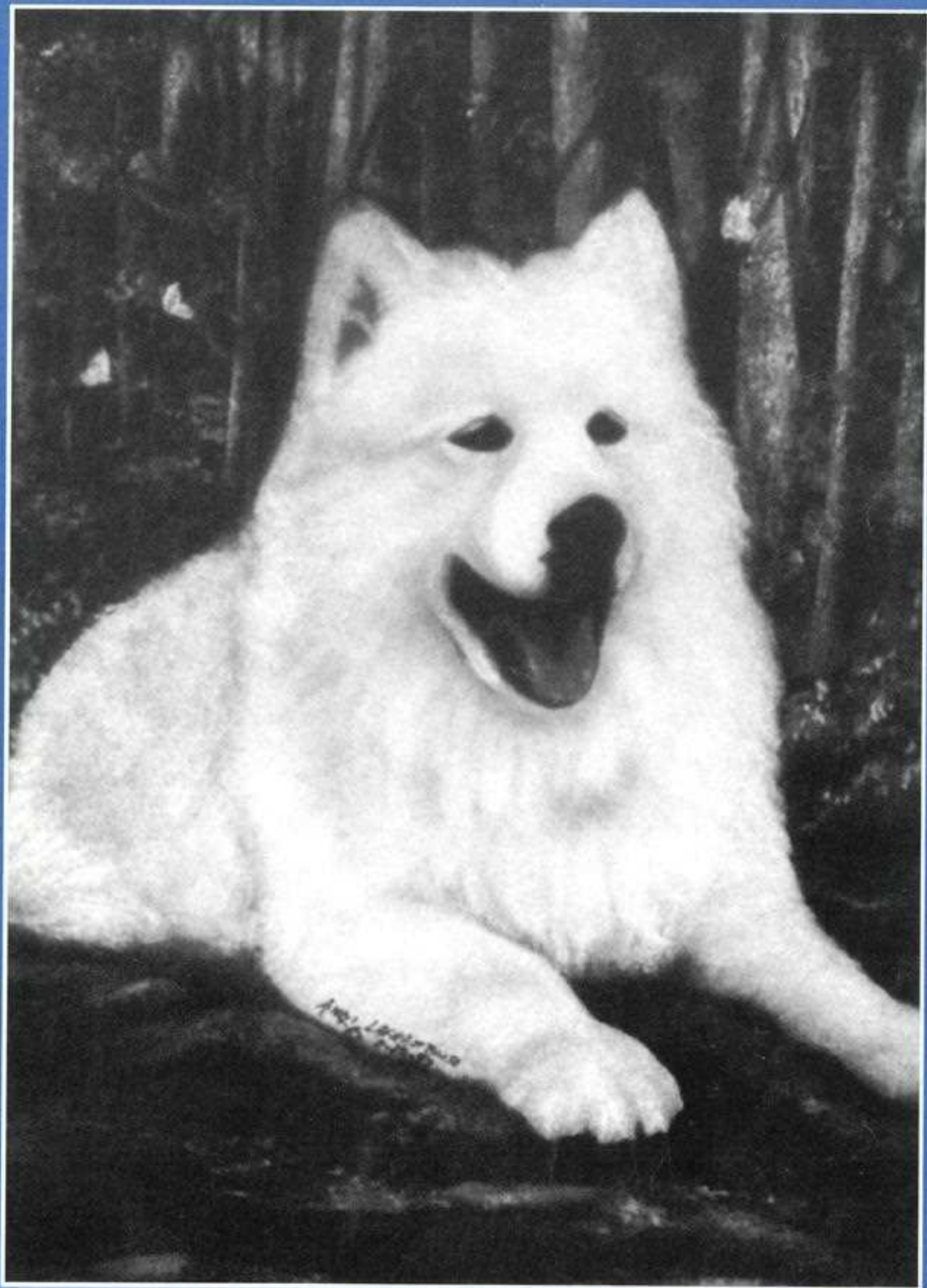


THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Merrill and Rowena Evans
SEELAH
Waukee, Iowa

This interview was conducted at the home of Merrill and Rowena Evans in June of 1996 by Katy Merseal.

How long have you been in Samoyeds?

Merrill: We had our first Sammy in the late 1960s and didn't start showing until 1972.

Why Sammies?

Rowena: I didn't know what the breed was in the first place. When I was a little girl, there was a litter of Eskimo Spitz. I always wanted one. I read a lot of books at the library and thought it was a big sled dog. When I was in the fourth grade, my dad gave me a little Spitz. He didn't pull a sled. I pulled him on the sled. (laughter) When I got older and knew more about the breed, I was married and had children and we could not afford to have a nice dog like that. I always dreamed of this dog. Finally, Merrill was up near Camp McCoy, Wisconsin and he brought one home to me for a birthday or anniversary.

Merrill: It was 1969. We didn't know much about pedigrees then, but we learned from that.

Rowena: It was a good pedigree. We had him X-rayed and he was excellent. He had black points and I really thought we had something. When the dog was about eighteen months old, at what I call the teenager stage, I inquired of a judge who said, "Oh, no. This is not the right line. You should not have bought this dog." She told me all the bad things about the dog, so I had him neutered. I learned later that this was one of the top lines in the country, but the judge and the breeder had been fighting back and forth. We found the dog a nice home and started again with a female. She was something else! She was Merrill's dog and she had every fault you could think of. She traveled in a helicopter with him.

Merrill: She traveled with me in the Army. One evening, dur-



ing the Viet Nam war, I went to the airport to pick up someone. When I came back, I found that someone had poisoned her.

Rowena: We thought she was asleep on the floor, but she was dead.

Merrill: A little while later someone threw a hand grenade through our window, so you have some good experiences and some bad ones, and sometimes you lose a good dog. She was my dog. She traveled with me every-

where and would fly in the helicopter with me.

We next bought a female with good breeding from California. Just before they shipped her they called and said they had two. We didn't have any dogs at that point and thought one would keep the other one company so we bought both of them. We had Little Bo Peep and Little Miss Muffit. That was the beginning of our career in quality Sammies. We finished both dogs.

Rowena: We had their championships and both had CDs.

Merrill: Then Little Bo Peep sired our big guy, "Murdock," Ch. Di Murdock of Seelah. She was the mother of our line. She won the SCA top brood bitch award three years in a row.

Rowena: It was fun because we did it together. Merrill put the first major on Bo Peep. She was out of the Snowfire Kennel.

Merrill: Back in 1982, Mur-



dock won the SCA top show dog award and Bo Peep won top brood bitch, and we had the top stud dog, all in one year. For five consecutive years, we had the SCA top brood bitch and Murdock won the top show dog award for two consecutive years. He retired and his son, "Bucky," took over and was the SCA top show dog a year later.

Rowena: Bucky's name was Murdock's Marauder of Seelah, but everyone knew him as Bucky.

Merrill: At the SCA National Specialty, in the state of Washington, we swept nearly all the awards including the Grand Futurity Puppy.

Rowena: There was one class that we didn't win in the Futurity that year. Wouldn't you know it, the photographer's pictures were ruined and all we had were some terrible black and white pictures. After all that nice winning, we didn't get a nice picture out of it, which is too bad, because that was a once-in-a-lifetime thing.

Merrill: You only hit the jackpot once. When Murdock was a puppy, I didn't think he looked like much, but he started to win. He is the only dog I know of, however, that had over 40 points but still wasn't a champion.

Rowena: I put everything on him but one major.

Merrill: People wouldn't show in order to break the major and keep him from getting his championship. He was in Louisiana with a handler against three Sammies and took a Group 1 that day and finished. The next weekend he won a Best in Show. The Working Group split a few years ago, but Murdock never was shown after that split. He had 100 Group placements and 216 Bests of Breed. I wanted to retire him after he got his 100th Group placement. After he was retired, we brought out Bucky. We had sold him to a couple in Des Moines and asked them if we could show him in Florida. At his first show, on the Florida circuit, at six months and three days old, he won a four-point major. The second and third days he won four-point majors, so he had twelve points at six months and one week of age. We brought him home and gave him back to the owner. We borrowed him again a month later and took him to Kansas City where he finished his championship. When Bucky



Ch. Snowfire's Bo Peep CD.

was about a year and a half or two years old, I bought him back and put him out on the circuit. He won his first twelve shows. He was second in the United States that year and finished first the next year.

Murdock was an old veteran who had showed against every dog in the country, but Bucky was the clown. He got so he knew the photographers. Before he got out of the ring, he would spot the photographer who always had a toy. He would go bananas. One day after he had won the Breed, he broke away from the handler. There was a flatbed wagon where they were taking pictures, and he ran clear across the show arena and

climbed up in that flatbed wagon and sat there, waiting for the photographer to take his picture so he could get his toy. He was a pure ham! (laughter)

Rowena: We could never get a picture of Bucky where he was set up the way he should be because he was always ready to jump, but we could get a beautiful head shot. He would either be lying flat out or be ready to pounce and we had a terrible time with him. The photographer thought Bucky didn't like him, but we said, "No, he does like you." He is still taking pictures and sometimes he will ask, "Does this one go back to Murdock?" or "Does this one go back to Bucky?" Sometimes he wonders,

especially if we have one that kind of acts that way.

The competition then was really great. We have competition now, but they are not three and four people deep, standing around the ring to see certain dogs. It was fun to watch, and everybody watched them. Competition is good today, but it's not like then when there was so much excitement. People who didn't like us then and we didn't like them because we were in competition with each other, we are friends with today. It was just one of those things. The competition was something else! We never backed down from a judge. Our handler would say, "That judge isn't going to like us. We'd

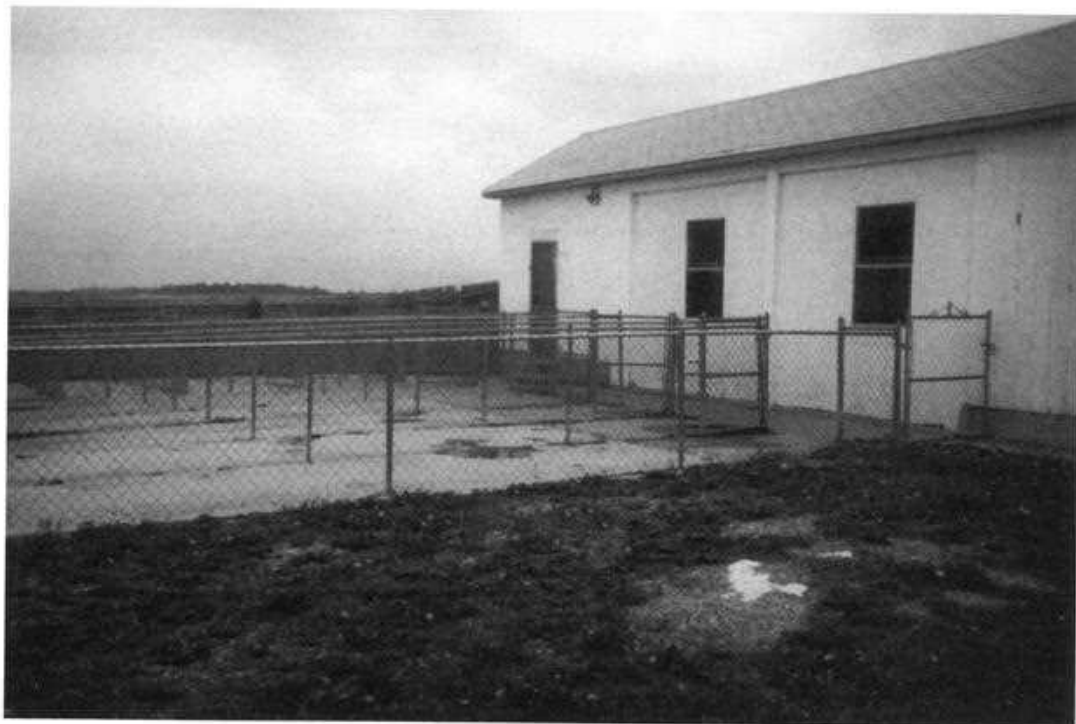


Dusha's Pop Corn Kernel of Seelah, "Dizzy," chewing on a bone.

better not show him today." We would say, "No! We're going to show him." There's always a chance that maybe that day that judge might like him, and it happened sometimes. I don't believe in backing away from a judge. If you keep showing under a judge and they don't like you, that's one thing. You have to take a chance.

Merrill: We used a handler because we couldn't show every weekend. If you are going to campaign a dog, you need to have it out there every weekend. Murdock showed for four years, and even though Bucky won five Bests in Show he could have won a lot more. We took him off the circuit young because we wanted him home. We could have campaigned him for another year and he could have done a lot more winning.

Rowena: It's fun to campaign them, but you miss a lot because your dog isn't home with you. When they finally come home, they are already beginning to get



Breeding kennel.



From left to right: Ch. Di Murdock of Seelah (sire), Ch. Murdock's Marauder of Seelah, "Bucky" (son), and Ch. Murdock's Mystic Man of Seelah, "Teddy" (son).



"My mom and I."



Dusha's DiMaggio of Seelah (Ch. Dusha's Keno of Seelah x Oopsy Daisy of Seelah), Dubuque, 1996.



Ch. Snowfire's Miss Muffet (Shandy of Snow Ridge x Ch. Katyusha's of Encino), finishing championship after tornado the night before, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1974. Judge Joyce Cain.

older and you don't have them for that many years. Sammies can live quite a long time, but

usually, from ten years onward, they begin to go downhill. If you keep them out on the circuit for

five years or more, you don't have too many years left with them.

Merrill: All dogs are not such good travelers, but Murdock was the greatest traveler there ever



Marauder's Coty of Seelah CD, "Coty."

was. He could come out of an airplane or out of a motor home and show in 30 seconds. Not many dogs can do that. For one show, he was in Dallas, where he won a Group 1, and Rowena was in Kansas City with Bucky and won the Breed. The next day was the Los Angeles Samoyed Specialty. You never know who

is going to be there until 8:00 in the morning. The people in California said, "There is no way Murdock is going to be in California, because he just won the Group in Dallas at 5pm." We flew Murdock to LA that night and hid him out in a motel. We took him in a taxicab the next morning to the show site and got

there about ten minutes to 8:00. (laughter) He won the Specialty, got back in the airplane and placed in the Group again in Texas. That's the kind of dog he was. It was fun. We had some losses too. Not every weekend was that great, but my point is that dog was never tired. He would come out of the motor

home, and in seconds his tail was up, his ears were up, he'd walk into the ring saying, "Let's see! Who haven't I beaten today?" He had that kind of cocky arrogance about him. He had beaten many of the dogs many times over the years. He would never walk to the end of the line, though. He would always walk



Murdock/Pepeta litter number two.

to the front, look around to see who was there, and say, "Okay, beat me, if you can."

Rowena: It was just like he knew. He was a fun dog!

Merrill: He was a smart dog. Some people said Murdock was mean. He was excused from the ring in Texas one time when the judge picked him up by his tail and Murdock whirled around. Well, naturally! I would have whirled too if someone had picked me up by my tail! (laughter) While there were people who said he was a mean dog, he was never mean a day in his life. He would share an ice cream cone with any little kid.

Rowena: We had a young mother here one time who had a baby who would lie on Murdock and drink his bottle. The other child was about four then. If the children were eating candy, Murdock was right there, but he never tried to grab it out of their hands. People didn't see the good side of Murdock. Even to this day, when he has been dead for ten years, there are people who talk about how mean he was. The people who say that have never even seen him! I will ask, "How do you know that?" They will say, "So-and-so told me about it." I said, "Well, you're all wrong!"

Merrill: Murdock beat so many people's dogs so many times that the people became a little paranoid about him, and they had to say something against the dog. We took our lumps. We did find out later from some of these people that the handler we had would sometimes say things we didn't necessarily agree with. That's one reason we didn't show Bucky with him as long as we did Murdock.

Rowena: There were some people we thought were unfriendly, but we found out they were not unfriendly when we got to know them later and they got to know us. We've become good friends through the years. It was basically the handler, and that's where the reputation began. It's too bad, because the dog took the punishment and we did too. We really took a beating.

There is a sore spot with me today. I think people are pricing their puppies too high. I don't believe in asking \$1,000 to \$2,000, for a puppy! How do you know what that puppy is going to be? There is no way that you can guarantee or tell if

that puppy is going to be a champion, and even if it is a champion, whether or not it will be a good champion. There are some good people out there who would like to have good dogs, but they can't afford the price. People also tie the buyers up in contracts, where sometimes they want a whole litter back. Maybe one puppy, or perhaps two, might be all right, but when you get into taking whole litters back and tying people up for years in contracts, that's not right.

Merrill: We use a contract, but we have guidelines for our contract. We're not so naive to believe that you can really enforce a contract. I maintain that a contract is only some words written on a piece of paper. I also maintain that once I own title to a dog, I'm going to do what I want to do with my dog. We use a contract as a guideline to try to work with the people we sell a dog to, rather than trying to

enforce a strict contract. That way, you end up with a good home for the dog and with people who will listen to you. If you say to them, "It says here in fine print that you are going to do it this way," and try to shove it down their throats, that's not the way to do it. I believe contracts are necessary as guidelines, but otherwise they are worthless. I have never heard of one that has been enforced.

Rowena: We have to help new people, and that's another sore spot with me. Some breeders, unless there is something coming back to them from a future breeding, do not help the new people. They don't show them how to groom and they don't help them at the shows. I've seen the newcomer ignored at the shows because a puppy didn't look too good that day. If the breeder would have helped the people, maybe the puppy that day would have looked good.

There are little extra things you have to do to have a winning dog that an experienced breeder can show the newcomer. You have to show them that you are really interested in that puppy. Call them once in awhile.

Merrill: That is what Rowena does. Everybody in the country calls her because she helps people out. I'm not that tolerant, but she is very patient with people.

Rowena: Maybe I go overboard, I don't know.

Merrill: She will spend hours with them on the phone.

Rowena: I feel I should help even those people who aren't puppy millers yet, but they might be if someone doesn't guide them. When they call me, I say, "Why don't you send me your pedigree?" or "Bring your dog down and we'll look him over." Sometimes I will say, "Well, he looks good, but what about his pedigree?" I try to explain to people



Dusha's Cameo of Seelah, "Cameo" (Ch. Dusha's Hustler of Seelah x Dusha's Oopsy Daisy of Seelah).



Kiam's Northern Exposure, "Rocky."

that this isn't the same as showing cattle or sheep. Dogs are a whole different ball game. We need to take the time to do it. There have been a couple of times I've been stung, but most of the time people will listen to you because they know you are really trying

to help them. I will tell people, "I will help you, but don't ever cross me!" (laughter)

There are two or three people right now I am trying to help, and I don't know if I am going to be able to help them or not, but they call me all the time. One had an

accidental breeding and I've been trying to help her with that breeding, and help her to understand that she should have them spayed or neutered. They are both Sammies, but neither one had been X-rayed. I think they were brother and sister, which maybe would

have been all right if they had had good pedigrees to start with. I told her that even if they don't turn out, she can still do sledding and herding and many other things with the dogs. I said, "Spay them, neuter them and enjoy them." Some breeders



Ch. Murdock's Marauder of Seclah.

would advise putting a dog down and say, "You shouldn't have done that." Maybe they shouldn't have done it, but that's not the way to handle it. You have to help people a little bit.

Merrill: That's why I'm Rowena's biggest critic. When

she goes into the show ring and makes a mistake, I tell her about it. (laughter)

Rowena: I make lots of mistakes! I have said, "I should quit showing Sammies. This is the last time." I really think it is coming pretty soon. I have one male

I am showing. He is easy to show and is a nice dog. He could go places if he was with a handler continuously.

We've had a good time with our dogs. It's the one thing that we did together, because I'm not a big baseball or basketball fan.

Merrill: I have one complaint. I can't go to Florida without taking my dogs with me! (laughter) Or go anywhere!

Rowena: We've really enjoyed the dogs and have met so many nice people. We have made a lot of friends, and I guess

I'd do it over again. There comes a time when you have to slow down. About three years ago we got "TJ" (Tibetan Spaniel), but I had been looking for three or four years for a smaller dog because I knew a time was coming that this couldn't go on forever. When we went to Florida, I would see these little dogs in the ring. They weren't what you would call pretty, but there was something there I liked. I didn't like dogs without hair, and yet I didn't want to do grooming. Finally, after about three years, there were some people who won one day and I was watching them while they were in the ring, so I cornered the lady afterwards and asked, "What are these dogs?" She said, "These are Tibetan Spaniels." I had never heard of them before and I said, "They don't look like Spaniels."

Merrill: They are ten to fifteen pounds of dynamite!

Rowena: She took me to her motor home where she had two dogs. I said, "Let me talk to my husband." She didn't say anything. I found Merrill and said, "I want you to see these little things." He said, "Well, if you like them, it's all right." I went back and offered to buy one, but she wouldn't sell me one. She said, "No. I want to keep them together. They have a lot of fun together." I knew what she was doing. She wanted to check on me first. When we got home, Merrill said, "Call her." So I called her and she said they were not for sale. I found out later she sold them as pets, but she said, "I have a little female here for you." By that time, I knew she had really checked on us. She sent the female to us and we showed her, but she didn't turn out right. She was something else! The woman said, "Don't show her. I'll send you something else." That's when we got TJ. We also wanted a female. She said, "I used one of my males for a breeding and I get a pick female back." That's where we got little "Pippin" here, the loud mouth.

Merrill: Two years ago, TJ won 37 straight Bests of Breed and finished number five in the country for his breed.

Rowena: They are fun little dogs. You should see them with the Sammies. They stand on their hind legs and kiss them and wash their faces. I haven't found any big dogs that didn't like these little dogs. They just seem to get

along. That was another reason I wanted this breed, because they did seem to get along with all dogs. I'm not saying somebody doesn't have one that doesn't get along. When they go to ringside, you don't have to watch them as you do the working breeds, where you have to keep your males apart. Anyway, that's why we got the Tibetan Spaniels, so that in our old age we can both show these dogs. (laughter)

We had our first litter, and after having all white dogs, I couldn't understand it because the litter was all black and I said, "But our dogs are gold." Within four to five weeks they began to change color, and every one was a different color of sable. This was so different to us, after seeing only the white ones that don't change like that. They all went from black to gold to kind of a dark sable. You never know what they are going to be, so you

register most of them as sable unless they are parti-color. They will be varying shades of sable, or if they are gold, like our dog here, that's a whole different ball game. They have been a lot of fun. I can take one Sammy and a couple of these little ones with no problem. I keep thinking, "I just have to stop showing these big dogs." I said something about it this last weekend, and I heard someone say, "If I could get around the ring as good as you can, I would just keep going." One person said, "Put your little short skirt on and go in there." I said, "I don't think that will work, because after awhile, even the short skirt won't work." (laughter)

We used to hear about things that happened even before we started showing. On the West Coast there was a lady that showed her dogs while she was wearing what is called a "squat

dress," with the silver threads showing through. They would show out on the beaches sometimes and you could always tell her and you could always tell the dog because it had such silver tips.

Merrill: I always wanted to be sure that when Rowena showed she dressed like a lady and that she complemented the dog that she was showing. You don't wear a white dress with a white dog. It doesn't have to be formal, and it doesn't have to be an expensive dress, but it should complement the dog. More people soon learn that.

Rowena: That reminds me of my first show. Merrill didn't go with me to that show. I wore white boots, a white dress and I think I had a white bow in my hair, tying it back. The dog I had was white, although she had a little buff in her. I was at the motel with my sister-in-law the night



Ch. Dusha's Veges of Seelah (Ch. Windsong's Jak Pot O Pomirish x Ch. Murdock's Mykola of Seelah).

before, and the dog wet on the floor and laid in it on red carpet. The next day she was just as pink as could be. Nowadays, maybe I'd know how to get that out, but then I was new and I had no idea. There I went, into the ring wearing all this white and having a pinkish looking dog in Huntington, West Virginia. I'll never forget it. It was something.

What colors do you feel complement the Samoyeds?

Merrill: Wear a skirt with a jacket the same color as the skirt, like a red or green. It should be a bright colored jacket and a skirt the same color. That way, you accentuate the white. If a man can wear a coat, a woman can wear a skirt.

Rowena: Some women look nicer in dresses, and a lot of us are wearing the longer shorts, the walking shorts that come to the knee. I wear those and wear a jacket with it. Especially with the little dogs, if you have to get down on the floor, it is a lot better wearing the longer shorts than having to fool around with a full skirt.

Merrill: A lot of people don't wear colors that show off the dog. You are showing the dog, not the handler, and the handler should complement the dog. You win as a team. If the dog doesn't respond, the handler is responsible.

Rowena: If you wear white with a white dog, you really can't see the conformation of that dog. Someone told me, "When you have your picture taken, be sure you are not wearing white shoes, because you will have six white feet showing." I don't know who told me that, but I have always remembered that.

There are some nice dogs out there today, although I think some people are going too much to the teddy bear look, and that is not our standard. It's cute, but the teddy bear look is not the Sammy look. We need the wedge head with a nice medium ear. We are losing the nice almond-shaped eyes and are getting a lot of round eyes. We've lost leg and we've lost neck. We don't see nice necks much on the dogs anymore. We don't see that nice arched neck we used to see. Sometimes some of the heads seem to be set right down on the shoulders, and I've had a few like that myself. I would like to see that change. I would like people to breed to the standard instead



Farrah Bit O' Seelah (Homer's Hektor of Seelah x Bit O' Honey of Seelah).

of breeding what they personally like. We are getting away from our standard. There is no almond eye at all anymore.

Is there anything you would like to see changed in the standard?

Merrill: It's a good standard.

Rowena: It is a preferred standard and after all these years it would be hard to enforce a specified standard, one where all the limits are defined specifically. One judge said to me, "As long as the balance is there, it does not matter if they are a little over or under the standard." I agree with that. I have seen some dogs that were over the standard - but I don't mean HUGE - and yet the balance was there, and you just couldn't take your eyes off of them.

Merrill: I'm sorry to say that there are some judges that I don't know how they are getting

approved to judge our breed.

Rowena: They pay no attention to the standard.

Merrill: It's pathetic. In the last two years, I have seen the worst judging in Sammies I've ever seen.

Rowena: We're not alone in feeling that way. A lot of people say the same thing.

Merrill: We've been in this for 30-plus years, and we see judges who somehow got appointed to judge the Sammy, who don't know the standard.

Rowena: Or, if they know the standard, they don't choose to follow it. A lot of them put up strictly the handlers and the owner-handler doesn't have much of a chance.

Merrill: Even if it is a new judge, if he or she knows the standard, I have no problem with that. It's the judges who consis-

tently put up class dogs for Best of Breed over champions. I don't agree with that day in and day out. There is something wrong when they do that. It's not the usual way, that a class dog beats four to eight Best of Breed dogs, but that's what we're seeing quite frequently today.

Rowena: It has to be a mighty good dog, and they are trying to break all the top dogs.

Merrill: I never heard of many of these judges. I don't know how they got approved. They don't know the standard, and then they wonder why they are not asked back to judge. I can tell them why. If they don't learn the standard, we're not going to bring them back to our local club, and we don't. We don't ever show in our local club, so nobody can say we bring in judges for our own benefit.

Rowena: No. I'm not on the board this year, but if we are on the board, or an officer, we don't show. This year I'm off the board, but I have a co-owner who is still on the board, and we are not showing any of our dogs that we co-own with her. We are bringing a couple of judges in this year that I bought my Tibetans from and I'm not going to go out there and show under those people. Even if I had the best dog and they put it up, it's not right. I don't think it is fair to them and it is not fair to the others entering, but I often see it where someone will show under a judge they bought a dog from. I don't believe in it and I'll never do it. I seriously thought about becoming a judge, but I decided, no, I like showing dogs. You have to make a choice. You either show dogs or you judge, but doing both can cause a conflict.

Merrill: A lot of them do both.

Rowena: It should not be that way. That's the reason I decided not to become a judge. I do a lot of fun matches and I've done some Futurities.

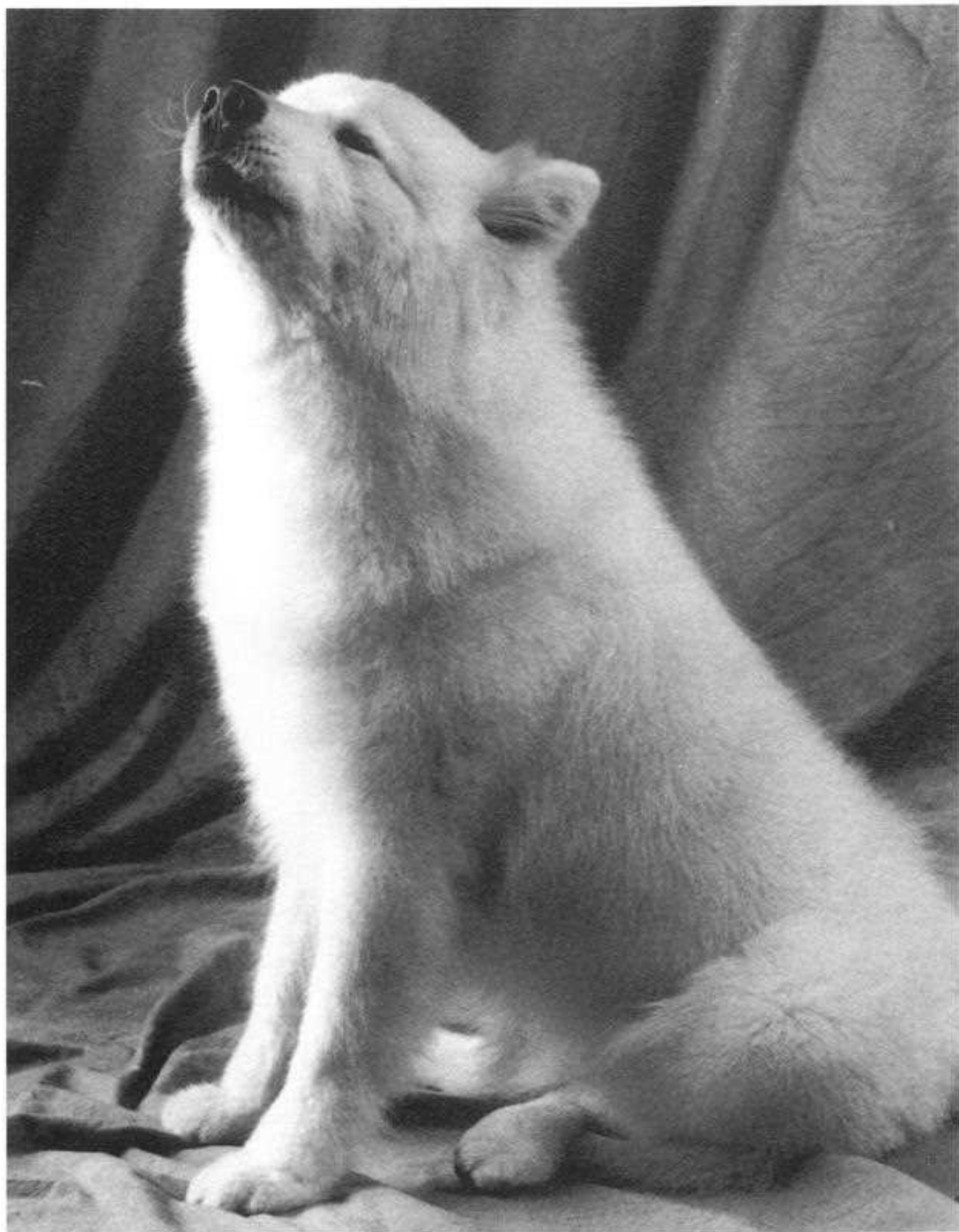
How would you describe your interpretation of the perfect Sammy?

Rowena: That's a question and a half.

Merrill: It's whatever the standard says. The standard, to me, is the perfect Sammy. You will never have a perfect Sammy because you will never have in one dog every attribute listed in the standard.

Rowena: Big is not always better. We are finding dogs with bones as big as Pyrenees. A lady bought a Sammy from me about a month ago and she wanted to see the mother, so I brought her in. I consider the mother pretty good sized. In fact, I quit showing her because I felt she was too large. This woman said, "Well, she's not very big boned." She was out of coat because she had just had these puppies. We looked at the male she had and I said, "Compare the two. If you take the hair away from his legs, he isn't going to be much bigger, and he shouldn't be." She said, "I like them big." That's the way people are. They like big dogs. Well, then they should go and buy a big dog!

Merrill: We have never had a perfect Sammy, but the only reason we have stayed in the breed is to continue striving to breed toward the goal of a perfect



Ch. Seelah's Hot Off The Press.

Sammy according to the standard. Someday you just might hit the jackpot and get all the attributes and have a 99.9 percent perfect Sammy. Many people have dogs that are close to it, but every dog has imperfections; that doesn't mean the standard is wrong. That's why we continue to try to improve our breeding, and hopefully we can always improve on the last litter. Maybe we will get that perfect Sammy, I

don't know, but the perfect Sammy is not necessarily the perfect show dog. There are a lot of GOOD Samoyeds that, in my opinion, are as close to the standard as they can be, yet they are not necessarily the best show dogs. They don't like to show. Out of all the dogs we have had over our lifetime, we have only had two natural show dogs, Murdock and Bucky, or perhaps three, because "Buddy" is a good

showman.

Rowena: While we had Murdock out, I would say there were two or three others that were natural showmen, just as he was. Dr. Pepper was one and Bark Starr was a showy dog, and "Diko," Murdock's father, was a very showy dog. He won the National Specialty in Colorado one year. Those were showy dogs. They were not perfect, anymore than Murdock was per-

fect, but they were showy and they liked to show. They were fun to show and some were hard to show. Murdock was a hard dog to show.

Merrill: Bucky was an even more likable dog to show because he was a happier dog. Bucky always had a smile.

Rowena: I couldn't show him. He was a much stronger dog than Murdock. He was a very strong dog. I would swear he was never lead-broke. The handler always kept him on a very tight lead, and that got him in the habit of pulling strongly too. If I could have put him through obedience first, I maybe could have handled him. Maybe that's what I should have done with him that year we kept him out of it before we brought him out and campaigned him. At least we might have gotten some decent pictures of him then! (laughter)

Merrill: It used to be that they would give away beautiful silver platters and tea sets when you won, but they don't do that now.

Rowena: You are lucky if you get a ribbon, although there are some pretty things now. It's just that they used to give very expensive things.

To get back to the perfect Sammy, I already mentioned the eyes. I want a nice tailset, not a tight tailset, but a nice one. I want a good front, good rear, and the dog should make a nice picture from the side.

What about movement?

Rowena: Movement is really bad on some of them. I used to concentrate on the rears all the time because Murdock had a powerful rear. But there is another end of the dog. The fronts have improved on a lot of the dogs, but some of the rears need improvement. A lot of them don't even single-track, and a Sammy should single-track. If you find a long-legged dog, it will single-track quicker than a short-legged dog. Sometimes people see a dog with a little shorter leg and they say it isn't single-tracking, but it will take that dog a little longer because they are short-legged.

Merrill: This is a working breed, but not many judges put much emphasis on movement. They just pose the dogs and that's a poor way to judge. We see a lot of judges who just pose the dogs. The dog HAS to move!



Ch. Snoufire's Bo Peep CD.

You can't give first place or Best of Breed to a dog that isn't running the ring, but it's done all the time and it just kills me when I see it because they are not emphasizing movement. That's what the standard says, that it is a working breed that should be able to move. Sure, they look nice standing there.

Rowena: Some judges are different. Some will go strictly on side movement, and I've seen beautiful side movers that had terrible rears. Some are head judges and will judge on the dog's head. They don't run on their heads.

Merrill: More and more judges have a toy or something in their hand that makes a noise. They judge the dogs on how well they respond when they click the toy, or whatever noise it makes, and if the dog doesn't follow the judge's hand, that dog won't go up. They say it's not an alert dog. I think that's horrible.

Rowena: The dog is trained to watch the handler and it is up to the handler to show what the dog can do, not the judge.

Merrill: At almost any show you go to, no matter what breed ring you are watching, the judge

will have the dog go down and back and make the triangle. When the dog comes back, it should be watching its handler. Invariably, the judge will take something out of his/her pocket, something that makes noise, and if the dog doesn't follow it, you can count on it that that dog won't go up. It's wrong to do that. The handler is in control of the dog. I'm not saying the dog shouldn't be alert, but don't put the dog down because it didn't follow your hand while it made some noise.

Rowena: When you train your dog, you train it to look at you and it is up to you to bring out the animation, to get the ears up and the head cocked to one side. If you want to use a toy to do it, that's fine, but some dogs don't even respond to toys. The one I have in the ring right now doesn't care a thing about toys. When he is outside the ring, he will not even take a treat. I finally found the tiny milkbones that I give to the little dogs, which he won't touch outside the ring, but I can stand in the ring and toss them to him and he catches them every time.

Merrill: She stands in front

of him and he stands foursquare every time, with his tail up and his ears up and catches that cookie.

Rowena: If the judge tries to get his attention, he ignores him, so what are you going to do? There are not too many Sammies out there campaigning now. There are a few, but people can't afford to keep them out.

Merrill: I suppose it's the least number of Samoyeds that there have been in many years. There are only a couple that are even running this year. Usually there are half a dozen. People can't afford it. To campaign a dog, to get it into the Top Ten and to stay in the Top Ten, who wants to put in \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year? Sometimes it's more than that. Way back, our dogs showed in 104 shows a year, and even back then it cost us plenty.

Rowena: We can't say we didn't enjoy it, because we did enjoy it, but it was for our own ego.

Merrill: But not at today's prices. There is a handling fee, a mileage charge, a boarding charge, vet bills and entry fees. After you add all that up, win, lose or draw, you have put a lot of money into it.

Rowena: It was fun to campaign a dog and I won't say that it wasn't, but it's just for one's own ego and nothing else. You won't get big stud service on that dog just because he is the top winner.

Merrill: The reason for that is that you have to keep the dog at home to be used effectively at stud, and if you are on the road, you won't be breeding him. Murdock was on the road and missed many stud services.

Rowena: Also, people never called us to see what the stud fee was. Our handler told someone it was \$2,000! Well, that's ridiculous. We lost out there because they thought he was the owner of the dog. It's hard when you are on the road and trying to use a dog at stud. Some dogs don't show well when they are used at stud. Some dogs get very upset with bitches in season. "Keno" was a show dog, but he had buff on him. I finished him at seventeen months and he was pure white, but soon after that he started getting some buff spots and that was it.

To be continued ...