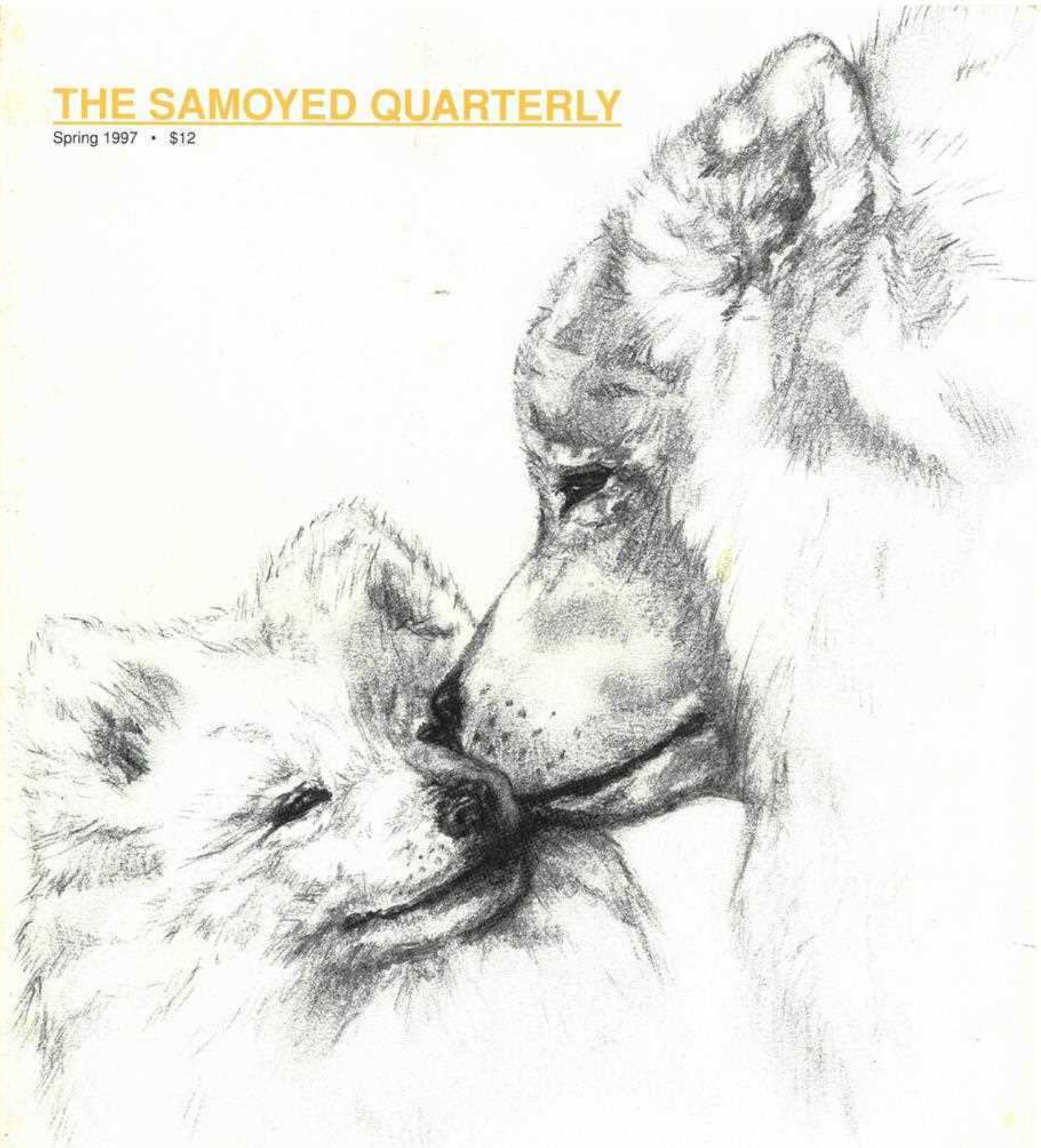


THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
**Larry and Kathy
Wiley Mackai**
QUE SERA
Bloomington, Minnesota

This interview was conducted at the home of Larry and Kathy Wiley Mackai in September of 1995 by Barb Matson.

How did you get into dogs and when?

Kathy: It was 1970. Actually, when I was a senior in high school I bought a Saint Bernard. When I got married I left her with my parents. I wanted a dog and my husband was looking for a Saint Bernard for me and my sister was helping him. They were looking in the want ads and couldn't find any Saint Bernards and found Samoyeds. She went with him and I got a puppy for Christmas that year. After I had one I wanted another one.

Larry: The first time I saw a Samoyed was in 1968. My first wife and I had just been married. We were both juniors in college and for cheap entertainment we went to the Duluth Kennel Club dog show, stayed all day, watched all the judging we could. We fell in love with the Sammy. The Samoyed won the Group that day and we said that when we had a house of our own we would get a Samoyed. In 1971 we got our first Samoyed, a pet, which happened to be born on the same day that my daughter was born, September 9, 1971. That's where we started. Of course, we attended a few dog shows; there was a Samoyed club in the area and we got to talk to people and look at their dogs, and have them look at our pet. That's how we started.

Where and when did you get the first show dog?

Kathy: I had bought a dog, from a local breeder who had been in Sammies, and she ran away. We never found her. So, through a few connections, we had met Larry and his wife by then, and found out that our bitch's sister - not a litter sister, an older sister - was available for sale. She had been bred and they

wanted to find a home for her. She was Tsartar's Somewhere My Lara. We got some people to put in a good word for us and we were able to buy her. When the puppies were a little bit older, they realized she was a good producer, so a repeat litter was part of the agreement. That was the litter that we got our Best in

quality they were. We wanted to learn how to show dogs. We went in the ring with no qualms that we were going to win, but we wanted to learn how to do it until our show dog came. We purchased a young puppy, a very nice puppy. Unfortunately he turned out to be dysplastic. At the same time we ran across a

going to have to shoot the dog," because he was a runner. He was out on the farm and chased the sheep and everything, so we arranged to buy him. It happened to be at a time when he was losing all his coat. He was about four and a half years old and he was loaded with ticks. We washed him and there were still dead ticks on him. We brought him in and showed some people this beautiful dog and they said, "Oh, sure," but he was. Structurally, he was a nice dog.

We started showing as soon as he started growing his coat. He finished his American championship in twelve shows, his Canadian championship in three shows. He went on to be a Group winner in the States and a Best in Show winner in Canada. I felt good about him because we could see the quality in him, but we were still novices and people still kid us about my Baron. He was a very special dog and he was my first champion. At the same time, I started handling dogs because I had learned a little bit about showing. I started showing for Kathy, and I showed a bitch for Nellie. We'd wind up going to shows where we got Winners Dog with Kathy's dog, Winners Bitch with Nellie's bitch and Breed with my special. I had good dogs to show. They were good quality dogs. They weren't all the same type. That's basically how I got started into showing dogs. I did not always have the same type of dog, but all the dogs I've shown are good quality, very sound, very good moving. They may not always have been the prettiest dogs, but they were sound dogs.

How many litters have you bred?

Larry: It's in the low teens. In '87, when you did the article for Show and Tell, we were at nine litters and we haven't bred a lot of litters since then, so we're in the low teens. Basically, I'm talking when Kathy started out, and I was around for every single litter to help evaluate, and I became co-owner on the dogs.

What made you decide to breed?

Kathy: The first litter was because we had bought Kara, and that was part of our agreement,



Show dog out of. So, it was pretty much luck for us.

Larry: My wife and I went on and purchased another dog - actually we wound up with two and they were also pet quality. We were looking for a show dog and we continued showing our pets. Basically, we knew what

dog out on a farm. To me, he was a beautiful dog. We said, "If there is any chance you ever have to get rid of that dog, we'd like to purchase him." We were still very novice. They basically told us that the sheriff had been around and told them, "If you can't keep the dog at home, I'm

that we had to breed her to Ch. Sulu's Karbon Kopi O'Baerstone. It was a repeat of the litter that she had before. So, it went from there. We had quite a few problems with her as she got a little bit older, as far as trying to repeat breedings, but it just gets in your blood, I guess.

Does any litter stand out in your mind as having been the best?

Kathy: I think the first litter that I had.

Larry: It's hard to say what's best. The first litter you had Hogan, who is Ch. Ken-Tee's Honkin' Hogan of Sulu. He didn't carry Kathy's kennel name. He was the Best in Show winner. You also had "Kojak," Am/Can Ch. Que Sera's Kara Sea Copy. He was a double Group winner in Canada as a puppy. As he grew up, he really didn't have the temperament as a special. He's not one that I thought we could show. Your second litter produced "Aimee," Ch. Que Sera's Karamee, who was number one winning bitch in '77 and "Nova," Am/Can Ch. Que Sera's Karanova, who was number two winning bitch in '82, so that was an outstanding litter. Then we did our outcross litter with a bitch that we leased and that produced our "Mindy," Am/Can Ch. Que Sera's Always On My Mind, who was our Grand Futurity winner in '83, plus two other champions. Litters were different, so there was no one best litter. Even though these were outstanding litters, they still had some things that you would like to improve.

Kathy: Also, the one thing that has been important is they're not all show dogs and to make sure that the pets have good temperaments and good socialization. So, that's been really important too, to place the pets in the right kind of homes.

Do you know how many champions have been in the litters you've bred?

Larry: I just figured that out. It came out to be twenty champions, and two of those were in litters that we co-bred. We didn't whelp them here, but we helped select the stud. These were kind of novice people and we were helping them along, but basically they whelped the litter. Counting those, we have bred twenty champions.

If you had to narrow it down to one dog or bitch, which would say is the best one that you've owned or bred?

Kathy: That's hard, because



Am/Can Ch. Snorefantasy's Main Man, "Roscoe" with judge Mrs. Evelyn Kenny, Thompson Dog Club, August 11, 1979.

Nova is my special dog, but she didn't do as much winning as some of the other ones. Who would you say?

Larry: Well, the pat answer is we haven't bred it yet, but it's really hard because we've had several animals that have been really special to us in different ways. You can go back to your foundation of Kara. She was a very special bitch. She needed a major to finish her championship. It's something we could have done, but we didn't enter at a particular show because we didn't feel right about it. Nova was a special bitch. Even what we have here, Dancer, is a special animal to us. He's a dog that was returned. The owner had passed

away and we have in our contract that we have the first option of buy back and we took him back. He was a very sick dog. For one, his owner had died, so he was in depression. We also found he had heartworm at the time, so we brought him through the treatment and he's our house dog at the present time. He's special in that way. I can look at our Mindy and she was probably one of the most intelligent dogs we ever had - our Grand Futurity winner - she's special in her way. They're kind of like children. There's no one best. They all have their particular areas where they're outstanding, but no one is the best we've ever had.

Which is the biggest winner?

Kathy: Probably Aimee.

Larry: Yes, she was the top-winning bitch, but she only had a handful of Group placements to become top-winning bitch, which was back when the Working Group was still the Working and Herding, together. She was a Specialty winner. Not having owned, but having been the breeder on Hogan, who was a Best in Show winner Actually, Kathy's first litter. He was a top winner. Again, we have several dogs. Mindy was a Grand Futurity winner. We haven't nominated all of our litters for the futurity, but we just happened to do it. This was a leased bitch, Ch. Silveracre Shanna O'Windy Hill, that we had and we nomi-

nated the litter. Then you have to nominate the puppies and we nominated, I think, two puppies out of the litter. Mindy finished as a puppy. She was special to me because there was a special connection between myself and Mindy.

When it came time for the specialty, we almost didn't send in the entry because she was out of coat. Kathy said, "Are you going to send the entry in?" because she wasn't. I said, "Sure. I'm going to send the entry in and, when she wins the futurity, I get all the money," kind of joking along. It was a specialty that we could not personally attend, so a friend of ours, Pat Griffin, took Mindy along and showed her. That was the first time she really handled Mindy and she wound up winning the futurity. Just as I had said it in jest earlier, when the phone rang that night I jokingly said, "Oh, that's Pat calling to tell us we won the futurity," and it WAS Pat telling us we won the futurity.

Kathy: That was exciting.

Larry: But, we talked about dogs that we've owned being best. I go back to when I was handling dogs. There's one dog that stands out, and it's actually Mindy's father, Am/Can Ch. Snowfantasy's Main Man. His call name was "Roscoe." He was owned by Frank and Paula Phillips, who pushed me along when I was a novice and they've been very dear friends ever since then. They've left Minnesota. They've lived in Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa and Texas. Right now they are in North Carolina. We still co-own one of our bitches with them.

Roscoe was born and I went down and looked at the litter when it was quite young and he just stood out. I said, "He's a fantastic puppy." They showed Roscoe, and as I was talking to Frank and Paula one day, I said, "I'd like to show him in Canada, just take him up and campaign him." They said, "Well, make us an offer. What's it going to cost us?" So I made them a very reasonable offer and I started in July with Roscoe. Again, he had absolutely no undercoat when I first took him out, but he had probably the best guard coat I've ever had my hands on. You couldn't tell he had no undercoat. The first weekend out we went Best in Show. It went on from there. We started in July, and through

December I put three Bests in Show on him and he wound up number one Samoyed in Canada that year. Doing it from the States, driving to Canada on weekends, I put on 24,000 miles in less than six months. As a handler, he was probably the most exciting dog I ever had to show because, again, there was that special connection between me and Roscoe and he was a fantastic animal. I showed him some

in this breed can be trusted as to accuracy?

Kathy: As far as the pedigrees, themselves, if you don't know the dogs, you don't know that much just by looking at their names.

Larry: Every line that we've dealt with, I can say the pedigrees are true for five or six generations, because most of them are dogs that I have personally known. In the last five years we

anything, I would guess there's somebody out there who's fudged on breeding, but I wouldn't want to put my finger on anyone by saying that is not the right dog.

How would you summarize how you have used inbreeding, linebreeding and outcrossing, and when should each be used?

Larry: We've done mainly linebreeding. We've done one outcross. Our lines could go back through the old Baerstone



Ch. C-Song's Stormy Weather, "Stormy."

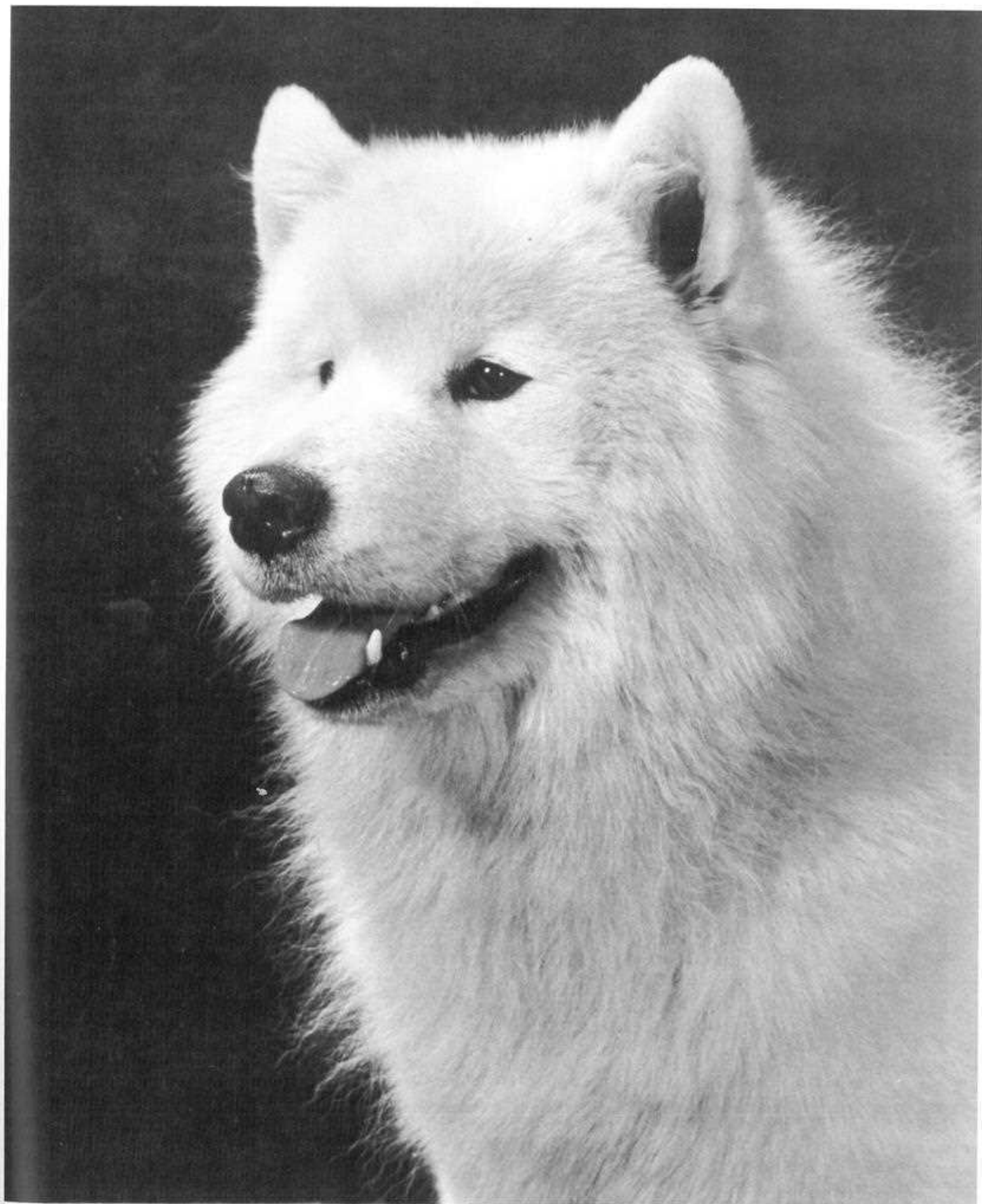
in the States. He was a smaller male and he was a little harder to compete here. I think our most exciting win was when Frank and Paula were present, because they didn't get to see much of my showing of him. This time they were living in Texas and we'd gone to the Houston Astrohalls shows. We got Breed at one of the shows, and a good Group placement, so it was very exciting for them. He was probably the best show dog that I've handled, just because it was a very special connection.

Do you feel confident that pedigrees

haven't been as involved in breeding, so I am not that involved with knowing the dogs, but in the '70s and '80s when we were getting started and really doing pedigree research, we saw most of the dogs and I tried to see their parents and grandparents on any breedings that we did. So I'm very confident in those breedings. I can't speak for other lines, but my general impression would be, yes. I would say that it's pretty honest. You may find an occasional person whose lines are questionable, but I can't tell you who they would be. It's like with

lines and the old Tsartar, which is now Donnereign, but the old Tsartar and the old Baerstone had a similar background. We started off with some linebreeding and we did go to one complete outcross. That was a very tightly linebred bitch from one kennel and a looser linebred male from a different kennel. The similarity was in structure. The dogs, as far as coat type and outline, were not similar at all, but if you were to shave down their coats, structurally they were very similar animals.

In using an outcross, I feel it's



Ch. Que Sera's Karaimae, "Aimee."

important to maintain the structure that you really want and then work from there. This was the litter that produced Mindy, which was our Grand Futurity winner. We then took that bitch and tried going back into our line. Even with linebreeding, you can't do it just on pedigree. You have to know the animals and they have to be complementary in their structure. If they are not complementary in their structure, their pedigrees could be beautiful and it's going to be the same as doing a shot in the dark outcross. Whether you're doing a linebreeding or an outcross, you still have to maintain the structure of the animals. To me, that's really more important than the rest. If you can maintain some linebreeding, you're going to emphasize the strengths that you feel are important in those lines, but you've got to make sure that the animals you are breeding have those strengths.

What led you to do that one outcross?

Larry: Shanna was a bitch that I was showing for a friend. She was a tightly linebred Silver-acres bitch and I just liked her. She was not a really pretty bitch, but she was very sound, very well structured. Lori was not in a situation to do a breeding and it was a chance for us to lease her. We wound up breeding her to Roscoe, the male I campaigned in Canada, who was gorgeous on type, beautiful coat, beautiful headpiece and very similar in structure. We were trying to maintain very sound structured animals and trying to add prettiness to the bitch. It was successful.

Kathy: They were born in Lori's closet.

Larry: Yes. They were born in her closet two days early. We were actually going to have the whelping take place here, and Lori gave me a call around midnight saying, "We just had a puppy." She had a white carpet, by the way, and the first one was born on her white carpet, which she didn't mind at the time. Lori now has one of our males that we had finished, and we asked Lori, "Why doesn't he come and live with you for a while?" Her dogs had passed away, and Luke went to live with Lori and is still living with her.

Is there anything you would add to who has influenced your breeding the most?



*Ch. Que Sera's Macho Man WD, BOW and
Am/Can Ch. Que Sera's Always On My Mind WB, BOS at nine months of age.*

Kathy: I would say Elizabeth Hooyman Lockman. We did a lot of work with her. We really liked the dogs that she had and her ideas about things, so we did several breedings with the dogs. Temperament is really important to me, so we were able to go out and see the dogs, and how they were away from the dog show, and to make decisions on what breedings we wanted to do.

Larry: Going back farther than that, when I first started, there're the old Baerstone lines with Jean Baer. I got to know her very well. She lived in Illinois and I was here in Minnesota. We would drive down there and we'd just sit and visit. Jean got to be very honest about her dogs with us, pointing out their faults. These are dogs that are in the background of our line here, so she was showing us certain things. "Be careful of this in these particular animals and don't double up on that." It was really nice to have one of the foundation breeders of the breed sit down and be honest with us and tell us about those problems or things to watch out for.

We've always tried to be honest about any puppies that we've sold as far as show potential. We don't feel there's any difference between breeding stock and show potential. If they can't be shown, they shouldn't be bred. That's where our boundaries are, and we've been very honest with people about the faults in our animals. When we sell a puppy, maybe we're too honest with them. We say, "This is a very nice puppy. It's got a very strong front, rear or whatever. This is a little weak as far as we're concerned. It's still going to finish;

but this is where this dog's weakness is." I guess it's part of what we've always tried to be - very honest with people about our dogs. None of us have perfect dogs. When you're going out to do some breeding, it's very important that you know not only the faults of the dog that you're going to be breeding to, but you have to know the faults of your own animals. Hopefully the people that you're breeding with are as honest with you as you are with them. I think we've been very fortunate, because most people have been.

How many dogs do you keep now?

Kathy: Right now we have four. We're actually legal in the city.

What's the most that you've kept?

Larry: Before I moved in to Bloomington - I used to live out in the country - and after my wife passed away, I was at twelve dogs at one time. I had a Golden Retriever, which I was also licensed to show, and I had Sammies, so I was showing a lot of dogs. After having the twelve dogs at one time, four dogs is very easy.

Kathy: We were up to about ten here, at one time. That was too much.

Larry: Yes, but some of those were relatively young and they were supposed to be going to new homes.

Kathy: Once they get names it's harder to let them go.

How did you get your kennel name, Que Sera?

Kathy: After I'd gotten my first dog for Christmas, right away I decided I wanted another one. We were able to talk with people in the Samoyed club that was just starting and met John

Donner. He was having a litter so we bought a female out of that litter. Her name was Tsartars Que Sera Sera, so it came from that.

Do you name your litters by any sort of a scheme?

Kathy: We had one that was a country-western theme.

Larry: Fun titles. Whatever happens, try to fit the personality of the dog. A lot of times what happens is we wind up with a call name that fits the dog, first. Then we find a registered name that fits the call name. But we haven't had any naming patterns to our litters.

What distinguishes the dogs in your line?

Larry: I'd say temperament. What would you say?

Kathy: That's what I'm most proud of and what I most want to maintain.

How would you describe the ideal Samoyed temperament?

Kathy: I want a dog that I know I can trust in any situation, that is going to be really stable. I'm known as the softie. I don't have a whole lot of rules and the dogs don't always have manners, as far as they're not going to sit as soon as you tell them to, but I want to know when people are around that they're going to behave in the right way. I want to know when people come with kids that I don't have to worry about the dogs doing anything, that they're stable enough to handle any situation.

Larry: Basically, they're sweet, loving animals, with very stable temperaments.

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

Kathy: I guess I would rate it

as temperament, soundness and type.

Larry: I would go the same way, because regardless if it's a show animal or not, it has to be somebody's pet, number one. It's going to be living with someone. Between soundness and type, being a judge I should say type is more important than soundness, but if the dog cannot function, it's not its breed, so it has to be sound. Within our lines, we've never had to worry about type because it is there, so I guess that's something that I've never considered having to worry about.

Kathy: I don't think that we've really said, "This is our perfect head and that's what we're going for." We try to take the whole dog in and we have different dogs now as far as their type, but they're within the standard. They're just a little bit different.

Larry: Basically, they're all sound dogs. Well, we have three bitches right now. We have "Honey," who's twelve, "Melody," who's eight, and "Sara," the first dog we've bought since "Kara," is five. All three are different in visual type. All three are very sound animals. The same thing happens when I'm judging. I don't know if people try to guess what I'll put up, because there is not a visual type that I am looking for. Yes, I do have preferences. I like a pretty dog, but it has to be a very sound animal and a sound moving animal, number one. When you get to the point where you have a very sound animal and it doesn't look like a Sammy, of course I'm not going to go with it. It's got to be within what I consider my limits of visual type. Considering soundness is part of type, that's why I say visual type and soundness. With the Samoyed, you have visual type, which is what you see in the coat and the headpiece, and overall soundness, which is the muscle condition and the way the bones are put together and everything.

What would you say has been your long-range goal in breeding dogs, and what lies ahead?

Kathy: I think each litter we were breeding for ourselves, we had the two dogs or the bitch that we had decided we wanted to breed so that we would have the next generation for us to show. There have only been a couple of litters that we didn't actually

intend to keep. There have been very few litters where we set out saying, "We're going to do this litter, but we don't plan to keep anything. We're going to try to find somebody around that we can work with." For right now, we haven't had a litter in three years. It depends upon who wins out. Larry would like to do a breeding and I'm not sure that I would like to have a litter.

of the nicest animals we've had around, and if we can get the breeding out of it, the people who co-own Sara with us, Frank and Paula Phillips, definitely want another Roscoe. If we don't end up keeping anything, I'd really like Frank and Paula to have their next dog coming back out of it. As I said, Sara's the only dog we've bought in twenty years or so. I would guess we will proba-

be fantastic puppies. If that doesn't happen, then going to a male that we were co-breeders of is a possibility. He is a little bit different style than Sara, but he is a very sound, very nice male. I really shouldn't mention who he is because we don't know if it will come about yet.

Will you please describe your interpretation of the ideal dog of the breed?

Larry: I have preferences in



Ch. Ken-Tee's Honkin' Hogan Of Sulu, "Hogan."

Larry: The last three years, with Heather being in high school and being involved in the varsity dance line, that takes up time. For a period of time our grandson lived with us and that was very time-consuming. There are other priorities. Dogs are not always number one. We have Sara, who I want to breed next spring. She's five now and I'd really like to have this litter out of her. I think she's structurally one

bly have a litter next year.

Any idea who the dad would be?

Larry: Yes. Actually, Frank and Paula have semen from Roscoe frozen. I would like to try that breeding, so it would be going back to her grandfather. I don't know of a lot of success in the Samoyeds using frozen semen. It's one of these litters that I would really like to try and, hopefully, we will get a litter out of it, because I think they would

certain areas. I do not have a preference on size. As long as the dog is in proper proportion, whether he's a 23 1/2-inch male or 21-inch male, within the standard, he is still proper to me. If you had both of these dogs identical in all other ways, at that point I would have a really tough time making a decision. I don't know how I would choose between them. I do not believe in "the wolf type" and "the bear type" in

heads because both are extremes of our standard. I do not like those terms. I was at a seminar, and another breeder was going to make the comment on the two types of heads, the bear head and the wolf head, and after they finished I interjected, saying, "Both of those types are the extreme. The proper head type falls in between." So I am looking for a head that is not the extreme of a very bear-type, heavy head or a wolf head.

I want to find the medium in-between, a very pleasing head with a pretty eye and nice ears and, obviously, with the perfect Sammy smile. That head has to fit the total animal though. You can have this beautiful head and, if it doesn't fit the rest of the animal, you don't have an overall, balanced animal. I look for an overall, balanced animal. To me, balance is very important. The head has to fit the body. The length of leg has got to fit the body, also. It has to move in balance. It can have a beautifully structured front and poor rear and I'll go with a less structured front and average rear that is going to be moving very efficiently. So picking out an ideal dog is very difficult, because I do want a very balanced animal.

I would prefer a coat that is harsh to the touch, as our standard says. Again, I'd have to go back to Roscoe's coat as the most ideal coat I've ever had my hands on. I have not seen many coats like that. I do not necessarily like a long glamour coat, which is droopy. I do not necessarily like the shorter coat, which is very easy to maintain. They both fit in our standard, the long droopy coat less than the other one. I'd like to find a nice medium-length coat with ideal texture, and that is very hard to find. What else am I looking for, Kathy?

Kathy: One thing you've told people not to do is alter the color of the nose. People think that they have to alter the color and make it darker, where a lot of dogs just have a lighter nose, and so he's made it pretty clear to a lot of people in his judging, "Don't color the nose. Bring it to me the way it is."

Larry: Right. I don't penalize a snow nose. To me, that's natural within the breed and I'm not going to penalize it. There have been some dogs that, for one reason or another, had obviously colored noses, and there



Am/Can Ch. Grande Baron of Saroyan, "Baron," the farm dog.

happened to be other things wrong with the dogs so I didn't place the dogs. People would come up to me later and talk to me and I would tell them some of the reasons why I liked other dogs better than theirs. Then I would strongly suggest, "Next time don't color the nose when you show to me." I can't prove that it was colored, so I couldn't excuse them from the ring or disqualify them, but I knew that it was colored. I've been a handler long enough to know what it looks like. I know the mistakes people make in doing it, but unless I can have it come off on something to prove it, there's nothing I can do.

People have since brought dogs to me with natural noses and I feel it's very important. I'm

not going to penalize them. I think part of the problem I have with the chemicals that are used to dye noses, is the two chemicals that are used, at least the formula that I know, the formula is ferric chloride and is an irritant. It irritates the mucous membranes. The second chemical is tannic acid which is an organic stain. Tannic acid is also a suspected carcinogenic, so you're using a suspected carcinogenic on a mucous membrane where it is going to be absorbed directly into the dog, just so you'll have a black nose. I have a really hard time with that basis, other than you shouldn't have to do it anyway.

I believe the colors are described as white, cream and biscuit. Do you have a preference?

Larry: No. It was interesting in that I was talking to an AKC rep once and he pulled me aside. He said, "Now, your standard says white, cream and biscuit. That's in order of preference, right?" I said, "No, there is no preference." A true white Sammy, in my opinion, is very rare. When you get the dog wet, that white is actually mostly cream. There's a lot of cream to the coat. I do not find Sammy people trying to hide their biscuit coats. You are seeing more and more dogs going in the ring with a large biscuit spot on the side. I've had people ask me, "Is that proper for your breed?" Yes, that's acceptable. There's no penalty. I hope all judges - new judges and old judges - will get to the point where they will not

penalize the biscuit in the breed. It is naturally there and it is very attractive to me. There is also, going back to old breeders and talking to them, a need to have biscuit in the lines to maintain a quality coat. They felt that there was a connection between the good, harsh coat and having biscuit. They felt that the pure white coat wound up being a very soft coat and not really proper.

Kathy: Also, with the biscuit they have darker pigment for eyes and noses.

What are some of the most common faults that you see in the breed today?

Larry: Front problems. I think that's a fault that we've had in our breed ever since I've been there. I've seen every kind of front problem. I think there are times when they are losing a little bit in eye shape. I don't penalize it as much as maybe I should, because you can take a dog with a rounder eye, show him in an outdoor show where he's squinting, and you don't know he has a rounder eye. Those are handling techniques. Occasionally, I am starting to see some bite problems. I never used to see anything other than a nice scissors bite in the breed. Now, as I'm judging, I'm starting to see some level bites, a little bit of overshot, a little bit of undershot, and I penalize accordingly because there's no disqualification with our breed.

One thing is I'm seeing a lot more dogs shown. With more breeders out there, all having in their minds the idea of selling show potential dogs, we're getting more dogs in the ring that I think are mediocre. The good dogs stand out a little bit easier. I'd say you're getting more dogs of mediocre quality in the ring. They have no glaring faults, they are just lacking in overall quality. They were sold as show dogs and they're probably not show dogs, or they think they are, and they're going to keep showing until they run out of money or whatever.

Kathy: From what I see, I would say there are better dogs in the ring, as far as overall, from what I saw when we got started, because I think it's a little more difficult watching ringside. You might not agree with what the judge does, but he has a lot there to choose from.

Larry: You have more good dogs, but there're also a lot more



Tsartar's Somewhere My Lara, "Kara."

dogs being shown. There are also a lot more lower quality dogs in the ring.

Kathy: If they don't do anything, time and time again, they won't be there forever, as long as there are the good dogs there to win.

Is there anything about the standard that you would like to see changed or clarified?

Larry: No. AKC asked the Samoyed Club of America three times to revise our standard to

the standard format, which now is called a quality judging format. They renamed it. They started off with the Samoyed standard because they felt the Samoyed standard was a good standard to begin with and they felt that there really weren't a lot of changes to be done. After reading our standard as it is written, I have to agree the new format is easier for a new person to learn the standard, because you use consistent terms and it's in a logical, orga-

nized area. Our standard does that, but it reads very smoothly. It's very nicely written and easy to read. The one thing that I kind of disagree with in our standard is that we will use different terms, meaning basically the same thing, in different areas of the standard. When they initially wrote it, they weren't consistent in using the same terms, whether it's medium and moderate or whatever. In essence, they wanted them to mean the same thing,

but they didn't use exactly the same term in the same places. I think we have a very well-written standard and I really wouldn't want to tamper with it.

Kathy: I agree, especially after having read some other standards. You start to appreciate it a little bit.

How many breeds do you judge?

Larry: Right now I'm approved to judge six breeds and Junior Showmanship. I have the four northern breeds in the Working Group, the Samoyed, the Siberian, the Akita and the Malamute. Then I have Portuguese Water Dogs and I have Australian Shepherds. I was an approved judge in the original Australian Shepherd Club of America and had been judging Australian Shepherds in their shows for a long time, so I was able to pick those up through the adjunct method. Portuguese Water Dogs - we have in this area a very large group of very good Portuguese Water Dogs. They are the first licensed independent specialty club for Portuguese, they are the first ones to hold their own specialty and they hosted the National Specialty the second year it was offered, so I had a good opportunity to learn on some very good dogs and see some very good specimens and it's really a fantastic breed. I chose to pick up that breed because of the availability of good dogs and the specialty club. I worked with them. I did a couple of their A matches and I've done one of their Sweepstakes, so it worked out very nicely for me.

How long have you been judging?

Larry: My first judging assignment was in February of 1990, so five years. I don't get a lot of judging assignments each year - four to five. It is hard, being a new judge, a limited breed judge, to get a lot of assignments. For one thing, you're not well known in other parts of the country. You really don't want to judge too much in your own backyard. So, I get about four or five assignments a year and kind of plod along and will keep expanding.

Right now, my plan is, since AKC has changed the rules and I don't have to stick in the Working Group, I want to pick up the rest of the northern breeds, plus work on the Working Groups. Obviously, I like the northern breeds. I was asked to do the National Norwegian Buhund Spe-



Am/Can Ch. Que Serà's Karanova, "Nova," at age ten.

cialty. They happened to have their specialty here a couple of years ago. It's a very interesting breed - a rare breed - and we had about sixteen or seventeen animals entered. I think that rep-

resented almost 40 percent of the entire registry in the country. I was very pleased with them. It was a very sound breed. The animals I saw were very consistent in type. They asked me for

some suggestions. I suggested that they read some of the other northern breed standards, start working on what they feel is very important in overall soundness in their breed, start writing it down

and use the AKC format. Seeing that the dogs that I was judging were very consistent, I suggested they start taking measurements of their dogs - length of leg, proportion of leg to body, all the measurements - so that they would have a basis regarding their foundation animals and know what the proportions were when they started in this country. That way, in the future, they could refer back to what the dogs originally were here. They sent me a note saying they were going to do that.

Do you think that most judging is fair?

Larry: I can only answer for myself. When I go in the ring and judge, I do not care who is showing the dog. I may know some of these dogs and I may have done something with them before, but they have to be able to perform for me on that day. Dog shows are just that. It's a dog show. The best dog may not always win. The best dog may not be showing that day. It may not have the expression, it may be down, it may not feel well, it may not move the best, and I can only judge what I see on that day. In my mind, I may think another dog is better, but this one is outperforming it.

As far as other judges, I would say that most judging is honest. Occasionally you'll run into situations Unfortunately, I've had a personal experience when I was handling. I had one old-time, all-around judge who approached me and told me if I ever needed a favor to come and talk to him; that shocked me. When I'm on judging panels, I don't hear judges talking about "I'm going to put so-and-so up today" or anything like that. So, I would like to believe that the judging is more honest than the one incident that I had experience with.

I think there are a lot of exhibitors out there who may feel that some judges have a bias for certain handlers, but if you look at the handlers, they are excellent handlers. Handlers can make or break a dog. If you have an outstanding animal and you do a poor job of handling it, it is very difficult for a judge to go with you. If you have a dog that is not very good and you can get everything out of him or her, you have a better chance of winning. There is a coach that made a comment about sports, that if he

had a choice of two teams, one with all talent and very little desire and one with minimal talent and all the desire in the world, he'd take the team with the desire because they want to win and they will win. It's the same with a show animal. You can walk into the ring with an animal that is not spectacular, but he walks into the ring and it's a

there are times when he's on the way back from a show and thinking about this class or whatever. He thought, "I really should have put up this other dog" or "I wish I had it to do over again and to feel this and know that I was right on it." That really made me feel better, not only that they are human, but they don't always think that they put up the right

tie, and it's to remind himself not to take himself too seriously. "I'm the judge, but I'm not God. I may make a mistake. I'm only trying to judge what I see that day. You can't take yourself too seriously." I guess this would translate into the exhibitors. It's only a dog show. It's not life and death.

There aren't too many



Ch. Mystical's Stolen Memory, Best in Show and Best in Specialty.

transformation for that animal, he will move better than he is structured to move, he will show better than he is and there are times when that dog is going to win.

Kathy: It was 1990 when we went to the judges' education put on by AKC. A good many of the all-around judges were there giving seminars. One of the things I remember is Bob Forsyth talking about do-overs. He said that

dog. At the time, of course, they do, but after they think about it they might change their minds and put up somebody else if they had the chance.

Larry: There is a particular judge out there whose comment one time meant a lot to me. It was Bob Page, a Siberian breeder and a very respected judge. He made the comment that he always wears a Mickey Mouse

exhibitors who, outside the ring, can honestly say, "Yes, there are other good dogs, but mine is the best." You have to have that idea before you walk into the ring, but you have to be honest with yourself. There are good examples of the breed other than your breeding. If you can't get past that, you are going to be a frustrated exhibitor every time you lose. You have to be able to see the



Ch. Que Sera's L'Aura D'Nova, "Aura."

quality in the other animals. Yes, occasionally there will be times when you will say about a dog, "How did that go up?" You just have to say, "It's just one of those days." Until exhibitors accept the fact that they're not the only ones with the good dogs, they're not going to have fun, because they have to win.

If you go out to the West Coast in particular, there are a lot of handlers and that's their livelihood. They have to win, because if they don't win, they have a hard time maintaining clients, etc. If it's a business for you, you're going to do everything you can to win. I guess I can understand their attitude. I don't like it, but I can understand their attitude a little better. I've known a couple of handlers; in fact, Bob and Delores Burkholder, who were handlers in this area, really got me going as far as handling. I would help them out and they would help me out. A lot of philosophy from Bob and Delores would be, "You have to believe in the animals that you are showing. If you get beat, you have to accept the fact that there are other good dogs. Yes, you're going to be upset if a dog that you don't feel is of quality beats you, but it's only a dog show." To me, that is probably the philosophy I'd like to get across to other people. You've got a lot more to worry about than a dog show. If it can't be fun for you, don't do it.

Back when I was handling Roscoe in 1979, I got to my last set of shows in Canada and it was one of those situations where I had to win to be number one. We happened to get Breed all three days and we were number one, but I came back that weekend and decided that I really didn't want to be a handler if I had to win. I enjoy dog shows for the enjoyment, the pleasure, and when I got to the point where I had to win, it was no fun any more. That's when I decided I wasn't going to go into handling as a second livelihood besides teaching. I don't like putting that kind of pressure on myself. I'm a competitive person. I like to go in with a good animal, and when someone beats me, that's great, as long as it's another good animal. There are a lot of them out there.

I try to do the same thing in judging. There are a lot of good animals out there. I don't have certain people who I'm going to be putting up. There are certain



Ch. Que Sera's Sweet Persuasion, "Honey."

dogs that I like, but they're going to have to perform for me on that day. As long as I can keep a positive attitude and can enjoy judging, I'll keep judging. Once I get to the point where judging is no fun for me, I will stop. I enjoy doing it.

How much do you think advertising influences judges?

Kathy: Probably not as much as people think. With just his six breeds and all the magazines that we get, he'll look at them and he knows who the dogs are, but I don't think it's as important as some people think it is, really.

Larry: Once you get to the Group level - and I'm not that level of judge - maybe at that level of competition it may be more important than on the Breed level. I get all the magazines for the breeds I'm judging. I have fun looking through them because it's fun to look back and say, "Oh, that dog I put up is winning." I don't say, "I've got an assignment in Illinois. Let's

see, who's showing in Illinois?" That's not going to influence me. Besides, I think a lot of the pictures they use in advertising are terrible. Just because it's a win and they're trying to show this win, the overall image of the animal is not the best they could show.

I like going through the magazines because I get to see varieties of type within the breed, even the breeds that I have. I like to look at breeds that I am applying for. But I like to look at differences in type in these dogs, because I can't always get out and travel and see them. That's what I like the magazines for. As far as influencing judges, probably on the Group level, yes, there's some influence. There are judges out there who are to the point where they've got to know who's been winning and they have to go with winners, because they're not confident enough in their own judging to make decisions for themselves. I hope I never get to that point.

When you were handling, did you have a preference of showing under breeder-judges or all breed judges?

Larry: No. As long as I had what I thought was a good, sound, quality animal, I would show to anybody. There were really no judges that I would not show to. I felt the dogs that I was showing, even if I knew that it was not their style of dog, were quality enough that they would recognize the quality. I was very fortunate and was showing good dogs. I felt that I could take them to any judge. If I didn't win, fine. If I won, fine. I was only disappointed a couple of times in what judges really did. I also learned very quickly not to ask the judge, "Why didn't you put my dog up?" The only time I ever asked the judge that, when I had Baron, my first champion, the farm dog, we were showing at a local show, and everyone thought from what was being shown he had a good chance to go Breed from the classes. I think we went fourth of five and I was kind of dumb-

founded at the dogs he put up. I was still new, so I asked the judge, "What is it about the dog that you didn't like?" There were things that he could pick on very easily, because there is no perfect dog and, again, I was trying to learn. He said, "Well, I personally like a round eye in a Sammy" which is contrary to our standard. I went back and looked at the dogs that he put up. They all had these big, round, bulging eyes. The only dogs that finished their championships were Baron, who placed fourth, and the dog who didn't place. The dogs that went one, two, three never finished. From then on I've never gone up and asked a judge that I didn't know, "What didn't you like about my dog?" because I felt that if you don't know the standard or you make a statement so contrary, I don't want to hear it. It's embarrassing you and you don't even know it.

I will approach judges that I know personally and try to take them off to the side and kind of talk to them about dogs. That's harder to do these days because shows are bigger and judges aren't supposed to be off talking to the exhibitors as much, but there were certain judges when I started that I could talk to and we just talked dogs, in general. When I had Baron out and I was showing Kathy's Kojak, I'd occasionally have a judge say, "I like your old boy, here, but I like that young dog better. He's more my style of dog," and he'd go on to tell me what he liked about the dog. I could accept that very nicely, but you don't see that happening these days. We, as judges, are not supposed to be in the grooming area, we're not supposed to converse with people, and I have a hard time talking to exhibitors about their dogs before or after showing, because they may think, "He likes my dog. I'm going to show to him again."

Kathy, have you done handling?

Kathy: Yes, of my own dogs.

Do you have any advice for people who would like to handle their own dogs?

Kathy: To me, it's really important to let the dogs have a good time and not make them work. Let them enjoy it. When we'd be taking young dogs to shows and the old ones would know, they wanted to go. You could tell they knew what was going on and they wanted to go. It's important to have a good



Ch. Blue Sky's Hot Cakes, "Ginni."

time, let your dog have a good time and get to know people. Everybody wants to win, but whether you win or lose, enjoy it and don't make it so important. There's always another dog show.

Larry: I agree with Kathy, it's got to be fun. You have to make it fun for your dogs. If it's not fun for them, they will figure out a way to make it not fun for you. Handling is like dancing. You have to get into a rhythm. You have to get into a flow with your animal. You have to be aware of what your dog is doing. You can feel it through the lead. I do not have the ideal physique for moving a dog, but when I'm moving a dog I can get into the proper speed for the dog and the dog will move comfortably. It's figuring that out, and then you move as one and it's very smooth. At the same time, you have to be aware of what is going on. You can't just stare at the

judge and you can't just stare at your dog. You have to be aware of what's going on around you.

A lot of handling is timing: when to relax your dog and when to, all of a sudden, make your dog look just right to catch the judge's eye. Remember, this is dog showing. You want your dog looking the best when the judge is going to be looking at it. When the judge isn't looking at it, it doesn't have to look its best, but try to have your dog relax, with you kind of blocking the view of the judge, so if the judge happens to look that way, he's not going to see your dog not looking its best. Part of this timing comes from watching other handlers and watching judging techniques. There are a lot of exhibitors today who do not take the time to go ringside and just sit and watch. Watch different handlers. Watch the techniques they use. Not every technique is ideal for you, but watch the different

techniques they are using and see if there is something that they're doing that you can do. Watch their timing. Watch how they are keeping an eye on the judge. They have learned the timing of the judge and know about when the judge is going to turn and look that way and their dog is set up and looking good. It is the timing involved with that.

Go and watch the Groups, because there you have the best dogs and the best handlers, and watch how they present their dogs and how they have their timing down. As shows have gotten bigger, people go and show the dogs and go home. They don't watch the dog show anymore. They don't watch the way people handle and they don't watch the judging going on. There's much you can learn from watching more than your own breed.

I used to go and watch different handlers. Back when I was



BIS, BISS Ch. Glenhaven's Arctic Knight, "Juneau." Number one Alaskan Malamute Dog, 1994; number two Alaskan Malamute, 1994; number one West Coast Malamute, 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994.

learning, I took a trip out to the New England circuit. I took a Golden with me and a Sammy, and I watched a lot of the East Coast handlers. I particularly watched Bob and Jane Forsyth and "the machine." It was fantastic to watch them operate. They had a big bus set up and they had a van. They had people grooming for them. They were ringside and the dogs were presented to them at the ring. No matter what breed it was, they always looked so smooth with that animal. To watch Bob Forsyth, who is a tall person, in the ring with a Whippet or another small animal, he looked just as smooth as when he was handling a large dog. The iced tea was brought to them ringside. They didn't leave the ringside. All of a sudden I would notice their bus would leave.

What was left was the van with their Group dogs. The bus would be going to the next show site to get the spot and their assistants would have everything set up by the time they got there. It was just fascinating to watch the Forsyths and they were good handlers.

There are other good handlers out there. Watch their techniques. Watch what they are doing as far as timing, because that's really what it is. They have a special rapport with their animals, no matter who it is that they're showing.

As far as specializing goes, what does it mean to make the Top Ten or Twenty?

Kathy: I think it means a lot. It shows you that your dog is the quality you're breeding for. You may think it's really good, and if

it can do that kind of winning and place like that, then it is as good as other dogs that are out there. There are some people who will only show to certain judges, but on the whole, you can feel that you've had a good number of judges who have all liked the dog, so it has to be more than one person's type that they're following around. It's exciting to win and to do that.

Larry: My answer would be it depends on who you are. Some people have to be number one or number two or it doesn't mean anything. That's because of their egos. They're not trying to prove anything about their dogs, they're trying to prove their egos. Other people who are showing, who are the breeders and breeder-handlers, are trying to prove to the rest of the breed-

ers out there that "I have quality animals. What I am breeding and showing are good." Then you have some people who enjoy showing, it's their own dog and they're not big breeders. They're having fun in what they're doing and they have a good dog to have fun with. It's not really a reflection of their ego, it's not a reflection of their kennel, they're trying to show what their dog is and they're just having fun. So, it really depends on how you are falling in those categories.

Where did you fall?

Larry: There's always a little bit of ego. Any person who is competitive has a little bit of an ego that they want to satisfy. For me, I wanted to show people that I could show good dogs and I wanted people to see the dogs. When I first started showing for

Kathy, she had some good dogs and we started showing Kojak, at first, and we came back and told you ... what, do you remember?

Kathy: He told me, "Do you want this dog to be a special? Then you have to get him out there."

Larry: People aren't going to see the dog unless you get him out and get him shown. Or do you just want him to be a pet around the house? This was Kathy's first litter. She had something to prove. Kojak was a fantastic dog. He was fun and he would reflect their kennel. Michael had an ego, which made it easy to push his buttons. Michael was a lot of fun. He and I were good friends. He is Kathy's ex. We told Kathy, "This is a good dog. He can either sit in your backyard and just be a pet or you can have him out showing and reflecting what your kennel is," so it worked out that it was reflecting Kathy's kennel. I was learning how to handle and he was a good dog for me to learn with, so in essence it was helping my ego, but it was something I enjoyed doing.

I like people to see good dogs, so I kind of fit into all three categories, depending on who I was showing at the time. When I was showing Roscoe, it started off that I wanted to show him because I thought he was a fantastic animal and I just wanted people to see him. It was always a very big ego booster. We were beaten in the Breed once in the year and we usually got a Group placement, but it was an ego booster for us to win. It was more important for me to have people who didn't know me come up to me and comment, "What a beautiful animal. He can really move." To me, that was more of an ego boost than anything, because people could appreciate him as an animal and I felt he was one of the top animals that I've ever had my hands on.

How popular is the Sammy with the general public?

Kathy: I know they went down in the last AKC statistics that came out. They were in about the 30s, I think.

Larry: Mid-30s I think.

Is that a good place to be?

Kathy: Oh, yes.

Larry: A Sammy isn't for everybody. Temperament and personality, yes, they could live with anybody. Everybody can't handle the coat. Everybody can't

handle the shedding, the long hair. If you have a long coat, you're going to have hair. There is grooming involved. Everybody can't handle that. They're energetic dogs. They should have an area where they can run and play, yet they're content to be with you. If you want a kennel dog, a Sammy's not for you. They don't do well as a kennel dog. They want to be with the people and that goes back to their heritage. I really don't want them to get to be a really popular dog, because then you will get the problems with people getting the breed that really shouldn't have them. They develop more and more problems. Where we are now, they're fairly stable and dropped a little bit. I'm comfortable with that.

How do you train puppies and at what age?

Kathy: We start working with them when they're born as far as socialization. That's really a big thing with us. We start training at about six or seven weeks. If it's winter it's not so easy. In the summer we'll take them out and play and go where they want to go with the lead. We try to get them to training classes at a fairly young age. Even if it is a slow maturing puppy and is not going to be ready to show right at six months, you want it to have that training and socialization going to matches.

A lot of our training is when the puppies are with the older dogs. They follow them as far as basic "what do we do now? What's the routine? Where am I supposed to go potty if not in the kennel?" The older dogs do a lot of training. One of Kara's jobs as she got older was teaching the dogs to dig. With every puppy, she'd stand right behind them and get all the dirt thrown at her and come in with a black face, but she'd be right behind them barking and telling them, "Come on, you're doing a good job."

I don't do anything that's really harsh. I know that a lot of other people, in order to have dogs that will fit into their situation, will teach a few of the basic obedience commands, and that's good to do at a really young age. We encourage people to do that, if that's what they want.

How far in obedience have you gone with your dogs?

Kathy: I've only made it through beginning obedience

with a couple of my dogs.

Larry: My first two dogs I put CDs on. That's about it. I got into conformation and more emphasis on that type of training. Going back to what Kathy said as far as training we do with the dogs, there's training that we do that is not necessarily lead training, but just attitude training, when we're giving them treats, making them stand and show for them. Little things like that, that we don't think about that we do automatically, are training the dogs. We give treats and the older dogs are standing there in a show-type pose and the puppies will go, "Oh, okay," and they'll do the same thing. So there are little things that we do all along that we don't think of as training, but they are training. We start off, as Kathy said, with really young, newborn pups as far as socialization, holding them, putting them on their backs, teaching them that they have to be submissive to humans. That kind of training we do right from the beginning and all through, and I think it's been very beneficial to the overall temperament of our animals.

How intelligent is the Samoyed compared with other breeds?

Larry: It's difficult to compare to other breeds. Basically we're limited on the breeds we've had experience with. We've had a Tibetan Terrier, I've owned Golden Retrievers and they can be robot dogs. I've handled Siberians. We co-owned an Alaskan Malamute, and compared to him they are extremely intelligent. (laughter) Are you talking trainability or are you talking intelligence, because I think a Sammy is extremely intelligent. The reason some of them don't do well in obedience is it's kind of routine. It's, "All right, I've done that. Now I want to see if I can do it a little bit differently and make it a little more fun." So there's a lot of intelligence, a lot of thought process going on.

I think Mindy is the most intelligent animal we've had. I think with Sammies people see this white, fluffy dog and a lot of people are afraid of them. They really wouldn't hurt anybody, but they can sense danger. One situation I was in, I was out showing Mindy at the time. I had her out on a Flexi-lead and I had a young puppy with me, and an inebriated fellow came up to talk to me. He wanted to see the dog and Mindy

sensed that there was something different about this guy. She positioned herself between me and him, and every time he moved, she moved. She kept her eye on him at all times. It was nice to know that she had the intelligence to know that this guy could have been a threatening factor to me or to the puppy, and she was willing to put herself in between us and was guarding me, whether I really needed to be guarded or not at that time. After I talked to him a little longer, I'm glad she did it, because he was not really balanced, let's put it that way. She could sense that. I've talked to other people with the breed with similar situations, where their dog could sense danger in a person and positioned themselves where it basically made the person a little safer, because where the dog was the people weren't going to do anything. It was to the point where the guy even asked me, "Is she okay? Will she bite?" I said, "If necessary she probably would." He kind of backed off and left at that point. So, yes, they have an intelligence to them.

Trainability for the obedience ring, some will do fantastic because they love to do it. With most of them, it becomes a challenge, because they are so intelligent that they have a hard time understanding why you keep doing the same thing over and over and over. At least, that's the way I interpret it.

Is it appropriate to take a dog anywhere off-leash?

Larry: I don't do it. Our dogs are on lead at all times except in our backyard and we have a fenced yard. I know people who go in the mountains backpacking with their dogs who will take them off lead at that time and they always come to them. I would be nervous about it. I've never done it. I can't say whether it's appropriate or not. My feeling is I want to be in control of the dog. I know the temperament of my dog, but I don't know about the temperaments of other dogs out there.

Kathy: The other thing is, even the most well-trained dog occasionally is going to see something or take off, and maybe because we've lived primarily in the city where there is lots of traffic, our dogs aren't really street-smart, because they don't run loose. In the country you don't have to worry as much about it,

so maybe it's a little easier if it's something that they've become used to. They see a squirrel or see something and they're off, and no matter what, they're not going to turn around. I just don't do it, because I don't want to let a situation happen.

Larry: We do know people who are capable of having their dogs off-lead. Their dogs will come when called. I just get nervous of the situation.

Can shy or aggressive dogs be corrected by training?

Kathy: I would say that shy dogs can be, if it's just something from not having the socialization and not from having had a bad experience. With enough training as far as getting them out in different situations and seeing more people and becoming more comfortable, they can make progress. I have no problem thinking that can happen. With aggressive dogs, I guess it depends on why they are aggressive. Again, if they've had a bad experience, it's really difficult. It can be done in some cases.

Larry: If the dog is not necessarily shy but is not sure of itself, and is an outgoing animal, that can be developed by you putting more work into it and bringing it into situations where it is going to be positive for it and build up its confidence. A shy dog is a much more difficult situation and may or may not be successful, depending on why it is shy and what created that in the first place. As far as an aggressive dog, is the dog aggressive toward other dogs or is it people-aggressive? Our general statement is that we would never have a people-aggressive animal in this house. As far as aggression toward other dogs, I think any time you put males together you always have to be on guard, just because that's the situation with males. They're not necessarily aggressive, but they can be dog-aggressive at certain times of the year.

We have had absolutely no problems with all of our bitches running together. They develop their own pack and their own order and they respect it. We develop the queen of the kennel. We had Nova, when she was still queen and around, she was at the age where Mindy was going to start challenging her for queen. We intervened and wouldn't let it happen. In essence, Kathy and I were the alphas of our kennel and we would not let Mindy take



Ch. Snow Fantasy's Que Sera Sera, "Sara."

over the queenship from Nova until it was time for Nova to leave. We corrected the one situation and Mindy respected that Nova was still going to be queen. Then, after we lost Nova, Mindy just stepped into being queen. She wasn't the oldest at the time, but she was accepted. That was the situation.

With your love of the northern breeds, have you been involved with sledding or weight pulling or anything like that?

Kathy: Just with sledding, very amateur. Probably, because the dogs weren't trained very well, we found we had to run along with them to get them to do anything. So we would do it once in a while with the Sammy club and take the dogs out. That was nice, because maybe you'd have a dog or two on there that had a little more experience and would help your dogs to do it. Weight pulling I've never done.

Larry: I think our big prob-

lem is that we've never really had the time to be diverse in other areas. Being very active in conformation showing, being a full-time schoolteacher and having kids, we didn't really have the time to concentrate on the other aspects of the animals. I very much appreciate those who do. We have an active club in the area. We have some members who are very active in sledding. They're trying to put a competitive team together to do some racing. We have some who are very active in skijoring. We have people who are doing backpacking with their dogs. I think it's fantastic and I really think it's great. In fact, we have a very active group with agility. Our local specialty is trying to have an AKC licensed agility trial with it next year. So we have a lot of people in the area who are very active with their animals. I enjoy going and watching them do it, but I don't have the time to put into it.

I wish I did.

To what extent are your breedings natural or controlled? How much do you physically help mating along?

Kathy: We've always started out trying to let it happen naturally, as much as possible. We've always wanted to be there when the breeding was taking place. We have had to do two artificial inseminations. I believe that if your dogs can't mate naturally, there is a reason, and you don't want to perpetuate that because it's going to just keep going and going. I believe the tendency for that would go on through the generations.

Larry: We've never really owned a stud dog, so we haven't been in that aspect of it. The couple of breedings with Roscoe, he is a dog that I would assist in that he would stand on my leg. I would sit down and he would stand on my leg to do the breeding, so from that aspect, I was assisting him. We've had the two

artificial inseminations, but they were bitches that had bred naturally before and males that had bred naturally before; it was just the conditions at the time. I would like to see more of a natural breeding.

What do you think is a fair stud fee?

Kathy: It depends upon the dog. I would say probably \$300 to \$500 would be the range most dogs should be in.

Larry: You have some dogs out there that claim their stud fee as \$1,000. Well, if you have a quality bitch and you want to use that stud with your bitch, most stud owners will come down from that \$1,000. A lot of the breedings we've done have been with people we've known very well, where we've been in situations of "let's make a deal," because they wanted a puppy or really wanted to see a breeding with our particular bitch or whatever. People who have stud dogs have to look at the total picture. If someone is shipping a bitch across country to you, a bitch you really want, and you think it will be a complementary breeding, and the owners of that bitch are going to invest several hundred dollars in just shipping that bitch to you and getting that bitch back, you may decide to come down with your stud fee to make it economically feasible for them to do the breeding.

Kathy: I feel that for those people that want \$1,000 it might be that they don't want to do any breedings. It might be that they just want to get the quality bitches. I can imagine all of the things I've heard when you have an active stud dog, all of the things that go on. In that way, they figure if somebody is willing to pay that, then it's something that they might want to do.

How many litters should a bitch have?

Kathy: There are so many variations. I don't believe they should have a litter before they are two years old and have been x-rayed. We've done a couple back-to-back breedings, but we would have one and two-puppy litters where we and our vet felt that the dog was in good enough condition where she could have another one if that was going to be right for us. I don't think that any of our dogs have had more than four litters.

Larry: Kara had the most, didn't she?

Kathy: Yes.

Larry: We wound up having two and three puppies in a litter. Our philosophy was that we wouldn't breed before two years of age, x-rays and eyes checked, and we wouldn't breed a bitch that wasn't a champion. That was our standard. At that time, we wouldn't breed to a male who wasn't a champion, who hadn't proven himself. It all depends on your situation. I don't think a person should have a litter just to have a litter - just because the bitch is two years old, okay she can have a litter. That's not our philosophy as far as breeding. Even when we were having litters, we were doing breedings where we wanted something or we were looking for something in particular out of a litter, and it had to be at a time that was going to be convenient for us. We'd skip seasons where it wasn't the proper time. I don't like having puppies that are going to be ready to go at the Christmas season because I don't think you have the right clientele looking for puppies at that time. There are other times of year where it is going to conflict with other events that are going on. We'll skip doing a breeding.

Kathy: This litter that he wants to have with Sara, if the timing works out, we would have puppies in June for Heather's graduation, and I'm saying, "No, I don't want to have puppies during that time."

Larry: And, if timing works out, it's just going to miss. There are people who have different philosophies as far as breeding. Some people feel that this bitch has got to earn her keep and you have to get litters out of her. She's young and you try to have as many litters as possible. That's not our philosophy. I can't say that's wrong for those people. That's their philosophy. Every time we have a litter, we always keep in the back of our mind that having a litter is a responsibility for us. We're responsible for that bitch going to full term with a healthy pregnancy, and we're responsible for those puppies to make sure they're in good homes. It's important for us to do this when we're ready to do it, not just because the bitch is ready to do it.

How late in her life would you breed a bitch?

Kathy: I would say probably six.

Larry: It depends on the individual animal. We have had a litter later than that, but the bitch was in fantastic condition and was in extreme good health. I think seven would be my baseline and anything after that would be on a case by case situation. I guess I couldn't put a limit on that. I've heard of people breeding bitches that are eight or nine years old and people criticize them for that, but I think you have to look at what condition the bitch is in. Is she healthy enough to have this litter, and is there a reason they are doing this particular breeding, as far as their kennel and their bloodlines are concerned, that they feel this is an important breeding for them? It's a decision that they have to make at that point. I don't want to put my judgment on them. I have certain limits, and if people go beyond that, I may say, "They shouldn't do that," but that's their business. They've got to make that decision for themselves.

Do you help your bitches whelp?

Kathy: Oh, yes. I want to be there with them. Normally we'll have puppies in our family room, so they're upstairs with us and the bitch is up here. We've never had a problem with a bitch and the kids going to see puppies. I've never had to worry about that. As far as helping them, I like to see them do it as much as they can, but I want to be here as the puppies are born just in case, to make sure that it's all okay. It's in the middle of the night, always. There have been a couple cases where they had one and I thought that they were okay, and I lay down to rest a little bit, and there was another puppy coming, but I didn't hear that she was making noise. I've lost a couple that way and I felt really bad. I should have been there when she had the puppy. I don't think we do anything extreme to help.

Larry: The first litter for a bitch, the first puppy, can be traumatic for the bitch, and after the first one Kathy will try to help them and make sure they know what they are doing. After that, most of our bitches have no problems at all or very few problems. They become more relaxed and understand what's going on. I know some people who leave the house when the bitch has a litter and let her do it all herself. I can't do that. I want to at least be there in case there is a problem

that develops, so that we can intervene if we have to.

Kathy: Yes. There have been some cases where we've had to.

Larry: A very large puppy where you might have to help in the delivery, or a breech puppy where you might have to assist. You would hate to not be there and something happen to your bitch just because you didn't want to watch this.

Have you supplemented young puppies?

Kathy: Not usually. I know of one instance where the bitch had a cesarean and then developed an infection. That was Kara. Usually, when they get a little bit older, I like the mother to want them. I don't say, "Okay, you're three weeks old, this is it." I just do it gradually. I start feeding them a little food. I start out with raw hamburger and honey mix to get the digestive system going, but the mother needs to be a big influence on the puppies for a long time and I like to keep her around. So even when they're not nursing, we try to have the puppies with the mother - and the other dogs, too - as much as possible.

Larry: The other dogs have fun with the puppies in that the puppies will chase the older dogs and they'll run away and then try to play with them. It's fun to watch the relationships developing between the young pups and the older dogs and how they interact. It's really neat to see your kennel being harmonious in that way. It's a lot of fun in that situation.

At what ages do you evaluate the puppies for pet and show quality and what are you looking for?

Kathy: I think we start evaluating them from the beginning. We try to compare them to each other to see what differences we see. I think we get serious about the sixth week, after they've been up on their feet a lot more. We're looking for the same thing that we do in the show ring, the temperament, the soundness and the type. I know that there are some lines where they'll say, "They have a close rear. All of our puppies do that and that will be gone at a certain age." I've seen it happen where they'll do that, but we've never had anything like that. Normally, what we see in a six- to eight-week puppy is what we'll have.

Larry: We mark our puppies

with fingernail polish, so we know who we're talking about. It's just observations. You'll see a certain puppy doing certain things and you'll file it in your head or you might jot it down. We keep track of weights, particularly the first two weeks, and see how they're growing. At the same time we're looking at head types, looking at pigment development, looking at those ears, evaluating bone. Then, at about six weeks we start the formal evaluation where we try to do a puppy at a time. Then, what we do is rank them with each other. We make notes, we like this, we like that - the positives - and we're seeing this, right now, within the dogs. At eight weeks we may do another formal evaluation and we still see these positive things that we saw earlier and see if those things that we had questions about have changed. Again, we rate the puppies against each other. It's interesting to see the changes where puppies shift along.

Depending on how long we are going to hold onto what we consider our show potentials, we'll evaluate them again. It's evaluating them on the general criteria we want as far as what we feel we want as show or pet quality, ranking them with each other. It starts getting to be pretty consistent at a particular age if you have an outstanding specimen. The puppy is going to start standing out and his personality starts to emerge and a few other things, so the evaluation is ongoing.

The hard part is when you have other people coming out to evaluate puppies, because they see them just that one time and they haven't seen the transition from here to there, and it's interesting to get their input on what they see at that particular time. You've been with them, and sometimes you are either very aware of certain things or miss certain things that may seem obvious at the time.

With Mindy's litter, Frank and Paula Phillips, because they owned the stud, had the pick of the litter. They were living in Texas at the time, so we met halfway, and we sat down and evaluated the puppies in that situation. They picked their puppy on what they saw that day. She did finish her championship. Structurally, she was probably the best overall animal at that time. She was also one of our highest



Ch. Que Sera's Unchained Melody, "Melody."

ranked puppies. When we came back, after that puppy had left, Mindy, who we weren't thinking of keeping, all of a sudden developed. Her personality exploded. She was now in charge of the rest of the puppies. The other one had been more dominant at the time. When she left, all of a sudden Mindy's personality came out, so her overall personality helped in her presentation to us and she moved up as far as evaluation goes. Even though you are doing these evaluations, other puppies are involved, and there are those things you can't eliminate from an evaluation - the intangibles. Whoever the number one puppy was at that time is still number one, but all of a sudden somebody else blossoms, and that was the case with Mindy and we wound up keeping Mindy. They were very similar, but a lot

of it was that little extra pizzazz that she had.

At what age should puppies be placed in their new home?

Kathy: The earliest, if it was somebody that had other dogs, between seven and eight weeks. Normally we like to keep them eight weeks, and show potentials we like to keep a little longer if there is something we are not sure about.

What should a potential show puppy sell for?

Larry: More than we get. (laughter)

Kathy: Some people get a lot more. We've pretty much sold show quality for \$500, which is probably the maximum stud fee that I would expect.

Larry: I think there are probably people out there getting a lot more for puppies than we do. We're more concerned about the

homes they're going to. Usually the people approaching us about show potential dogs are people that we know and we really wanted this animal in that home, so we're not out trying to sell show potentials to unknown factors out there. We're not asking big bucks.

Do you sell pet puppies with spay and neuter agreements?

Kathy: Yes.

Do you sell cash only or have you ever had payment terms?

Kathy: We've had payment terms or worked out some kind of arrangement. When I bought my second dog from John Donner he took payments and he understood. I think that if you judge it's really a home that you want your dog in, you should consider special arrangements. A lot of times we'll tell people, if there is a time that they're going

to be out of town, give us a call and we'll see if the dog can come back and stay here. We have one family that has two little boys and they call it Camp Que Sera and say, "Sasha's going to camp now." It's really funny, so we try to keep in touch with them as much as possible.

Larry: Normally if someone wants to do payments, that's fine. We write up a sales agreement and the papers are not turned over until payment is made in full, so they don't get the full ownership until payment is made in full. We've also had dogs go on a trial basis. If we really think this is going to be a good home, we want to make sure that the dog fits their situation. We've had a trial basis where the dog is with them, with the agreement that he can come back here if it doesn't work.

When people come to buy a puppy from us, they wind up getting interviewed, whether they know it or not. One situation we had was a person answering an ad in the paper. They came to the door and said, "We came to buy your puppy." Our response was, "We'll see." They looked at us like, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, sit down." We went through an interview. We insist that both mom and dad are there, because if dad only is there, we won't sell this puppy until mom knows this puppy is coming home, because mom's the one who's really going to take care of it. If mom's at home and you have a puppy, mom's the one who's really going to be taking care of it, so we want to make sure mom is comfortable with the dog. If there are children involved, we want to see the children and see how they react with other dogs, our dogs, the older ones. So, there're a lot of things that we try to bring into the discussion.

We've had people come who thought they wanted a puppy, and after we've talked to them for a while and pointed out that they needed to know what they were really getting into Maybe we're trying to unsell the dogs. We want the people to really know what they're getting into and we need to know that they want this puppy. We had a situation where some people had just moved into a new house and had a landscaped yard and they wanted a puppy. We went through the whole thing and really talked

to them. We won't send a dog, that day, with anybody. They were going to get back to us. A few days later they called back and said, "We've decided we're not going to get a dog, now, of any breed. We want to enjoy our house. We want to enjoy our landscaped yard for a while. Maybe in a couple of years we'll get back to you." It made me feel good that they realized that they weren't ready for a dog.

Have you ever gotten puppies back when you sold a bitch?

Larry: No. I think the most we've done is had in the contract if we sell a bitch we might want to go on as co-owner for a particular reason, and help guide them in the breeding. Then, if there's a puppy we might want out of the litter, we have the option of buying one at pet price. Isn't that what we've done?

Kathy: Yes, we've done that.

Larry: It's our philosophy that if you own a dog, you shouldn't have to keep paying for it over and over again. I know there are situations where this does occur, but if we feel the animal is good enough, I would like to help guide them in how they are going to breed that, and if there is something outstanding in the litter, I should be willing to pay for it. We've never been in the situation where we've got to have puppies and keep selling them to have an income. That's not our philosophy and that's never where we wanted to be. That's why we haven't had that many litters in 23 or 24 years. A total in the low teens and we don't have big litters. We don't produce a lot of puppies. We've been very successful in what we've done, but we don't feel that the puppies have to support the kennel. We've never been there and I never want to be in that situation.

What do you feed your dogs?

Larry: Nature's Recipe maintenance, which is the lamb and rice. Prior to that I've used the Eagle performance, and prior to that we used a food called Show Results. Then I was kind of involved with Show Results. I was regional sales manager. The president of the company is Lou Hoehn, who had Sulu Samoyeds. Other vice-presidents were Frank and Paula Phillips. There were a lot of us Sammy people who were involved with Show Results dog food. It was a very good dog food. I would say we

were one of the first companies to push the big name performance companies into setting up at shows and presenting facts. We would go to dog shows and set up our booth and start pushing information about our food and be straightforward and honest about it. Maybe that was the problem, we were too honest about it. The people who were involved in trying to sell the food were breeders who were using the food themselves and were talking about it. We really weren't sales people trying to pitch a line, but we did certain things that we saw the big companies starting to follow and mimic.

Show Results was trying to get into a market where you had big money involved, and the big name food companies, and we really didn't have a lot of money backing us. I had the area built up pretty well with pretty decent tonnage, and then I decided to put my application in for judging. At that time I had to remove myself from a position with a dog food company. When I did that, I saw the sales in the area go from x number of tons a year to basically nothing, mainly because it was taken over by a company that had other products and they didn't own dogs themselves or use the product themselves. They were sales-type people, and I could see the difference in people being honest about a product and people just trying to sell a product.

We continued using Show Results for a few years and I would bring in a ton at a time which would last me six months or more. I had a few other people still wanting to use it so they would get a little of mine. It just got to be a hassle to have to do that, so I went on to Eagle dog food, which was very similar to our dog food at the time. The company that makes Eagle dog food at one time manufactured Show Results. Actually, their first brochure looked a lot like Show Results' brochure at the time. It was a good food.

The location where I was buying it was inconvenient, and because of location and ease of getting this other food, we moved on to Nature's Recipe, which is another good performance food, and we're pleased with it, so far. We've been using it a year, now. I would always use a performance-type food. There are good name foods out there that have

changed their recipes and have gone from a food that I would use to a food that, because of certain ingredients, I won't use right now. They're still very popular and they're doing very well and dogs do well on them, but it's not what I want to use right now.

Do you feed any kind of supplements, vitamins or minerals?

Larry: No.

Kathy: I would say a pregnant bitch or a lactating bitch we would supplement with cottage cheese or whatever but, really, in normal, everyday feeding and maintenance, we don't.

Larry: As long as the food has been produced properly and has the vitamins and minerals listed on the bag, that should be adequate nutrition for the animal.

What kind of a routine do you do in preparation for a show?

Kathy: The regular maintenance is pretty much just cutting toenails. We like it when the weather is nice, when we can get outside and use the dryer; we'll do a lot of in-between bathing and brush them and use the blower to blow out the hair.

Larry: We have to check to see if our neighbors have any clothes hanging on the line, first. (laughter)

Kathy: The birds like it and the squirrels. If it's somebody that we're showing, that's a little bit different.

Larry: We have Sara entered this coming weekend at the shows. Actually, it's the first show I've shown at in about two years, because of other things going on. I gave her her first bath three weeks ago and have given her a bath each week, trying to get her coat back into show condition, making sure that we're cutting nails every week. At that point, I will also do a little biking with the dog. That grooming I start several weeks in advance. I start trimming of the feet in advance and I just touch up each week, so that's easier to do. I'm not doing a complete foot the day of the show. I don't do anybody trimming. I don't believe in body trimming.

Any favorite grooming products or tools that you use?

Kathy: Actually, Larry went to buy shampoo and they don't make the stuff that we used to use.

Larry: Some have changed. A lot of it depends on the type of water you have, as far as the ease of rinsing out. I've gone on that

basis, what gives it a good, clean coat and leaves it nice and glistening and easy to rinse out. I've done some experimenting with different shampoos and there are different ones, and I don't want to plug any one that I do use. It depends on the different dogs. I normally use a whitening shampoo, which most Sammy people do. I also use a little bit of a texturizing shampoo at certain times. I don't follow any directions. I've developed my own technique for using it. Some dogs I use it on more than other dogs. Some dogs don't have to have any at all. When you've worked with coats long enough, you know which coat needs a little bit of added texture, so I know I can use a little bit of the texturizing shampoo after I've used the regular shampoo.

After 23 years of grooming Sammys, you don't think about a lot of things any more. There are techniques you're using, but you don't think about them. When I first started in the breed, my wife and I would go around to different people and ask, "How do you groom this? What do you do?" We went to a lot of the big breeders in the Midwest and asked them the same questions. It was interesting, because so often we'd hear, "The only way to do this," and it was different from what the last person showed us. So we developed our theory: "This is the way one does it, this is the way someone else does it. Obviously there is more than one way to do the same thing." So we would develop our own technique. When people would ask us how to groom, we'd say, "All right. This is what we want to do. There are many ways of getting to the end product. These are some different techniques of doing it. You have to find out what technique you like." When I was helping Bob and Delores Burkholder and talking about doing it, you have to have in your mind what you want your animal to look like when you're done. Now you have to figure out how to get there and you've got to practice and try different techniques. The same technique does not work on every dog, so you have to have more than one way to approach in grooming. That's basically what I've done.

Starting with Sara three weeks ago and working her coat, there are certain things that each week I may do something differ-

ent and I like the result. This week, with the show, I'm actually going to give her her bath tomorrow morning before we leave, because it was supposed to rain today and I didn't want to bathe her last night and have it rain today, so I'll do her in the morning and I think she's going to look very nice. So there are no special secrets. If you're going to do it, you have to know many ways of approaching the situation. Whatever works best for that animal, use that technique. (P.S. Sara picked up two BOBs and a Group three.)

I want to ask you about exercise for your dogs and maybe, in conjunction with that, you can describe a little of what your setup is like.

Kathy: I don't know sizes, but we have the one big rock area. All the dogs are together as much as possible. We try to keep everybody together and they'll run and play and pretty much exercise themselves. If it's somebody that we're going to show, it will be more of an actual exercise program to get them in condition. Actually, Larry built our inside kennel area to be an office, but it ended up with an air conditioner and that's where the dogs are in their crates when we're not home. When we are home, they have a room that's under the porch. It's a cement room, and they have stairs they can go up and go out the dog door. So, when we're here, they can be outside in the rock area or they can go downstairs and lie down or whatever. When we're not home they're in their crates.

What kind of a program do you do when they're being shown?

Kathy: Pretty much on the bicycle, getting them to trot the speed you want them to go in the show ring, and conditioning them.

How far do you go?

Larry: It depends on where we start off with the dogs. What I like to do is start off a little slow, get them used to trotting. The first time I go out with them is kind of an easy, even trot the whole time. I try to see how long they can go without exerting them too much. Then when I take them out I will probably go a little bit farther and a little farther. I used to have a route around the neighborhood that I would go and it worked out to be about a mile and a half to two miles total, so I would build them up to where they were comfortable trot-

ting with me that distance without feeling like they were tired. I will do various things while I'm gaiting them on the bike. I will go for a period of time at what I think is a good, comfortable trot and then I may speed up, trying to get them to use all the reach and drive they have, trying to force them to really exert themselves and use what they have. Then I will slow back down to an even, nice, easy trot for them. Then I will speed up for a short distance, slow down for a while, speed up, slow down. By the time I am back home, I have gone through this whole process. When I really have a dog that I'm showing a lot, that's the routine I will do. I'd like to have a trotter. I just don't want to invest another \$1000 in a trotter. We're to the point where we're not campaigning dogs any more.

As far as the rest of our facility, our rock area is about 20 by 40. The back 20 by 20 I have a sunscreen that I can put over, so that is shaded. They're on rock, but underneath the rock they're on cement block with the holes pointing upward. They're on about ten to twelve inches of rock, so that when it rains it drains through very fast. For the most part it keeps them very clean. There's one area where they have been able to dig between blocks and get some dirt up into it and I have to go through and eventually screen out the dirt and redo that area.

The room below us is about 18 by 12. They have that available. We put them in the other room at night where they sleep in their crates. We have central air and, when the central air is running all the time, it stays nice and cool downstairs. When it is nice weather, we don't have to have the central air on and it gets a little stuffy down there, so in the room where they have their crates we have an air conditioner we can turn on just to keep that area more comfortable for them. Occasionally we'll let them out in the backyard to run together.

We have privacy fence completely around the kennel area. We have chain-link fence on this side and there is about a two-foot space and then we have the privacy fence. That allows me to go outside and look at the dogs and still be between the privacy fence and the kennel. Next to the driveway, the privacy fence is against the chain-link fence. Part

of that is to keep the barking down. There's a park across the street and any time kids would be over there playing ball or whatever, they would be watching the kids and barking at the kids because they wanted to play. So the privacy fence was initially put up to keep down the distractions to the dogs and keep the barking to a minimum. Whenever our dogs start barking, we bring them in for a short time and then we let them back out when whatever the distraction was is gone. Since then, we have found out that the city ordinances require a privacy fence if you have a kennel situation. The dogs are not supposed to be visible to your neighbors, so we were in compliance with the ordinance and didn't know it.

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

Larry: If they already have what they consider as their foundation, evaluate it honestly. Know what the strengths and weaknesses of their foundation are, and when you go out to do any breeding with that animal, try to minimize the deficiencies your animal might have and maximize your positives. That doesn't mean to breed exactly to the opposite - if you have a weak rear you're going to go with the most fantastic rear in the world. You have to look at the total balance of the animal that you're going to breed to and you want a rear that is better than what you have now. You also want to look at the grandparents of that animal and make sure that they have good rears behind that, so you're not just looking at what you're breeding, you're looking at one or two generations back. Unless you know those animals personally, you're going to have to have trust in the people you're doing the breeding with to be honest about the grandparents and the great-grandparents, as far as the certain areas you feel may be a weakness in your particular dog.

If you're purchasing a foundation, do a lot of research first. Is there a particular style that you like? As far as a particular kennel, do you really like the style that you are always seeing? If that's what you like, then try to find out what it is about that animal that you really like. Deal with a breeder who you are very comfortable with. Deal with them for not just a short period of time, but get to know them. Get to know their dogs and try to get

to know the background of their dogs as far as the strong points and the weak points behind their kennel. You're going to have to develop trust with the people that you are buying your foundation from, because if this is going to be your foundation, you're going to have to work off of the reputation of the kennel that you are buying from. So you have to have a lot of trust, and they have to have a lot of trust in you and they have to be honest with you.

So find a style of animal you like, find a breeder that you can be comfortable with and can be honest with, and you feel that they are being honest with you. At that point, it's very difficult for a new person coming in to get the best thing that a breeder has to offer, because you've not proven yourself yet. At that point you may have to work with the breeder you are establishing your foundation with, and maybe wind up with a co-ownership on your first animal. They want some assurance that what you are going to do is the direction that they want that animal to be going. It's really difficult to sell a top animal to somebody you don't know for sure, or to a novice that you don't know what is going to happen down the road. Yes, it's not fair that if you want to get involved and you want to buy the best thing, people are apprehensive about letting their best go.

Kathy: If they've gone through it and they still want to breed, I would like to tell them that they are really taking a big responsibility by having a litter, because they are responsible for the bitch and taking care of her, but they are responsible for bringing those puppies into the world and they have to feel responsible for them all their lives. They don't just sell them at eight weeks and they're gone. They have to pick the right homes for them. They also have to be willing to say, "Maybe I misjudged these people. Maybe I made a mistake." In our contract for every dog we sell we say, "At any time in this dog's life, if you need to place him, we want the first chance to buy him back," because a lot of times people will maybe get in a situation where they have to get rid of the dog, but they never think to call the breeder. This isn't just a show dog, this is any dog that we sell. You have to take a long-term responsibility and it's not easy. There's a lot

of things that you run into where you think, "I've had this problem and I've had that problem." Then there's something new that comes up, so you have to be sort of tough-skinned in that way, to handle puppies dying or things like that. There's lots of fun in it to enjoy, but you have to be ready to accept that you're going to have some problems.

Larry: That's one reason why we haven't produced a lot of puppies. We take responsibility for these puppies for their lives. If a situation comes up and the owner dies and the one that's left just can't handle the situation - that's how we got Dancer back - we have that first option. We've had very few that we've had come back in that situation. Normally, we do a good enough job in screening and selling puppies, we're confident in the homes they're going into, so we're really confident where we're not going to have a lot come back, but we do stand the responsibility for these puppies. I could never be in a situation where I'm just producing puppies and selling them and ignoring where they go.

When you recommend that new breeders investigate various kennels to find the right type, should they go to the kennels with the big winners?

Larry: Sure. They should go to all of them. Look at the big kennels; look at the small kennels. Don't just go to the kennels with the big winners. We're not a top name kennel. We're not a big kennel. There are good dogs out there from smaller breeders who are very conscientious in what they're doing. You're going to have to start somewhere. You're going to have to go to dog shows and just watch and see what you like and then ask a lot of questions, visit as many kennels as you can, see what facilities they have, see how they treat their dogs. Ask some of these same questions - "What's your philosophy in bringing up puppies?" If you're going to establish a foundation, you're really going to have to know the breeders the dog came from, and what their philosophy is as far as how that dog was brought up and be comfortable with it. But I wouldn't eliminate the big kennels. There are some good dogs in the big kennels.

What would you recommend in terms of joining clubs?

Kathy: I think that it's really good. It gives you a chance to

meet the people, a good chance to learn, to be with people who love your breed and will understand. In our Samoyed club we had a night where you told your most embarrassing story of what your dog has done. Everybody there understands when you tell them what happened. Or, what you went through when you first got your puppy, how many couches or that kind of thing. I think it's part of making it all where it's not centered around the dog show and what the dog does in the ring. It's also good to join all breed clubs. You get a little bit wider perspective on the dog world. I think it's important.

Larry: As far as people who are buying pets, we make the information about our local Samoyed club available to them. We tell them that there's a lot of good things involved there. Some go to meetings and join. I know how busy a lot of people are and this is not going to be their number one priority. They think, "I have to live with my Sammy. This is my pet, that's it." Not everybody has to join the club. Those who want to learn more about it and want to have the companionship of other people having the breed, it's great for them - local clubs and national club.

I like having the national club available. There is a lot of knowledge that can be gained, nationwide, if that's the direction you want to go, where you want to do a lot of learning. Being involved with the national club, being on the board of directors and former vice president, I can say it's an important organization, but it's not for everybody. Some people join the club just to get the bulletin. It's one of the benefits, the same reason some people subscribe to *The Quarterly*. They want to look at the pictures and read the stories and that is as far as they want to go in their involvement. There is a level of involvement for everybody and the clubs give you that chance. If you really want to get involved, there's a spot for you. If you want to be a little bit involved, there's a spot.

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

Larry: I think we're moving in the right direction. Having served on the board for six years, sometimes it gets frustrating trying to develop certain education-

type programs. I think now that we've separated judges' education from the education group it will be easier. I think with the judges' education, they'll be able to concentrate on education for judges. I think that's a good aspect. The rest of the education committee is trying to get certain information out there. They're trying to develop some booklets. It's a slow process when you're working with volunteer people. Maybe it's not going as fast as I would like to see it go, but they are trying. Kathy is currently serving on the education committee.

What would you say are some of the biggest challenges that are facing the parent club right now?

Larry: I would like to see the parent club work on setting up a foundation towards canine research and education, with an emphasis towards the Sammy. We are investigating whether it is possible to do this under our existing charter and have a portion of our treasury set aside for this, a tax-deductible portion that is set aside for research - canine research, basically medical type things, in general. If that's not possible to do under the existing charter, then having the parent club form a foundation with a board of directors to the foundation which is tied to SCA. This would be a tax-deductible foundation that would work in funding or contributing to certain research projects. I'm going off the board this year and it's something that I will keep in touch with other board members about and keep hounding them that it's something we have to do. That falls into the category of general education for not just judges but the general public, for breeders. Those, I think, are the two challenges for the parent club.

The other area that I think is a challenge is that when people run for the board they should be running because there is a dedication they have for the breed; they can't be running just for personal gratification. There is a commitment involved. We have our annual meeting and we have a mid-term meeting. You have to make the commitment that you will use your expense to travel to those face-to-face meetings because that's where most of the work is done, and you have to be willing to do some basic background research. You have to know our constitution and you

have to know the general business guide. I get very frustrated when a comment comes up or a business comes up and we have board members making suggestions that are contrary to the constitution, or the general way we're going to do business, without first saying, "Maybe we have to change this process and do this." They say, "Well, let's just do it anyway." I get really frustrated when they obviously haven't read the constitution or understood the business guide that we have right now.

I think there should be term limits. This is my sixth year on the board. I am going off for several reasons. One is that I don't think people should be on forever. You should go off the board for a while, step back as a general member and look at the entire situation. Then, if you feel that you still want to be on the board, you can run for it again in a couple of years. It's good to step back and get an outside perspective again of what the whole picture is. The other aspect is that there are things other than dogs. When I'm on the board, I take the position seriously. Those are a couple of challenges: getting good people running for the board and keeping them, and having them willing to step off the board at times, working with setting up a foundation for research, and general educational research.

Kathy: I think the education committee was geared toward judges' education and it's been a transition time to decide what direction to go now, and things have been moving slowly. Now they're working on possibly doing a grooming video that I think would be very helpful for people as they come into the breed. They've worked on a second booklet to come out on deciding to breed, but it just doesn't seem to have moved very fast, so it is frustrating in that way.

Have you seen the AKC video for the breed and what do you think of that?

Larry: We have a new video as of last year or two years ago. I think the final product is good. AKC has a standard format that you follow and our end product is a good example of an AKC video. It is a good video as far as the format that they want and it does show the positive aspects. There was a lot of work put into getting it done. When people see

it, there are obviously certain things that they are going to disagree with, certain animals that they're trying to show off this particular head and they don't see the head, but they see something else that they don't like about this particular dog. It's an example of whatever. Ignore the rest of the picture if they are showing you a positive example of a certain part of the dog. That gets to be a hard part. That's my general comment: we came out with a quality video. I don't think any of them are fantastic, because it is a set format that they follow. I think we did a good job in following that format.

Would you like to see a different format?

Larry: Not necessarily. That gets to be really hard, what you want to show. The AKC video, obviously, is to emphasize the standard. They no longer read the standard as they're doing things, but they are giving the information. These examples fit into the standard. I don't know if a better format could be done. I've never sat down and thought about what would be the best format to use.

Do you feel that there is adequate literature - books and magazines - available in the breed, or are there gaps in what should, perhaps, be out there?

Kathy: I think we have a lot. There are several magazines, plus breed books by several well-qualified people.

Larry: I think The Samoyed Quarterly, as far as ongoing information, is a very good product. It gives excellent general information. There are a number of Samoyed books. Some, I feel, are better than others. The Wards' book is in the process of being updated again, with a new version coming out. Obviously, whenever we read a book, there are errors in it, but nobody's perfect. One book that is out has a picture of Hogan, Ch. Ken-Tee's Honkin' Hogan O'Sulu, on the inside cover and they don't give credit to Kathy as being the breeder. That's hard to take, but that's the way it goes. Yes, there is a lot of information out there. I think we're better off than a lot of breeds.

I'd like to ask each of you to give me a brief biography of yourself, where you were born, grew up, where you went to school, what you've done for a living.

Kathy: I was born here in Minnesota. My dad was in the

Navy, so we did a lot of traveling. When he retired, when I was still in elementary school, we came back and settled here and I went through school here. I got married, got my first Sammy in 1970 and started showing and breeding. My daughter Heather is seventeen. I'm an office manager for an industrial company here in Bloomington, where I can go home and let the dogs out at noon.

Larry: I'm from northern Minnesota, a town called Cloquet, which is just outside of Duluth. I went through high school. I started college at Michigan Technological University at Houghton, Michigan, in engineering. That's where I met my first wife. She was in chemistry. I went to school there for three years and each year the out-of-state tuition went up until it got to the point where I really couldn't afford to go there any longer. So Jan and I got married and moved back to Duluth and finished our last two years' college at University of Minnesota, Duluth. I got my degree in education with a double major in general science and earth science. Jan got her degree in chemistry and education so she could teach chemistry.

This was in 1970 and you have to realize what was going on in current affairs at the time. I did not go interviewing for a job because my number was called and I was going to be drafted. I went and took my physical as I was going to enlist in the Navy and, at that point, I found out that my eyes were beyond the limits that they allow for the military service, so I was classified 4F, even though I'm correctable to normal vision. So then I had to go out and find a job and I interviewed at three places. My last three years of school I had a full beard. This was 1970 and I walked in for an interview. I must have had good credentials because people would call up for an interview all enthused, and the first two places I went to, I walked in and they took one look and started having second thoughts already because I had a full beard. Then, it was graduation time and the night of graduation I shaved. My dad did not notice for three hours. I went out and interviewed in Buffalo without a beard. I was hired that day, so I do think there was a little prejudice against facial hair at the time. I have been teaching in

Buffalo ever since. This is my 26th year, still in eighth grade. I teach eighth grade earth science, and I am also the computer technology supervisor for the network at the junior high.

At the same time I got involved with the dogs. My wife passed away in '76, very suddenly, and it is still, to me, an unexplained death. It just happened. I lost myself in the dogs for a couple of years. That's when I really started handling, traveling every weekend. I'd have my daughter travel with me. My daughter Bess was four at the time, going on five. When she was in school she'd stay at the farmhouse with a lady who had twelve children of her own and Bess was like the next one in line. There were a lot of things that I had to work out for myself emotionally - loss of a wife - and the dogs were a way that I was able to do that. The dogs would listen the whole time when I'd talk to them. In 1980, I moved with Kathy, after her divorce. We had been good friends for several years and it was a friendship that developed from there. We got married in '88. I've been in different aspects of the dog things, from being an AKC licensed handler for Sammys and Golden Retrievers to being in the dog food business for a while. I have been very involved with our specialty club, to finally deciding to put in for my judge's license.

How would you say the dogs have affected your lifestyle?

Larry: I haven't been fishing since I got into dogs.

Kathy: It has in every way. There are a lot of things you can't do because of the dogs, but for so many years we didn't do anything but go to dog shows or club things. I think it was good, in a way. Heather and Bess grew up with more adult contact, I think, because they'd go to the shows with us, and I think that was good. They maybe didn't get to do some of the activities in school that they wanted to get involved with. We couldn't make any long-term commitments for that because most of the weekends were taken. It's given us a chance to do a lot of traveling, see a lot of places, meet a lot of different people. It's affected everything that we've done.

Larry: It has to. We decided to take a vacation at one time and thought, "All right, what dog shows are in that area that we can

take some dogs with us?" We're more to the point where we'll say, "Let's board all the dogs and we'll go off for a week." Maybe we're getting to the point where there's more to life than just the dogs, but the dogs are still important to us. We've been more involved with Heather's activities in the Varsity Dance Line, taking in all aspects of that. It's a really important age for Heather, so we really haven't done a lot with the dogs in the last couple of years. Yes, they're a big influence.

Kathy: The good thing is, you can be away for a long time and get back into it and you still have all the knowledge that you had before. There are lots of new people when you go back out there, but there're still the old people around. Larry's stayed in contact more than I have, through his judging assignments and stuff. If there comes a time when we decide we want to be more active, there would be no reason why we couldn't.

Anything you would add to the benefits of being in dogs?

Larry: One thing, and a lot of people say this, dogs give you unconditional love. You can be angry at one time and they're right there. They have a calming effect. To me, that's a big benefit. All the contacts and people we've met and traveling we've done have been a benefit of the dogs.

Kathy: Heather grew up thinking everybody has six dogs or eight dogs, and in that way I think it was a fairly good lifestyle for her in the early years, growing up. She loves horses, so I don't know if she is going to continue with dogs. I think she'll have a dog, but I don't know if it's something that she'll go into to the extent that we have, since she's seen and known all that we've put into it.

Larry: I really wouldn't push them into it at all. It's a decision that they have to make for themselves. Knowing what we do now, as far as the overall costs involved in showing dogs these days, would we be as involved starting off today as when we started? I don't know. Yes, there're a lot more people showing dogs, but the expense is a lot greater.

Do you think there is a different class of people involved today than there was?

Larry: I don't know. I personally could not do the showing that I did, at today's prices, if I

were just starting off in teaching. Maybe I would have to do less showing or more local showing, but there're a lot more local shows than we had back then. We only had a few local shows and I would travel 1,000 miles a weekend, 500 miles in either direction, to get to a dog show and then get back in time to go to school. In some ways it was also relaxation, a way of getting away from the routine of school, so I don't know what we'd do.

What have been the drawbacks of being in dogs?

Larry: Not going fishing.

Kathy: You're pretty tied down.

Larry: Doing something with your home to accommodate the dogs. Moving from a car to a station wagon to a van to a motor home and then back to a van when you realize that a motor home is very expensive. You have to adjust yourself to them. They're not going to adjust to you. The fact of all the dirt that I dug out of here and landscaped the front yard with, and wound up with a 20-by-40 rock area that the next person moving here may not want. When they start moving the rocks and realize that there's concrete block beneath it, they're going to have a lot to remove.

Are there favorite stories about the dogs that you might share?

Kathy: We had a litter of puppies and they were about three months old. We still had one and she was out with the rest of the crew. One thing you find as you're living with Sammies is that they can get out of anything. I can't remember what stage our kennel was at that point, but she was able to get out. The rest of the dogs were here. When I finally realized she was out, Heather was a baby and she was in bed, and I had this puppy out loose. I called my parents and was crying. They came over and my mom stayed with Heather while my dad drove me around, and we were talking to all these people and saying, "We lost this puppy and don't know where she is." Finally, we saw the mailman. My dad was a retired mailman so he thought, "We'll stop and ask him." He said, "Yes, I found him and I put him back in your yard." He'd put the puppy back and she was so tired that she went downstairs and was sleeping down there. That was about the funniest thing that happened.

Larry: When we first started, when I still had a station wagon, I had a male and a female - our second two dogs - and our female was in season, so we had her in the crate. We only had one crate in the car at the time, so our other dog was loose in the car. He was a little upset, of course, so he proceeded to destroy the front seat, all the upholstery, digging into it and chewing it out and the whole thing. I contacted my insurance company and asked them what we could do. My insurance agent said, "Go get an estimate on what it's going to cost to repair," and he told me to go ahead and repair it. He submitted it as vandalism to the car. We had the front seat all repaired and about two months later, the same thing happened. He did it again! We did not submit it to the insurance company this time. I had it fixed myself and paid for it, but the fact that the insurance agent He was a friend and he submitted it that way. Well, it was vandalism, he just didn't say who did it.

What have the dogs taught you? Do you think that you've changed or grown in any way as a result of having dogs?

Larry: Having dogs dying and having to make the decision of when to put a dog down, the realization of life, that it's an ongoing process. The finality of life. It's an aspect that we have to deal with in these particular situations.

Have you found ways to deal with it? Do you bury or cremate or have a service in some way when you lose a dog?

Larry: We haven't. Part of it is the zoning around here. You can't do things in your own yard. If we were out in the country we could have an area where we had plots for the dogs.

Would you have preferred to do that?

Kathy: I think so.

Larry: In some way, yes. Some dogs are harder to have go - the ones that have been with you all their lives. It's time to go, but they've been with you twelve or fourteen years. You know their habits and they know your habits. It gets very hard. Puppies are hard because they haven't had a chance yet.

Is there any way that you've found to alleviate or get through the grief?

Kathy: I think we both understand how hard it is, and you'd think after so many years it

would be easier, but it never gets easier. I don't think it's anything we've really come up with or talked about.

Maybe just knowing that you share the grief?

Kathy: Yes.

Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to discuss?

Larry: The only other comment I would like to make deals partly with my philosophy on judging. It's something that is important to me and that is I always take extra time with puppies. I feel that it's very important that this be a positive time for a puppy, and as exhibitors we've had judges who were heavy-handed with puppies and basically made it a bad experience. I have said, "I don't want to do that. I want to make this a very positive experience for a puppy." I will take extra time with puppies. I will actually gait puppies an extra time, even if they did it right the first time. You can go to all the training classes that you want, but it's different in the ring. "Now, he's in the ring. Let's give him another chance." I can always make up time with my older dogs that don't need as much special attention and I still get my proper number of dogs judged in the hour, but I'm always taking extra time with puppies, because it's so important that puppies have that positive experience. You have to be gentle-handed, soft-toned and let the people relax also, and let them know that this is fun. Have fun with your puppy. That's something that I always emphasize in judging, is the puppies, because they're not always going to be puppies. I've seen too many puppies have such a bad experience that they don't want to go to another show. That's just my own personal philosophy in judging - one thing that I think is important. Remember it's only a dog show and have fun.

Kathy: Enjoy your dogs. It gets to a point where you have so many and you're doing some things, you don't enjoy them for just letting them be themselves and letting them be dogs, because you're just worried about all the other aspects of it.

Thank you so much for taking the time to do the interview.

Kathy: Well, thank you.

Larry: Thank you. •