

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Bernice Helinski
WYNTERKLOUD
Englewood, Colorado

Part II

This interview was conducted at the home of Bernice Helinski in March of 1991 by Cindy Adams.

When you were breeding, did you believe in natural breedings as opposed to AI's or controlled breeding?

If they could do a natural breeding, that's what I preferred. There was one occasion when I had an AI done but right after that, the bitch bred normally. Sometimes I think that if you have to do an AI, they're telling you that they are not quite ready to be bred yet. Maybe wait a year or the next heat cycle. Maybe there is something there that's not going to be right this time.

Do you assist with the breeding procedure?

Oh, yes. I hold the bitch. I remember one bitch I had to hold for 45 minutes because she was on the small side of breed standing, about 19 inches and he was 23½ inches. I think it's fine to help if they want you to help them.

What do you feel is a fair stud fee?

Back then they weren't the big prices they are now. Back then it was about \$75. I never went over that. Or if they wanted a puppy out of the litter instead, that was fine. But the prices now are way up. I don't think they should be charging \$300, \$400 or \$500. Maybe \$150 or \$175; that would be fine, but I can't see these big stud fees.

Do you have any males now?

No, I don't. I'm just down to my two Sammies, my three-legged one and my little young one over there just turned a year old.

When you did have Kloudi and he was at stud did you ever refuse stud service to anyone?

Yes, I sure did. There was one that wouldn't X-ray and I said, no. Another one, the bloodlines just weren't right - it was a mixed breed - and I said, "I'm sorry, I can't accommodate



Ch. Wynter Kloud of Silver Moon at 9 months going BOW for a 5-point major, first time shown.

you." There were several times when I turned people down. If it isn't right for the breed and it wasn't to improve the breed or keep the breed at a good standard and good quality, I wouldn't be a part of that.

Would you ever breed to a dog with a serious fault if he had other outstanding points?

It depends on what the fault is. If they had PRA, no. Supposing they wouldn't X-ray and the dog had dysplasia, no, I would not do it. It is doing a disservice to the breed. Or if the dog had a nasty temperament, no, I wouldn't breed to it. Any serious thing like that I would not breed.

How many breedings have you done?

I didn't do many breedings with Kloudi. Including using him with my own bitches, he was used for fifteen breedings. *Besides Kloudi, did you have any other males?*

Yes, I had his son, Ch. Wynterkloud Tuf Lad O'Ryandie (Tuffy). I wasn't his breeder. His breeder had a daughter of Ch. Nachalnik of Draylene and our Ch. Wynterkloud's Patyna Sno Mist (Tyna). Tuffy's dam was a

daughter of Tyna and Chief. Tuffy's sire was Kloudi, Ch. Wynter Kloud of Silver Moon. I only used Tuffy at stud a few times with my own bitches.

Did you finish him?

Yes, Tuffy had his championship at two years of age. He was a very good Samoyed. His grandsire was Nachalnik of Draylene owned by Harold and Doris McLaughlin. Tuffy had some biscuit coloring on him and very black points; the roof of his mouth was black, and he had a black mark on the back of his tongue.

I had two of his offspring, Chummy and Chatta. Their dam was Ch. Shesrnustar of Wynterkloud. Chummy had his obedience title CD.

One problem I ran into was bloat. Chummy died at eight years of age from bloat. Willie had bloat at nine years of age, and she was weakened to the extent that I had to put her down at 9¼ years of age. Chummy was the grandson of Ch. Shesrnustar of Wynterkloud, who was the daughter of Tyna (Ch. Wynterkloud's Patyna Sno Mist). Tyna shocked even the veterinarians because at 13½ years of age,

she died of bloat.

Do you feel there is an ideal number of litters a bitch should have?

If you start breeding after they are two years of age, because you wait for OFA certification of clear hips, I think no more than five litters for one female.

Do you spay the bitches at that point?

Yes, I do. I feel it is better for them. There are fewer problems with uterine infections, etc. They have a healthier life. I feel you at least reduce uterine cancer.

Do you help your bitches whelp?

Yes, I enjoy it. The dam of Sugar goes back to my breeding. The owners of Sugar's dam called me when she was to whelp, as this was their first litter. As it turned out, the dam only had very mild contractions, and I helped the veterinarian do the caesarean section. It was an interesting experience. Being a nurse, that's why I enjoyed it. I enjoy helping bitches when they are whelping their puppies. I enjoyed helping my own.

Did you actually get in the whelping box and break sacs and break the umbilical cords and so forth?

Oh, yes, indeed I did. Especially when the bitches were with their first litter, they were inexperienced themselves and not quite sure. You knew that they were going to try but by helping them, it went along much better for the bitch, too. Then another time, you found that they could handle it much better. When it came time for whelping Ch. Wynterkloud's Patyna Sno Mist (Tyna), I would have her right near me while sleeping. Tyna was very smart. At 7:00 o'clock in the morning - and this happened with each one of her litters - she would come and nudge me and say, "I'm ready," and she would be in full labor and ready for that first puppy to whelp. Even with her first breeding, she did that. It was remarkable. With her last litter, she had me up and was in contractions but she couldn't bring that puppy out and I waited and waited. She had to have a C-section. She was going on eight and that was her last litter of puppies. Afterwards I had her spayed.

Was that the only C-section that any of your bitches had?

No. Ch. Shesrnustar of Wynterkloud (Willie) had one C-section but after that had normal births. That was Tyna's only C-Section, too. It was surprising - with Willie I think that was her second litter she had a C-section. It has to do with their hormones, I'm sure.

Do you supplement young puppies and your bitches in whelp?

Yes, I like to supplement young



Ch. Wynter Kloud of Silver Moon, "Kloudi," at 11 weeks.

puppies and very definitely when whelping. They do need that. The mother's milk is better and the puppies feel much better, too. I believe in supplementing, yes.

What do you usually supplement with?

I usually use Esbilac. Then when the puppies get a little older, I give them baby cereal, mix it with Esbilac and put their liquid baby vitamins in with it. I think it helps them.

Do you give vitamins to all your dogs?

Yes, I sure do. I use a multivitamin which I think is very good. I find, too, with puppies, with their lip line, when they get to be about eight to ten weeks of age, that to give them some kelp will help bring in the black pigment. It's very mild. Give them a low dosage, one-half of a tablet, and it does help with pigmentation.

What kind of dog food do you feed your dogs? Do you feed it to lactating bitches?

I've been using lams for a good many years and I've found it's been very good. In older dogs, I like to give them Science Diet. I give puppies the puppy food and I like to mix in meat with it, and cottage cheese. I feel they will get their calcium with the cottage cheese. Because I've had the problems with bloat, I do moisturize their dry food with hot water and then add the other things. I found it helped.

Do you let the bitches wean their own puppies?

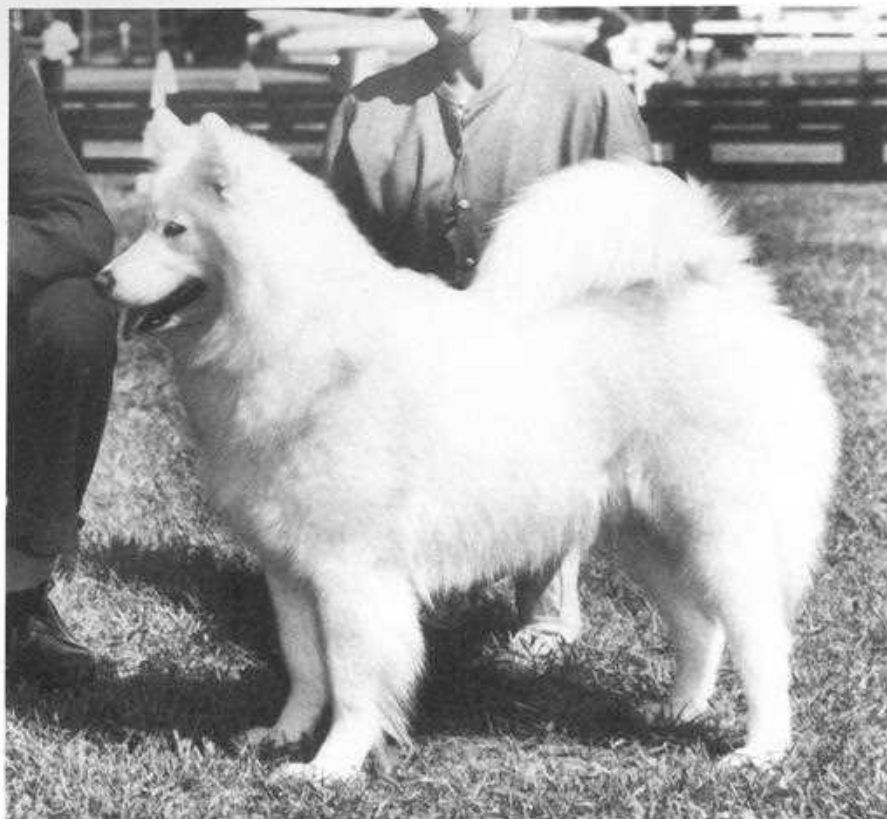
I sort of help them. I start about four to five weeks of age with a little baby cereal and just put it down and let them lick down their own. Eventually I put in some little baby strained meat as they get a little bit older. Then at six and one-half to seven weeks of age I start them on some of the puppy food, soaked real good with strained baby meat added. Then we go gradually to a dog food. By eight weeks of age, they are usually on pure dog food.

Do you continue to supplement your bitches even after the puppies have been weaned for a while?

Yes. I feel they do need that supplement even to four to five months afterward. They need to be rebuilt. The next time you want to breed them, they are in real good shape. If you've done this afterwards, I think it really helps them.

Have you ever had to tube or bottle feed litters?

I had one litter I had to tube feed. In fact, it was Ch. Shesrnustar of Wynterkloud's last litter, which was born by C-section. I had to tube feed and then bottle feed the puppies for about a week and then the dam started producing some milk and could nurse the puppies on her own. But it wasn't easy.



Ch. Wynterkloud's Patyna Sno Mist, "Tyna," at 2 years.

What age do you begin to evaluate puppies for show or pet?

I start when they are first born by looking at their overall balance. If there's angulation, you start watching. I like to start them when they get up on their own feet and start walking around. It's about four weeks of age before I really start and then I want to evaluate them again at six weeks and then at eight weeks. The earliest is eight weeks but then you can really evaluate them.

So you typically don't place puppies with owners until they are eight weeks old?

That's the earliest I'll let them go. I'd rather keep them until about ten weeks. Then you have a better chance of really taking the finer points of the dog, the balance, the angulation, the coat, ear set and everything. You see a little more then.

Have you ever culled any litters?

Yes, definitely. I did a couple of litters and I wouldn't hesitate to pull something out. Why end up with a dog that's not even going to be good as a pet? I wouldn't hesitate, if it's going to be a pet, to hold money either until a puppy was spayed or neutered - the amount it would cost to have it spayed or neutered. And they do it. If it's going to be a pet, that's it. It's not

being used for breeding.

What do you feel a show puppy should sell for?

I think today they are selling for \$300 and more. When I was breeding, it was \$150 to \$175 for a show quality puppy. I think they are getting out of hand. The tops, to me, would be \$250. That, to me, is the tops for a show quality puppy.

Do you think the incentive of making money is causing problems for the breed?

Yes. You might screen your puppy buyers as well as you can and you can always make a mistake. Those are the ones you have to watch. They are the ones who won't care how they breed the puppy, just for the buck. I don't think that's right. They are doing a disservice to the breed. This is why I think when any puppy is sold as a pet the seller should require that it be spayed or neutered. I believe that firmly. Otherwise they will breed them and sell the puppies for a big price and it is unfair to the breed. This is true with any breed.

Do you think AKC's new registration will help?

Yes, I think it will. I think the new process will really help. It's a long time coming and we should have had it a long time ago.

When you sell puppies do you sell for cash or will you arrange terms with people?

You can work out terms with them. If they want to make it in payments or whatever.

Have you ever sold bitches with a puppy back?

Yes, I have, twice. I would pick the sire for that bitch so that it would be something I would want and then I would take the puppy.

Is that dog on a co-ownership then?

It's their dog but I have a signed contract with them.

How long do you feel a breeder should be responsible for the puppies he sells and should you take dogs back in the event of something unforeseen?

I think if you are selling a puppy, you are responsible for placing it out in the world. If they decide they don't want that puppy anymore, I want it back.

Would you take it back if it were, say, a three-year-old?

I would rather have it come back to me for me to make the decision with that dog. I usually tell them, "If something doesn't work out, you let me have my puppy back. It doesn't mean I will necessarily refund your money but I want that puppy back before you do anything."

You do sell puppies on contract then?

Oh, yes. For hip dysplasia and things like that, yes. If a puppy should turn out to be dysplastic, they have the option of replacing the puppy or replacing the money. If they want to keep the puppy, I will refund their money and the dog must be neutered and/or spayed so it's out of the breeding program. Also included in the contract is PRA testing.

Do you feel there is any particular diet that is beneficial to Sammies?

I want a balanced diet. I like to give them a little oil for their coat especially in this higher altitude with the dry climate.

So, basically, you give them dry kibble but you moisten it?

Yes, and I add the meat to it, either Pedigree Kal Kan, or I give them hamburger. I don't give it to them raw, I cook it. I find a teaspoon of oil very helpful in their food.

Did you condition your dogs when you were showing them?

Yes. Back there, I would take them out and gait them and run them. Being out here with this park, it was excellent because here we have the hills and you can go up and down which I find excellent for the dogs. If you want them to improve their front gait, going downhill helps; then climbing up gives that rear action motion. Having done

rehab nursing, I knew what types of exercises to do to build up what muscles. Out here, I take them all the time and I stayed in condition, too. It's also good because in the summertime there are a lot of people in this park and they can socialize. I liked to take puppies out there; it was the greatest thing in the world for them.

What kind of grooming do you feel should be done with this breed for show purposes?

I don't like to see all this trimming, as I said. I will groom from skin out. They have to be bathed from skin out and, what they call in this day and age, linecombed. We didn't do that. I wrote an article and it was in Bob and Dolly Ward's first book on Samoyeds. I was taught by the old-timers - Nell Collins up in the Northwest was wonderful - how to groom skin out, how to bathe and so forth.

It wouldn't irritate the skin?

No. You didn't go all the way into the skin, anyhow. It was on the surface and it was just wonderful. You didn't have to go to all this chalk, dyeing, and everything else, just the bluing.

I feel you need to groom from the skin out and bathe them, toenails trimmed. The only thing I will do on Sammies is trim their feet so they are not raggedy looking and maybe their hock joints to smooth them out a little bit. I don't believe in all this sculpturing. The dog should be a natural looking dog. They need to be clean and look pretty because they are.

What do you mean by grooming from the skin out?

You part the hair and I like to go forward. You start up at the head and brush the coat forward on the back with a comb. You start on the sides and then get down to the belly, everything forward, then let them shake and everything stands out then. You may call it line grooming.

So you are actually backcombing the entire dog?

Yes, exactly.

Do you believe in using mousse and other things as they do nowadays?

No, I don't. If people want to do that, it's OK, but if a dog has the proper diet, their coats are going to be what they should be. You can use a little oil in their food and it will come out in their coat. If you feed them properly, you don't have to put all this substance on those dogs. I don't believe in it and never have. A lot of people used to use spray and all that and I won't. As far as I'm concerned, when my dogs are groomed, they will be groomed the way I've been taught to groom and no artificial substances put on them. Some-



Left: Ch. Wynterkloud!'s Patyna Sno Mist (Kloudi's aunt).

Right: Ch. Wynter Kloud of Silver Moon, "Kloudi."

times if they get dirty, I will use alcohol and spray it on and then take cornstarch, rub it in and that will dry it and rub it right out, brush it all out and it will clean up beautiful. That's the only thing I will use. I take a towel and wipe it until it's still a little dampish, not real wet, and then put the cornstarch in it. Then I dry it all out real well and brush it and it's perfectly clean and beautiful.

Do you use just a regular dog shampoo?

Yes.

Do you believe in trimming whiskers?

No. I believe it's part of their dog to be natural.

Did they trim them years back?

Yes. Everybody trimmed whiskers and if you didn't do it, you wouldn't get anywhere. It used to just kill me because that's their sensors and I would think, "What are you doing to this dog?" Finally, I refused to cut my dog's whiskers.

Do you feel that ever hurt you in competition?

Probably. It was passed in SCA that you don't trim the whiskers. I'm glad that Samoyed Club of American put that down because they are supposed to be natural.

Are your dogs kenneled right here off your home in a regular kennel?

Yes. John built all this. I have one section in the basement cordoned off and that's for the dogs. There's a cou-

ple of pens down there for when the bitches are in season. There is a door at the end. In the summertime, we even have a blower out here and it keeps them cool in the summer.

There's a sliding door at the end and in the winter if I want to close it off, they can just stay in here. I have four runs.

Have you ever had more than four dogs?

I had six at one time. At that time, John and I were one of the founding members of the Colorado Dog Fanciers. At one time here in Englewood, they were putting restrictions on the number of dogs. So I went through the Colorado Dog Fanciers - another member and myself and John went to the city council. At their meeting I proposed hobby breeder's licensing at which you could have five adult dogs and X number of puppies until you got up to six months of age. You had until they were six months of age to place your puppies, and that was put into effect here. You could have five adult dogs through hobby breeder's licensing. With Colorado Dog Fanciers' breeder referral, we use the same inspection rules, guidelines, for the City of Englewood. We were safe. I had one over one time. It stayed a puppy for a long time.

Typically with the breed, do you keep the males together, separate from the females?

The only time I would keep the

males separated is when there is a bitch in season. Otherwise, they would get along just fine.

Are they pretty friendly with other breeds of dogs?

Oh, yes. They really think they're great. I've had other people with other breeds here and they could care less. When Pepper, my Polish Sheep Dog, which is one of the rare breeds, first came, they sort of looked down and thought, "What are you?" But he stepped right in and I think now he thinks he's a Samoyed. What was interesting is the herding instinct - he is very strong in herding - he thought he should herd the Sammys. When I first got him, I had four Sammys. He would nibble their hocks and get them all shoved over in the corner and finally they turned around. He brought out the herding instinct in every one of them and they would herd him into a corner. It was funny. They were having a ball. He got along with the male Samoyeds just fine.

So they are not a dog-aggressive breed?

No, I don't think so. At least mine have never been. No, the only time I ever separated them was when the bitches were in season. A different power takes over then.

How long have you lived in this location?

Since the fall of 1967. Prior to that we were in New Jersey and before that in the state of Washington. John was in the aerospace program. We lived in Renton, Washington when he worked for Boeing. We then were transferred to Moses Lake, Washington which at that time was an Air Force base and a missile site. Then later we were transferred to New Jersey, and there he worked for the Bendix Corporation and that was all aerospace combined with Martin-Marietta, and that was how he was then transferred out here to Colorado.

Did you practice nursing all the way along?

Yes. In New Jersey I worked in the emergency room of St. Joseph's Hospital in downtown Patterson, New Jersey. That was a whole different world. The dog shows were so different back on the East Coast than they were in the Northwest, which were more casual. When we first started back into dog shows all of these were benched shows, and more formal. There were so many shows. If you didn't like the judging panel at the shows over here, you could go 50 miles the other way. When we first moved here and went to the dog shows, they were so casual. In a way, it was nice to go from one part of the country to another because it was a learning experience in dog shows.



Ch. Duchess Joh-Ni of Silver Moon at 10 years.

Did you feel you were accepted by the dog people back east or did you have to work your way in?

You worked your way in. The founding fathers of the Samoyed Club of America were in the east. But we were soon active in the Eastern Division. My first term in Samoyed Club of America as secretary was when we lived in New Jersey. It was at that time that we were informed by the AKC that the Samoyed Club of America would change and eliminate divisions within the club. It was quite an experience for the SCA president (who was also living on the East Coast) to work with AKC. My second term as SCA secretary was when we lived here in Colorado.

When did the Samoyed Club get started?

Back in the early twenties, about 1923, I believe. Back east we learned a great deal. We were members of the Ramapo Kennel Club in Patterson, New Jersey, and also the Rockland County Kennel Club just across the border. We lived close to the border of New York, too. It was a fun learning experience on how to put on shows. We learned the basics back there. They had me help with conformation classes, and I really learned how to teach handling classes. It was a great experience.

At that time, were there a lot of Sammys in the east?

There were many, yes. There were some of the old-time breeders back there. There was Mrs. Borghild Ulfeng, Antoinette Callahan, and Elma Miller who was the second owner of the imported Samoyed Ch. Martingate Snowland Taz, a top-winning Samoyed

on the East Coast in the past. Taz was in the background of many Samoyeds on the East Coast.

How old were you when you got started in the breed?

I was just getting close to thirty, so it's been a long time.

How do you feel your dogs have affected your life-style?

Completely changed it. Everything was around the dogs. It really was.

Were the dogs something both you and John were really into together?

Oh, yes. He was always working in the kennel clubs and helping with the business end of the dog shows. We didn't have any children, and the dogs were our family. The dogs couldn't do any wrong as far as John was concerned. He really enjoyed them.

Do you ever look back and think that there were any drawbacks to having dogs?

I didn't think so.

Do you feel it's been a really beneficial experience?

It really has been. In going from one part of the country to another, having dogs was a way to meet new people quickly. I thought it was great. We both did because being transferred around this way, you made new friends at the dog shows. We have met some wonderful people through it all.

Is there anything you can think of that we haven't touched on that you would like to comment on?

I'll always remember the Sammy that my childhood girlfriend had. That's the breed I really wanted, and don't regret ever going into dogs. Also, I learned to do some spinning. I do save their coat when they shed. I have an electric spinner that I use. Jean Brown got me into spinning when we moved here. I wrote to Edhel Stefanik about what we should do to get started spinning. Then we found a woman here in the Denver area who taught us how to work with the electric spinner. I have a sweater and a hat made from Sammy wool.

Did you knit these things yourself?

Yes. We carded the Sammy hair we had saved, spun our own yarn and then knitted sweaters. I sent some yarn out to California, and had material made. Then I made my hats.

I have enjoyed it. It has been a wonderful world in dogs. The dogs have been my life, and both John and I have enjoyed them so very much.

Thank you for allowing me to interview you.