

# THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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## Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly  
Talks With  
**Don and Barbara Winslow  
KARATYLL**  
Houston, Texas

*This interview was conducted in Houston, Texas in November of 1991 by Judy Mears.*

*How long have you been in dogs?*

Don: The official answer to that question would be since 1965.

*Is that when you got your first Samoyed?*

Barbara: Yes.

Don: It was the first Samoyed of record. We both had white dogs before that may or may not have been Samoyeds. We met when we were in junior high school. Barbara had her first dog when she was ten and I had my first white dog when I was six or seven. But neither one of us knew what Sammies were.

Barbara: I think she was actually a large Spitz.

*Was this in Texas?*

Barbara: I brought her from Massachusetts when we moved to Texas. When Don and I got married, he bought me an American Eskimo, which we saw in a pet shop window, as a wedding gift.

Don: A couple years after that, I was going to graduate school and Barbara had graduated. We went into a typewriter shop close to campus and there were two very large, white, furry balls behind the counter. They had the typical Sammy temperament.

Barbara: We thought they were neat. We weren't familiar with them at all, other than we had had white dogs, and when we saw the Samoyed, we were very impressed, needless to say. In 1965, we had to go to Edmonton, Canada.

Don: I worked a job for my company up in Ft. McMurray, which is about 250 miles north of Edmonton, and I took my family along. We got an apartment for Barbara and the kids. Our third child, Jay, was four months old at the time, and I would leave them there and go off for two weeks into the bush and come back. Driving up, we looked at one another and said, "I bet a

person can get a good Samoyed in Canada! That's the place to get a good Sammy." So, that was the primary agenda, besides going into the bush and almost freezing to death, to find a Sammy. I called a pet shop - you know newcomers start by calling a pet shop - and fortunately we got hold of a very nice person at the pet shop who gave us the name of a breeder, Dr. Neil Cuthbertson, who was well known in the area. We asked how we could get hold of Dr. Cuthbertson, and they said, "Why don't you go to the show on Saturday?" We said, "Show?" (laughter) They said, "The dog show," and told us how to get there. We went and met Neil Cuthbertson.

Barbara: He had Samko Kara Tyll, who was eight months old at the time. He was showing her that day, along with her mother. He offered us

Don: Well, he didn't offer. We sort of hung onto him until he offered. (laughter) He's a real nice fellow and is not the kind to be unwilling to sell his best dog to somebody he thought would do right by it.

Barbara: Meanwhile, I thought I wanted a little puppy, and she was eight months old. We did go elsewhere and look at a litter, and then we decided we would go with "Tyll" because we could see her and she looked nice to us and we decided not to take a chance on a puppy. Don went off into the bush, there was a dog show coming up and I entered her. I bathed her the night before, thinking she would be dry by

morning (laughter) and, of course, she was wet, but I went to the show by myself anyway.

Don: The children were four months old, two-and-a-half and four.

Barbara: I had these three children, and the dog on a rope, which is how Dr. Cuthbertson had given her to us. This young teenage boy came up and started talking to me and asked me if I needed some help. Of course I did, and he offered to show my dog for me. That person was Clay Coady. His father did the horse circuits.

Don: His father is an animal photographer and he was there for the horse show. Clay would travel with him occasionally and make a beeline over to the dog show if there was one.

Barbara: Anyway, I had this dog on a rope and she wasn't dry and he worked frantically trying to get her dry with, I guess, cornstarch or something. (laughter) I introduced him to Dr. Cuthbertson, who was showing Tyll's mother, so they were going to be competing against one another.

Don: Dr. Cuthbertson had her on a Resco show lead and Clay said, "What's that?" Dr. Cuthbertson's son Brian, who was going to show "Karen," Tyll's mother, said, "A Resco show lead." Then Clay asked what we had and we said, "A rope," and Clay asked Brian if he showed dogs on a rope. Brian said it didn't make any difference, and Clay said, "Fine, you take the rope and I'll take the lead." (laughter) So Clay started real young. He knew his way around at a very early age.

Barbara: We won that day. Tyll beat her mother and, of course, we



were hooked. She kept her mother from ever obtaining her championship because her mother had her hind legs severed in a mowing tractor accident on the farm the following summer. Anyhow, that's how we got started.

*Why did you choose Sammies?*

Don: The Samoyed is a thing of beauty, whether you've seen one or a thousand or never seen one before at all, and I think it's kind of natural that you are drawn to them. If you are a dog person, whether or not you are a large dog person makes little difference. Everybody is drawn. You never go anyplace with a Sammy without people showing a great deal of interest in them. I think it's natural - if you see one, you're kind of hooked.

*How many litters have you bred?*

Barbara: Quite a few, but I would really have to check. There was a period in there, from 1966 to about 1972, when we did quite a bit of breeding. Then we trickled off after that for various reasons.

*What do you consider your best litter?*

Barbara: As far as I'm concerned, we had two outstanding litters, but the very best litter was the Joli White Knight litter. We bred Samko Kara Tyll, our foundation bitch, to "Shanny," Ch. Joli White Knight, owned by Lila and John Weir. That was her second litter. Although her first litter was very good, that one was outstanding. That was the litter that produced Joan Scovin's bitch, Ch. Karatyll's Tia of Weathervane. Unfortunately, due to circumstances, we ran into trouble with those puppies, and that's a long story.

*How many champions have been in the litters you've bred?*

Barbara: There would have been four in that particular litter, except that we lost two bitches. I would say approximately ten. Most of them are dual champions, because we did a lot of showing in Canada.

Don: Of our own breedings, about ten. We are not very record conscious.

Barbara: I have very good records, but they go back a while. We haven't really thought about it in a long time.

Don: In the latter part of the 1960's, I had quite a few opportunities to travel to southern California on business and would always go by to see Billie Tucker. Billie was an encyclopedia of information about all things pertaining to Sammies - pedigrees, etc. We'd always go to eat at her favorite place, and we were talking about something to do with a pedigree, and I either didn't respond quick enough or said, "I don't know," and she would say, "Do you

mean to tell me that you don't know your pedigrees?" I said, "Yes, ma'am, that's right." (laughter)

Barbara: That was very early on, when we were just starting out.

Don: We know the pedigrees pretty well, but we've never kept too much track of our own as far as who won what and where and how many champions and so forth. We just had fun, and we surely had a lot of that.

*What do you consider the best dog you've ever owned or bred?*

Don: Owned, it would be Am/Can Ch. Samko Kara Tyll, Tyll. She was what I refer to as an alpha bitch. In the wild or in the natural state, she would be running things. She did, indeed, pick out those dogs that she wanted to mate with. She would go out into the yard, open up the gate between yards, then the main gate into the kennel, and then she would open up one of the run gates. She'd go over the fence if you had it padlocked, but she could open anything, and she'd pick her boy out just like they would in the wild. She had to be the most outstanding, but not for that reason. As an alpha bitch, she was intelligent to a point she would surprise people. I'm a person who doesn't necessarily like every person he meets - I'm not a Will Rogers - but I never met a dog I didn't like. There may be some I've preferred more than others. Tyll was that way about people. I used to take her to the office and she went everywhere with us all the time. When she went up to a person and said hello, you could bet that it was a person who you already knew and whose company you enjoyed, or you would if you got to know them. She would look right through people who you may not have particularly cared for - she wouldn't even let them touch her. She was something else.

Barbara: I loved and adored Tyll, but I think some of my favorite dogs have been male dogs. Am/Can Ch. Karatyll's Nikita was out of Tyll's first litter, and I showed him. I think you get very close to the dogs that you show or are involved with. You have a sort of rapport between yourself and the dog, although you can appreciate all of them and have a special spot in your heart for all of them, just as you do with your kids.

Don: We had some great males and females along the way, but she was the outstanding one as far as I was concerned.

Barbara: Mainly, he likes a good, strong alpha female, as he refers to, and she definitely was that. (laughter) She kept all her puppies in line.

Don: She did that. She took them down and cleaned them up until they were big enough to give her what for, which generally happened when her bitch puppies were in whelp themselves, and they got tired real quick of getting rolled over and checked. Then there would be a disagreement - no blood, but boy was there a lot of noise! Then Tyll would say, "All right, I guess you're on your own, kid." (laughter)

Barbara: She was one of those who, if you shook your finger in her face, would snap but not bite at it.

Don: She wouldn't bite it off, but she'd show you those teeth and she'd snap them about six inches off the end of your finger.

Barbara: But she was never aggressive. It was just that you didn't put your finger in her face! (laughter) She was just too smart for her own good.

*Was Nikita your biggest winner?*

Barbara: We showed him the most extensively, and I guess he was. We did quite a bit of winning with Tyll's father, Am/Can Ch. Frosty of Crystal Beauty. We brought him down from Canada and he was an absolutely gorgeous dog. He was always the one we were trying to breed for, to duplicate him. He was our ideal at the time. With every litter we were looking for a "Frosty," and we never did quite reproduce him, though we would have loved to have done it, but he did quite a bit of winning. He didn't have a fancy kennel name on him, but he was a great dog. I'd put him up against anybody's dog.

Don: That's how we really got to know Billie Tucker. Frosty had a lot of Kobe and Kobe of Encino behind him. One of the first things we did when we got interested was to take Tyll's pedigree back to before 1900. She was born in late 1964. She was only eight generations out of Pearlene - think about that, that's over 60 years.

Barbara: Anyway, we looked up Billie Tucker because of all the Kobe that was behind her and enjoyed that relationship very much.

*How have you used linebreeding, inbreeding and outcrossing in your breeding program?*

Don: There's Kobe and Kobe of Encino in Lila's dogs, and I guess that's one of the reasons we bred to Shanny. There was really no outcross. When we were breeding, the vast majority of Sammies at that time were really only two or three generations removed from one another, at least the ones we were interested in when we came across people and talked with them. We never



Am/Can Ch. Frosty of Crystal Beauty.

bred to any of the Whitecliff dogs. I'm not saying that's good, bad or indifferent, it's just a fact. I would have considered that to be an outcross, but we never did it.

Barbara: We were just essentially in Kobe.

Don: Nikita's (out of Tyll's first litter) great-grand sire was Eng/Am Ch. Americ of Kobe. It's pretty strong on Kobe almost all the way through.

Barbara: Now we are breeding other lines, but back then that's what we were doing predominantly, and we never really outcrossed until we brought in "Chan," Am/Can Ch. Chan Star's Silver Chief, and he wasn't a total outcross. Chan was a dog we had admired while competing against him in Canada. A year later, his owners offered him to us because he was unruly.

Don: We get many calls where people would like to have a puppy, and if it's older than twelve weeks, it's not a puppy in their minds. We have only had one puppy, age under fifteen weeks, that we have not bred, and that was more or less because we had done something for someone and they wanted us to have one of their dogs. All the rest of the dogs that we've gotten from other people, purchased, admired or rescued, have on an average been two and a half or three years old. They've been wonderful dogs and we certainly

enjoyed them. I would like to take some new people aside and try to win them over to taking on an older dog because our experiences have been fantastic - not a bad moment in them. We've had ten or twelve like that that have been just great dogs.

*Do you feel an older dog has any problem bonding with a new family, as people always say?*

Don: Yes. There is a remarkable thing about any dog, and we've noticed it in particular about Sammies. With their new family, they are not necessarily reticent about making an acquaintance, but they don't really blossom until they go back home. We encourage people to bring them back to visit us in several weeks, just for a couple of hours, to come in and visit. Then, when they go back home, there is a continuity to the world - "I haven't been abandoned. There is a continuum here" - and they turn on. We've noticed that about dogs who come back at six or seven weeks, or those who are six or seven years old, who go to a new home and come back to us in a few weeks. The new owners call us and say, "You know, our dog is like a new dog. We're having so much fun after that visit."

Barbara: A dog that we've had to take back was Am/Can Ch. Karatyll's Leonid CD, whose owner went to Japan, and for a while he was hesitant

about us because he'd been away from us long enough. When he saw his old owner again, he accepted us and everything was fine.

Don: Then we were his family. He was very attached to our son, who showed him to his championship. Sammies pick out a person. Some people say it's the person who feeds it and some say it's the disciplinarian. I think it's the disciplinarian or the person who works with them and creates a showmanship team, and that was Jay. If another dog came up in the ring behind Jay and growled or barked or did anything, Leonid was ready. He was not aggressive and didn't pick a fight, but he was sure ready to finish one. This trait wasn't apparent when he was handled by someone else.

Barbara: He would protect his young owner. Sams love children. They are very protective of them.

Don: We've had several like that, and then we've had some who just wanted to play all the time.

*What's the most dogs you've ever had at one time?*

Don: The year we had two litters I went down to the kennel and said, "I've either got to double the size of this kennel or hook it up and get out of here." But counting the two litters, there were 33 at that time.

Barbara: That's the most we've had.

Don: We had fourteen puppies about three or four weeks old, born within a week of one another, and the balance in adults.

*How many dogs do you have now?*

Barbara: We have six Samoyeds, five Pomeranians and one Norfolk Terrier. The Norfolk was acquired by Don while I went to the San Antonio shows last summer.

Don: I never met a dog I didn't like. (laughter)

*Did you get your kennel name from Tyll?*

Barbara: Yes, we did. She was Samko Kara Tyll, and we just combined the Kara and the Tyll.

Don: Kara from the Kara Sea and Tyll is an Eskimo word that Dr. Cuthbertson knows the meaning of but I've forgotten.

*Did you name your litters by any scheme?*

Barbara: No, not at all. Only in that I like to use Russian names, but not by any scheme at all.

*Did you name your puppies before you sold them?*

Barbara: Some, but not all of them.

Don: Probably fewer than ten percent, really. They all had call names. People who don't know Sammies or

never had a litter would say, "How can you tell them apart?" Barbara and I looked at some of the pictures and we can name every dog off for the last 25 years. Even when they are five or six weeks old I can stand in the yard at midnight and a six-week-old puppy – how they touch you, how they carry themselves – there can be eight of them down there and I can call every one of them out by name, so they are very distinctive.

*Do you feel that you established a distinguishable line?*

Barbara: We did at one time. Our line was wiped out, essentially, because of some slag that we used on our kennel runs and we ended up with all these problems. We lost a lot of our young, beautiful dogs, and that is primarily why we went through this period of not being active. Don brought in some steel mill slag.

Don: Steel mill slag is like lava rock. It's very clean, it floats, not like pea gravel that works down. It doesn't get smelly. If you have it in a run, even if it gets compacted, you don't have a urine odor problem because it floats and the rain or washing down the run carries everything away from it. However, there are two problems with steel mill slag. It depends upon the process and whether it's recovered metals slag or not. Slag is generally high in lead and hydrochloric stomach acid will leach the lead out of it. I'd say maybe a third of the dogs we lost – and there were about twelve who were our principal stock over a several year period – died of lead poisoning. The other thing about steel mill slag is that the filings are like little razors. It's not shale like, but it's gritty, and they would lick their feet or whatever and it settled in the kidneys. They blow the steel and form the slag, and that brings up the salts, the magnesium, chloride, calcium and the sulphates, which is also leachable, and that makes a very strong solution through the gut of dissolved solids and the stuff crystallizes in the kidneys. Before long, there is nothing left, and I would say two-thirds of them died of kidney failure. This didn't happen the first month or two, but after a period of two years. It happened over the third and fourth year.

Barbara: But the puppies, the dogs that were too young, we began to lose them. It got really frightening and we didn't know what was wrong. I asked Don about the slag, but he felt comfortable with it at the time and didn't think there was a problem. And it was wonderful stuff.

Don: As far as keeping them clean, their coats in good shape and



*Karatyll's Natalya.*

their feet in good shape, everything else about it was just fantastic.

Barbara: But it was lethal and we didn't know it. The puppies would get it in the water, playing and one thing and another. We finally ended up taking a dog to Texas A&M Veterinary College, and we had the city run tests on our well water. That was what it was determined to be. It seemed to cause tail deformities. Although I know there are tail deformities in the breed, every litter we had during this time, some of them would not have any tails, and it was crazy. The tail would be short, twisted or double back.

Don: It would double back on itself for about three or four vertebrae within the skin of the tail and you could feel it. There was a long knot at the end of the tail and you could tell it from birth. There was one puppy that had a short foreleg, very short and very evident from birth.

Barbara: But we got more paranoid with every litter. The first thing we would do would be to check their tails, and we just didn't know what was going on. It was when we had some of our best dogs and were doing some of our best breeding. It was really heart-

breaking. Then I began to worry about the kids because we had some of it in the yard, but it apparently didn't affect them. But it was really scary.

Don: We saw some mention of the tail deformities in articles or heard about it and it was said that it was in Sammies. I don't think that it's anything anyone needs to be concerned about as far as it being a genetic or inherited thing. In our case, there was very little question in my mind that it was the result of heavy metal poisoning.

Barbara: It stopped after that.

Don: Yes, as soon as I was able to remove the slag from the environment – concrete it over totally – juvenile kidney failure, anything that you would think that would be akin to heavy metal genetic disorders, trauma, all went away in our case. Although the dogs we have now are not really of the same line, a lot of them are similar enough that we'd have seen some evidence, and we have not seen a single thing like that.

Barbara: The litter that Ch. Karatyll's Tia of Weathervane was in was going to be a tremendous litter, but we lost two gorgeous bitches that our



Ch. Karatyll's Sofa.

daughters showed. It hurt. What we kept out of the litter was gone. Joan had Tia, but we had nothing left out of that litter. It took us so long to pull it all together.

Don: It took about three years to bring it all together.

Barbara: We had a dog, Am/Can Ch. Kobe's Karatyll Ty of Encino, from Margaret Tucker that our oldest daughter Kathleen showed to his championship and he died. He was the one we ended up taking to Texas A&M.

Don: He was down and Barbara put him in the car and took him 90 miles to the vet school and he died on the way. They thought it was mercury poisoning, and that's what really clued me in. I said, "I know it's not mercury." I went to the lab and started tearing it apart. I knew there was no mercury in the stuff because it was chemically and physically impossible for the mercury to be in the slag. But I did find a passel of lead, and very easily leachable.

Barbara: Of course, Don was shoveling the slag every weekend and raking it, but he wasn't ingesting it, which is what the dogs were doing evidently.

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

Barbara: We might each answer that in a different manner.

Don: When you are judging dogs, you look for soundness. Temperament is not always the easiest thing to get deeply into when you judge a dog for the first time.

Barbara: We all look for soundness, but I would probably look for breed type first and then see if that dog is sound.

Don: There used to be a reference to a "Northwest dog," the Shanny, the Joli dogs. We can agree that you could not go into eastern Canada and find that type of dog there at that time. There was a smaller dog from eastern Canada. There was what I referred to as the bear and the wolf. So when you say type, in my mind, there certainly are two types of Sammies, and variations on those in size and weight. I appreciate both of them. If you try to lump the term "type" in with what a Sammy is, I don't do that. I distinguish within the Sammy family several types of dogs, and I appreciate them all and don't really have a druther.

Barbara: They have to at least be typey in that category.

Don: I think it's well known and it's true. There are judges who do not appreciate one type as opposed to the other, and you are wasting your time in many cases if you don't have the type of Sammy that judge appreciates. Some people have been raised, whether

they be judges or breeders, with one of these families of Sammies, either the bear or the wolf type, and they think the other type is wrong. But I don't think that.

Barbara: But you tend to have a preference, and I think that sort of changes over the years, too.

Don: It depends on what you have on the lead today. (laughter)

*Do you have any long-range goals for breeding at this point?*

Barbara: I love to breed and I plan to continue to breed. Actually, we have two rather young dogs that we bought on a trip to Canada and we are essentially starting over again. I love the challenge of breeding, and yes, I do want to breed. We are expecting a litter at the present time. Our granddaughter tells me that our new young male is her best friend. (laughter)

*What is your interpretation of the perfect Samoyed?*

Barbara: It obviously has to move well. We all want a lovely head. I don't like a real coarse head. It should have dark pigment and a nice, long neck. To me, the arch of neck and the topline is very important. It has to have a lovely plumed tail that is properly over the back. I cannot stand bad tails. I like a good length of leg, although there is another type with shorter legs that I can still very much appreciate. The carriage and the way the dog moves is very important. Don, do you want to add to that?

Don: I never met a dog I didn't like. (laughter)

*How should a dog move from the front and from the side?*

Don: I don't like pounders. I'm pretty strong on good front end angulation. I like good drive in the rear, but I don't like to see the front end just being pushed along in front of it. I don't think a dog should move as though it were in harness, but I think the front end needs to do a very recognizable portion of the work. If I've got a hang-up, that would be it. It really puts me off to see a dog not using the reach in the front and a decent drive in the back. Over the years, we've seen some dogs who were really fine movers who didn't demonstrate a lot of angulation in the rear. Rear angulation is good for pictures, but let's see them move. It doesn't put me off if a dog is a little bit straight of stifle, but let's see how they move. It's pretty in pictures - Del Monte's This Is It had a fantastic let down and was a pretty mover, too. But what a picture! "Tia" could move like a million dollars. The angulation is there, but they sort of stand up off of it and they don't go around crouching in

the rear. When they move, you will see it, but just standing around naturally, they bring themselves up in the rear - some of them, not all of them.

Barbara: Our adopted dog, Am/Can Ch. Hercules CD, was straight in the rear.

Don: Some of our greatest, if not our greatest, dogs were what I call adopted dogs. We've had a ball, absolutely. If we had a little bit better facilities ... We like to keep our dogs in the house, and this rescuing dogs is a little bit of a problem when you have a lot in the house. If we rescue a dog, it comes in the house and not on the back 40.

*What are you looking for, specifically, in a head?*

Barbara: A certain soft quality, not coarse. A very almond-shaped, dark eye is my preference. Of course, we all like good pigment. A nice, square muzzle that is not snipey.

*How serious are missing teeth in Sammies?*

Barbara: We never had a Samoyed with a missing tooth.

Don: There's a full denture at birth and until death. We've never had any genetically missing teeth.

Barbara: We had one overbite, and that was in a dog that we acquired. We never bred an overbite. It has not been our experience that either bite or teeth are a problem.

*How important is eye color?*

Barbara: It's very important to me. I like a dark eye, as long as it's a good brown. I just don't like a light eye, but the depth of color is not that important. We all prefer a darker color. But it is still the overall dog. It is not one of the things I would stress first.

*Do you get winter noses very often?*

Barbara: Yes, we do.

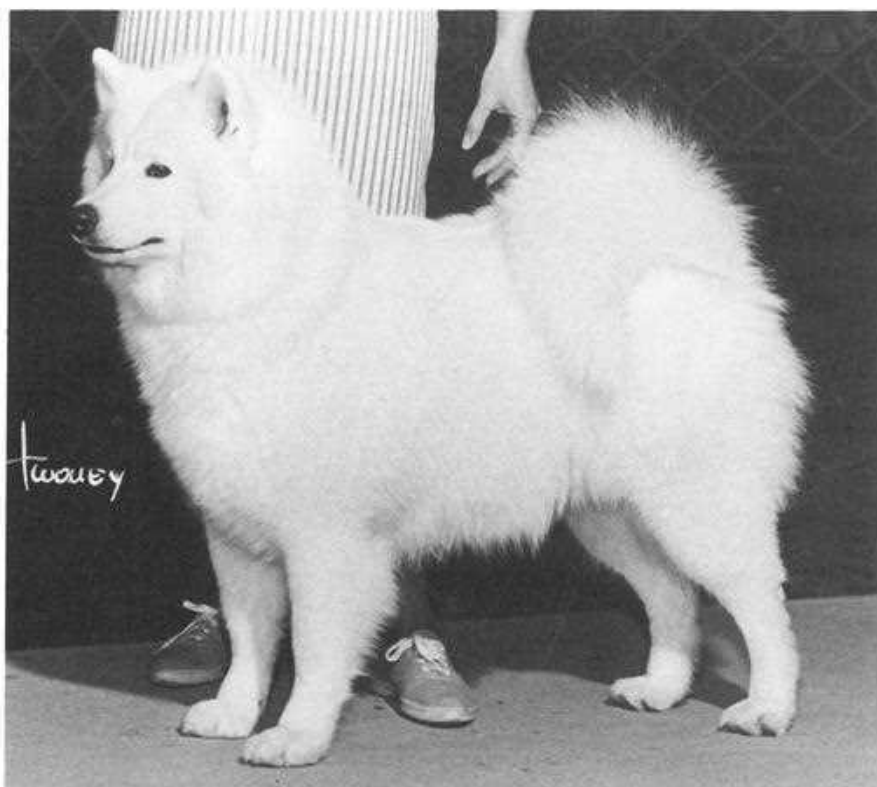
Don: It's very noticeable in the dogs we brought down from Canada and from the Northwest, but not so much in the dogs that were born and raised here.

Barbara: Dogs that come in from the colder climates seem to have it and sometimes it can be in the summertime. They almost seem to get a fungus rather than a snow nose. It's very humid here and they will get a fungus on their lipline or on their nose and sometimes their feet from the wet grass, and if you treat it with alcohol, it clears up. It seems to be related to our wet summers.

Don: Yes, we have "snow nose" in the summertime. (laughter)

*What should be the relationship of chest depth to the rest of the dog?*

Don: My reference is Ch. Saroma's Polar Prince, owned by Dick and



Am/Can Ch. Samko Kara Tyll CD.

Martha Beal. He was a very magnificent dog with a very deep, heart-shaped chest. You could tell by being around him, when you were looking at him and he was looking at you, that he had a lot between the ears, too, and I suppose that was what I liked and appreciated about him. But he had a very deep chest. A Sammy should have a very deep chest, should not be shallow, should not be slab-sided or round like a wienie.

*Do you think most Sammy chests honestly come to the elbow?*

Barbara: I would say so.

Don: The dogs that we've had have been at least to the elbow, at least the proper width. Both dogs that we've adopted and dogs that we've bred, you find about as many that are shallow as deep, and I'd say they are less than ten percent. It's not that we wouldn't breed to a dog that had a shallow chest. You don't find the other qualities in the dog with an absence of deep chest. It's pretty rare.

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

Barbara: It sure doesn't hurt anything. (laughter)

Don: We were looking at our pictures, and being here in Houston ...

Barbara: It's pretty hard to have coat.

Don: In our original dogs from

the North, we did a lot of showing out of coat and a lot of winning out of coat. It seems to be more important now with the new generation of judges than it used to be. We'll call it political and nonpolitical. There were many political judges when we started showing dogs; however, in my opinion, the majority of those people knew dogs. I don't really have a gauge on how many people are political now or not, but I do have an opinion on whether they're qualified to select a good dog. Not enough judges know their dogs now.

Barbara: But a dog can definitely have too much coat.

Don: There seems to be emphasis on too much coat right now. Was it last spring that a bitch was excused from the ring because she was nontypical?

Barbara: No, at the Astro World Series of Dog Shows.

Don: It blew my mind. Circumstances came to light later, and it was a novice effort on the part of an experienced judge.

Barbara: They had a rather rangy bitch that had not a speck of coat on her, but she was very obviously a Samoyed, and a very good one, and a good moving bitch from a well-known breeder, and she should never have been excused.

Don: But there are things like that



Am/Can Ch. Karatyll's Nikita.

that happen. There is too much emphasis on coat. We simply don't have enough cool weather down here, and dogs are going to get rid of their coat.

Barbara: The standard says quality is more important than quantity. Actually, when we first brought Tylly down from Canada, the first shows were in Galveston. She was very naked and Don won with her and he left the ring saying, "Just give us a little more coat and we'll take 'em all." (laughter) She was ABSOLUTELY naked.

*How about scissoring?*

Barbara: I think you are beginning to see some coat scissoring rather than just trimming. It's mostly handlers who are doing that to give the dog a little more leg. They just can't stand not to do something to the dog, let's face it. (laughter)

Don: They like to give them a little tuck in front of the stifles.

Barbara: I like a neatly trimmed dog.

*Have you ever had biscuit dogs or have yours always been white?*

Don: We can show you pictures with saddles. One of the most magnificent dogs visually was a dog that Jack Onofrio was showing in the mid 1960's when he was handling, Canadian Sunset. He was a biscuit dog, not a stained dog with urine burn, but a golden biscuit dog with silver tips, ice clear tips, and the fur on his head like a cat's where you part it and still see hair no

matter how many times you part it. He was a gorgeous dog, 100 percent biscuit with icy tips. Biscuit has never bothered us. Our first litter was pure white except they were very highly pigmented and one out of 2,000 hairs would be black. There were not bunches of black hairs, but just one here and there - not the undercoat, but the guard coat. Nikita had that with the silver tip on it.

Barbara: I have seen a few dogs lately that were very biscuit to the point where, yes, I think I would object to it. I'm not talking about biscuit saddles, but just VERY biscuit so that they don't even look like Samoyeds. They are beautiful dogs, but it's disconcerting to see that.

Don: I think when it gets to the point where it freckles it is more objectionable.

Barbara: Or it's more blotchy.

Don: If it's a saddle or a larger area, that's not too bad, but if they get kind of speckly ...

*What's the ideal front, and do you think there is a 45-degree layback?*

Don: Absolutely. There's not enough of it. On those few occasions that I've judged Sammies - I'm not licensed - they were otherwise very nice animals but too straight of shoulder.

Barbara: Don is very front conscious.

Don: I'm conscious about the whole thing, but one thing that really

turns me off is not good enough layback in the front.

Barbara: I thought I saw quite a few good moving dogs at the Denver National, and there must be some good layback there, because there were some really good movers. It was really impressive. I am sure the grass helped a lot of them look better, but it was really very impressive.

Don: If one wants to be critical of the standard in terms of body length or height, depth of chest, layback of shoulders, the ratio of hock length and angulation, they say that's not a Sammy, but I beg your pardon, that is a Sammy. There are some dogs of remark in the last several years who may not measure well to that standard. That doesn't mean they are bad dogs, but it certainly doesn't mean that standard is passé. It's a darned good standard.

*Do you think there are many good topline in Sammies?*

Barbara: The topline should be level, and it's very important how the neck fits into the topline. It must arch rather than U. It has to fit in smoothly and, of course, the tail has to be over the back.

Don: The Sammies have decent topline and it's not a problem in the breed.

Barbara: I think the way the neck fits the topline is not always correct, but I don't think we see a lot of sagging backs. I find there is a lot of discrepancy in loins and there is quite a bit of room there for variation in how long the loin is.

Don: A short rib and the length of the loin is probably the second greatest hang-up in my mind when I look at a dog. They don't have to be squished up - they can be long if they are strong, but they better be strong if they are long in the loin. Judges put a little too much emphasis on whether a back is weak or not. You can tell that when they're moving, but you can't always tell that when they are standing. Some dogs' temperaments are such that if you press on them they will say, "You want to press on me? Go ahead, I'll give," and other dogs will poke it back at you. Some of them are well muscled and very strong of structure and yet feel pretty sound. I wouldn't bang a dog in the ring if I was judging it, because if I push down in the middle of their back and they gave a little bit ... Now, if they are going bumpity, bumpity around the ring, that's something else when they are moving.

*What's the ideal height for a dog and a bitch?*

Don: Twenty-six inches in the withers on a dog. (laughter)

Barbara: I like a nice 20-inch bitch myself, but she probably needs to be 21 inches to produce the larger males. I'd say around 23 inches for a male.

Don: Yes, 23 inches is a good size. There was a time when there was a lot of talk about raising the standard height on the bitches and there were a lot of bitches at that time that were above the standard. It seemed to me that judges were not paying enough attention to the qualities of the bitches who were 20 inches and very typey. They kept going for the big ones.

Barbara: When the bitches get too large, they begin to look too masculine, but we do need them to produce that nice, masculine male.

*What's the ideal tail length and set, and is there a specific reason for the tailset?*

Barbara: The standard says the length is to the hock, and in my experience, most of them come close to the hock. Some of them don't make it. Some of them are much too short and they need to be properly set in order to protect the dog like they were supposed to, to cover their face and protect themselves from the snow.

Don: I don't like high set snapped over tails.

Barbara: It's also somewhat important to how the dogs move because it is an extension of the spinal column, and they can't move quite as well with too tight a tail.

Don: Too high set. It needs to come out of that croup at the same angle. If they get it up over nice, it shouldn't flag. It should lay over the back, but it shouldn't be ironed on like some of them are. They are just too high set.

Barbara: It ruins the outline of the dog.

Don: You see a little bit too much of it. There are far too many of them that are plastered up over their croup. They're high and they lay forward. It's not correct; I would rather have a tail that was correctly set that had three hooks in it. (laughter)

*What's the ideal ear and earset?*

Don: There again, you come across several different types. They go from large and close in, but some of those are the mobile ones. They have a great deal of mobility. Are they alert? Are they listening behind them? Are they looking in front of them? The bare head with a little smaller ear that is wider set is probably a little more on the preferred list of most people. Have you ever seen a bitch in whelp who puts her ears together? (laughter) It's just like you clothespinned them together. The one thing about ears that bothers me is when they are immobile.



Am/Can Ch. Kobe's Karatyll Ty of Encino.

Barbara: Or possibly set too far forward on the head. That does bother me. I don't think you see that very often, but you do see it, and it's very bothersome when you do.

*What about feet?*

Don: Feet are very important. Generally, feet are good, though. I think it's one reason that most people like to trim the hair on the feet, because you can see a little better.

Barbara: They can't be splayed. That's very ugly. They must be thick enough. They are important to the overall picture of the dog. The dog has to have good feet to do the work for which it was intended.

*What do you feel is the most serious fault in Samoyeds today?*

Barbara: I'd say bad fronts.

Don: In the conformation ring, fronts. As far as breeder-owners, outside of the show ring, I think I see too many dogs who are not attuned to people. Too many of them aren't very smart. Someone will say, "That's because they've been bred for color and size and type," but a dog has to be smart first.

*Do you think this is lack of socialization or do you think that some lines are just not intelligent?*

Barbara: I don't think it's lack of socialization because that isn't the problem - it's not shyness. It's that some

lines aren't intelligent. That's not across the board. But in thinking back over the dogs over the years, there were certain areas in certain lines where the dogs didn't seem to be as intelligent as in others.

*What do you think is the most common fault in the breed today?*

Don: I'd have to say the fronts, and second is neck.

Barbara: I think there are some very poor heads that lack expression. The head is important to our breed. The head doesn't have to be perfect, fantastic or just one way, but it has to be pleasing. There are some really ugly heads.

Don: We have a dog right now that if you put a measuring tape on him he is probably the best fit together of any dog. He's not the greatest dog we've ever had, because there are a lot of things that go into greatness. But if you stand him up and measure him here and there, he is right on with the book. He's a tad bit weak in the head. If he had a little more presence in that head ...

Barbara: He has a soft, pleasing head. You would maybe want him to have more head. I'm talking about the downright ugly heads, and there are some of those. They are hollowed out under the eyes, not smooth in the muzzle, and are snipey.



Zen Jo's Silver Tip Teddy, WD, Galveston, November 1971, handled by Don Winslow.

Don: Yes, but you aren't going to find people hunting them out to breed to them. Some people have bred some pretty unsatisfactory bitches on occasion, but I think that is something that people naturally move away from. It's there and people show what they've got. Maybe it's the people's first dog and they want to show it. It's not that they are saying it's the perfect dog. A lot of people go to a show just to have the fun. It's fun to show your dog. Winning is great, but it's not everything. We are talking about breeding and going in and winning and what should be winning and what shouldn't be winning and what we need to do. I say, let's look at the fronts and do the best we can to look inside their heads, too.

*Is the standard a good one?*

Barbara: Very. It's excellent.

Don: I think it's a great standard. I don't believe that anybody can start from day one through year five and say, "I've read the standard and I know what it says and I know what it means." It isn't for the novice. It's for the experienced and educated to call to

the attention of the novice and help them interpret it and show them what is and what isn't. If you don't know what a Great Dane is and you read the standard, you still don't know what a Great Dane is. It's the same thing with Sammys, but when you've been around a while, you've watched, shown, fed, whelped and so on, and you go back and say, "That's a good standard."

Barbara: And the order of the standard is good, too. I wouldn't approve of AKC cutting and pasting it all because it builds upon itself and gives you a good picture of the dog.

Don: I think it's a marvelous standard, I really do. There are a few things they point out that are "inconsistent" phraseology. That's what makes it the Sammy Standard rather than another standard. It does tell us what our dogs should be.

Barbara: It still gives us room for variation. It paints a picture and still allows us the different types that we have.

*Is there anything that you would change?*

Barbara: No.

Don: It's been a while since we discussed it. Last year we sat down and spent several hours on two or three occasions chewing it up, and the AKC has made a couple of good points that should be carefully considered. While I understand what changes some people would like to make, I say, "No." Better left alone. It's a good one.

Barbara: We've done a lot of match judging, and you read the standards pretty carefully before you do that, and some of them really do not tell you anything.

*Why have you never applied for a judge's license?*

Barbara: We have met all the requirements and we need to do that. I've written for applications twice and never did sit down and fill them out. (laughter)

Don: Between bathing dogs, grooming dogs, mowing the lawn, houndyewing, the grandkids, going fishing and showing dogs and working on occasion, it gets to be a pretty full life. (laughter)

Barbara: I just need to sit down and do it.

*Should champions be specialed?*

Barbara: I love to special dogs. The specials, the champions, usually are more mature and have more coat, and it's a little harder for the younger dogs to come along and compete with that type of presence and that coat.

Don: "Isn't that a good Open Dog class. Isn't that a nice Winners Dog? What happened to him in the specials ring?" Many times they pale by comparison with the specials, but they'll mature.

Barbara: That really wasn't the question, though. The question was, "Should champions be specialed?" and yes, I think they should. If you can afford it and you would enjoy it, why not? I don't think you should necessarily send your dogs out with handlers unless you cannot physically show your own dogs. Then that's all you can do, but that takes all the fun out of it as far as I'm concerned.

*To be continued ...*