

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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“Merlyn”

Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks With
Dave Richardson
KONDAKO
Long Beach, California

This interview was conducted at the Conejo Kennel Club show in Newbury Park, California on October 20, 1990 by Pamela Geer.

How long have you been in dogs?

All of my life. I was born in Washington, DC, and when I came home at the age of four days, the family Springer Spaniel moved into the crib with me on the spot.

So Springers were your first breed?

Springers and English Cocker.

Did you have those two breeds throughout your childhood?

Absolutely. It was not a show situation, they were basically family pets. My folks bred a litter when I was about ten. A couple of the Spaniels out of the litter were sold into

show situations and one got its championship. This was in the late 40's. So I knew about dog shows back then.

How did you get into Samoyeds?

When I was in the third grade, my teacher discovered that I couldn't read, that I had been faking, so she taught me how to read. One of the first books I ever read was "White Fang" by Jack London. I was so enchanted with the characteristics of the dog that I wanted a wolf dog of my own. Sammies are as close as you can get; these dogs are literally as close to a wolf as you can get. If you watch these guys in their social situations, watch the behavioral characteristics, and compare that to the way the wolves handle their social situations and behavioral characteristics, they are virtually identical. I mean, everything that the wolves do wrong these guys do wrong. Everything the wolves do right, these guys do right. The pack structure is absolute.

More than in other breeds?

Certainly more than the Spaniels that I was associated with. I did an article during 1990 about Spooky, a little stray that we picked up. Spooky doesn't dig the pack situation. She gets along with everybody in the household except Cinnar, our old alpha female. She and Cinnar are on a death watch together, which is kind of sad, because Cinnar weighs about twice as much as Spooky.

Spooky just doesn't get it. She doesn't understand the pack. Everybody else is willing to let her go ahead and just cruise along, but the alpha female, no, "You have to play the game or you're in deep trouble."

Is Spooky a Sammy?

She is a Tibetan Bearded Spaniel. And you say, "What in the devil is a Tibetan Bearded Spaniel?" This is a dog that looks like a Tibetan Terrier or a Bearded Collie and has the head of a Cocker Spaniel, so Tibetan Bearded Spaniel will do. (laughter) It's kind of like a Colorado Mountain Dog.

Why did you go for Samoyeds?

I started out after a Siberian Husky. I ran into this gal back in Washington, DC, where this was all happening, by the name of Carolyn Posey. Carolyn had Yesopac Siberian Huskies, which is cute because Yesopac is C.A. Posey backwards. I said, "Carolyn, I want a Siberian Husky. How much do you want for a puppy?" She said, "You can have that black and white one over there for \$150." This was 1960, and I said, "Oh, \$150 for a dawg!" So I found somebody selling Sammies for \$75 and I bought one. Now, the Siberian that Carolyn tried to sell me for \$150 turned out to be Ch. Tamara of Yesopac, and I should have bought the bitch because she was spectacular. The Sammy I bought was Princess Natiya, and she was possibly the single worst Sammy that ever walked the face of the earth. It took showing her for a couple of years to figure that out. Of course, that was our first dog and she was a den mother and took care of our puppies later in her life. We finally figured out this bitch was not going to go anywhere in the show ring.

We were at the Hagerstown Kennel Club and I came out of the ring. Connie met me outside of the ring and said, "Nikki doesn't look like the other Sammies out there." I said, "What do you suppose that means?" She said, "I think it means we need a different Sammy if we're going to do this."

Where did you get Nikki?

From some backyard breeder in Potomac, Maryland who was putting out puppies as fast as she could.

Where did you go from there?

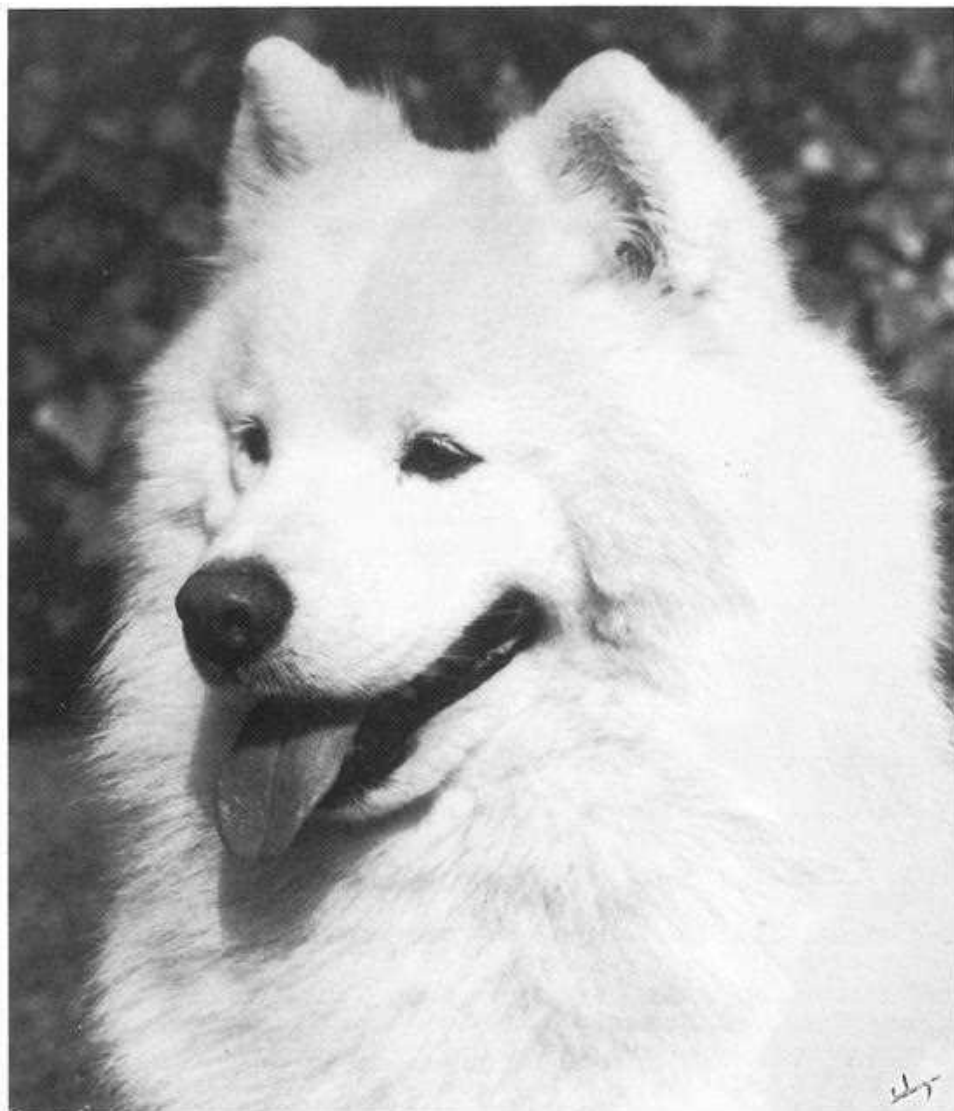
The first show puppy we got was out of Noatak of Silvermoon's litter sister, Duchess Joh-Ni of Silvermoon and a dog that belonged to the Whitlocks. It was a puppy bred by Bernice Helinski. The bitch was named WynterKloud's Tama Fra-Mar. We took her home ... I remember she rode from Wayne, New Jersey to Rockville, Maryland on Connie's lap. At six months, we took her



out to a match and she got down on her belly and crawled across the ring, so we did the shopping center routine. We took her to her first real point show a couple of weeks after that match. If I recall, it was National Capitol KC or something like that. She took a four-point major. Very good. Of course, you have to remember now that I'm an old man and in those days, four points meant six bitches or so. Anyway, she had won a four-point major and was doing very nicely. She was a great animal to be around. We showed her on a toy lead. I could have shown her on a piece of thread because she was so attached to us that she wouldn't go more than five feet away. Spooky is like that now, she won't go more than five feet away from Sunny. Unfortunately, Tammy, who was a reasonable bitch, got distemper at twenty-two months of age and we watched her slowly wither away and die. A very nasty way to go. That was really too bad, because she was a nice bitch and would have had a very nice life, a good show career.

Now we were back to crazy Princess Natiya. Nothing useful was going on there, so we started looking around. We ran into some breedings that Lila Weir had had a hand in. She had bred her Joli White Knight to a bitch that belonged to a Canadian in the Vancouver area. So we got a bitch from this Canadian breeder. For one reason or another, that one didn't work out, so we got a replacement bitch from the breeder. The second bitch that we got was Lucky Star. Bad name. This bitch was not lucky. She also had a tendency to fly or at least become airborne. She could get out of anything. She was medium quality, but we were stuck in a situation where we had a bitch that had clear hips and was apparently sound, so what do you do? We bred her to WynterKloud of Silvermoon, Bernice Helinski's stud dog.

Bernice knew that we were looking for another bitch. She called Connie one day and said, "I think I've found what you're looking for. There's a kennel in Niagara Falls that belongs to Bev Ward. She has a bitch up there that she's probably willing to sell to you if you're going to make a good home. She's an ex-sled dog. Why don't you go up and take a look at this girl?" We went to the Philadelphia show and then kept driving right on towards Niagara Falls. This was in the middle of December with icy rain, sleet, typical for the area. You have to be crazy to do this kind of thing. We hit the Wards' place and sat down and talked and looked at the bitch. Then Bev said, "Come on, let's take the bitch outside and move



Ch. Kondako's Dancing Bear.

her." Oni-Agra's Silver Bunny went straight down and right back. By the time she was back, Connie was literally jumping up and down saying, "I want her! I want her!"

Try going to a bank some day and saying, "I want a \$400 loan." "What are you going to do with the money?" "I'm going to buy a dog." Right. But, that's exactly what we did, we took out a bank loan and picked up Bunny. (Hey, c'mon - we were young and poor!)

Star had been bred to WynterKloud and Bunny was bred to Nachalnik of Drayalene. Nachalnik was a good dog, a super dog. He was of California breeding and was picked up by Doris McLaughlin. He had a phenomenal record in breeding good hips (and champions). By this point in time it

was the mid-60's. We had been fighting our way through this mess since the early 1960's. August of 1960 was when we picked up Nikki. Out of the Nachalnik/Silver Bunny breeding came a litter of seven, as I recall, and they were huge puppies. If I remember correctly, it was like a 16- to 24-ounce litter, most in the 22 to 24 range. They were big puppies and Bunny was a little girl, so she had hard times doing this.

Ten months to a year before that, Star had had her litter, and out of that we had kept a bitch that we called Kondako's Koko Lossal. About that point in time, we coined the kennel name Kondako. It stood for Connie, Dave and Company. So we had this little bitch, Koko Lossal, and here comes this new litter. Out of this litter, we have a



Ch. Kondako's Anybody's Girl.



Ch. Kondako's Night Watch.

dog that was a really big, clunky puppy. He had a lovely head on him. We were talking to Doris, and she talked about ridges down the nose. If you have ridges on the nose that looks like chevrons, you have a good bear head, which is how he got his call name. Ruffles had ridges. Sorry about that. (laughter) But he was officially named Kondako's Dancing Bear.

Interestingly enough, there was another puppy in the litter that was badly undershot. We were terribly concerned about this. We were seriously thinking that maybe the time had come to put her down. We were in communication with Joan Sheets and mentioned this puppy. Joan, for some reason or another, was talking to Jan Kauzlerich. The conversation on Jan's end went, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, that's a Drayalene background! Their puppies do that. Don't do anything!" So the word came back to us not to do anything.

This was during the first week of age or so. What happened was the puppy grew into her jaw and got the name Kondako's Thank You JJ, for Jan and Joan. She ended up going through a couple of homes. She came out to a California breeder and that didn't work out. (Jan K. rescued her with the

comment, "I have to protect my namesake, don't I?") Then she went to a Sammy judge, Kenny O'Brien, here in California, who kept her as his constant companion until he died a few years ago. Then she ended up in the home of Karl and Jo Geletich. If you have to move from home to home, Karl and Jo's home is a great place to end up. If you think I'm crazy about wolves, you ought to see their collection of wolf stuff! Anyway, that was Thank You JJ, and there were a couple of other nice puppies in that litter.

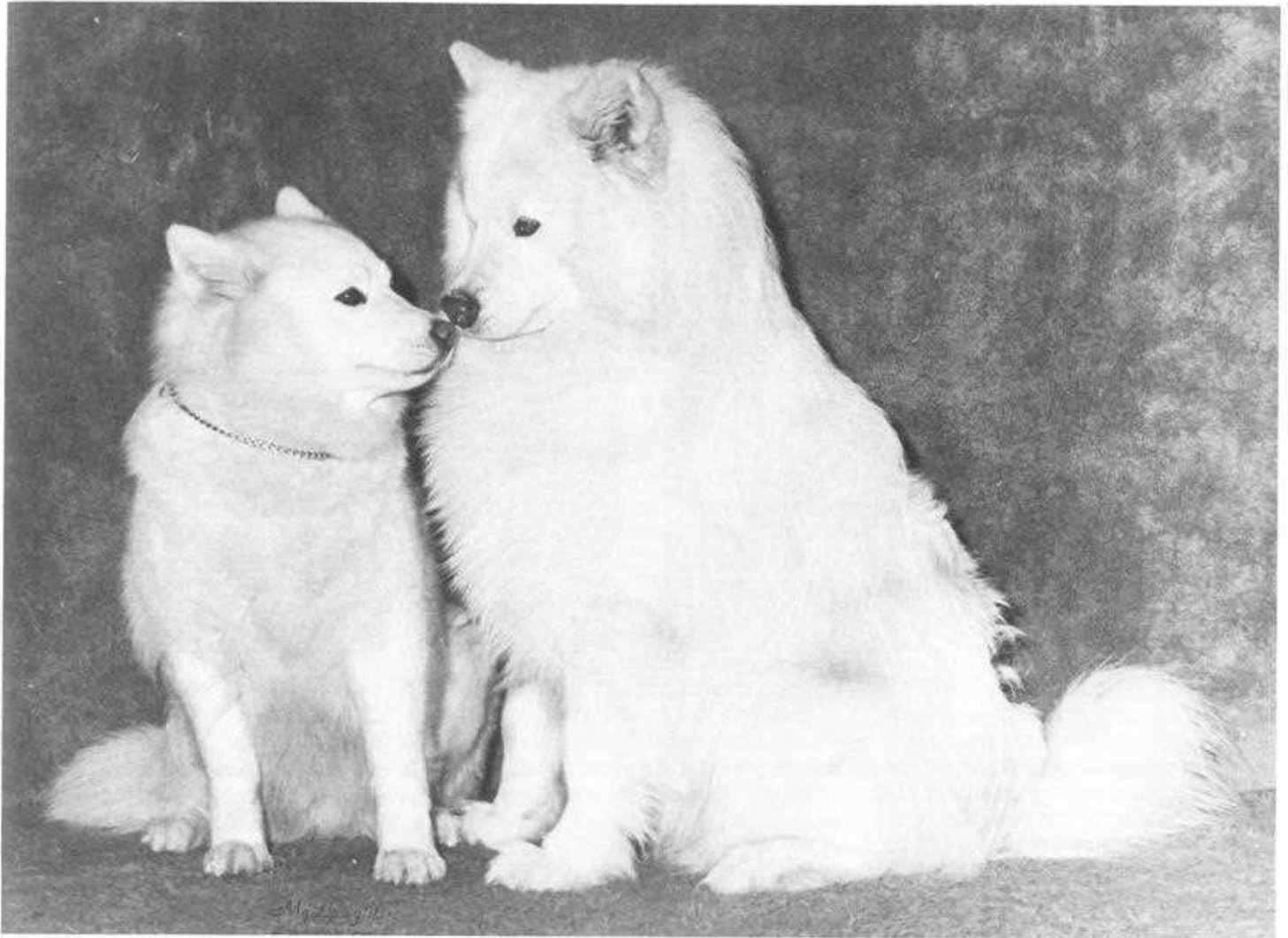
We repeated that breeding a couple more times and got some really nice dogs. There was a dog in Pittsburgh by the name of Caesar, who was one of Dancing Bear's litterbrothers who was very nice. My memory is not good, I don't have the proverbial blue book (kennel records) in front of me to track back as to who all of these dogs were.

The point is that Kondako's Koko Lossal and Kondako's Dancing Bear were bred. It was downhill from there. It was at that point in time that I started building the chart which I now refer to as the Kondako A-line and B-line chart. The A-line went through Kondako's Sundancer, a Dancing Bear son out of Koko. I think there were nine

champions out of a total of fifteen or seventeen puppies that Koko produced, something along that line. It was a very good percentage. At one point in time, she stood a chance of being the top producing Sammy bitch of all time, but of course that number has been exceeded long since. I don't think it was quite as good a percentage record as a bitch owned by Doris McLaughlin. The bitch had something like a total of seven puppies and six were champions. This was a real heavyweight.

Sundancer in turn sired a dog that we kept, Sundance Kid (really cute naming convention). Sundance Kid in turn sired Rising Sun. Rising Sun sired some more dogs. He was breeding partner to the Torres' bitch and sired Statussam's Trouble, Statussam's King Kody of Kondako and Statussam's Lollipop. Lollipop was a very interesting animal. I was extremely fond of her and I showed her a number of times. Connie was the real handler in the family and I ran backup while we showed the Torres' dogs. I had shown Lollipop for Best of Winners or Best of Breed a number of times, and she was an exquisite moving bitch, a pleasure to handle.

The Geletichs now come back into the



Ch. Nachalnik of Drayalene and Ch. Oni-Agra's Silver Bunny.

picture. They had bred their Tiger Boy to Lollipop and had produced a number of very nice puppies and got some champions. One of them was Statussam's Majestic Star (a stud fee puppy, I presume). Remember the name.

Now we're going to go back up the line to Dancing Bear. Dancing Bear was bred to a Snowflower bitch and produced Kondako's Night Watch, a puppy that we took for the breeding. Night Watch was the beginning of what I refer to as the B-line. We have Kondako's Dancing Bear and Koko Lossal over here, producing puppies for the A-line. Now we have Dancing Bear and this Snowflower bitch, and here comes the B-line down from there eight or so years later.

The A-line were very typey dogs. When we had left the east coast in 1972, people started inbreeding these dogs and did terrible

things to them. What was a pretty head became a humongous head and things like that. When we got out here to California, we were getting beat and Connie got tired of getting beaten. She figured we needed to fix the gait, and Night Watch fixed the gait. He had side movement that was absolutely exquisite to watch. What we did was we lost type in the process. Fine. Now we had a dog that could move like the wind and wasn't as typey as our older dogs. People back east were coming up with these heads like crazy, and out here they looked more like a California Sammy. I mean, Kondako has moved to California and now we have California Sammies. That makes good sense.

Night Watch was bred to Kondako's Anybody's Girl. Anybody's Girl was Sundancer's sister, so this was the first combination of the A- and the B-lines. That

produced a bitch known as Kondako's Busybody, a single survivor of the litter. Kondako's Busybody was an amazing animal because she could go around the ring and her feet would never touch the ground. I don't know how she did this. It was kind of like she levitated and just floated around the ring. It looked like her feet were moving, but she never touched the ground. I was absolutely crazy about Busy.

Busy, in turn, was bred to Ima Bark Star and produced a dog that is now seven plus years old by the name of Kondako's Show Biz. Very poor choice of names. This dog can sleep through any dog show class. I was showing him at San Bernardino this past winter just after the SCLA Specialty. This stupid dog was standing in the ring, and it was hot. It was January, but the sun was shining and it was hot. I get him over into the



Ch. Kondako's Night Watch.



Ch. Snowdahl's Budding Star.

shade. He's standing there and he starts posting out the front legs until finally the chest hit the ground, and then the rear end slowly followed, and I was showing this dog that's lying down with his chin between his paws. (laughter) He's truly a character. He's a tremendously loving dog, though.

Of all of the things that Kondako has done, I think the most important thing that we have ever come up with is that temperament. Connie and I were at the National together this past week. Of course, we were divorced in 1985. It doesn't matter, Kondako continues to go on. Connie is not as active as she was, but she still gets to voice her opinions about what's going on and we communicate and are basically very kind to each other. Anyway, Connie and I were at the National. After the National, I was talking to her on the phone, and she said, "You know, I've really come full circle to where I think the most important thing that we did is the temperament." I said, "I could not agree with you more." That's really the biggest thing we've done. We have come up with some pretty heads. On the other side, we have come up with some dogs that could move very nicely. We have done this, that and the other. We got some good ones and some bad ones, but mostly we have dogs that can go out and live with people and be

accepted as a part of the family. People will do anything for some of these silly puppies we've bred.

How would you describe their temperament?

That's a tough question. When I opened up the motor home, Slim, my male puppy, cruised over and jumped in his pen. Sundog, his aunt, is bouncy, and yet she's not berserk. They are reasonable animals. They are fun and they are smart. They know what you want and are willing to go along with you. They will do their own thing, absolutely, if they don't agree with you. They are simply a joy to live with. This is a stupid thing to say, but you look forward to coming home to them. Who wants to come home to several Sammies in the backyard? (laughter)

The Sammies, for some reason or another, seem to be one of those dogs that end up in rescue situations a lot. The dogs tend to be hyper. They tend to be destructive to a ridiculous degree. I have holes in my backyard. I know better than to plant things back there that I must protect if I want to keep them back there. I take a number of precautions, like barbed wire around the sofa and things like that to protect it. Maybe my dogs are the same as everybody else's dogs and I've just learned how to condition them or I'm conditioned. No, that can't be

right either because total novices take our dogs and come back eighteen years later and say, "Our dog just died, we want another one just like her."

Do you think lack of proper socialization causes the hyperness?

I don't think so. Historically, the breed was raised with people. Supposedly there was a tremendous interlinking of the Samoyed people and the Samoyed dogs. The dogs lived with the people inside their dwellings. They might be the origin of the old three-dog night routine. They were companions, they did reindeer herding and hunting. This bit about the Sammy being a working dog and a sledding dog is only a very small part of it. They really are an all-around animal. They were raised as family members. They were an integral part of the family. When you have a dog that's done that for many years, many generations, they're going to know how to run people. I have had situations where I've placed dogs in somebody else's home and the dogs, particularly males, will take over.

No, I think the hyper quality is just a given for the breed and for whatever kind of reason, Kondako dogs are just gentler.

When I was back on the east coast, a family in Philadelphia with one of our puppies said, "You have to do something

with this dog." I said, "Obedience train the dog." The only person who could control the dog was the maid. The dog ran the rest of the family. The maid ran the dog. The maid was having a wonderful time. This dog would growl at them and back them into corners. He just did whatever he wanted to do. You give a Sammy an inch and he's going to make a lifetime commitment to be the dog from hell.

When you sell a puppy, do you make sure the people know how to be alpha?

I go through a complete routine about what it means to own a Sammy and how they relate to the wolf. One of the smartest things that people can do is go read the Scott and Fuller book on wolf behavior or Dave Mech's stuff. Go watch the Brandenburg video tapes. Get familiar with what wolves do, because your Sammies are going to do the same things to you.

How many litters have you bred?

I have no idea. I'd need to have the record book handy. We're 70 miles north of Fullerton right now, and that's where the records are. Back to the number of litters, not really all that many. We came up with the Kondako name in 1964 or 1965, and this is 25 years later ... I'd guess probably 20 to 25 litters. Dancing Bear and Sundancer were used rather extensively as studs with

other people's bitches. There were maybe 150 Kondako puppies and another 150 to 200 puppies from our studs.

From the boys, total, I would say 20 to 25 litters is probably high. Maybe 18 or 20 is more like it. The puppies that I have sitting out in the pen, the little eight-month-old monsters, are the first Kondako litter since 1985, just before Connie's and my marriage broke up.

There was a short period of time when we were two-a-year producers but you can get into so many peculiar problems. You can see puppies die of so many things, and it becomes so painful that you wonder why you're doing it. Right now, if I'm going to breed a litter, I'm going to breed for me first. If there is one puppy, I'm okay. If there are three puppies, great, I can hold on to two like I've done here. This litter was six. I have the two, the others were placed in pet homes, and they're all very pretty puppies. People seem to like them. This boy took Best of Winners from the 6-9 Puppy class today. Their first time out in a point show at six and a half months, he took 6-9 Puppy Dog and Winners Dog, and she took the 6-9 and Winners Bitch. Then she took Best of Winners over him. Fairly consistently, she beats him when they compete head-on at this point. I wanted these puppies. Show

Biz was bred to Crizta's Sugar Wolf, Tina Schultz's dog, and out of that I got a stud fee puppy, Kondako-Crizta Broadway Baby, these puppies' dam. That's why I did it. I specifically bred Show Biz because I wanted a puppy out of Sugar, and I bred Baby to specifically get something like these guys.

Have you had a best litter?

I think it was probably the second or third time that Dancing Bear was bred to Koko Lossal. We had seven puppies and six champions out of the litter. It could have been all seven but we just couldn't persuade the owner (of the seventh) to show her.

Do you know how many champions you've bred over the years?

Maybe 30 with Kondako prefixes. Who counts?

I admire the Hodges' breeding. I think that Don and Dot do marvelous work. I have watched them for years and years. We have been friends for a long time. I think champions 47 and 48 in The Samoyed Quarterly are nice. I don't have any idea how many champions I've produced.

Have you had a best dog?

There isn't a best dog. Dancing Bear was a phenomenal dog. He was a dog of a lifetime, but he wasn't the best dog. Busy was a wonderful dog. She had characteristics and was a very busy puppy. I mean, she got



Left to right - Ch. Kondako's Show Biz, Ch. Kondako's Broadway Baby and Kondako's Last Dance.



Kondako's Kiowa Rogue.

her name legitimately. She was into everything and was the world's greatest ball player. She was a panic to live with, a funny dog. She was very special. Show Biz, the seven-year-old I have right now, is a very special dog to me. He's taken me through some very tough times. I'm very fond of these two puppies that I have right now. They each have their good points and their bad points. You take them for who they are and what they are. If I had to go back and come up with just one dog that I was going to have, that's really tough. Probably Dancing Bear. I'll never see the likes of him again. He was such a loving dog, and at the same time, he was a macho, no-nonsense "I'm alpha." You have to admire that alpha attitude. Of course, I'm a little alpha myself. (laughter)

Are the pedigrees in the breed accurate?

I was associated (as a member of the SCA BoG) with the work that was done when Bob Krause did the original pedigree research and was loading the stuff up into the IBM mainframe at the University of Wisconsin, bootlegging time I presume. I know Bob's capabilities as a researcher. I'm willing to believe if Bob was getting decent data that he loaded decent data into the database. That's the whole key. How good were the records? I have absolutely no idea. (In retrospect, the data all came from the AKC stud books. Can one do better?) It is a pure shot in the dark as to whether or not the stuff that's been recorded has any significance. I'll have to talk to the Wards and ask them whether or not the pedigrees that they have seen since the mid-40's, when they got into it, are coherent with what their knowledge is. This is what you have to do.

Oh, I'm afraid to call Dolly an old-timer, but you have to go to the old-timers. You have to go to the people who have the history in the breed to get the history in the breed.

There's a little lady back in Washington, DC, Laura Figgins, who was in Sammies when we got into the breed. She had two Sam brothers in the 60's, and she'd been in there for a long time. She's still a member of the club. Before she dies, somebody has to go talk to her. She's a very quiet woman and a little - uh - different. She'd show her dog in one hand and have her pocketbook in the other hand in the ring. We used to have to go and take her purse away from her. She was a marvel. As far as I know, she's still active. She has to be well into her 80's now, but she should have lots of memories of dogs and pedigrees she has seen. That's the kind of thing I mean ... go to these people for their memories.

What do you think of inbreeding, linebreeding and outcrossing?

Okay, here it goes. Outcrossing or outbreeding is a total waste of time. First off, outcrossing is a misuse of terminology. Outcrossing is if I take that dog out there

and breed it to a Siberian Husky and come up with an Alaskan Husky. That's an outcross. Outbreeding is if I take that dog out there and breed him to some totally unrelated Sammy. I don't think you can really outbreed in this breed. If you look at the history of the breed, there couldn't have been more than a dozen stud dogs total that formed the breed. They complain today about the Akitas and the limited gene pool and the fact that they closed the stud book too soon. The Sammies are the exact same thing.

There was a limited number of dogs that came down to England from Siberia, and there is the root of the problem. In the fifties, I think, there was a very well-known geneticist who was into a Sam breeding program, and the breeding program ran like this: "I will breed this dog to that dog and get this new dog. I'm going to breed this new dog to that and I'll get something. I'll breed something to the other." He did this for several generations and ended up right back where he started from. He went a full circle. At this point in time, he threw up his hands in horror and said, "You can't breed these



Ch. Kondako's Silver Sparkle.



dogs!" I subscribe to that.

What would you call what you did that caused you to lose type and get movement?

That was an outbreeding. What am I doing right now? What I'm doing right now is a linebreeding, I guess. I have type on that little male puppy out there. He's a very pretty puppy. He does not move quite as well as his sister, but his sister is not quite as typey. Maybe that's the trade-off. What did I do to get that puppy? I took a Night Watch great-great-granddaughter and bred her to a Sundancer great-great-grandson. Of course, there is some interleaving in the pedigrees between Dancing Bear and these puppies. This is getting really far out for a linebreeding. But, Sundancer was the pretty boy and it seems to continue showing up.

And Night Watch brought the movement in?

Yes. Busybody came out of an A to B breeding. Fine. Show Biz is kind of an A to B breeding. BarkStar's grandsire was Sundancer. So I got Show Biz. Show Biz was a Breaker grandkid on his dam's side. Great, there's an outbreeding. So, here's Broadway Baby on the ground. Broadway Baby is a very solid little animal, maybe not quite as typey as she should be. Broadway

Baby is then bred to a Lollipop son, Lollipop being the bitch from the Torres' that I was so fond of. Lollipop had been bred to the Geletich's Tiger, producing Star, another mostly outbreeding. Statussam's Majestic Star was bred to Broadway Baby. Out of that came those puppies that are out there in that pen. What have I got? I have some puppies that move very nicely and are very pretty to look at and to live with. Am I happy? You bet. Are they outbred, linebred, or inbred? Beats me.

Those pups just came back from the National. He took third in Sweeps 6-9, first in Futurity 6-9 and first in 6-9 Puppy Dog in conformation. She walked in Sweeps. She took first in 6-9 in Futurity and walked in conformation. The conformation judge, Sam Pizzino, was looking for something other than what that ding-a-ling out there is. Fine. The boy and girl both took first in their classes in Futurity. They came head to head and she beat him. Today, he took first in 6-9 Puppy Dog and went from there to Winners Dog. She did a walk today. It's a toss-up. You pay your money, come in here and take your chances. "Why didn't you win?" It wasn't my turn.

So what do I feel about inbreeding,

linebreeding and outbreeding? Inbreeding is the fastest way to get from point X to point Y. It is very dangerous and you have to be absolutely ruthless. You cannot let the bad stuff (puppies, that is) out. Linebreeding is much slower, but it is much safer. It is the way to get from point X to point Y over time, and probably have a more enjoyable time doing it. Outbreeding will get you one generation. You'll get hybrid vigor in an outbreeding, as much as you can get hybrid vigor in this stupid breed. The next generation, look out, nobody knows what's going to happen. It is a crap shoot. That's the way that I see it.

Who or what has influenced your breeding the most?

Connie. (laughter)

Who or what has influenced Kondako from the outside?

That's a very difficult question to answer. When we first got started, Bernice Helinski had a great deal to do with our view of how things were being done and what a dog was. As time went on, we became associated with Jim and Joan Sheets and Ghenkis Khan. They had some definite impact. There have been lots of others like that. But I think probably what we've done

is go with our own viewpoint of what the breed should be and what the breed should look like. What has influenced our breeding? You know what it is? It's the standard! THAT'S what did it. You read that standard and you get a picture of what a Sammy should look like and breed to the standard. Isn't that quaint?

You mentioned the book you read as a boy, "White Fang." Has reading and knowing about wolves actually influenced your breeding in any way?

Oh, yes, very much so. I'm looking to produce a dog who can go out into the woods and live. I'm looking for a dog that doesn't sit in the living room and take up space and put hair on your couch. I want a dog who can actually do the work that we understand the Samoyed people wanted the dogs to do. I want an all-around animal. I don't want just a sled dog, I don't want a herding dog, I don't want a dog that's going to go out and

retrieve. Sams have a very soft mouth, I'm told. I don't want a dog for soup, but you look at them every now and then if you're hungry, you think, "I bet he'd make a great bowl of soup." (laughter) But, you've got to do it within the standard.

So you want a dog that would be able to live in the wild but is very comfortable for a family to live with, too?

Absolutely, and as far as I'm concerned, that is the Samoyed. That's what the people 4,000 to 5,000 years ago wanted. You read books like Jeanne Auel's books about "Valley of the Horses" and all the rest of that and how Ayla, Auel's heroine, came up with this wolf cub that she raised. As far as I'm concerned, that was the beginning of the domesticated dog, at least as far as the northern dogs are concerned. You take the silly Akita, and he is as much of a northern dog as the Sammies are. The Siberian Huskies, Malamutes and Norwegian

Elkhounds - they're all really very similar dogs. They happen to end up in different groups now and then, but they're very similar dogs. And, as far as I'm concerned, they are all linked to the wolf.

Where did the Samoyed people live at that time?

You know, what the Americans did to the American Indians is nothing compared to what the Russians did to their nomads. There are no Samoyed people. The people are destroyed. They hung out in the area of the Yenesei River and all through the upper steppes of Siberia, over to the Kara Sea. They wandered all around through there. They were primarily reindeer herders. They were nomads. They went from here to there, wherever living was possible. They were also basically a pacifist people. The other tribes would have a tendency to push them around a lot. Of course, then, once Russia developed the government starting in 1917, the people basically just ceased to exist. You can find families that are involved with other tribes, but mostly the nomad people of Russia are gone, in general. The Samoyed people, in particular, are destroyed. Now there's a problem, because what you see in those pens out there right now is what you get. We aren't bringing in any new dogs.

To be continued ...



Ch. King Kody of Kondako.

