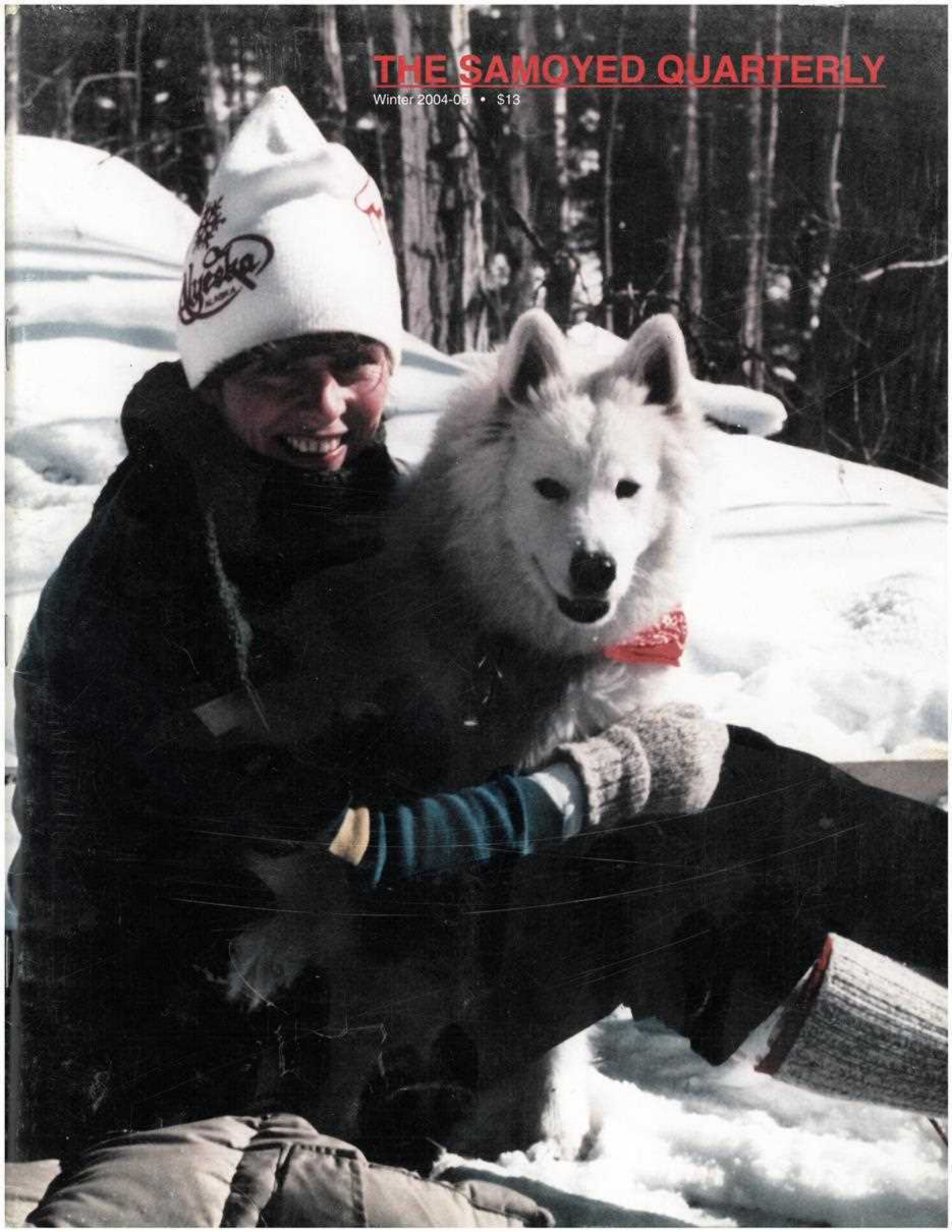


THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Judy Bennett
HOMELAND
Webster, Texas

Part II

This interview was conducted at the home of Judy Bennett in August 2002 by Sandra Miller.

How many dogs do you keep now?

Actually, I am down to two. I was down to one, and it almost drove me crazy. I need more than one around. I feel they are company for each other, too. I had a bitch that I rescued back in 1990; her name was Janey. When we rescued her, she was totally feral. She was the only Sammy I have ever known that was completely, totally feral. It took her a year and a half to seek affection. It took a lot of work. Trendy quite literally trained her to come in out of the backyard. She would not come in so I had to go out and corner her with a leash to get her in the house! Janey was an incredible dog, one of the bravest dogs I have ever known. To let down those defenses took such courage, and she did ultimately let them down, but it took years. After she was here seven years, if she could have gotten out the door, she would have taken off and we wouldn't have seen her again. She did get out twice and Debbie Baird and I had to capture her two times. We didn't find her, we had to capture her. She was still feral, and she still wanted to be a wild dog. When we had to have her put down, she was in bad shape. She was very old, and I had her for a number of years. We think she was around fourteen when we let go of her. We thought she was five or six when we got her, and then she was around fourteen when we let her go.

We were down to one Sammy, and I couldn't stand it. While on vacation two years ago, I went to the northeast. For a time, we stayed at Marge Goodenough's farm. There was a match that weekend, and they



Ch. Timberline's Sugarbear.

had somehow lost their match judge, so I got hooked into judging their match. Judges aren't supposed to judge a breed in a match that they are already approved to judge, but they didn't have a judge, so I thought what the heck, okay. I judged the match, and I told them in lieu of my judging fee, I was going to take the top-winning puppy bitch there. Of course, everyone laughed. Sue Dye happened to have a litter of puppies with her, and I saw Sara. I had to have her; she goes back to Tikal and she moves so great.



Daisy.

She is so pretty – I could have taken any one of five bitches, I believe she had five bitches there. I could have taken them all! I literally could have taken them all. They are a treasure to live with.

Sue Dye is the best person at socializing a litter, I mean, she will go out and get one from the kennel and bring it in upside down in her arms like a baby, and vacuum, with the other hand. This is how she gets them so used to being handled. If Sara doesn't get her lap time every day, she is not a happy camper, and she lets you know about it. You WILL give her lap time; I'm sorry, that is the way it is! She craves that more than she craves food. I brought her back, so I have two now.

I have a black sheep in the family, I don't know what you would call Inky. When we moved my disabled stepmother in with us earlier this year, she brought her little dog, Inky. He is about half the size of the girls, but he thinks he is a real hot property because he has two

gals. (laughter) He is the harem master, but he is neutered. He still thinks he is the man in charge!

What was the most number of dogs you ever kept?

Probably seven. Whenever I would have a litter of puppies, I would keep them for as long as it took to find the right homes for them. In fact, I placed Colonel with family friends who experienced some problems and I ended up taking him back. It is too hard on a male to be kept and kenneled in the house with the bitches. It is too hard for them, and it is too hard for Judy! (laughter) They taught him to run away. He would charge the door or sneak out the door, and be down the street. They would stand there and shout, "Colonel! You come back here right now!" He would come back, and when he got back to them, they would punish him. So, it got translated to mean, "Run like hell" to the dog. I placed him with a lady in Pennsylvania who was in training for the Olympics as a run-

ner. She was also an Olympic bicyclist, and Colonel got all the running he wanted. They had no children, so he was the star. They had another Sammy that was a spayed bitch. So he got to be the star, and he lived happily ever after. He was a great dog who ended up being speialed. I can't keep males, but I do keep bitches and I keep my puppies as long as it takes to get them in the right homes.

Can you go into detail about what you are looking for in conformation, or your interpretation of the perfect Samoyed?

The perfect dog fits the standard. Fortunately, our standard is so beautiful in its concept and its content. The people who wrote that document wrote something incredible for the breed. Their gift will continue to live for what I hope is hundreds of years. I hope the breed continues to live up to it to the degree that it has up to now.

When I judge a dog, I like to see, first and foremost, balance. When I say balance, I mean a dog is balanced throughout the whole dog, not just in one area. But if you have a dog who has a lot of drive and no reach, you have a dog who is going to wear out. He is going to be putting more stress on one part of his body than another, or vice versa. I have also seen more reach than drive. You might see a dog that has exaggerated movement problems, such as a pastern problem or a hock problem. I am seeing a lot of close rears. That concerns me. You can't sacrifice coming and going for exceptional sidegait, and I don't think you can sacrifice sidegait for the coming and going. I want it all, ideally.

The structure and movement is important. Rachel Page Elliott was very good at what she wrote and what she taught. One of the things that she stressed a great deal was that a dog is one great big lever; you have to have a neck, and that neck is a lever for the dog. That is how they move; that is how they are able to establish motion. If a dog doesn't have a decent neck, they are not going to be able to move as efficiently as they should. I will say that, for the most part, a 45-degree shoulder is a myth. There, I have said it! I have maybe found three 45-degree shoulders in 30 years. One of them was



Am/Mex/PR/SA/Int. Ch. Homeland's Sunni Side Up, "Daisy."



Left to right: Colonel, Tonya, and Daisy.

on a bitch that was a grandmother to Tazz. We called her Puddin'.

She was the ugliest Sammy bitch you ever saw in your life until she moved. I have watched judges literally do a double-take when Puddin' took off and went around the ring. She was poetry in motion; that was one of the best-moving Sammies I have ever seen. She was structurally sound, just a locomotive. She could flat move! But she had a really ugly head. (laughter)

Puddin' is a very important story; she was bred to Chris and Danny's Red Baron. I believe they had two bitches out of that litter; and Chris was so mad at Danny for breeding that litter, she couldn't stand it. She was having a baby, and she was hav-



Ch. Timberline's Katy Homeland.

ing problems at the time, trying not to miscarry and so on. She was really having a lot of problems trying to work and being pregnant and everything else, and Danny bred that litter. She could have killed him! They got these two bitches, and I think they named one Bell Star and the other Annie Oakley. They sold Star to another breeder who really preferred males. They really preferred the big, gorgeous heads on males, with lots of coat and very regal presence. They agreed to return Star to Chris and Danny. Star was a nice, lovely, incredible bitch; she didn't look like her mama. She had her structure, but she was prettier. She finished very easily. Later on, they bred her to Ch. Kolinka's Quilted Bear. This was where they got Tazz.

Anyway, what I have to have is balance. The standard shouts balance and structure, as well as soundness. A lot of what we call beauty in our breed is nothing more than soundness. The way their head is shaped, the way their ears are shaped, the way their eyes are shaped and slanted, the oblique

slant to their eyes - all of these things make them capable of surviving in a severe climate. These things are no less important to soundness and structure. It would be nice if we could get everything in one dog, but I have never found a perfect dog or bitch. I am accused of favoring bitches in the ring, which is NOT true! I favor good Sammies. (laughter) I do not penalize a bitch for being a bitch and not looking like a dog. It is not that I favor them, I just don't penalize them. I don't care what the Group judge does; I am not judging for the Group judge. I am not the Group judge's eyes and ears. I am Judy Bennett, I am in this ring today and I am in charge. I am looking for a good Sammy. If it happens to wear a couple of huevos, then super! If it doesn't, that is super, too. But a bitch doesn't look like a dog, and a dog doesn't look like a bitch. They are both wonderful, but I am there to find the best Sammy. I am going to find it regardless of its plumbing equipment. That is it.

What are some of the most serious problems with the breed today?

The most serious problem with the breed today is denial. I am telling you here and now, there is an epidemic of tick disease in this country. If people ignore it, not only are their dogs going to be sick, but they are also going to be sick. I am sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but it is a fact. If they do something about it, they can extend their dogs' lives for many years. They can make them healthier and they can have much more success in the breed, but they HAVE to wake up and smell the coffee. A lot of the problems we are seeing in the breed arise from tick-borne disease. Even if your dog has never been bitten by a tick, that doesn't mean they don't have tick disease. A goodly percentage of tick diseases today are contracted in utero. The mother has it, their mothers have it, and so on. It is in the bloodstream and it is passed from mother to puppy down the line.

Dr. Jane Biggerstaff who is the vet I use, has done a lot of research. She has worked with Dr. Kukoma at the University of Illinois, and they have done a lot of research on tick-borne disease. Jane flew to Virginia and delivered a litter, and collected everything from amniotic fluid to placentas. They are putting together a database of information that is going to help everybody. Those two individuals

are probably the top experts on tick-borne disease in the country. I am so thankful that I found her. This is the biggest threat in the breed today. Many of the problems that people think are threats to the breed are coming from tick-borne disease including orthopedic problems to eye problems and so on.

Historically, the breed is in pretty good shape. When I first came in the breed 30 years ago, they were having a problem with rears. They fixed the problem with rears, and then the fronts went into decline. It is like the pendulum swings from one side to the other. People were saying, "Oh, we have to fix our fronts," so they started concentrating on fixing the fronts, and they let the rears go again. Now I am actually seeing Sammies that have strong fronts and rears, which is very rewarding. It is candy for the eyes. They have improved sidegait, and they have also cleaned up their coming and going, and the angulation. It is a good thing. Historically speaking, the breed is in better shape than it has been for 30 or 40 years. It is still not there, but it is in a lot better shape than I first saw it.

As a judge, what are some of your pet peeves?

My pet peeves are people picking on my friends, thinking that if they don't like something I do, they will let my friends



Divine Ya Ya Goddess of less than gourmet cuisine, Nanouk.



Ch. Polar Mist's Ain't She Somethin' shown finishing with a three-point major at Shawnee Kennel club April 20, 1978. Judge Lynette Saltzman. Handler Betty Arnold. Misty is five weeks in whelp.

know about it and put my friends in a bad position. They obviously are a little defensive for me, because we are friends. They see my side of things sometimes. So when people pick on my friends, it doesn't really get back to me, necessarily, but I see eyes rolling and I know. I know they have been cornered again! Or for people to assume that just because your dogs are from one line or what have you, that is the only line you are going to like. Everyone thinks I am going to put up Lynette Blue, because she is a dear friend of mine. She complains, as all of my friends complain, that I practice reverse discrimination. They say I don't put them up! That is not true; I don't avoid putting them up. I just go in and judge the dogs. I can't worry about who is watching, who owns what or whatever. I just judge the dogs.

There was a time when I could walk up to a ring, look in the ring and tell you what line every dog in that ring came out of, just about. I stopped buying catalogs because I don't want to know the features of a given dog, or a given line. Fortunately there has been such a blend of lines now that they have begun to be a bit more homoge-

nous than they used to be. I used to could spot a Breaker tail a mile away, because it had a little extra kick on the end. It was a certain tailset that they had in common. Now I don't see that anymore. It has kind of melted into the breed. That is a good thing, because I don't want to know who anybody is. I don't care who anybody is! I get fussed at by reps for putting my face down in the dogs' faces, but in the Sammy, I have no fear. I am going to keep right on doing it, because it is what I like doing. I talk to the dogs.

In fact, one day I was with Karl Geletich in California. I was there judging, going over his dog. I was down close to his dog's ear, and the dog reached up and gave me a kiss on the cheek. I said, "Aw, we get kiss-

es!" Karl said as loud as he could to the entire ringside assembly, "Madam, I will have you know I am a married man!" (laughter) I didn't think anyone could hear what I was saying to the dog! I naturally turned three shades of crimson. I thought, "You know, paybacks are hell." I have got Karl back since then. Of course, the ringside fell apart; they thought it was great. I got good old Karl back. I was at the National Specialty a couple of years later in Santa Rosa. I went down and bought a bunch of Hershey's kisses and some helium balloons, and a foam cup. I wrote on the side of the cup, "Kisses for a married man." I filled the cup with Hershey's kisses and tied balloons to the top of it, and took it out and handed it to him. He had to carry these balloons around all day until he could get back to his room! Of course everyone thought it was funny. Karl and I always pick on each other at Nationals. Karl and Jo are great folks.

I guess my pet peeve is what people expect. I am a really easy judge to win under; I am so easy to win under, it is not even funny. Just bring me a

good dog! That is all you have to do; just bring me a good dog.

Have you handled your own dogs for the most part?

No, not in the beginning. I do now, I have for the last several years. Betty Chamberlain is probably one of the best handlers I have ever known in my life; there is almost none better. She has a psychic ability, and I am serious when I say psychic. She has a psychic communication with these dogs. You could hand her a completely untrained dog, she will go to the end of the line and by the time she gets to the judge, you have a trained dog. It is amazing to watch; I actually have it on film. She is an amazing handler.

Also, Chris Middleton is a wonderful handler. She handled my Sugarbear as a puppy. John Ronald is a great handler, too. That man is a really wonderful handler. The handlers who I have used have all been Sammy people but for the most part, I have handled my own dogs. I like to show my own dogs, it is my time in the ring with them. It is my two minutes. I figure if you win, you are going to have fun, and if you don't win, and you don't



Ch. Polar Mist's Ain't She Somethin', Ch. Timberline's Lord Tikal, and Timberline's Sugarbear (fourteen points, both majors) at 1979 PUSC Specialty. Judge H.A. Mickelson.



Second from right, Am/Mex/PR/SA/Int. Ch. Homeland's Sumi Side Up, "Daisy."

have fun, you have wasted your time, wasted your money, and gone to a lot of work and trouble. Why not have fun, win, lose or draw? It just makes sense. That is our time together, that we are in physical contact with one another, grooming, caressing, and loving. They have 100 percent of my attention. That is a time that I don't give up easily.

Would you rather show under an all breed or a breeder-judge?

A breeder-judge every time! That is an easy one. I feel breeder-judges have the best interests of the breed at heart, and they know the standard better. That isn't to say there are not some great all breed judges, but I believe the better judges are breeder-judges. We have so many new ones coming into the fold now, it is a good thing. We lost Bob and Dolly, and they were an absolute institution. Their loss was so great, it will be felt for many generations. They gave us a great deal; they were generous, loving people who gave us the best throughout their lives that they had to give.

We have many new judges who are in the breed now, and that is a good thing for the breed. Our breed will be well-served by that. It is an expensive prospect to judge. It isn't free. Nine times out of ten, it is going to cost more money than what you are paid for an assignment, so it is like a contribution you are making. I can't breed enough dogs to have an impact on the breed, nor would I want to. Every home in America was not meant to be coated with white dog hair! (laughter)

However, doing some limited judging is my way of protecting the breed by hopefully putting up sound individuals to perpetuate the breed. This is making the breed a little better because hopefully, they are going to take my opinions, what I did and why I did it, and understand it better, and it will educate the breed a little more. Hopefully, I am giving something back to the breed. That is a good thing. That is the only way that I can justify the expense and the time that goes into this. We are all busy.

Is training important to winning in conformation?

Only minimally. I have a bad back, so I had to breed dogs that I don't have to stack. They



Judy Bennett and Karl Geletich at Austin, Texas.

have to know how to stack themselves. It is what the dog can do themselves that counts, not what you can do with them. A free-stacking dog is a beautiful thing. That is hard to train; they are built to do it or they are not. I know that when I took Daisy to Mexico, she caused quite a sensation down there. The crowd got to know her name. They were chanting it one day, and that was like being on stage and being a hit. It was like, "Oh, my goodness!" I have never felt a thrill like that before.

I figured out that I had inadvertently taught her hand signals. It was an accident. I would hold a piece of bait up and take my fingers and tell her to come forward a little bit, and then stop. They were hand signals, I wasn't speaking them. It is just that she got to know what they meant. It wasn't training; it was habit and routine. She was intuitive; she was tuned into me.

I judged a show recently where I had three of the most incredible bitches in the ring. I had some nice dogs, too, but that day there was more quality in the bitches. I had one that was shown by a wonderful handler but this handler did not have her heart. She wasn't showing and she looked a little lost. The second was really showing; she was gorgeous. Just stunning! The third one was not only stunning and showing to beat the band, but she had a little something extra. I could have gone with any of those three bitches and been just fine. The one that wasn't showing would have been a problem; she just looked toward me, and I read bewilderment in that puppy's face. She was a beautiful, gorgeous-moving bitch, very pretty, but she just wasn't "on." I would have had trouble going with her that day. But the other two bitches, I could have gone either way. They were all three stunning. The one that won

was better trained because her mama trains her religiously. I know that now. She has trained her to stand off and away from her and I guess that is very dramatic in the ring, to see someone show that way. The second one, though, was so animated, it was like I had to weigh them. I could have gone either way. Training did play an element in the bitch that I did choose. They were awesome; that was a dream judging assignment, to find that kind of quality. It was amazing. It makes you feel so good for the breed. We should all have problems like that, deciding which is the best.

Have you done any obedience since the first dog?

Dean put a CD on Nanook and I put one on Ginger, and then I got Bear and started showing in conformation. I kind of never looked back at that point. What I learned in obedience helped me in conformation, but it was really hard to find time and energy to both

train in obedience and in Breed. Knowing how to train in obedience really helps you in Breed. Before you start conformation, it helps to have knowledge of obedience, because all obedience does is teaches both the handler and dog a common language. Then they know how to do that. "English as a second language" for dogs course. That is what obedience is.

Have you done any other activities with your dogs, such as herding?

We took three dogs down the rapids of the South Fork of the Upper Snake River. We went whitewater rafting with our dogs once. We have not done any organized agility or anything like that. We take them to the beach, and we do things with our dogs, but we haven't done any agility or companion dog work or anything like that. Our dogs do companion dog work every day. They are good with old people and children, and they are good little ambassadors. We don't do it formally, but we do things.

What would you say the dogs teach you?

Dogs have a very pragmatic approach to life. To them, dying is not scary, but pain is scary. They teach about unconditional love, they teach about territories and invading other people's territories. Everyone has their own territory, and you have to use care and judgment in invading it. You have to be invited sometimes. They teach you that amenities are important. When I walk up to a dog, I don't immediately just grope them and put my hands all over them. I introduce myself first. That is called respect. I offer them the back of my hand, and I say hello. I smile at them, and they smile back.

They teach forgiveness. Unconditional love is probably one of the most wonderful contributions that they have. I fell in love with the beauty of the breed, but I was captured by their intelligence. They are very intelligent dogs. There is quite a great deal to learn from the dogs. They are some of the best people I know, like I said.

Have your breedings been natural or artificial?

My breedings have all been natural. So have the whelpings; there has never been an artificial insemination or a c-section. I have been very fortunate in that



Ch. Homeland's Original Recipe, "The Colonel" (Sugarbear x Lynthea's Star-Studded Knight).

regard. I only had problems with one litter. When Sugarbear had puppies, it was unbelievable. She could deliver seven puppies in an hour and 45 minutes. One time she had the first one in the car. I was closer to my vet's office than I was home, so I raced through rush hour traffic to my vet's office. She had one at the red light at Gessner and Westheimer. I finally got to the vet's office, and it was a couple of days before Christmas. It was the last day they were open before Christmas, December 22nd or something. They spread a blanket for me in the back corner of the

clinic, and I went back there and whelped some puppies! She made it look easy. She delivered seven puppies in an hour and 45 minutes, and that was the litter that had so many problems. But, it was an easy-whelping litter and they were good puppies. She knew how to do it.

Katy also had no problems. Daisy had a couple of problems; we had one litter from Daisy, and there was one bitch that was like twenty ounces, who was first. By the time I got her, it blocked the puppies behind her. I lost that bitch and a male behind her. The next time I

was going to have a litter, with Katy, my friend the Elkhound breeder vet was there. I made arrangements for her to be there as well as my friend Tammy Floyd just in case I had any problems. Tammy spent the night, and the vet stopped by on her way into the office that morning. Still no puppies, the temperature and that whole thing. Both of them got in their cars and down the road, I could still see them from the window, and Katy looked at me as if to say, "I thought they would never leave! Now can we have these damn puppies?" (laughter) I got to whelp them com-

pletely 100 percent by myself, but there were no problems. Of course, I was gun-shy after the problem with Daisy. Nothing I did worked, no respiration techniques, nothing. I was prepared for anything at that point.

With Sugarbear's first litter, I was told that her temperature would drop a degree. I had a friend who is an RN; she came over and we literally took that bitch's temperature every hour on the hour for 24 hours! When Sugar was ten or twelve years old, I could pull out a thermometer and she would run under the bed! We were so excited, you know. Most puppies, 63 days. With her, nothing. It nearly killed us, but we were going to be ready for those puppies when that temperature changed. One-tenth of a degree and we were going to get them. Of course, all the puppies were weighed and all that. We did everything so carefully, it was scientific.

Chris and Danny Middleton taught me, I have to say this. One of the best dog people I have ever known is Danny Middleton. He has a personality that is certainly a treasure. I have to say that whether you are best friends with someone or not, you can learn a lot from them. He taught me so much about movement and structure in dogs. He is a great dog man. I consider him one of the best sources I have ever known. I had to pull teeth to get the information sometimes, but I did get it! Chris was great, too. I consider Chris a great humanitarian; she married Danny! (laughter) You can print that; she will love it. I was also fortunate to

have Anne and Archie Peil nearby. They were very generous with their time and information.

Did you supplement feed young puppies, or anything out of the ordinary?

That one puppy with a cleft palate, we had to put her down. I do supplement. I studied at the school of Danny Middleton on that, too. They do everything from vitamin C to oil and you name it. I did too, adding extra protein, alternating things like boiled eggs and cottage cheese. They didn't get the same things all the time. I start feeding my puppies very early. I take a chunk of Alpo or some real meat, and I would mince it until it was almost a paste. I would make a pea-sized ball of it and give it to my puppies as young as two and one-half to three weeks. It really starts them off well. They start growing and they get good muscle tone from that. It makes a difference. I especially supplement the mama, because mama had a lot of work to do.

Did you wean the puppies then, or let the bitch do it?

The mama would wean them. Mothers have so much to teach their puppies. If you take them away too young, they are not going to get to teach them everything they need to teach. I have a figurine of an overstuffed chair, where the bitch is on top of the chair and the puppy is at the foot of the chair trying to get to her. She is looking down on them as if to say, "Uh-uh. You are not getting to me right now; I am up here, you are down there, and that is the way things are going to stay!" Mama knows best.



I have always been blessed with good mothers. Even Misty, Sugarbear's mom, loved playing with her puppies. She loved playing with anyone's puppies. She would romp with them and play with them even when she was ten or twelve years old. All my girls have been the same way; they love puppies and they love to play with them.

At what age do you evaluate the puppies for pet or show quality, and what do you look for?

I evaluate them between eight and ten weeks, and I don't look at them again for a year. I forgive them for a year, and then look at them again to see how they are progressing. In the meantime, I don't worry about anything. Legs grow at different rates, they are clumsy, nothing works in tandem with anything else, they fall UP stairs, and they look at you with that miserable little look like, "Why don't these things work at the same time?" It is like, "Wait a minute, I know I left that foot there yesterday, why isn't it still there today?" It is a precious time. They need time to be what they are, and that is growing kids. I don't judge them until later. I will assess them at a year of age, but I don't really expect them to be much until they are probably about two. My puppies can generally be judged around eight to ten weeks, and after that, let them alone. Don't pressure them to be anything but growing kids.

What I look for is movement. I look at where they are putting those feet. Even if they can't get a single-track, I look for convergence. I don't want

to see any funny motion. At that point in time, their proportions are pretty good. After that, they kind of fall apart, and they don't really get it back together until they are nine months to a year of age. Although I have to say, with my puppies, you will see they are early maturing. Sugarbear was out winning, and she never did go in the Puppy class. She was always in Open, and was winning from Open from six months of age. I thought she was mature, but I didn't know what maturity meant until she was three or four years of age. Then I could appreciate maturity. I let them be what they are going to be.

Do you sell pet pups with spay/neuter agreements?

I do not require it. I haven't had a litter for sixteen years, but back then, I told them they could not breed them. I do not necessarily require spay/neuter agreements. Most of the pets I have sold I sold to family friends, or they are placed very close to me. They weren't breeding people, they didn't want puppies or anything. I haven't really had that many puppies where I had to worry about it. The people from New Orleans who owned Blizzard wanted to show him, so they couldn't neuter him. If my buyers found out a dog wasn't show quality, then by all means, go for it. I placed Beau in a pet home but I would get him back and show him. Once he was finished, they asked if they could neuter him, and I said, "Absolutely! Go for the gusto!" I didn't intend to special him.

I don't require them to, but I am so careful with my puppies



that I feel very comfortable about where they are placed. I had an agreement that said they would not breed them, so it was never a problem. I feel it is a good idea these days. The AKC's issuance of registrations that are designated, whether the puppies can be registered or not, is a good thing. That way it gives the breeder some control. Fortunately, I dealt with good people. I had some control, but I had control because it was the right thing to do. The limited registration is a wonderful thing because it does give you control. It is revocable, so you can change it later on if you need to do so.

How important is diet in raising this breed, and what do you feed your dogs?

I feed my dogs a Nature's Recipe product that is potato and duck meat. It is a veterinary diet, and it is one that my friend and vet, Dr. Jane Biggerstaff recommended. The dogs love it. It doesn't have a lot of preservatives and stuff in it, and it is a prescription diet. You have to get it from the vet, but it is a good food. Diet is very important; they have to have adequate protein. Dog food has such disgusting stuff in it anyway, the three D's, they call it. Dead, diseased and dying are the three Ds. Would we eat this? No!

I am told this is a really good food. I was feeding Science Diet, the prescription diet. A friend of mine at the time was working for Riviana Foods, and she has actually toured their plant. She knows how they formulate their food, and she highly suggested it. So I was feeding that for years, but I am now on the IBD, which is a veterinary diet by Nature's Recipe.

Also, when we were talking about economy of motion, it ties into the food thing. In their native element, these dogs had to operate on so much less food. They had to be able to deliver more return per ounce of energy expended in order to survive; it was simple survival. They had to be very efficient in their digestive processes. As such, our dogs have a much lower metabolism than most other breeds. So they gain weight if you even look at them! Cream cheese is my secret weapon in giving medicine, because they don't try to chew



Ch. Timberline's Sugarbear.

it. If you give them regular cheese, they try to chew it and they get the pill out. With cream cheese, they just swallow it and they don't question what is in it. They don't care what is in it! You could give them arsenic in it, and they wouldn't care as long as they got their cream cheese.

They get heavy at the drop of a hat. They don't eat as much as other breeds eat, and if we try to feed them according to the package directions, we are going to have fat dogs. And fat dogs are a no-no, of course. It is hard on their joints and everything else, and you are going to

end up damaging your dog. It is really important how you feed them, and the quality of what you feed. There are a lot of good products out now; you have to avoid some of the really high protein foods, because they are really hard on the kidneys. They can also encourage too rapid a growth and cause joint problems. Great Danes for example, feed them much higher carbohydrates, and lower protein, because they don't want them to grow at too rapid a rate because it hurts them orthopedically.

Do you feed any supplements?

I do feed Consequin. It is a

glucosamine-chondroitin product for dogs and horses. I do give glucosamine for hip joint health.

Do you have any favorite grooming products?

No, I don't have any specific products that everybody else doesn't already know about. I do have one little grooming trick that I share with novices, a couple of them, actually. It can help them along somewhat. When you try to wet a Sammy down, it is hard to get them wet to the skin. There is a really easy trick to get them wet to the skin; that is to take your shampoo or whatever type of soap

you are using, pour it in your hand and rub your hands together, and then wipe it all over the dry dog. Then wet them, and it instantly goes to the skin. It breaks the surface tension in the coat.

The other thing is about ears. When you are trying to make the ears fluffy, some people will pack them with cornstarch or chalk and everything else, which is not a good thing. You don't want that stuff down in the ear. In fact, I still have a piece of chalk that has a depression in it from the hundreds of times I have used it to clean the oil out of the ears. The trick is to take the chalk cloth up to the ear and pull the hair over the chalk cloth, and rub it. Those are my little novice grooming tips.

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

I have known breeders who were so hard-headed about taking Pooky and breeding and improving Pooky through generation after generation, hopefully breeding to better dogs, or breeding to their own line only and trying to refine it to a point where they have a good line. I say, turn around and look at all of the puppies you will put out into the world who will end up homeless, in shelters, in research laboratories, and you will not have control over them anymore. Look around at other people who have already done the work that you are looking at doing, and play leap-frog. Play genetic leap-frog! Buy the very best that you can get, and buy from people who are reputable. Buy from people who will be there when you start having problems, because you WILL have problems. At some point in your breeding career, you will have problems. Buy from someone who will be there after the fact, and who is interested in what happens to their puppies after the puppy is sold. Other than that, I don't know.

Also, buying a dog to breed especially right out of the chute as a new breeder is a bad idea. I believe you ought to go through a pet or two and really get to know the breed first. Not necessarily a pet quality, but buy a dog to show and just to live with, and don't plan on breeding it immediately the minute they turn two years old. Take your time and get to really



Homeland's El Niño Nevado, "Amigo," a Daisy son.

know and understand the breed. When you start in this, you are responsible for that puppy from the day you whelp that puppy until the day it dies. If the home doesn't work out, understand that you are honor-bound to take that puppy back if necessary. Make sure it has a reasonable home where they can live their lives. If you can't do that, if you can't take back every puppy you have out walking the streets with their owners or whatever, if all those homes went bad and you couldn't take all those puppies back, then you have bred too many puppies. That is my philosophy on it; other people may feel differently, and I respect that.

I have to say this about my friend Lynette Blue, as many puppies as she has had over the years, I have never known Lynette not to take a puppy back that was in a bad situation and find it another home, or even keep it. I have to hand it to her. She has been so reputable in all the dealings that I have been associated with and I really respect her for that. It is important, and it is not something you undertake lightly. It is okay to buy a dog just to show it and have fun with, but it is okay not to breed a dog. Every home in America was not intended to have white hair all over, as I said.

Is it a good idea to join a local breed club, national club, or all bred club?

Yes, absolutely. The years of experience and knowledge that are there for you to take advantage of, it is unbelievable. The people you come to know

will have a tremendous impact on your formative years in the breed. I got to know the Middletons, the Peils, Judyrae Clark, Donna Laufman, and many others through the local breed club. My prospective was greatly enlarged when I joined an all breed club. It's amazing how much you learn about your own breed when you study another.

I got to know so many people in the breed who helped me. Wanda Krauss was the one who finally convinced me that I could show a dog. I am a big woman; I have always been a big woman, so I am not exactly fleet of foot and all that good stuff. I was never really convinced that I could show a dog until I saw Wanda show a dog. Well, she was a big woman, too, and she went out there and won. She had a good dog and she won. I was visiting with her about that one evening and she handed me her dog. She told me to take her dog down and back, and I did. She said, "Now, stop looking down at the dog and look up at where you are going." I did that, and it was great! She convinced me I could show a dog, and from then on, I could. It was a mental thing that I had in my head that I couldn't show a dog. I have finished many dogs since.

The wealth of experience and knowledge - if I had to be restricted to just the people I got puppies from the first couple of times, I would be in bad shape. I treasure some of the friendships I have made in the Samoyed Club of America. They are the finest people.

Even when you are not best friends with someone, you can learn amazing amounts of knowledge from them. It is a good thing; I wouldn't trade that for anything. I wouldn't trade Danny Middleton for anything, either.

How long have you been in this location?

We have been in this house about sixteen years. Before that we built a house out in Katy. We built kennel runs and had all kinds of stuff, but I discovered that I didn't want a kennel. Everybody dreams of having a kennel, but I found out that when I had a kennel, my dogs didn't get me and I didn't get them near enough. They were in and out but I like my dogs in the house with me. I like my dogs where I can see them and touch them and so on. From that standpoint, it was an unsatisfactory experience. Besides building your own house will kill you; we really did build our own house. We didn't have the carpenter come in. Dean and Judy built it, plumbed it, wired it and did all those things. We were nuts! We had to move here for a job change, in doing so, we improved. We figured out that the time we spent building that house, weekends, vacations - we could have been spending that time with our dogs. We were spending it building a house!

Our dogs are here now, and although we can't keep as many, they have a backyard to play in. We don't have any kennel runs. We only keep one crate in the house, and they fight over who gets it. That is all we have room for here. Other than that, we are happy living in just a plain old tract suburbia house. We loved it out in the country, but we don't miss not having our dogs with us.

How long have you been married?

Dean and I have been married for 37 years. Dean didn't have a dog before we got married. They had dogs who would come up to get their heads scratched and fed scraps, that sort of thing. When we married, I had a little mixed breed named Tinker. She was part Sheltie, I believe. Then we found Nook, and Nook was Dean's dog from the get-go. Back then, Tinker was given to me, and she had heartworms. I

had her treated for heartworms. We didn't have the preventative back then, so I had to take her back every four months for a check to make sure she didn't get them again. When we bought Nook, we immediately took the dogs to the vet. It was time for Tinker to go back in for her check. It was then that I learned that Tinker had heartworms again. Here was this puppy demanding all this attention, forget Tinker. It was like, "I want to be petted more than you!" I felt guilty then for denying Tinker the attention when we got this puppy. Dean made no bones about it; he liked Nook better, and he wanted Nook in his lap. She really became his.

A few years later, he had trained her in obedience and finished her CD. One year we were talking about what he was going to get me for Christmas. He said, "You didn't get me anything for my birthday. You have to get me something for my birthday before I will get you something for Christmas." I said, "You see that stupid dog laying in the corner? She is yours; happy birthday." I thought he would laugh it off, but he stopped and said, "Do you mean it? That's the best present you've ever given me!" But, she was really already his. For someone who never had a dog of his own growing up, it was big. Dean is the best dog lover, he is really good with them. We are very security-minded about them getting out and stuff. It is just second nature to him; he is really great with the dogs. They love him, so it is great. He never says much, though. Dean is a cross between Bob Newhart and George Gobel. He kind of grins a lot but doesn't say much.

How have the dogs affected your lifestyle?

Vacations are tougher, because we have to have someone we can trust take care of our dogs or we have to take them with us.

Dogs are not nose-tissue, they are not something you use once and throw away. They are forever. It drives me nuts to see people move from one home or apartment or whatever to another, and they have to get rid of their dogs. Well, do they get rid of their kids because they are moving? Why would they

get rid of their dogs? It does affect your lifestyle, it is a long commitment. The sad thing is that dogs do not outlive you generally. Unlike children, they don't grow up and move away. They are perpetual children, but you are lucky if you get to keep them fifteen years. They are a commitment, and you don't give them away when you move.

I have rules about selling to certain people; I will not sell to people living in apartments, or to military families. As much as I appreciate our men and women in uniform, they have no control over their living arrangements. I have to know

that my pup is going to be in a lifelong home, to the degree that anyone can know that. So I don't sell to anyone in the military. I don't sell to anyone who has ever had a dog run over. And I will find out, too. I don't sell to anyone who doesn't have a fenced yard. They do impact your lifestyle, and if you can't handle having a little dog hair - I tell people who come over not to wear black. When you leave, you will be white, so do not wear black, and do not dress up. It is their home. Our home is built both for us and our dogs. Yes, the carpet is not as clean as it would be, but oh, well. The dogs live here too.

Is there anything we haven't covered that you would like to talk about?

Just that there are a lot of new people in the breed, and every time I judge or go to a show, my time is so dear these days that I don't hang around ringside much. I even missed Astro Hall this year. But I have to say that we have a lot of new people in the breed, and that is really good for the breed. I love seeing new faces. It is always nice to get a postcard or note, and I treasure them, by the way, from someone who you met maybe five or ten years ago, who you were standing next to at ringside. Maybe they asked a question and you answered it, maybe it was how the classes are structured, or why the judge chooses one dog over another, or something. All kinds of little things like that, you take the time and patience to answer them, and they don't forget. You will get a little card saying, "You don't remember me, but ..." You do remember them, because they were interested enough to ask a question. The new people coming in the breed today are so good for it, and they are doing a wonderful job.

We all have to remember one thing, and that is someone taught us what we know. We didn't learn everything we know by absorption. It wasn't osmosis! Someone taught us how to groom, how to handle, and so on. Someone taught us those things, and it is incumbent upon all of us to pass those things on to the next generation so that they too have the means of being good exhibitors. Right now, we are creating our competition, do we want good competition, or do we want cut-throat competition? Do we want to go to shows and enjoy ourselves, or do we want to go to shows and watch a cat fight? The people I learned to show against congratulated each other, and they were happy for one another when they won. They had good hearts. They shared those good hearts with me. I hope that people continue to share what they know, their knowledge in the dogs and their experience, with the new people who are coming in. It will make our breed just that much stronger.

*Thank you so much, Judy.
You're welcome. •*



Daisy.