the sort, so they x-rayed her and got a dysplastic reading, so they didn't breed to the outside dog. But they did go on to some extent with these eight nice puppies. There were some Group winners and things in there. But all of those that were bred produced very large proportions of hip dysplasia. They got away with it for one generation, but they didn't get clear.

We do eye checks on our dogs several times during their lives. We are scientific based people who want to know the facts and we want to help get the facts, if we can. We would rather not deal on the basis of rumors and half information. Right at this point, in 1992, Samoyed people are in big trouble. Hopefully, in a couple of years or so, we will have some light at the end of the

tunnel. But between PRA, cataracts, retinal dystrophy, retinal dysplasia, and so on, I don't know where we are going and don't see a way clear at this point.

Bob: People are getting a little more open about the problems now than they were when we were getting started. In the '70's, people weren't as willing to talk about eye problems, and if you go back into the '60's, and even into the '50's, people wouldn't even talk about hip dysplasia - it was something you hid in the back room. People are a little more open now about what they have and the problems they've had. If you spend the time and effort to gather information, you discover that almost every generation has problems of one sort or another. If you are willing to ask established breeders openly - and you've convinced them you are asking honestly for a good reason and not to just spread rumors - they will willingly tell you what difficulties they've had and what problems you ought to look for when you are breeding to their stock.

Wanda: And, to the best of their knowledge, how to get around it, how to solve the problems.

Bob: We need more of this. I'm hoping that sometime in the future our national breed club will establish a genetic screening committee that will be able to gather some

of this information and put it in a central data bank so that when people want to make a breeding, they will be able to get information about relatives and ancestors of dogs that they are considering. Then, they will have a better idea of what problems they are likely to encounter when they make a breeding. Right now, it's like closing your eyes, throwing a dart at the wall, and hoping you don't hit a bad spot.

People who have made three or more breedings and haven't run into any problems feel they have great breeding stock and nothing to worry about, and feel they are doing so much better than anybody else. Their heads are all swelled up about why everybody is having so many problems. They feel all you should have to do is apply yourself and things are going to come out just fine. There is no problem at all to good breeding. (laughter) They just haven't bred enough dogs. They are looking at the world through rose-colored glasses, because they have poor statistics of small numbers; whereas, if you take a good scientific look at what you are likely to encounter based on problems other people have encountered in the breed, you are going to stub your toe a few times. You may breed several good litters in a row and then have a complete disaster. Or, what's worse, you may have a complete disaster

and decide never to breed again. Some people have had that bad luck.

The important thing to keep in mind is that if you work hard, you can build your little sand castle on the beach, and have some fun doing it, but dog breeding, even though there is lots of work and skill involved to produce good animals, is still very much like playing poker in Las Vegas. You can apply yourself and if you work hard, you can become better than most of the people around you, but there is always the luck of the draw and pure chance that is going to give you a kick in the pants now and then. Unless you have a strong enough constitution to tolerate that and work past your problems, you probably aren't going to be successful as a dog breeder for the long run. In fact, it's still true today that a lot of people get into dogs, produce a litter or two, and are out again in under five years. There's a reason for that. Lots of people don't like stubbing their toes.

Wanda: We feel people who have to struggle with their first dog or their first litter get tested by the fire and last longer. The people who have one dog that wins well and finishes quickly, get a second one, and it's not so easy with the second one, so they don't usually get a third one.

To be continued ...

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