

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Lynda Zaraza
AUTUMN

Mt. Vernon, New Hampshire

This interview was conducted at the home of Lynda Zaraza in August of 2003 by Lynne Robertson.

How long ago did you get started in Samoyeds, and what led you to this breed?

My mother showed dogs. I started going to dog shows as a child with my mother, when she bred and showed Rough Collies. There was a time when my sister became allergic to all animal hair and instead of getting rid of my sister, my mother got rid of the dogs! When I got married and moved to Denver, I decided to show dogs as a hobby. I was considering Rough Collies, but I went to a Samoyed match and decided that was the breed I wanted.

What was it that you liked about the first Samoyed you saw?

The breed itself is quite attractive. I liked the overall look of the dog. I wanted a more heavy-coated dog so that I wouldn't have to worry about exercising in the winter. I knew we would eventually be heading back east, and I wanted a dog with a heavy coat for the harsher winters. White has always attracted me. At the time, I had a pure white cat. That's probably why I stopped to look at them in the first place. I also liked the temperament of the breed. That has always been very important to me, because if you can't live with them, you can't show them.

Who was your first dog, and your first show dog?

Unfortunately, the first show dog I purchased was severely dysplastic, and we had to let him go at a very young age. I did show my replacement for him. He had his majors and was a decent dog, but he had a temperament problem.

I decided to go out on my own. I was in one of the biggest areas in the country with top Samoyeds. I always liked the look of the English Samoyed. I noticed in one of the magazines

that a breeder in Canada had an English import, so I contacted her and eventually purchased one of her dogs, a male I named Kristik's English Autumn. Marguerite and Harold Kritsch were the breeders. They sent me the

puppy and he won the National Specialty his first time out as a special. He was a lovely dog. He had the temperament I was looking for, and I believe the English dogs have the sweetest temperaments. Not that the

American dogs aren't nice in temperament, because they certainly are. There is just something a little more obliging, and they don't question as much as the American dogs.

He was my all-time favorite



Lynda and Ch. Glitz.

dog. I could obedience train him in a flash; he learned something new immediately. We called him Alfie, and he went on to take his Puppy class at the National in Denver. There were a bunch of puppies in that class so I was quite proud of him and myself. I learned to just trust in myself and train the dogs really well.

I brought him to Connecticut when he was about two years old. I finished him in 1977. That particular year he was the youngest dog to ever take a National, it was the biggest National ever held, and it was his first time out as a special, and the record has never

been broken. There have been bigger Nationals since then, and a younger dog has taken it since then, but no one has won first time out as a special since Alfie.

Alfie didn't really like the show ring that much. Most dogs were shown by handlers at that time, or the owner-handlers had a lot more experience than I did. I hired a professional handler because I realized this could be my once-in-a-lifetime dog. He took numerous Group placements, but never got Best. I was sorry he never got that, but we had a lot of fun with him, and he produced some beautiful animals.

His daughter, Ch. Suzuki's

Final Edition, won Best of Opposite at the National the following year. His other daughter from the same litter, Suzuki's Miss B Havin, owned by Gen Delitievre, took Highest Scoring Dog at the trial. A third dog, Ch. Suzuki's Flying High, owned by Debbie Kraft, finished from the same litter. Alfie was a very special dog. I still have some of him in some of my girls, and on occasion I can see where he is still there.

I got another dog from the same kennel in Canada, in Cumberland, Ontario. I bought a beautiful bitch, Can. Ch. Kristik's Modesty Blaze. I brought her down here and finished her

very quickly. Her first litter produced my first homebred champion, Autumn's Rainbow Connection CD. Alfie was the sire.

Later I was offered a co-ownership with Pat Kirms, a friend of mine from New Jersey, with a dog named Skipper, from Michigan. She had produced Nellie, Alfie's daughter, who took Best of Opposite at the National. My friend and I traveled together to dog shows because we were both history buffs and enjoy sightseeing after dog shows. We decided to special Skipper for a while. He was in the Top Ten one year. Skipper's name was Ch. Devon-



Am/Can Ch. Kristik's English Autumn, "Alfie" (Fyodor of Kobe x Ch. Kristik's Snow Panda) going BOB in August 1977. Breeders: Marguerite and Harold Kritsch.



*Am/Can Ch. Kristik's English Autumn, "Alfie" (Fyodor of Kobe x Ch. Kristik's Snow Panda) going BOB in January 1979.
Breeders: Marguerite and Harold Kritsch.*

shire's Sudden Stop. He produced some nice puppies bred to one of my girls. He produced a son, Ch. Autumn's Just Plain Yogart. He was a colicky puppy so we gave him yogurt at night, and that's how he got his name.

About what time was this?

This was in the early 1980s. I didn't breed a lot, for several

reasons. One reason was that I enjoyed showing. It was a hobby first, and I preferred to go to the dog shows if they were being shown. And I was also working full-time. I felt that having litters of puppies was a big obligation and that if something went wrong, who was going to take care of the litter? I

did breed my first litter when I was working, and it was a big mistake. That lesson taught me that it was not a good thing to do. I lost all the puppies in the beginning, not because I wasn't there, but I had done a very close inbreeding. I learned that although you got the best of the best, you also had to deal with

what problems can occur. As I bred more often, I learned that the bitches in this particular line seemed to have some serious whelping problems. I knew that it was going to be a fight to have puppies survive whelping. Most of the problem was uterine inertia, which is a problem of pushing the puppy out. I learned

that this would be an uphill battle, and all of a sudden it wasn't fun anymore.

I did add a bitch or two that had some English lines but also some American lines. I did have a litter with no problems from a half-American, half-English bitch. They were all alive,

healthy, and beautiful. All five were males! And I already had four males living with me, so there was no way I was keeping a male. It seemed like I was always one step behind the situation.

I really did enjoy the dog shows, though. I had a lot of

friends there. Everyone said it was great to finish your first homebred champion. And it was great to finish Rainbow; I did it myself. But it didn't feel any different to me than if I had bought her and finished her. I did not feel the difference and was just as happy to finish any

of my dogs. I came to the conclusion that the most important thing for me was taking a young dog and developing it into a show dog. Of course, it has to be a decent dog first, which is the luck of the breeder. It's more than half luck because no one has control of how the



Ch. Autumn's Rainbow Connection CD (Am/Can Ch. Kristik's English Autumn x Am/Can Ch. Kristik's Modesty Blaze).

genes are going to mesh when you breed. You can take a young dog, train it well, develop its personality, and have a show dog. That was my favorite thing to do, to take a dog and make it into something.

As a matter of fact, I did take in several dogs that had been injured mentally because of the conditions they had been in, and one of them happens to be here now. I also took in a half-

brother of hers, and after a year of working him out of his problems, he finished quickly in about ten shows. The quality was there for sure. The female that I still have was within a couple of points of finishing, but she hated it so much that I decided she didn't have to do it anymore. It was sad that she didn't finish because her quality was tremendous. She is totally American lines and a sweet dog.

I couldn't get her bred, though. We bred her almost every season from when she was three years old until she was seven and I even took her to a specialist for testing. I took her to a doctor of genetics who is a Samoyed person I had used for breeding assistance. She didn't take, so I decided none of this was meant to be. That was my luck with breeding. Give me a dog to show, but don't let me

breed!

About fourteen years ago, I went into another breed, the Keeshonden. I decided again, after looking around here and seeing nothing, to call a well-known breeder in California. Again, sight unseen I got a puppy. He got off that plane after being on the plane forever, and just came out like dynamite. He was only eight weeks old. I looked at him and said, "This is a show dog." He ended up in the Top Ten for four years running. We had many Group wins on him. He was "Mr. Showdog." I just lost him last fall; his name was Kokomo. I never bred Keeshonden. I learned my lesson, and got real smart. Somebody offered me a co-breedership and I said, "As long as they're there, breed them, and when they're on the ground, I will take over from there!" I can raise them well. I just can't get them on the ground.

I co-bred two Keeshonden litters if I remember correctly, but I was not a breeder per se. Keeshonden are a little higher-strung than Samoyeds. They are very happy-go-lucky, lovely dogs, but they are a little more dog than I, personally, would want to live with on a regular basis. Though I do still have one Kees left, he's calmer. He's not what his father was. Kokomo always "had his bags packed" the first two years of his life, and when he would do something, I would always say, "You know, California is not that far away." He was a very enjoyable dog.

How many litters did you breed over the years?

Probably about seven or eight. And there were some champions in those litters.

Did you have an outstanding litter?

In one litter I would say there were a couple of girls that were quite outstanding. I usually had one or two that were quite nice in each litter. My friend Pat Kirms had some outstanding litters from my stud dog Alfie. Alfie's best litter was produced by Pat.

Let's talk about some of your other top dogs that you showed.

I mentioned Ch. Devonshire Sudden Stop. "Skipper," was ranked. He lived with me when he was about a year and a half because Pat didn't want to run



Can. Ch. Kristik's Blaze of Autumn (Am/Can Ch. Kristik's English Autumn x Am/Can Ch. Kristik's Modesty Blaze), bred by Lynda Zaraza. Owner: M. Fox.

back and forth to the shows. Joy Brewster showed him. He had some nice Group placing. We bred to him a couple of times. Two of the females downstairs are related. One is a granddaughter of his, and the other is a great granddaughter.

When he was a little older, there was a gal interested in taking him as a pet. She learned to show him, but we kept a co-ownership on him so that he would never be bred without our consent. This was to protect us and the breeder in Michigan. I respect people's feelings, and I certainly wouldn't want it done to me. He lived out a very happy life with her. Skipper was bred to Rainbow, my first champion, which produced a son, Ch. Autumn's Just Plain Yogart. That was a very good litter.

I kept an all-male kennel for years because I liked showing the boys! When it comes down to specializing, if you are going to put money into it, you might as well look at the male. It's very difficult for the females to go out there and beat the boys.

I kept Yogart. He was a nice dog, a very interesting dog. For some reason, as a young dog, he decided he wasn't going to show. He didn't want anybody to touch him, even me, and I raised him. So I couldn't figure out what was going on with this dog. I always said that, "He was a puppy that fell off a rock wall on his head." He knocked himself silly at a very young age, about five or six weeks old. I never would have guessed that he would have done that stupid thing, but he did. I had the dedication because he was such a beautiful animal. Any time he went out, he won until we finished him. I decided to special him once, and when he took the Breed, I said, "Retired!"

I took him everywhere with me. We went to the grocery store, and everywhere I went, the dog was dragged. I took him to training classes faithfully. After a year of working with this dog, and entering him in a four-show circuit in Boston, the first thing he did was glide around like a German Shepherd. He was starting to make me nervous, so I thought another set of hands should show him. I left him with a handler overnight. The next day he walked into the



Ch. Kokomo, my Keeshond.

ring and said, "Here I am." He took a five-point major, and Best of Winners! And I took BOB with Skipper. It was kind of nice; we had father and son pictures and I have one for you. From there, Yogart went on to finish within five or six shows.

He produced one of the girls downstairs, Ch. Autumn's Uptown Girl. She's ten years old, and she is just so full of herself. She is the one in the pen who was talking to you earlier. This trait I mentioned earlier was never passed on, so I don't

really know what happened to Yogart. Once he came out of it, he was fine with everybody. Maybe it was just a young male dog with a problem! Who knows? He was almost fourteen when I lost him. All my dogs have been almost fourteen when



Ch. Alfie (right) and Ch. Suzuki's Final Edition, "Nellie." Nellie owned and bred by Pat Kirms.

I've lost them. I've been very lucky to have such long-lived dogs.

Do you credit that to good care or good genes?

A combination of both. I think it does take genes, and good care. I only lost one dog early. She wasn't from my lines. She was from American lines. She got cancer at age ten and we lost her within two days. It was shocking. Her name was Pansy and she was a lovely bitch. I always said she was an ambassador of the breed. Everybody tried to buy her from me. Her attitude was as if to say, "Here I am and I'm so cute." And she was so cute. She was a gorgeous bitch and she moved beautifully.

I was very lucky to own her. She's the one who had the litter with no problems. I never bred her again because I got involved with specialing Kokomo, which took a lot of my time. He was out for about five years being speialed. He loved it. He was a show dog, and yet he was a good housedog too. He was a typical male Keeshond.

How big was your kennel?

In my most active years, I would have to say I had between seven and nine dogs. It was very manageable. There were always some dogs that weren't being shown. The most I ever had was sixteen, including older dogs and puppies. The last few years I was not showing

quite as much. I showed Keeshonden more than Samoyeds, and was down to five or six dogs at that point. Today, I'm down to four dogs. Two are going to be eleven years old shortly. One is eight, and the young male Keeshond is four. I'm just kind of debating what to do.

Are you still showing?

I haven't shown in quite a few years. When I moved to New Hampshire I had the Keeshonden, who was only six months old then. I also had a six-month-old Samoyed puppy. She was dazzling, a gorgeous bitch who moved like the wind. The male Keeshond I have now is nice. He's pointed, but not

quite as nice as I would like him to be; he could use a little more leg. He doesn't care if he finishes and neither do I. Maybe someday when these guys are gone I might pick up again. I will always have a Sammie, but I don't know if I could show one again with my knees. It would have to be a smaller dog, because I couldn't do the running. When you show for 32 years and bang your knees on concrete week after week, you deserve what you get!

Did you decide to start judging when you got away from showing?

I had just retired Kokomo, who was my last special. I had been thinking about judging and a lot of people were encouraging



Right: Can Ch. Kristik's Snow Panda (dam) and left: Am/Can Ch. Kristik's English Autumn, "Alfie" (son).

me to get involved. I had a mentor, Edna Ackerman, who was a long-time judge. As she got older, I used to drive her to the shows. She judged Toys, so there was no conflict of interest. I used to sit ringside with her and thought about it.

I finally decided that it would complete the circle, so I went for it. I actually intended to go further with it, and judge more breeds. After we moved up here and my knees got worse, I decided not to go any further with the judging. I can manage what I'm doing. I judge Samoyeds, Kees, and Juniors. I don't judge that often. I was president of an all breed club in Connecticut for seven years and their show chairman. I know how much it costs to bring in judges, and when you only judge a couple of breeds, it's not

cost efficient to bring in one person. I just did a Keeshond specialty in April which was very nice.

Have you judged in different parts of the country or mostly here in the northeast?

Mostly in the northeast. I have gone to Indiana and I've also judged in Michigan and Ohio.

When you are judging, what do you look for in the dog?

I look at the overall dog, and his presentation of himself in the ring. You can tell balance that way. I have spent many years watching Group rings. You learn a lot from people about balance for a particular breed. Having been in both breeds, it's not hard for me to judge those two breeds.

I look for a dog to be standing there saying, "I'm here,

notice me." That helps a lot. Then you have to decide, even though he's standing there looking gorgeous, if he lives up to the standard. Not only does he have to have the right angles, eyes, and head, but he has to move. There is an awful lot of leaning toward movement in recent years. Sure, they should be clean, coming and going; yes, they should have reach and drive. Sometimes as breeders, we are looking for that over-extended dog, and I think that's wrong. These dogs weren't racing dogs, so I don't think you want to see a herding dog moving like that.

I can't really say how much of that is going on today. They used to over-emphasize the reach and drive. I found that some of the dogs weren't looking balanced anymore. People

were trying to get these long, leggy dogs and that's not what a Samoyed is. I can tell you that I don't see it so much out here, but I have seen it in other parts of the country. People used to say, "English dogs are pretty but they can't move." I would say, "I found the balance and I won with my dogs." There is a balance. They should be a nice-looking dog, balanced, move well, and temperament is so important, too.

Temperament has vastly improved since I first got into this. There were dogs that were really aggressive here on the East Coast. They were using them for breeding. They didn't care. They couldn't bring the dogs to ringside without trouble. It was terrible.

How do you decide the overall best dog?



Ch. Devonshire's Sudden Stop, "Skipper," (sire) owned by Pat Kirms and Lynda Zaraza, and Ch. Autumn's Just Plain Yogart, (son).

I do believe it's the balance of the dog; moving well, having the nice coat of the Samoyed. The one closest to the standard.

Is there anything you put an emphasis on in your judging, beyond the standard?

People misjudged me from the beginning. They thought I would always go for "pretty." I didn't win with my dogs because they were "pretty." They moved well, too. I probably emphasize movement because of

the fact that I have put up dogs that are absolutely not my type of dog, but on that particular day, they were the best dog in the ring. If it came down to two equal dogs, one my type and one not my type, the better

mover will win. If it's not my type of dog, it will break my heart! I'm a softy for a pretty face! And I won't answer which one I would put in my kennel.

Do you have any pet peeves that happen in the ring?



Ch. Suzuki's Last Waltz, "Pansy," bred by Pat Kirms. Owners: Pat Kirms and Lynda Zaraza.

Facing page: Ch. Autumn's Upton Girl, "Glitz," bred by Vicky Nardi.



Not in the ring, but I have seen things out of the ring where they make it obvious that they lost that day, and were very unhappy about it. As long as they don't say something verbal to me, or throw their ribbon down, there is nothing you can do. You have to learn to accept

that your dog is going to lose on some days. It's not for everybody, to go out there and judge. I wasn't expecting some of the things I've seen.

This is something I would like to say to everybody: "As much as you think you see how a dog is moving in a ring, or



Nerek's Hotter Than a Chili Pepper, bred by Sue Dye.



Ch. Autumn's Rainbow Connection CD, "Rainbow."

how a dog looks in a ring, until you're the judge seeing it from your angle, you have no right to judge." I learned that, and I was guilty of the same thing. I would say, "How can she put that dog up?" Then I got in there and people said the same thing about me.

Once I was judging a particular dog. She was a special. You could have driven a Mack truck through her rear end, it was so wide. I moved her three times because I really liked her, but I didn't put her up. I figured it was probably just that particular day. The owner was really upset with me. We had a mutual friend who said to me, "I stood right in back of you and watched the bitch move, and I told the owner she had no reason to be mad, because the dog's movement was lousy." Unfortunately, people don't see that. Now being on the other side of the fence, I can see that there is a difference when you are judging them than when you are on the outside judging them. That's why it's called ringside judging. That was quite an experience.

I find it exciting to see a new dog coming up, a young puppy. I've already had this experience. I put one young puppy up over all the adults, and he finished at a specialty a month later with a

five-point major. He's been a Group placer ever since. People were shocked that I could do that when it happened. But I said, "Mark my words." And sure enough, you know. When there is a good puppy, you can see it.

Is that the most exciting aspect of judging?

Not necessarily just a puppy, but finding a new dog is the most exciting thing. I have to chuckle later, when I knew in my heart the dog would do something. The puppy I saw was with people who were brand-new in dogs. Someone was smart enough to tell them to get a professional handler. She did a nice job with him. He was on the wild side, but went on very well.

Do you feel that training is pretty important to winning conformation?

It is 50 percent of it. If I had the dog that I took in with problems, from the time she was eight weeks old, she would have been a specials bitch. That particular bitch could have beaten the boys. Her movement is outstanding. She has a gorgeous face and a tremendous coat. She was bred by Sue Dye in Virginia. Her brother Bubba was also Sue's and we finished him. By the time she came to me she was almost three years old and too much had happened. It took



Autumn's Can Do Candi.

me a long time to get her settled down. She has a perimeter at the dog shows, and if any dog crosses that perimeter, she grabs the dog so fast no one ever sees her do it. The perimeter is about two feet! She had been terribly beaten up by a couple of the dogs that she lived with at her other home. This caused her to hate dog shows.

The world's worst thing she ever did was at ringside. There was this cute little Whippet puppy who crossed the line to sniff her. That was it. She snapped and the puppy screamed. She didn't bite the puppy, but it was a warning. I was always afraid she would hurt a dog. She was a devil about that. It was her way of saying that she didn't want to be there.

How has the quality changed in Sammies over the years, or has it changed?

I'm seeing some very narrow fronts, which I'm not really pleased with. They are being put up anyway because they can still single track. It's really difficult when there is a ring full of

them. Rears are okay from what I've seen.

One of the things I was thinking about when I knew you were coming was that years back when I was showing and specialing a lot, we always had outstanding male specials. We called them the big guns. From Bart Star, Rising Star, Running Bear, and Raz. They were out there weekend after weekend. Some were professionally handled, but others were owner/handled. You don't see that anymore. You don't see what I consider outstanding specials. At least in this area, I find that they are more the middle-of-the-road dogs. I don't think we've seen a really outstanding dog in years.

Why is that?

I don't think they are bred every day of the week, that's one thing. I don't know, to be honest with you.

Do you think it's because there is less breeding going on in general, and fewer big kennels?

I think those are factors. I just read an article about the breeding going way down.

There aren't as many puppies being registered. That is a shame, because it's pretty tough on people trying to buy a pet. There isn't a drop in the amount of Samoyeds being shown, but there is a drop in the number of people doing the breeding.

Perhaps they are similar to me, where they prefer to show the dog rather than get into breeding? In most instances now, both husband and wife work. It's tough to raise a litter of puppies. I will have to say, thank God for my husband! Thank God for Les. He was my chief bottle-washer and babysitter when I was off to the dog shows. I could be gone three weekends out of the month and not even think twice about it. He was always good about taking care of all the dogs, whoever I left at home. And he's still here today, so I guess it wasn't all that bad!

Out of the seven or eight litters I had, there were three litters that were single-puppy litters because I lost all the other puppies. It's very discouraging and I can tell you that it's not fun to see puppies born dead or watch them die. That's why I

was just as happy to go buy a dog to train and show. Over time, I started seeing the failures of keeping more than one puppy out of a litter. When I got a litter I was tempted to keep the whole litter! When I kept two puppies, I could never put as much time into each dog. From the training end of it, I don't recommend more than one puppy. If you can train 24/7 and are home all the time, it is great; but, when you are older you don't put as much time into anything as when you were younger.

Were there any other memorable judging experiences?

There were small, funny instances. When you are judging puppies and you have one of them throw himself down and won't get back up. It's not a good thing to excuse a puppy, because they've learned a trick in the ring. Usually, I have the owner go to the back of the line so I at least can get my hands on it, because it needs that training. I always tell people with a puppy that needs some training to get that puppy to training class.

If I see a brand-new handler



Ch. Nerek's Hubba Bubba, "Bubba," bred by Sue Dye and owned by Ed Cable and Lynda Zaraza.

holding the dog in their left hand with their bait in their right hand out in front of the dog, causing the dog to sideward, I tell them to put their right hand behind their back. The dogs then go straight, of course. They don't realize that when they are new handlers. I believe we, as judges, should help out. I've had judges help me in the past, and if someone doesn't like the help, they don't have to listen! I haven't had any really strange experiences. I've been judging only four years. I wanted to finish specializing dogs before I started judging. I don't think the two mix very well.

Are there any judges, past or present, whom you really respect?

Yes. I most certainly respect the judge I won under at the National Specialty, Melbourne Downing. He is still around. For him to have put me up over some of the big-time dogs that were in that ring that day, gives me a high respect for him. I did show under him four months later at a show on the Cape. I drove in miserable weather to show under Downing because he put up my dog, Alfie. Being kennel-blind, because it was Alfie, he was just two and had blown his whole coat. He moved beautifully, that hadn't changed. He showed pretty good, but he looked awful. Why I took him, I don't know. I got beat by a very good dog, and I deserved it. That was an honest judge. The dog has to be really ready for each show.

I've always highly respected Pat Laurens. She is a good friend of mine. I only showed under her one time in all the years she was judging. I took my Chili under her, the one who hates to show. I knew Pat was a movement judge and I knew with Chili that if she could just hold her ears up one day! But I put her in for the day before. It was the mistake of the century. She showed that day, and when I took her back the second day at the specialty under Pat Laurens, she slapped her ears back. She hadn't been out for a long time so I wanted to be sure she was with me, which is why I showed her on the Friday before the specialty. We ended up Reserve. That was the last time I showed her. I respect Pat for that. The bitch she put up over me went back on my breeding anyway! She

didn't know that, though.

Of course Edna Ackerman was my mentor. I absolutely respect her. She's a very nice lady, and always a lady.

What do you think about the standard?

I think it's good. It covers everything very well. I don't think it needs any changes. The Sammie standard is one of the best ones out there. The Keeshond standard doesn't really say much. It leaves a big gap in things to decide what you think is right after learning the breed. The Samoyed standard is one of the best I've ever seen.

How important is the coat in judging?

It has to be a double coat. It has to be a straight coat. Coloring is another thing. I have no problem with color, but there are a lot of judges who do not like color. I've shown biscuit animals, and they are almost impossible to special. They just can't get beyond that for some reason. I think you have to be very knowledgeable from the judging end of it. There is a working coat and there is a glamour coat in the breed. My preference is a glamour coat. A working coat is a double coat, but it's much shorter. The guard hair is much shorter. The glamour coat can be tremendous; it can be seven or eight inches long, for the outer coat. I feel as long as the coat texture is proper, either one is fine. I have put up working-coated dogs. For myself, I did breed for the glamour coat. Some of them were very plushy. On the girls, you would not have the length, but it would be so extremely heavy-coated that they looked like teddy bears.

The glamour coat comes more with the English lines. You do have some in the American lines. I don't think there is a working coat in an English dog. I've never seen one. In England, they mainly breed for type, which is coat and head. They aren't as focused on movement as we are over here. That's why that story started that English dogs can't move. The English dogs that were imported were good-moving dogs.

If you want an English dog and you want to import the dog, you will need to go over there and take a look at what you're buying. I would do that if I lived over there and was going

to buy something from here. I wouldn't buy sight unseen. I have bought sight unseen from England, and it didn't work. I learned that lesson.

Do you think people are putting enough work into the grooming of the dogs?

They are pretty well-groomed. I've seen a few who weren't, but you will always have a few who could be better groomed. I've never seen a dirty dog shown.

Did you use any special grooming products for your dogs?

I used a particular brand of shampoo, but for a while we used Orvis paste. This started in Denver. Orvis paste is actually a shampoo for carpeting! We started using it and it does a good job! I couldn't get it out here, so I went to a regular dog shampoo called Snowy Coat. On occasion I would try a new brand, but if I didn't see a change or improvement, I went back to my old shampoo. When I groomed a dog, I was constantly spraying with water because you should never brush a dry coat. No matter how good the quality of the coat, the pins on a pin brush can snap the coat. It helps also to put moisture on the coat because it fills it out. It helps make the coat look better.

In Keeshonden, their coat is more brittle, so you have to spray them. I used white shampoo on a black dog and it worked beautifully. He was sparkling! I added Crown Royal to the water and it did such a tremendous job I started using it on my Sammies.

The amount and quality of the coat is genetic. Brushing and grooming on a regular basis does help, though.

How important is nutrition?

Nutrition is very important. With puppies, I always gave them vitamin supplements. Actually, I gave vitamin supplements to all my dogs all of their lives until four years ago. I finally stopped giving them vitamins because I didn't think they really needed it. I gave it to them because it made me feel good. Basically I used a good food. If I had trouble with the dog food because the company changed their formulas, I would get my dogs off of it. I fed them Nutro Max for a couple of years until I heard there was a preservative in the food that was car-

cinogenic. They banned it in England.

Keeshond people got me hooked on a food from Michigan called QC Plus. I have to have it shipped in because nobody sells it here. I have the most tremendous coats on my dogs with this food. I stopped giving supplements, I don't feed canned food anymore, and I just feed them this straight dry food. The results are fantastic. I haven't had a dog do badly on QC Plus. It's a high-protein food. I feed them the puppy food until they are about six months old, and then I put them on the adult version of the food. I also give supplements to puppies, like cottage cheese and eggs.

What do you do to keep them conditioned besides running?

I've always had fenced yards that are big enough for the dogs to run. I used to take one dog out on the road a lot to run him. They really kept quite sound from their own running. If you put more than one out there, they will run. I did sled for a while. That was strictly for pleasure. I ran with a team of Collies, and a team of Siberians. I had my own sled. I could beat the Collies but not the Siberians! We ran along an old railroad bed that ran through a park. It was in Connecticut, and it was a beautiful place. We used to do that on weekends when I wasn't at dog shows. I would turn them loose out there because they were obedience trained. They knew when they heard my voice, they better come back. They were getting about ten miles of running out there.

What made you decide to get a sled team?

It started when I met two girls who had Collies, and they asked me to come out with them. One of the dogs I had purchased, which was my foundation dog Modesty, had been a lead dog. Alfie was so obliging about everything. I guess the third dog I had then must have been Rainbow. We just hooked them up and I got on and took off! It was a three-dog team. I couldn't have handled more than three. They really enjoyed it. At first it was extremely fast and made me a bit nervous. Then they would slow down to a trot and it was manageable. We did that for a few winters. I can't recall what happened, if

maybe we just didn't have snow for a few winters, but we just drifted away. The dogs got a little older too, that could have been it. I don't really recall what the timing was on that. I had a friend who had Siberians, and she bought my sled and my gig, so it went to good use.

I also tried obedience. All my dogs were obedience trained. Alfie had been trained beyond sit and stay, but I never showed him in obedience. I put a CD on Rainbow, Alfie's daughter. It wasn't something I put a lot of time or interest in. If I really wanted to get serious about obedience it would not be with a Samoyed. I just did it for fun.

At one point I got involved with Fairfield Hospital in Connecticut, which was a mental hospital. They had two or three geriatric wards interested in dog therapy. I believe in giving back, and decided that could be something I could do with the dogs. I knew they were trained well enough. I started going on a weekly basis every Friday for four years. Unfortunately, they changed the group of people who were running it, and the place went downhill. I didn't feel comfortable anymore, so I stopped doing it.

What were some of the benefits of taking your dogs to the mental hospital?

The best story was when one of the doctors stopped me to say, "You can get more from those people than we can." They would have group therapy and just sit there and say nothing. Just having the dogs there that they could touch made it a wonderful situation. The dogs were very gentle, and the dogs brought out the best in the people. Some of the people who had never talked before started talking. The doctors couldn't get them to talk, so that made me feel good. I think they could feel a little human by having the dog there with them. Some of them talked to me, and others ignored me like I wasn't even there. It was a heart-warming experience, and a wonderful project for any kennel club to get involved with. It brightens up their day.

I visited a nursing home with my dogs, but didn't get as much reaction from them as I did at the mental hospital. I don't know if they happened to

be more doggy-type people or if a person with a mental illness can really relate to animals. It was very strange.

Was there a wide variety of illness?

Sure. There were people who had lobotomies. It was an amazing experience, a way to give back.

With your obedience training, you only got one CD?

Yes. That was it. I didn't really have the time. I was involved with other things. You can't spread yourself out too thin, or you are a master of

nothing, and I was really involved with conformation.

What kennels out there do you admire today, or kennels from the past?

From the past, I liked the Silver Acres kennel. She had an overall nicely-balanced dog, a pretty dog, and a nice-moving dog. They were consistent. Northwind was very similar in line to Silver Acres. Jack produced some very nice dogs. I'm probably missing some that I will regret not mentioning.

Today, I would have to say I've seen some nice-looking dogs

coming out of the kennels in the Midwest. Ice Way produced a lot of good dogs. I also have to mention Polar Mist. Of course Lynette Hanson still breeds, and she has beautiful dogs.

There are a lot of old kennels who had some very good dogs. Quicksilver bred Razzmatazz in Houston. The sire of Razzmatazz came from a kennel in Phoenix that was quite well-known. They didn't do a lot of showing and breeding, but they produced one heck of a dog. He was hard to fault. Karen McFarland has produced



Ch. Windrifts Kokomo of Kemont. Bred by Kemont and Windrift Kennels.



Ch. Yogart x Neesha litter, bred by Vicky Nardi. The third puppy in the wagon is Ch. Glitz.

many champions. She bred Cricket, her all-time favorite bitch, to Alfie. She did some nice winning with the girls she got out of that litter.

I want to mention the people who put me on the map, Marguerite and Harold Kritsch. They had Kristik kennels, and mainly had English lines. They produced Satin Sultan and a couple of others that were just outstanding dogs in Canada. They produced Alfie, who was the dog to beat in the U.S. for them.

Was Alfie ranked?

Oh, yes. For a couple of years he was ranked. He ended up number three or four in the end. He was a dog that didn't like to show. He wasn't into it wholeheartedly. After the second year I decided he didn't have to do this, and I brought him home. If he had been a real showman, I would have left him out there like I did with Koko-

mo. Kokomo wouldn't stop showing!

Is there any thing else you want to talk about that I haven't mentioned?

I was involved with rescue. In Connecticut I was known as the person to call if you had a Sam that needed rescuing. One year I placed fourteen dogs. I wouldn't take them in because I couldn't. I only lived on three acres then, and I couldn't cause my dogs problems by bringing in too many dogs. I would help them place the dogs. I was exhausted after that one year of placing fourteen dogs. I got so involved with it.

I took one dog that I shouldn't have gone to look at. He was a gorgeous dog with no papers, or they couldn't find the papers. I wanted to get the dog neutered and into a pet home. A woman called me who was interested in him, with a nice family. She tried him out and

things were going well. I took this woman to pick the dog up and they had her name as the woman who would probably take the dog. She gave them her phone number, which was the biggest mistake of her life. When I was out of town showing dogs, they called her and said, "Oh, we can't live without him, so we are going to take the dog back." She called me immediately. I would have gone and got the dog if I had been home. They went to her house and took the dog. I felt so bad, because her daughter was crying and she was so upset. I felt so bad about the whole thing that I called the people and bawled them out. I told them if they were serious about keeping the dog they could not tie it out 24/7. They needed to learn how to groom so the dog didn't get into a deplorable condition again. They set up appointments to come out to learn how

to groom the dog, but never showed up. There wasn't anything I could do but go steal the dog. It would have been better for the dog, but I would have been in jail. That was a very bad memory.

I had a couple of stud-fee puppies at the time and offered her one for free. I said, "If you come to training classes and let me show the dog, I will never take this dog away from you." I told her I would like to at least finish the dog. A free puppy is not a bad deal. To make a long story short, the woman had cancer and was dying. After she had the puppy for a while, she finally told me. I told her to take the dog home, neuter him, and I wouldn't show him. I checked on her to see how she was doing. One day her husband answered the phone and told me she had passed away. He thought I wanted the dog back. I said, "Absolutely not. Do you think I would take that dog away from you and your daughter?" He was elated that I wasn't going to take the dog. The good part was that probably about six years later he remarried. I heard from my vet that he and his new wife, the kid, and the dog were all just fine.

Did you have any problems in placing Sammies?

No. I have always had a waiting list. A lot of them waited forever. Some of them are still waiting! I didn't advertise; it was always from word of mouth. My people came on a regular basis to see the litters. I got to know the people better and would try to place the puppy according to their lifestyle. I never had a puppy returned.

Those are my mother's cats you are seeing. She passed away a few years ago and my brother and sister are not animal people, so here they are! They were eleven and twelve years old when I got them. I thought they would only live another year, and we are going on three years now.

I should tell you one more story about my most memorable experience. Kokomo, my Keeshond, needed a major to finish. There was going to be a major up in New York, and in Houston. I was double-entered, but it was shaky for the major in New York. I packed him up

and Pansy, (my Sam bitch special), and we went down to Houston. That was quite a haul. I hadn't driven that far alone. I had friends down there. I had worked for Jacqueline's Originals, owned by Jacqueline Adams. She did booths for years, and I painted for her. I was invited for dinner at her mother's house. I drove through a questionable neighborhood, stopped at the 7-11 to get some soda, and I left my side door open. It was August and it was hot. When I was coming

out the door I saw the gas pumps, maybe 50 feet away. There was a pickup truck by the gas pumps with a man laying on the ground beside the truck. There were two other guys there picking up the body. The guy was dead. They were shoving this man back into the truck, and I was thinking, "Oh no, they've just killed this guy." I didn't know what to do. I didn't even turn around to see if the clerk in the store saw what was going on. I just stood there, and then the body fell out of the

truck! I decided to get out of there! I went out the door, made no eye contact, jumped in my van and took off. In the paper the next day, I read it had been a drug bust gone bad, and they had killed him right there. It had just happened when I was there! I told my friends that night that I thought I had just witnessed a murder. They wondered if I should call the police. But I couldn't have recognized the guys anyway, it had been too dark. Besides, I was there to show dogs! Yes, I finished

Kokomo.

My overall experience with dogs has been outstanding. There are two other things I would like to say. One, that dog people in general are the nicest group of people. A few years ago my husband had a massive heart attack. I had driven him to the hospital. The dogs were all outside in their runs, and they needed to be fed. I called some very good friends, Jacqueline Adams and Pat Laurens, who called Joy Brewster. Bless Joy; she had shown my dogs. They sent someone to my house, and took the dogs to the kennel for boarding. Jackie drove over to the hospital and let me know where the dogs were. When I got home, she had left Alfie for me and I didn't need to pick up the rest until I was ready, but I needed them all home. I saw so much good like that through the years that I just want to say thank you to everyone. A special thanks goes to Kitty Burke, a friend and handler of my dogs.

The other thing I wanted to say about Samoyed people is that for many years there was a lot of hiding of major problems in the Samoyed breed. There were eye problems, dwarfism, and other problems that everybody hid in the closet. A good friend of mine got into an American line that had dwarfism problems. Nobody told her about it. Even after she had produced the problem, they wouldn't admit to anything. She had to do so much research on it herself because she didn't know where it was coming from. Fortunately, we never had the problem in my English dogs. I called the University of Pennsylvania and had a long talk with them. There was no testing for this at the time. Breeders have opened up and I'm reading articles about it now. People were afraid their kennel would be ostracized, but we didn't know enough about the problem to know if the entire kennel would be involved, or not. I can see now that people are being more caring and open about the problem. I'm hoping my mentioning it will make people remember to keep trying to solve problems and do your very best.

Thank you very much.
You're welcome. •



Am/Can Ch. Kristik's Modesty Blaze, "Modesty," my foundation bitch. Breeders: Marguerite and Harold Kritsch.