

Taimyr Samoyeds announces the retirement of  
**American & Canadian Champion**  
**"Orion's Winter Shaman"**  
**"Shaman"**

Multiple Specialty Winner \* Multiple Group Winner  
1st show (at 6 months old): Reserve Winner \* 2nd show: Best of Winners \* Last show: Best of Breed  
Shaman has won multiple Best of Breeds.

**Available for STUD to suitable bitches.**  
**Our goal is high tier show puppies.**



For more information on STUD services, please contact  
Skip & Penny Gay  
P.O. Box 2503 \* Valdez, Alaska 99686-2503  
(907) 835-5775  
plmiller@ucdavis.edu

SQ Wtr 07 \*\*\*\*\*ALL FOR ADC 970 County 015

Celinda & James M. Cheskawich  
183 Wieri Rd  
Woodland WA 98674-9211



# THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

Winter 2005-06 • \$13

# Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly  
Talks with  
**Carol Montgomery**  
ALPINE GLO  
Bedminster, New Jersey

*This interview was conducted at the home of Carol Montgomery in May 2004 by Lynne Robertson.*

*How did you get into Samoyeds, and why did you choose this breed?*

It was 1972. We were living in Palo Alto, California and my husband was finishing his PhD thesis at Stanford. We had wanted a dog for years, but because we were renting a small house we couldn't have pets. We decided that we would get a dog as soon as he graduated. I actually typed his thesis so we could put the money we would have had to pay someone else toward the purchase of a puppy.

Ever since I was a little girl I wanted an Irish Setter. We went to the dog show at the Cow Palace, which at that time was a benched show. We were talking to an Irish Setter breeder and in the distance I saw a beautiful white dog walking with its owner. We concluded our discussions with the Setter breeder and quickly walked to the area where I had spotted that white dog. We not only saw that dog, but 25 other Samoyeds all benched together. That was it for me - I found the breed that I wanted. It has been a 30+-year love affair with Samoyeds ever since that day.

The dog I saw, Ch. Pushka, Czar of Snowcliff, was beautiful. He was out of Wilna Coulter's Whitecliff kennels. I fell in love with his personality, his presence and his showmanship, and I decided I wanted a puppy sired by him. We moved back East to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania later that year, and about three months thereafter, our first Samoyed, Ch. Taylor's Kanik of Snowcliff, was shipped to us.

We chose this breed because of its beauty and grace and because we wanted a "natural" breed that didn't require ear cropping or tail docking. And, we wanted a breed that could be worked and shown.

*How difficult was it to get a*

*puppy from a breeder like that?*

Before we made any big decision we did a good deal of research. For months after the Cow Palace show we visited several Samoyed breeders. We talked to a lot of wonderful people who were extremely helpful and more than generous in sharing their knowledge of the breed. We also read everything we could find on Samoyeds. We bought a copy of the Ward's book, *The Complete Samoyed*, which was very comprehensive.

After all our research, we

novices. It looked easy, but the first few times I went into the ring with Kanik, I was pretty nervous. There was so much to learn. Of course I thought I could just take him in with no training, but I was wrong. Several kind people in Pennsylvania helped us get started by sharing information on local conformation handling classes. Fortunately, Kanik was very slow maturing, so I had a year or two to go to classes and develop a level of confidence and handling ability. It got easier after that. But you know, it is amazing that anyone



were still drawn to Pushka, who actually went on to win a Best in Show. We stayed in touch with the Taylors and told them that we wanted to show the puppy that we would purchase. I think they saw that we were committed and agreed to sell us a show-quality male. I don't know how many people finish their first dog, but we finished Kanik with back-to-back five-point majors. We were very fortunate to get such a nice dog.

*Did you have any experience prior to that in showing?*

No. We were complete

finishes their first dog. As a new handler, you simply make mistakes. A lot of times you are simply overwhelmed. I tell new owner-handlers not to get discouraged. We all have to start somewhere. No one walks into the show ring the first time as a proficient handler. It takes time, practice and a little luck.

*So that first dog was a male; from there, what dogs did you acquire?*

Our next dog turned out to be our "Cinderella" story. She was Am/Can Ch. Nentsi's Kachina of Alpine Glo. "Kachi-

na" became our foundation bitch.

I saw Kachina's mother, Ch. Nordic's Kismet of Nentsi, at the Eastern Dog Club show in Boston. We had just moved to the north shore of Boston and attended the show to meet people and see the local Samoyeds. Kismet did not win that day. In fact, she placed third in her class. But when I watched her move she was so clean and covered so much ground that she made the hair on the back of my neck stand up.

After the judging I spoke with her owner, Teddy Thuma, and told her how lovely I thought Kismet was. Teddy introduced me to her partner in Nentsi Samoyeds, Judy Muggia, and during the conversation they told me that Kismet had just been bred to Ch. Tsiulikagta's Aput. Over the next month we all got to know each other better and we decided to take pick male out of that litter, since the bitches had all been reserved.

As we watched the litter from birth, there was one female who caught my eye. I remember saying that I wished we had also opted to take a girl as well. However, she was already promised.

A month or so later, we ran into Judy Muggia at the Boston Bicentennial Celebration. She told me that Teddy had a female puppy returned. I asked WHAT female and she said the little one. She went on to say that Teddy couldn't keep her. We called Teddy immediately and the next day we brought Kachina home.

Kachina did some nice winning as a puppy and when she was sixteen months old we decided to take her to the Samoyed Club of America National Specialty which was being held in Pontiac, Michigan in 1976. It was the very first National I had ever been to. I remember being so excited about going. Teddy and several other members of Minuteman Samoyed Club came with us. We entered Kachina in the Futurity, Puppy Sweepstakes and in the American Bred class. We

entered her in American Bred for a reason – two years earlier, Kachina's mother, Kismet, won the American Bred class at the 1974 SCA National. So we decided it would be wonderful if Kachina could win the same class as her mother.

Kachina placed in her classes in both Futurity and Sweeps – she was second in one and third in the latter. She won the American Bred class, and then went on to win Winners Bitch and Best of Winners! This was under four different judges. It was fabulous to us that she was so consistent at the National. So that was our Cinderella story. (laughter). She was our true beginning!

By the way, her litterbrother, Ch. Nentsi's Nachala of Alpine Glo, who we also owned, was a wonderful dog who we finished very easily. He had lovely structure and proportions and was a very easy, strong mover. In fact, he was the Samoyed that Rachel Page Elliott used in her *Dogsteps* video. These were two littermates who both played major roles in giving us the dog we have at Alpine Glo today.

*Were you handling her to these wins?*

Oh, yes. I was still pretty novice. We were the two new kids on the block. That was a day I will never forget. We have been trying to repeat that ever since! Kachina is the one who laid the foundation for and gave us the dogs that you see today. She is responsible for all of this.

*These are gorgeous dogs. Would you say Kachina was your most winning dog?*

In terms of a big National Specialty win, yes. However, Kachina's daughter, Ch. Alpine Glo's Sunlit Tak-e-na, won an Award of Merit at the 1983 SCA National Specialty in Frederick, Maryland. Tak-e-na also won the Brood Bitch class at the 1988 SCA National in Merrimack, New Hampshire. Two Kachina granddaughters, Ch. Alpine Glo's Major Sensation and Ch. Alpine Glo's Major Attraction, won Best Brace at the 1988 SCA National as well. Both were Tak-e-na daughters.

When you are lucky enough to have a bitch of Kachina's quality as the foundation upon which you build your breeding program, you see her qualities



*Ch. Taylor's Kamik of Snowcliff.*

continue to come through in subsequent generations. Kachina was very special to me – she is still in my heart even today. I see so much of her in our present dogs. It goes to show that quality, if bred correctly, produces quality. I thank Teddy Thuma for allowing me to have Kachina as a part of my life all those many years ago.

*Would you say you had an eye for a dog?*

I think that over the years I

have developed an eye for a good dog. Soundness is so important to me. I like overall balance, proper proportions, and a dog who can do the work for which this breed was intended. I look for a dog who is clean coming and going and also covers ground from the side. There is a timing I look for in every dog I see move. Those who have it have effortless movement and are very light on their feet. These are dogs who can

hike or herd or weight pull or race, who with proper conditioning can go all day long without tiring.

I have always tried to breed for this type of movement. Back in the '70s and early '80s there were three dogs we owned at the same time (Kachina, Nachala and their half brother, Ch. Sparrow Hill's Taakowah) who all shared the same sire, Ch. Tsiulikagta's Aput (owned by Donna Yocom). Aput was a



*Ch. Nentsi's Nachala of Alpine Glo leading the Alpine Glo sled team on a training run.*

Painter (owned by the Wards) son out of Ch. Tsiulikagta's Pepe-san. These dogs trained my eye in terms of movement and structure ... and all three were working Sams.

Back in 1977 we heard from a good friend, Gail Mathews, about a Samoyed named Sparrow Hill's Taakowah. He was also an Aput son and a half brother to our Kachina and Nachala. Gail told us that "Taakowah" had been moved around among different families and needed a home. She thought he would be a good addition to our sled team. Of course, we could not say no to Gail. When we got him off the plane in Boston, I said, "This dog will never leave here ... he has a home." So Taakowah joined our family.

Because of the movement from home to home, Taakowah did not trust people and certainly did not like showing. However, he did like running on the sled team. I worked with him for over a year just to get him socialized and trained for the show ring. He finished his championship with several Bests of Breed and Group placings. He had wonderful temperament and produced several top winning champions ... among them, Ch. Alpine Glo's Sunlit Tak-ena.

*What were the lines behind Kachina again?*

Kachina's grandfather was Ch. Kiska's Karaholme Cherokee (Painter) who was imported from England by Bob and Dolly Ward. Her grandmother was Ch. Tsiulikagta's Pepe-san who was owned by Donna Yocom. Donna produced Ch. Tsiulikagta's Aput, Kachina's sire. Also, Kachina's dam, Ch. Nordic's Kismet of Nentsi was out of Gail Mathews' Nordic Kennels. The Wards, Donna, Gail, Teddy Thuma and Judy Muggia were real mentors to me. We all loved the same style of Samoyed and we were all willing to share information and help one another. They gave me a lot of help in understanding pedigrees and pedigree depth and shared information about dogs farther back in pedigrees that I didn't know. They answered my questions like: Who were these dogs? What did they produce? How did they move? They gave me a wonderful hands-on education that most breeders would love



*Am/Can Ch. Nentsi's Kachina of Alpine Glo (Ch. Tsiulikagta's Aput x Ch. Nordie's Kismet of Nentsi). Breeders: Theodora and Richard Thuma.*

to have.

*How many generations do you look at?*

Generally five. We bred our first litter about 25 years ago. It is a work in progress, and you learn with each litter. I remember some of the old dogs. I watched and learned. I think the benefit that some of the older breeders have is we saw combinations of this line with that line, and what worked and what didn't work. You always have an idea, this card file in your mind, of what might be nice to try. You learn when you

need to go out of your own line to bring in the qualities you want, or need. But every time we have gone outside our lines it has been to a linebred animal. That has worked for us.

*How many litters have you bred over the last 30 years?*

Twelve of our own litters. We probably breed once every two or three years. We breed when we want to keep something ourselves, or when we have a list of people who we feel can give the dogs the quality home that we want them to have. I generally do a breeding

after I have four or five people who are on a waiting list. They have been to our home, we have gone to their homes and met them. Screening prospective owners is something that takes a lot of time, and you have to do it properly. My belief is if you are going to do something, you need to do it well. You do your homework. Owning a dog is a real responsibility; we determine the quality of their lives.

*Out of those breedings, which was your best pairing or top litters?*

The very first one out of Kachina was a beautiful breed-

ing. She was bred to Ch. Tsiulikagta's Kabloona, Donna Yocom and Genia Cox owned him. That produced the very first litter - a litter of five - and we finished three champions out of that litter. Wonderful, very typey dogs. The second litter, we bred Kachina to Taakowah, and we got three champions out of that as well. The two that did the most winning were Ch. Alpine Glo's Sunlit Tak-e-na and her litterbrother, Ch. Alpine Glo's Sakima Tempest (owned by Ronnie and Kathy Tempesta).



The single-dog sled pull is still a popular event. This is 1981 Ch. Alpine Glo Nuvak Chin Mana (owned by Carole Harrigan-Rost), a 46-pound bitch pulling 1,138 pounds – nearly 25 times her own weight!

*How many dogs have you kept over the years?*

In the early years when we were doing a lot of sledding, and worked our dogs quite a bit, we had up to ten dogs. Now we stay somewhere between four and five dogs. They are all housedogs.

*Do you think you have established a distinguishable line or type?*

I think so. In terms of movement and silhouette, and a head type. Most new people to the breed will not say, "That's an Alpine Glo dog," but frequent exhibitors get an inkling and they'll ask. I think what we have seen is that the style of our dogs has stayed the same. There have been some improvements, there have been some things that you just wish you could put in a bottle and take from generation to generation. A lot of times it works out, and sometimes it doesn't come through. But I think our dedication to producing a sound dog has paid off.

*What is your style of dog?*

It's a very moderate style, actually. It is a very dense coat, not too short, not too long, very

weather-resistant. More of quality rather than quantity. A head style that is moderate, not overdone. We like good sidegait and fronts and rears that are clean coming and going. Not something that is too flashy and uses too much energy. Just that consistent, effortless gait that when you see the dog go around, they are light on their feet and they really reach out. It is the timing that I think we have been very fortunate to be able to keep.

*When you are selecting characteristics you want to keep in each breeding, how would you rate those, in terms of soundness, type, temperament and so on?*

Always temperament first. Then the movement, the soundness in the movement. No dog is perfect, but knowing that and always looking to improve is essential. As you can see, we have four females and one male – we are always looking for a male that can complement what we feel we need in our girls. To me, movement is very high on the list, but when people say, "Do you look for type or for movement?" I can't separate the

two. Movement is part of your type. It is the more functional part of type, but it wouldn't be the same dog if you didn't take movement into consideration.

And structure, you breed litters, go to shows, attend educational seminars over the years, and you learn how to judge structure. You get your hands on as many dogs as possible. I have been fortunate to have been asked to judge a lot of matches. I guess the biggest honor was being asked to judge the Futurity at the National several years ago. When you put your hands on that many dogs, you absolutely understand that they are not all built the same. You know, with your own dogs that this is the kind of dog that you prefer and this is the structure that you like. But most of your own dogs are built pretty much the same. When you are going over dogs other than your own, it's a whole different learning experience for you. You are learning through your hands and through your eyes. You are combining the two senses by watching the dog move. It's amazing. When I feel a dog for

shoulder layback, I automatically go to a certain point on the back. However, some dogs are much farther forward and some dogs have better layback of shoulder. Your education in structure is accelerated by judging. I have always said, even to relative novices, to really learn about structure go and judge a fun match if you are asked. Nobody gets upset in a small match. Go and just put your hands on as many dogs as you possibly can. It is such an education. You get to the point where your fingertips and hands are telling you everything as you are going over the dog. Then when you are watching the dog move that is when your mind is comparing what your fingers felt and what your eyes are seeing. Is that dog balanced; is that dog using himself, based on what you felt when you were going over the dog? A 45-degree layback is what people look for, but there aren't many dogs that have exactly that. Some dogs don't have it, but they are balanced front and rear and use themselves beautifully going around the ring. It's all about

balance. That is what I look for. Sometimes you say, "That's not a breeding I'll do again, maybe I'll do something different." Even though we haven't done a lot of breeding, people who have our dogs come back and ask us for advice. We can influence them in what to look for. Not in who to pick, but what to look for in a dog. Because they really should pick their own, if they own a female, they should pick their own studs. But you do influence them, because you are also training their eye to look for things that they like.

*What is your long-range goal in breeding?*

To breed the soundest dogs possible - both mentally and physically. It's not about winning this or winning that. It's wonderful when your dogs do some nice winning. But the long-range goal is to breed healthy, sound animals who can be successful in the show ring, obedience ring, and who can - for people who want - be used to sled and do other things, like hiking and weight pulling, therapy, etc. People who have bought their first Sammy from us come back to us for another twelve to fourteen years later.

*How did you get into sledding?*

Our very first two dogs, Kanik, and an Alaskan Malamute, Ch. Beowolf's Issortuyok, "Tuyok," were our first sled team. We got a wheeled cart, and we would just run around the neighborhood, go off to state parks and run on the trails. My husband was the trainer; I was really the person who did the grooming, conditioning, and the feeding. I would get on the cart and run with them, and we just enjoyed it.

Then we got to the point where we met people who had the same interests, and it became a very social thing. It is competitive from the standpoint that everyone likes to go out and everyone wants to come in first in the race, but it really is much more social in that you are not competing on subjective things. You are competing on how the dogs are conditioned, as I said before. So it became sort of a "thing" that we did with other people who we got to know and like.

The longer distance racing was something that my husband really loved. It kept him and the dogs in shape. It was kind



Ch. Alpine Glo's Nuvak Chin Mana (Ch. Tsiulikagta's Kabloona x Am/Can Ch. Nentsi's Kachina of Alpine Glo).  
Owner: Carole Harrigan-Rost.

of a common ground for the two of us with the dogs. I liked competing in the show ring, and although he did show the dogs, he was much more into the racing. In the winter season, he used to say, "The dogs are mine for the winter."

We then decided to do some middle distance racing, because Samoyeds are dogs who are built for endurance. So we started to compete in 100-mile races, 150-mile races, 250-mile races. That is still considered middle distance, and we had a wonderful time. My husband would take the dogs out and run with them, and I would be there at the checkpoints with hot cocoa. The deal was they had to carry everything that they were going to eat. You learn a lot about diets, because when dogs are running that distance, you are not feeding them grain. You are feeding them meat, and lots of fat. So you learn a lot about

what you are doing to increase their endurance and what kinds of fat, what they use to burn up quickly, and what they don't burn up as quickly. We had the best time - I have to say, there is nothing subjective about competing in a race. It is very objective. The dogs that are conditioned well, the dogs that are fed properly, and the dogs that get enough miles on them before they go into a race, are the dogs that will perform.

We knew we wanted a breed that was a "natural" breed. The only thing you take off of this breed is their dewclaws. You don't dock tails, you don't crop ears, that was something that appealed to us because we wanted a very natural dog. This is a very primitive breed, more primitive than some of the others, and we liked that about the dogs. They were bred to pull sleds and herd reindeer. We actually put them in a cou-

ple of herding trials, herding sheep, and it is amazing. You do no training, but instinctively these dogs know what to do. It is really wonderful to see some of those instincts that go back centuries, really, in these dogs.

*Do you have any herding stories to share?*

Yes. We did some herding with friends who had Malamutes. Our Sams were confused at first, when they would see the sheep just running, but then their natural instincts took over. They began to herd the sheep together and get them in a corner. Of course, one or two sheep would break out and then the rest of the sheep would follow. But the dogs would herd them into another corner. They didn't know commands, because we didn't teach them commands, but those natural instincts were there.

The one funny story is when we were doing this with



*Ch. Sparrow Hill's Taakowah.*

our Malamute. The Sams just knew instinctively what to do.

The Malamute was in there running and having fun with the

Sammies, but when he couldn't get this one sheep - there was

one sheep that just kept running off, so he grabbed it by its tail



*Ch. Nuvak China of Alpine Glo (Ch. Tsiulikagta's Kabloona x Am/Can Ch. Nentsi's Kachina of Alpine Glo). Owners: Craig and Carmen Mattson.*

and started to pull it back. (laughter). The Sammies looked at him like, "What are you doing?" Of course the sheep wasn't hurt, but it just gave you such a sense of what these dogs are really meant to do. Of course, Malamutes aren't herding dogs, so he wasn't exactly herding like the Sams were, but he was in there following what they were doing. He was learning and watching. Or hunting, perhaps. (laughter)

*Do you have any fun sledding stories?*

We went to races mostly up in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. They were all so much fun. For the long-distance races, you would be on the trail for two days. You would go up

and start out first thing Saturday morning, and the dogs would not come back in until late Sunday night or Monday morning. So I wasn't out on the trail; the spouses or significant others would stay back in a base camp, and share rooms and stay up wondering about where their spouses and dogs were, and where we could get a glimpse of them the next day. But these were all really backcountry trails that you couldn't get into. There were people at the checkpoints, and we did man checkpoints at times. We would hand the cup to the driver of the teams as they went by. You know, the fun was really just in the camaraderie that you built

with the other spouses.

One of the really fun things that we did, and this goes back to a Kachina daughter out of the first litter. There was only one female and I planned to keep her. But a very good friend, Carole Harrigan-Rost, came up and talked me into letting her take her home. To this day I do not know how she convinced me. That puppy became Am/Can Ch. Alpine Glo's Nuvak Chin Mana. She was a natural in weight pulling. She weighed about 46 pounds soaking wet. She was so strong and she loved to pull. I have a picture of her pulling a sled laden with 1,138 pounds of dog food. I would watch her, and she amazed me. In some pulls the

runners would become frozen into the surface. This little dog knew instinctively how to break them from the ice. She would see bigger dogs jumping into the harness, but she would just lean down and pull off to the left, then pull off to the right. Carole always stayed in front of her when she was pulling, and she would call her. Some people work behind their dogs, but Carole would always go to the front and call her from a distance. China stayed low to the ground conserving energy and pulling. She would break the sled from the ice and then pull forward. The best thing I did was to let Carole have her, because I wouldn't have done the weight pulling, I don't think.

Carole did, and she finished her championship as well. The only thing she never worked her in was obedience. China was always one of those effervescent dogs who loved life. Obedience was just not her cup of tea.

*Was she well-known in the weight pulling circles?*

She really was! This was back in the '70s and early '80s.

*That's amazing! What was the upper weight that she ever pulled?*

You know, I am not sure. What I do know is that there were a lot of men in weight pulling back then who had big, macho dogs. Carole would tell me stories about when she first started going to the weight pulls. The men would just laugh about this little white dog. But not for long. Carole and China became very respected by them because she started out-pulling the Malamutes and Newfs.

Samoyeds aren't just white fluffy couch potatoes. There is a history and a purpose for this breed. When you see them working, there is a recognition (even in some of the macho guys who were out there) that this breed can do something if they are conditioned and trained properly. I used to ask Carole, "How did you train her to do this?" She said, "Quite frankly, she trained me!" There was some training that Carole did, but China trained Carole more than Carole trained her. There are a lot of Sammies that do weight pulling now.

*You don't think of this as a breed for weight pulling?*

No, you don't really. But Samoyeds can be trained to be superb weight pullers.

*Have you done obedience training at all?*

We have done basic obedience for all of our dogs, but we have not competed in the obedience ring. I did very early on, with Kanik and with our Alaskan Malamute, Tuyok. There is a funny story about Tuyok. He loved Samoyeds, and I had him in the obedience ring on a long down. A woman with two Samoyeds walked by, and he broke the long down and jumped over the gating. This poor woman thought he was coming to attack her dogs! She actually lifted one of the Samoyeds up. He was just going to play with them, but she had no way of knowing that. We got a CD on both of them,

but we haven't done any serious obedience work since.

*You said your type is a moderate type; is that what you see a lot of in the ring these days?*

I think so. There are many types, but our standard allows for that. When you have a standard that talks about a wedge-shaped head, there are different sized wedges. I prefer a muzzle that is of moderate length, not a very snipey muzzle. I like a slightly broader wedge to the head but not overdone. My feeling is if you want a Chow, buy a Chow. Then a very definite stop. I don't like a stop that comes down very obliquely and then the nose looks like it just comes out from there. I like a stop that comes down and the muzzle just naturally comes out from that stop. The carset, I like an earset that is on top of the head and not off to the side of the head, but I have had both. I am just talking about preferences. I really like an almond eye, the darker the eye and the more almond-shaped the eye, the more appealing it is to me. Then of course, our standard calls for those black, black points, and I really do like inky black pigment, the color of the nose, the eye rims, the lip liner. Very black.

*What else about the dogs do you like?*

Most breeders I know try to breed to the standard, and I like a shoulder that is well laid-back because it contributes to a beautiful long neck. There is an elegance about a dog with a lovely neck. I look for neck because it gives the dog that elegance. When you view the dog from the side and you see that arch of neck it gives that dog that. When you see a dog in the ring with a short neck, it is just not as elegant a profile, and it generally indicates that you don't have the layback of shoulder, although not always. Sometimes it is coat. The coat can hide a perfectly lovely neck. But in general, even with coat - I have seen some very heavily coated dogs, and you can just tell that neck is there. As you are standing back looking at them and you go to put your hands on them, you know exactly where the shoulder placement is, because the neck gives you an idea of where to go to.

*How important is the coat?*

The coat is very important.

The Samoyed is double coated. They are supposed to have a coarse, weather-resistant coat. They are not supposed to have long, droopy coats. There is a short, dense undercoat and a moderate length outer coat that should be very weather-resistant. And quality should be considered more than quantity. I remember when we were running our dogs and they would be out all night on the trail. It would snow or sleet and they were sleeping out covered with snow, because on these races you are not bringing little doghouses along with you. (laughter). You would look for them in the morning and all you would see are these little mounds of snow. When they would wake up, they would stand up, shake off, and the coats weren't even wet. That is what all Nordic breeds should have, that kind of coat. I think most Sammy people will tell you that they like the luxurious coats and the nice, full coats. Length is not as important to me as quality of the coat. It should be a harsh outer coat that is very weather-resistant, and then an undercoat that is insulating to the body.

*Is that a pretty easy trait to keep?*

Our coats have improved over the years. I believe we have better coats in the breed, and we have selectively bred for that. Every now and then you will run into - although it is not something that you'll see often, but you will see a longer, soft coat that looks very glamorous but it is very laid down, it is not standoffish. You just wonder how weather-resistant it would be.

*So as a judge, you would take that into consideration?*

That's right.

*Now, about the color, are the biscuits a fault?*

No. Our standard allows for pure white, white and biscuit or all biscuit coloration. Actually the biscuit color is very desirable because the dogs who carry the biscuit are the dogs who will help you to keep those black points. Samoyeds are not albinos. They have been selectively bred for the white coloration, and the standard allows for the above-mentioned colors. We have not had dogs in our lines who have had lots of biscuit on them. I think "Monte," our male, is the one who has the

most biscuit. There are some beautiful dogs being shown who are almost completely biscuit. It is a matter of educating judges, because of course most judges are attracted to the white. But there are so many beautiful biscuit dogs out there now. Hopefully we are educating the judges that it's okay to put those dogs up.

*That sounds like something that is ongoing, the education.*

Yes. It makes sense. Typically the white dogs win more than the biscuit and cream because there are fewer biscuit dogs shown. Now we are seeing people who are out there saying, "I CAN win with dogs that have biscuit and cream." There is a local person, Marianne McNeil, who has the most gorgeous moving biscuit dog named Copper. Some of his puppies also have a lot of biscuit coloration in them. They are beautiful moving dogs. It is really nice to see people who have quality biscuit dogs showing those dogs. The more you show them, the more acceptable it is going to become to the judges out there.

*What are the most serious faults in the breed today?*

I would have to say, in my estimation, fronts. That is true of a lot of breeds, not just Sammies. I am starting to see rears that are very close as well. We look for a nice V rear, a single-tracking rear. That means different things to different people, just like we talked about the wedge-shaped head. But when it goes from that nice V to a Y, where the legs are moving very close at the back, I think we have to start paying some attention and going to the dogs that are giving us those lovely V rears. But you can correct a rear in a generation or two, whereas it is three or four generations before you can correct major front faults, if ever.

*Do you actively select for fronts on every breeding?*

Yes, it's that important to me. You could lose fronts in a generation. You don't want to. The front assembly starts at the neck. The neck should blend into the shoulders with a graceful arch. Everything builds on itself as you go down on the dog from the front to the rear. The placement of the shoulders affects the levelness of the back, and this is where the balance comes in, if you have 45-degree



*Ch. Alpine Glo's Sunlit Takena, Award of Merit winner at the SCA National Specialty (Taakowah x Kachina daughter).*

layback in front, but your rear layback doesn't match that front, you are not going to have a balanced dog, and it is going to compensate one way or another. It is interesting when you see some dogs, and as I said, you go over them and they may not have the layback that

you are looking for, but the front and rear angulation match. They do have a nice neck, and you watch them on the go-around, and they are really using themselves very efficiently. So there is no one magic state.

There is perfection, and we

all aim for that. I don't know that any of us have gotten there, but there are some dogs that have come pretty close. That is what your eye is looking for when you are trying to do the breedings. So if you have a female who maybe doesn't have as much layback as you like in

front, then I would suggest you look for a dog that has the layback. Breeding is about improving our dogs generation to generation.

*To be continued ...*